

NEWS NOTE

Heavy fighting in Ukraine leaves thousands of children cold, thirsty and out of school – UNICEF

KYIV/GENEVA, 1 February 2017 – Following intense fighting over the last two days around the town of Avdiivka, Donetsk region, more than 17,000 people – including 2,500 children – are facing freezing weather without any heating, electricity or water.

Six schools and four kindergartens have also closed in the area due to the violence, putting education on hold and children under further stress, as they lose the much needed routine and stability of going to school.

The electricity and water infrastructure in Avdiivka was extensively damaged on 29 and 30 January. The resulting power outages disabled water pumping from a backup reservoir that serves the town and on which the heating system relies. In temperatures plummeting to minus 17 degrees Celsius (1 degree Fahrenheit), the situation could have catastrophic consequences for the residents of Avdiivka.

“Not only are the lives of thousands of children in Avdiivka, and on all sides of the conflict, at risk, but to make matters worse, the lack of water and electricity means that homes are becoming dangerously cold and health conditions deteriorating as we speak,” said Giovanna Barberis, UNICEF Representative in Ukraine.

“UNICEF and partners call for safe access to carry out immediate repairs to the damaged water and electricity infrastructure to prevent further suffering,” she added.

The water supply to other towns and villages in the Donetsk region has also stopped after the power supply to the Donetsk Filtration Station was cut on 29 January. The filtration station provides water to approximately 400,000 people. Water is now rationed and there is a possibility that the piped household water supply will stop altogether.

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About UNICEF

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere.

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For more information, please contact:

Iuliia Poberezhna, Communication Specialist, UNICEF Ukraine
Tel: +380 50 388 29 51
Email: ipoberezhna@unicef.org

Kristen Elsby, Regional Chief of Communication, UNICEF Regional Office for Central & Eastern Europe and Central Asia (CEE/CIS)
Phone: +41 79 938 8273
Email: kelsby@unicef.org