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HIGHLIGHTS

- 16 civilians have been killed and 75 injured by shelling, mines and small arms fire in August
- 950,000 people had limited access to safe drinking water in the second half of August
- A holistic humanitarian and recovery approach to winterisation is needed in this year's programming



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A multi-storey building in Krasnogradivka (Donetska oblast) some 300m from the 'contact line' was hit by shelling

Escalation of the conflict increases human suffering

A renewed ceasefire was announced on 1 September, and while incidents continue to be reported, there has been a significant de-escalation. The conflict and its human consequences now go largely unnoticed, and this has a resultant implication on funding. Over the last month, frequent and intense shelling and shooting in populated areas resulted in the highest number of civilian casualties for a year and damaged houses and civilian infrastructure, leaving numerous people without shelter, drinking water, electricity or other basic services.

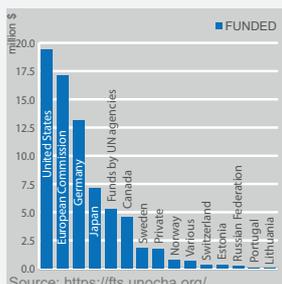
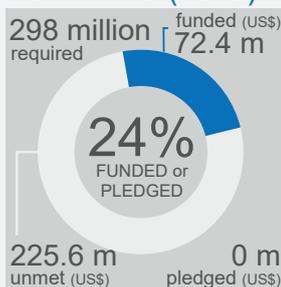
The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) recorded 91 conflict-related civilian casualties in Ukraine in August (16 killed and 75 injured). In June and July, 20 civilians had been killed and 122 injured altogether. Shelling, including from heavy artillery, which is prohibited according to the Minsk agreements, accounted for the majority (70 per cent) of civilian casualties in August. Small arms and light weapons caused 13 casualties (five deaths and eight injuries); seven casualties (two killed and five injured) were caused by mines and Explosive Remnants of War. Since the beginning of the conflict, at least 22,212 people have been wounded, and 9,569 have been killed. More than 2,000 of the fatalities were civilians.¹

FIGURES

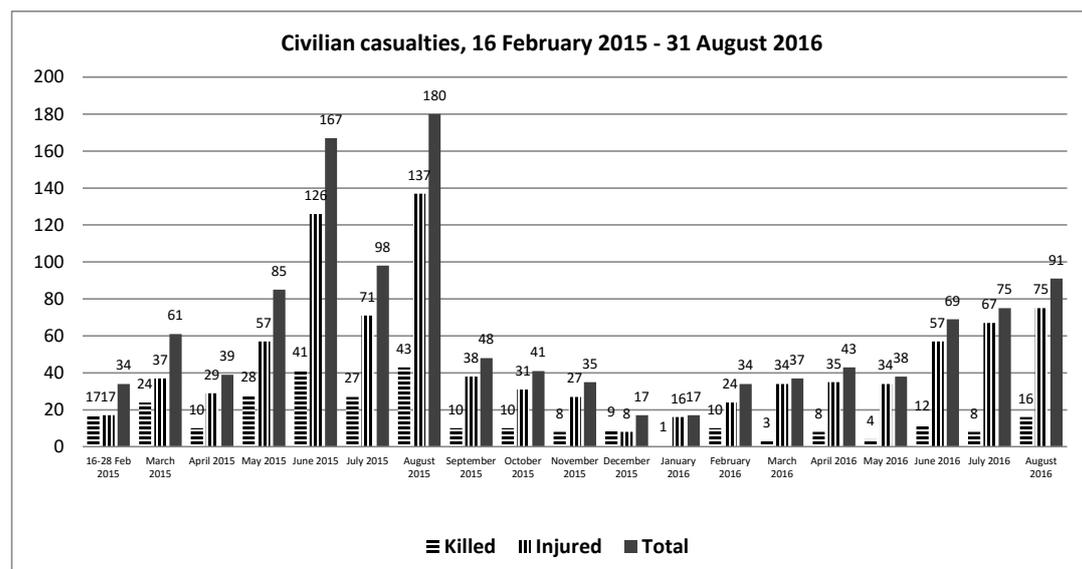
People killed	9,569
People wounded	22,212
Externally displaced	1.1 m
People in need (2016)	3.1 m
People targeted (2016)	2.5 m

Source: UNHCR, WHO, OHCHR

FUNDING (2016)



Source: <https://fts.unocha.org/>



¹ These are conservative estimates by OHCHR based on available data; the actual number of casualties is believed to be higher.

