HIGHLIGHTS (26 Aug 2020)

- As of 26 August 2020, there are 110,085 people confirmed to have COVID-19 in Government-controlled areas of Ukraine, including 1,503 cases in eastern Ukraine.

- There are reportedly 3,051 confirmed COVID-19 cases in areas beyond Government control, including 152 deaths.

- Three entry/exit crossing points in eastern Ukraine partially re-open after being closed for almost three months.

TRENDS (26 Aug 2020)

COVID-19 update (Government-controlled areas)

Ministry of Health of Ukraine confirms 110,085 cases as of 26 August.

- **First case:** 29 February 2020
- **Total cases:** 110,085 (as of 26 August 2020)
- **Total deaths:** 2,354
- **States affected:** All 24 oblasts

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Luhanska oblast: 247 confirmed cases (two deaths)
Donetska oblast: 1,256 confirmed cases (20 deaths)

Borders/Flights: Ukraine re-opened the majority of crossing points with neighbouring countries (i.e., Belarus, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, the Russian Federation, and Slovakia). Ukraine also resumed international and domestic passenger flights from 15 June 2020 and allowed entry for all foreigners. All passengers coming from the ‘red-zone’ countries must undergo self-quarantine or hospitalization upon arrival. The list of ‘green-zone’ and ‘red-zone’ countries is available here. Several countries have also conditionally re-opened their borders for Ukrainians.

Containment measures: In mid-March, the Government of Ukraine imposed quarantine restrictions to minimize the risk of transmission across the country, including in the conflict-affected area of eastern Ukraine. In May, these restrictions began to ease based on the fulfillment of criteria adopted on both sides of the ‘contact line’. In the Government-controlled areas, the adaptive quarantine was introduced to counter the spread of the virus. Oblasts are divided into the ‘red/orange/yellow/green’ COVID-19 risk level regions based on three indicators: the hospital bed occupancy, the number of tests conducted, and the COVID-19 incidence rate. The COVID-19 restrictive measures are implemented in accordance with the risk level in a given oblast. The adaptive quarantine currently in place is expected to be prolonged until 1 November 2020.

TRENDS (26 Aug 2020)

COVID-19 update (non-Government controlled areas)

Local sources reportedly confirm 3,051 COVID-19 cases as of 26 August.

- **Total cases:** 3,051 (152 deaths)
- **Luhanska oblast:** 651 cases (17 deaths). **First case:** 31 March 2020
- **Donetska oblast:** 2,400 cases (135 deaths). **First case:** 29 March 2020
- **Overview of containment measures:** Luhanska and Donetska oblast (NGCA) adopted quarantine measures similar to those in Government-controlled areas of eastern Ukraine at the end of March 2020. As part of easing quarantine restrictions, both NGCA oblasts lifted restrictions on travelling to the Russian Federation and partially lifted restrictions on travelling between Donetska and Luhanska oblasts (NGCA). In the meantime, only two out of the five official crossing points allow people to cross the ‘contact line’ (EECP ‘Stanytsia Luhanska’ in Luhanska oblast and EECP ‘Novotroitske’ in Donetska oblast). To a large extent, crossings have been limited to those who have been granted humanitarian exemptions negotiated by the humanitarian community. In addition, people have been allowed to cross based on the pre-approved lists issued in NGCA. Since the partial re-opening of the ‘contact line’ in mid-June, over 56,000 people were able to cross the ‘contact line’ subject to the self-quarantine or undergoing observation.

ANALYSIS (26 Aug 2020)

Crossing points in eastern Ukraine are gradually re-opening, yet lack a coordinated, systematic approach

On 21 March 2020, all entry/exit crossing points (EECPs) in eastern Ukraine were closed in an attempt to contain the spread of COVID-19 in communities along the 420-kilometer ‘contact line’ as well as in the rest of Ukraine. Before the closure, approximately 1.2 million people regularly crossed each month to reach Government and non-Government controlled areas and even at higher rates during the summer period, averaging at 1.5 million crossings per month.
Five months after the introduction of COVID-19-related quarantine measures, most of EECPs remain closed, with only two out of the five official crossing points allowing people to cross the ‘contact line’ (EECP ‘Stanytsia Luhanska’ in Luhanska oblast and EECP ‘Novotroitske’ in Donetska oblast). The gradual easing of quarantine restrictions and the adoption of humanitarian exemptions permitting people with acute needs to cross have led to an increase in civilian crossings across the ‘contact line’ in summer. In July, some 37,700 persons were able to cross the ‘contact line’ compared to 17,700 in June.

