

**UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR AND HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR IN
UKRAINE, NEAL WALKER**

**STATEMENT ON CONCERNS FOR THE SAFETY OF WATER TREATMENT
WORKERS OF THE DONETSK FILTER STATION**

(KYIV, 14 March 2018) – I am deeply concerned that water treatment workers and critical infrastructure continue to be targeted in eastern Ukraine’s armed conflict. It is unacceptable that in the last eight days, brave workers seeking to maintain the Donetsk Filter Station have been shot at on four separate occasions. Whilst I welcome the 24-hour “window of silence” obtained today, I urge that this guarantee of safety and protection maintained in the future.

The operation of the Donetsk Filter Station relies on the safe and unfettered access for the technicians, who risk their lives on a daily basis so water continues to flow to 345,000 men, women and children affected by the conflict. Yesterday, a truck was fired upon whilst making a routine delivery of water treatment chemicals vital for continued operations. On the same day, a bus carrying 30 workers was also fired upon. It was only due to good luck that no one was hurt.

It is impossible to keep critical infrastructure running without lasting guarantees for the safety and protection of the workers. Given Ukraine’s harsh winter, any interruption of water supply or inter-dependent heating systems could generate severe humanitarian consequences.

After four years of armed conflict, ordinary men, women and children continue to be disproportionately affected in eastern Ukraine. Their most basic needs, including safety and protection continue to be denied. Millions of Ukrainians, who are either trapped in active hostilities or families displaced are losing hope on the Europe’s continent.

I call on all parties to the conflict to respect civilian infrastructure and protect civilian workers. It is clear that any targeting of civilian infrastructure and intentional disruption of access to water supply or heating systems is a violation of International Humanitarian Law.

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