Donetska oblast, and in particular the area of Yasynuvata, Avdiivka and Donetsk city, remains the major hotspot of the armed conflict. However, intense combat activity occurred in several locations in Luhanska oblast in August. The heavy shelling of the town of Shchastia (Luhansk GCA) on 30 August was reportedly the most intense fighting in this location since the beginning of the year. It resulted in severe damage to numerous houses and the first conflict-related casualty in this area in a year.

950,000 people suffered limited access to safe water

In August, critical civilian infrastructure, particularly gas pipelines and power lines in the vicinity of the 'contact line', were regularly affected by hostilities. According to the WASH Cluster in Ukraine, of the 2.9 million people whose access to sufficient clean water has been affected longer term by the crisis, some 950,000 people experienced specific incidences of limited access to safe drinking water during the second half of August 2016.

Several big cities in NGCA of Luhanska oblast have consistently experienced water shortages since 2014 due to the absence of a formalised funding mechanism between the water supply companies. In Donetska oblast, where the water supplier 'Voda Donbasa' continues to serve people on both sides of the 'contact line', damages from shelling are the major cause of numerous service interruptions. Since the beginning of the year, 24 WASH alerts have been recorded, causing water shortages of different scale and scope in both Donetska and Luhanska oblasts.

Damages to critical civilian infrastructure continue to hamper people's access to basic services

Reduced operating hours at checkpoints

The number of people crossing the 'contact line' remained high in August. The State Border Guard Service registered some 875,000 people crossings (similar to July statistics) at the five checkpoints. Waiting periods at the checkpoints increased temporarily due to stricter controls, following renewed political tensions between Ukraine and Russia on 10 August. The shortening of the opening hours of checkpoints effective from 1 September (7am-6.30pm instead of 6am -8.30pm) is expected to further exacerbate this situation.

People travel between NGCA and GCA to maintain family ties, access markets, social payments and health care. In August, many people reportedly travelled in order to buy school supplies for children for the start of the school year on 1 September, which lead to a peak in crossing numbers in the middle of the month.

The humanitarian situation at the checkpoints has improved thanks to response efforts by partners; however, a recent needs assessment carried out by the NGO Premiere



Urgence found several latrines in an appalling state and highlighted the need for regular maintenance of the existing sanitary facilities. Winterisation of the checkpoints is urgently needed to prepare for the drop in temperatures to be expected in October.

In addition, the security situation at three out of five operating checkpoints on the 'contact line' has deteriorated in August. Shelling occurred on several occasions at the crossing points in Marinka, Maiorsk (Donetska oblast) and Stanytsia Luhanska (Luhanska oblast), forcing the checkpoints to close earlier in order to avoid casualties among the people waiting to cross. One man received a sniper gunshot wound while crossing the checkpoint in Marinka at 1 pm on 26 August. Another civilian was hurt by shrapnel during shelling at the pedestrian checkpoint Stanytsia Luhanska on 24 August. People waiting at checkpoints are particularly vulnerable, since the streets are often narrow, neighbouring fields are contaminated with mines, and bomb shelters are largely unavailable.

IDP regulations appear to be in a deadlock

Contradictions in the existing legislation and discriminative practices continue to pose a major concern to IDPs in Ukraine. As of 1 August, some 300,000 Ukrainian citizens who have had their IDP certificates suspended in February (allegedly owing to fraud schemes) have not been able to verify their status, according to the Ministry for Temporarily Occupied Territories and IDPs. According to the Departments of social Protection, more than half of the IDPs whose residence was checked appeared to reside at another address than indicated on their IDP certificate. Many of these people are believed to be pensioners residing in NGCA who were forced to register as IDPs in order to access their Ukrainian pensions. The humanitarian community had urged the Government on numerous occasions to de-link pensions from the IDP status.