Even though more people are now able to cross the ‘contact line’, some of the most vulnerable categories as pensioners are still unable to withdraw their pensions in areas under Government control. It is estimated that the closure has impacted more than one million people, including more than 360,000 elderly and 163,000 vulnerable persons who have not been able to access their hard-earned pensions or withdraw cash since late March by crossing the ‘contact line.’ After several months without access to the only source of income for many, elderly are forced to find alternative ways to reach their pensions, which are usually lengthier, costly and legally challenging. To a large extent, crossings have been limited to those who have been granted humanitarian exemptions negotiated by the humanitarian community. These exemptions include death or disease of a close relative, as well as severe or chronic illness requiring urgent medical intervention. Students participating in university admissions exams and adults accompanying them have also been granted special permission to cross.

In some cases, people could not cross as they could not fulfil some of the requirements (i.e., self-isolate using “Dii Vdoma” application or undergo observation upon arrival). Even after the expiration of the Cabinet of Ministers’ resolution regulating these requirements on 1 August, reportedly, people willing to cross to the Government-controlled side were still mandated to install the app to undergo self-isolation or agree to observation in a designated facility. The rule that requires to install the app to monitor self-isolation prevents people with older phones or without internet connection from crossing the ‘contact line’. While some ad hoc solutions were implemented as a temporary measure (e.g., installing WiFi hotspots at EECPs), no systemic resolution to this issue was found so far.

The insufficient and large gaps in communication, as well as the absence of clearly communicated information concerning eligibility and crossing procedures continues to lead to people spending nights at the ‘contact line’. Humanitarian and other actors have been assisting these people with food, water, and other basic supplies, yet, it remains imperative that all relevant parties apply well-coordinated and realistic measures to prevent such situations from happening in the future. It is also essential that all actors involved in re-opening the EECPs follow recommendations from the World Health Organization and the humanitarian community to mitigate the potential health risks for those crossing and working at the EECPs and to ensure smoother operation of crossing points.

**VISUAL (25 Aug 2020)**

**Crossing Points Snapshot (July 2020)**
UKRAINE
Situation Report
Last updated: 26 Aug 2020

CROSSING POINTS - Humanitarian Snapshot: July 2020

The crossing situation has remained mostly unchanged, with only two entry-exit crossing points (EECPs) operational in both directions – EECP ‘Stanytsia Luhanska’ in Luhanska oblast (daily) and EECP ‘Novoazovsk’ in Donetsk oblast (two days a week). The number of civilian crossings has doubled in July – from some 18,000 in June to 38,000. Reportedly, the sub-group members on Humanitarian issues of the Triilateral Contact Group reconfirmed their readiness to simultaneously OPEN two additional EECPs in Luhanska oblast. According to OSCE, it is expected to take place no later than 10 November 2020.

OPERATIONAL UPDATES

Civilian entry to non-Government controlled areas (NGCA) still requires pre-approval of the de facto entities. Although more communication channels have recently been established to allow people in both Government controlled areas (GCA) and NGCA to submit their registration requests, the process could take up to three weeks and the selection criteria remains somewhat unclear.

The 14-day self-isolation requirement1 remains in place until 31 August for people entering GCA from NGCA.2 This is contrary to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine’s resolution allowing an immediate removal of this requirement as of 1 August. In Donetska oblast (NGCA), the 2-week observation in a designated medical facility remains mandatory for people entering NGCA from GCA.

The volume of humanitarian cargo to NGCA has been halved in recent months due to the crossing restrictions. Between March to July 2020, around 250 tons of humanitarian cargo has been delivered to NGCA, compared to 550 tons during the same period in 2019. Closer look revealed a tenfold dip in Luhanska oblast (NGCA), where less than 25 tons of humanitarian cargo has been delivered this year (March-July), compared to some 250 tons during the same months in 2019. Meanwhile, all humanitarian organizations operating in NGCA and humanitarian convoys intended for NGCA are required to re-register with the Ministry for Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories despite having registration with the Ministry’s predecessor.