Protection Cluster partners have sent a letter to the Prime Minister on 22 August to express their dismay over the Government's disregard of their recommendations on amendments to a number of resolutions concerning the verification of IDP's status and benefits for IDPs. In response to harsh criticism from the humanitarian community, the Ministry of Social Policy had invited civil society organisations to a working group which met four times and elaborated recommendations, in particular regarding the contested Resolution 365 which imposes the creation of mobile commissions to verify IDPs places of residence.

However, the recommendations have not been taken into consideration in the draft amendments, as six Ukrainian NGOs claim in a protest letter to the Prime Minister. The NGOs reiterated the humanitarian community's request to immediately reinstate social benefits to IDPs and pensioners.

New guidelines for winterisation in Ukraine

The fast approaching winter² will dramatically increase the suffering of crisis-affected non-displaced people and IDPs who lack adequate shelter, particularly for those residing in front line areas and in NGCA. As a continuation of the 2015-2016 initiative, the Shelter Cluster released the updated winterisation guidelines which updated the three themes from lessons learned from last year: 1) personal items, 2) coal/fuel/energy, 3) insulation of shelter and an additional one: 4) communal facilities and infrastructure.

The winterisation³ guidelines recommend personal warmth as a first priority, especially when no electricity/gas is available. Qualitative consultations in NGCA and quantitative data available from the REACH 2016 survey indicate that needs for personal warmth are higher in rural than in urban areas.

² Average temperatures drop below 10° C between mid-October and mid-April, and below 0°C from the end of November to mid-March, with an average low of -10°C and down to -20°C in the colder areas. Throughout these months, snow, rain, and ice is prevalent

³ https://www.sheltercluster.org/sites/default/files/docs/ukraine_shelter_nfi_cluster_winter_recommendations_2016-2017_final.pdf

The verification procedure of the IDP status continues to be hampered by confusing regulations