The restrictions for humanitarian actors to travel to NGCA have been partially removed. In Donetska oblast (NGCA), the mandatory self-isolation requirement has been shortened from 14 to seven (7) days, and staff members are required to provide negative PCR test results upon entering and agree to undergo a second test after the self-isolation period. In Luhanska oblast (NGCA), the self-isolation has been reduced to ten (10) days; however, these exemptions are applicable to international staff members only.

1. The duration of the self-isolation requirement is possible only subject to negative PCR test results
2. The simplification requirement for NGCA residents of Donetska and Luhanska oblast was extended by a decision of the Joint Forces Operation (JFO) Command until 31 August

PEDESTRIAN CROSSENG AT EECPs

EECP | GCA to NGCA | NGCA to GCA
--- | --- | ---
STANYTSIA LUHANSKA | 4,092 | 79,326 | 6,279 | 118,674
NOVOAZOVSK | 3,227 | 3,352 | 3,587 | 2,267
MAURISKE | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0
MARINKA | 32 | 124 | 36 | 48
HRYTOVE | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0

MAIN REASONS TO CROSS

Family reunion
Return to place of origin
Medical reason

https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/ukraine/
Downloaded: 26 Aug 2020

VISUAL (25 Aug 2020)

Humanitarian Snapshot (as of 19 August 2020)
BACKGROUND  (1 Jul 2020)

Humanitarian Context

Now in its seventh year, the conflict in Donetska and Luhanska oblasts in eastern Ukraine continues to significantly impact the lives of more than five million people living in the region, 3.4 million of whom require humanitarian assistance and protection services. Since the start of the conflict in 2014, more than 3,350 civilian men, women and children have been killed and another 7,000 have been injured. As the crisis persists, civilians continue to bear the brunt of the conflict. Fear of shelling, violent clashes, and the threat of landmines and explosive remnants of war are the daily reality for millions of people living on both sides of the more than 420 kilometer-long ‘contact line’ -- equivalent to the length of the French-German border. Today, eastern Ukraine is considered one of the most mine-contaminated areas in the world.

The conflict has severely impacted the quality of life in eastern Ukraine, with daily hostilities damaging critical infrastructure and often disrupting essential water and sanitation services. Many people are increasingly affected by mental health issues, both due to the fear of violence as well as the long-term socio-economic impacts of the conflict. Once considered the industrial heartland of Ukraine, the region of Donbas has experienced a sharp decline in economic activities since 2014. The quality of life for those who have stayed has declined, with job security a persistent challenge. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many of these challenges, as well as access constraints for Government- and non-Government controlled areas.
Prior to the closure of the ‘contact line’ due to the COVID-19-related restrictions, which separates Government and non-Government controlled areas, an estimated 1.1 million people regularly crossed each month to access vital services or visit family. Many waited long hours in the bitter winter cold or in the scorching summer heat to reach the other side. The journey was particularly arduous for the elderly, who account for more than 30 per cent of people in need in eastern Ukraine, the highest proportion of elderly living in a conflict-affected area in the world.

Despite enormous challenges, the UN and its humanitarian partners continue to deliver lifesaving assistance to millions of people across the country. In 2019, more than 1.3 million people benefited from some form of humanitarian assistance and protection services. Since 2014, over US$500 million has been mobilized through humanitarian response plans.

The humanitarian response in eastern Ukraine is coordinated through six clusters: Shelter and Non-Food Items; Protection; Health and Nutrition; Education; Water, Sanitation and Hygiene; and Food Security and Livelihoods. Cluster partners conduct joint assessments, coordinate the response, and monitor humanitarian assistance and programming. They also provide relief and early recovery supplies, including food and non-food items, water, shelter materials, medicine, psycho-social support and hygienic and education kits, as well as cash assistance. Other urgent humanitarian assistance provided by the clusters includes the provision of farming inputs, mine clearance, mine-risk education, and personal protective equipment, as well as other protection services.
MEDIA (24 Jun 2020)

Yevhenia, who lives alone in a settlement close to the ‘contact line’ still exposed to hostilities, cannot fully take care of herself after a hip fracture she suffered two years ago. With the limited access to markets, health care and essential services, humanitarian assistance is the only help.

For more information, visit:
https://www.unocha.org/ukraine
https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/operations/ukraine
https://reliefweb.int/country/ukr