Both IDPs and non-displaced persons in GCA and NGCA need heating and warm cloths

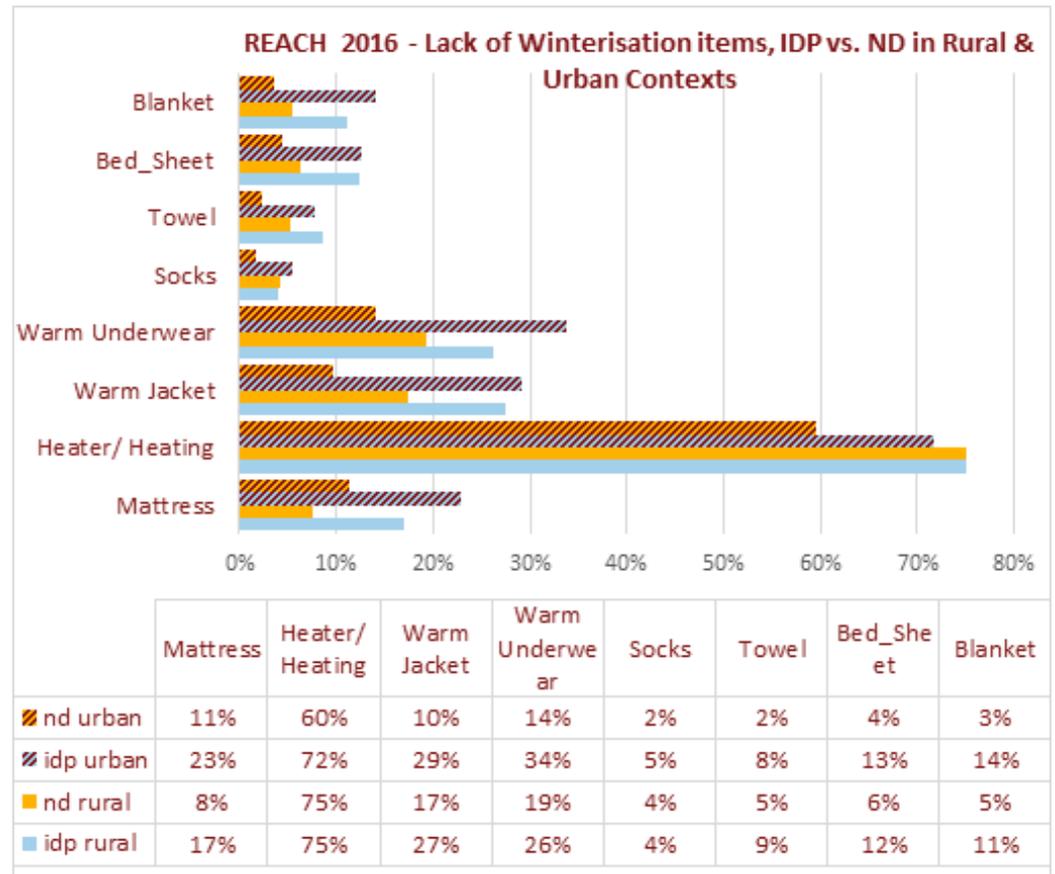


Figure 1: Lack of winterisation items, refined extraction from REACH 2016 data survey. Note: heater and heating might be understood as one thing: the device and the concept.

More than one warm room: In a protracted crisis minimum standards for winterisation need to be adapted

During the Soviet times, residential facilities were maintained through a Government subsidy program for heating and utility services. In recent years, the uneven distribution of these budget allocations has resulted in decaying insulation and heating infrastructure. Moreover, the antiquated standards of residential buildings create energy consumption inefficiency at the housing unit level. In 2015-2016, the rack price of energy rose significantly, and the authorities in GCA of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts made an attempt to support the vulnerable population through a system of subsidies. In NGCA, a similar subsidy program was also put in place, but this does not target IDPs and families with newborn children. However, in NGCA of Luhansk oblast vulnerable persons not covered in this program (IDPs, returnees, single mothers, disabled etc.), can apply separately for coal in-kind provision, and may have their case supported as long as they are providing the accurate documentation. Overall, despite the fact that Ukraine's economy is 10 times more energy intensive than average OECD countries, its social subsidy program is poorly targeted and benefits largely those belonging to the middle class and above, with only 20 per cent of the poorest economic quintile benefitting from 13 per cent of subsidies.

In 2014-2015, humanitarian actors rushed to assist the most vulnerable in preparing for winter by insulating one room to keep it warm. While this approach guaranteed minimum standards, it is not suitable to cover the housing needs in a protracted crisis situation. Unaddressed damages in these homes worsen with the moist winter, increasing the risk of displacement for the most vulnerable. Glazing and repairs of open areas of the house are recommended as more durable solutions.

A fourth sub thematic was added to this year's guidelines in an attempt to contribute to ensuring durable shelter solutions for permanent stay during winter. IDPs in collective centres have inadequate access to heating because of the high costs of heating such centres. In NGCA, rural areas and collective centres are in the worst conditions as

they are not prioritised for humanitarian referrals by the de facto authorities. The most vulnerable are impacted by damage to public infrastructure such as generators, power supply, roads and bridges. Often schools are communities' only heating source for those living in rural areas, and when damaged, they cannot offer any protection from the freezing climate. These cases are illustrative of the need to take a holistic humanitarian and recovery approach to winterisation in this year's programming.

HRP 2016: 24.3 per cent funded

As of 31 August, the Financial Tracking Service (FTS - <https://fts.unocha.org>) indicates that the HRP 2016 received US\$ 72.4 million, or 24.3 per cent of the US\$ 298 million required. OCHA has received indications from various sources that the actual funding might be slightly higher (28 per cent), as some donations are yet to be recorded into the FTS.

The Government of the Russian Federation delivered more than 600MT of assistance to Luhansk and Donetsk on 25 August, according to the Russian Emergency Ministry (EMERCOM).

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