

## HIGHLIGHTS

- After the closure of “Zaytseve” checkpoint, several appeals have been made to all parties to stop fighting where civilians are waiting in queues or reside, and for more checkpoints to be opened.
- In 2015, the UN delivered around 2,900 MT of humanitarian aid to NGCAs of Donetsk and Luhansk.
- Humanitarian Response Plan 2016 appeals for US \$298 million to help 2.5 million people who most need life-saving humanitarian assistance.



People are waiting to cross the checkpoint Stanytsa Luhanska

## In this issue

- Increased hardship for war-affected civilians P.1-2
- The vulnerable struggle to survive the winter P.3
- Water supply is at risk for people in conflict zone P.4
- Global Humanitarian Response Plan launched P.5

## Increased hardship for war-affected civilians

### Closure of a checkpoint is aggravating the situation

The queues to cross the frontline have not gotten shorter. The closure of “Zaitseve” checkpoint on 3 February owing to insecurity increased the flux of people in other locations. There are indications that other checkpoints could be closed. The people crossing are Ukrainian citizens who travel to access affordable medication and food, access their bank accounts and social entitlements, including pensions, to ensure linkages with family and take care of property in the areas controlled by the armed groups. These provisions also affect people living in the areas near the ‘contact line’.

Several appeals have been made to all parties to stop fighting and targeting areas where civilians are waiting in queues or reside, and for more checkpoints to be opened. Proportionality is a key factor. Should there be a need to close certain transport corridors, it is important to ensure that alternative options are explored and new safe passages are established to ensure that civilians can move freely, especially if they need to flee from the area of heightened hostilities. With the increase in shelling this will also increase the exposure to mines and unexploded ordnances. Experience shows that when the checkpoints are closed, people find other ways to cross, often where the risks for UXOs are higher, as was seen last year with a bus being blown up.

On a more positive note, work is ongoing to open the ‘Zolote’ checkpoint in Luhanska oblast on 12 February. Although there are logistic concerns with regards to the possibility for trucks to pass, as the road and infrastructure conditions are far from ideal, should this plan came into effect it would help reduce some of the hardship civilians are facing.

The December inter-agency assessment reconfirmed that many of the people crossing are elderly and vulnerable. The team recommended to immediately increase the number of crossing points, especially in Luhanska oblast; significantly simplify procedures; establish clear responsibility for security of civilians at checkpoints as trenches do not offer enough protection in case of shelling; fast track the elderly, disabled and children; increase the staffing, opening hours at checkpoints; step up public awareness and complaint mechanisms; waive restrictions of the weight and amount of goods transported, and waive all requirements for civilians residing along the contact line. Local authorities should also ensure the provision of services, mine risk education, demarcation and removal of mines and guarantee unfettered access for humanitarian organisations wishing to support civilians into no-man’s land. State Emergency Service heating points at checkpoints has been welcomed. However, these facilities are usually far from the queues, making them impractical for persons with special needs or the elderly.

### Shrinking of humanitarian space and bureaucratic impediments continue to affect aid delivery

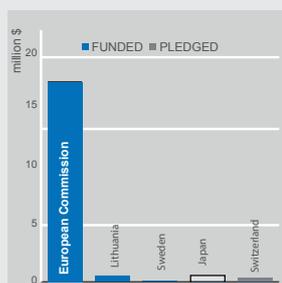
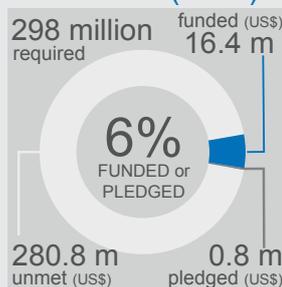
The ability for humanitarian organisations to deliver much-needed assistance in non-government controlled areas continues to be a major issue. On one side, because of the restrictions to operate for many humanitarian organisations imposed by the *de facto* authorities, on the other – because of Government-imposed bureaucratic impediments. Insecurity, damages to infrastructures, coupled with extreme winter conditions, aggravate

## FIGURES

People killed	9,145
People wounded	20,945
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/>

the situation and hamper aid delivery.

People living in Luhanska and Donetsk oblast which are beyond government control must cope with damaged homes, schools and hospitals, unaffordable food, limited medicines, depleted savings – all this aggravated by winter conditions. In the second year of conflict, there are no fewer challenges for hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people, and yet the resources available to them are disappearing.

A very limited number of international organisations are officially authorised to operate in areas beyond Government control to respond to the needs of many victims of the conflict through different modalities, including collaboration with local interlocutors. Stakeholders are concerned that operational partners are increasingly thin. The recent deteriorating environment for some local organisations to operate in NGCA, and particularly in Donetsk, is a serious concern as it further constraints the ability to respond. Provision of much needed aid is par- amount to alleviate suffering of people who are hostage to the conflict. Humanitarian partners continue to be committed to provide humanitarian aid in full respect of the basic humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality, prioritising the most vulnerable.

All United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and one International Organisation (IO) continue to be the only humanitarian partners officially authorised to operate in areas beyond government control of Luhansk, and two international NGOs and one IO in non-Government controlled areas (NGCA) of Donetsk. *De facto* authorities are providing some services and assistance, but the situation remains critical, especially in areas close to the 'contact line' where there is observed continuous insecurity and imposition of regulations which severely affect trade, basic services provision and freedom of movement.

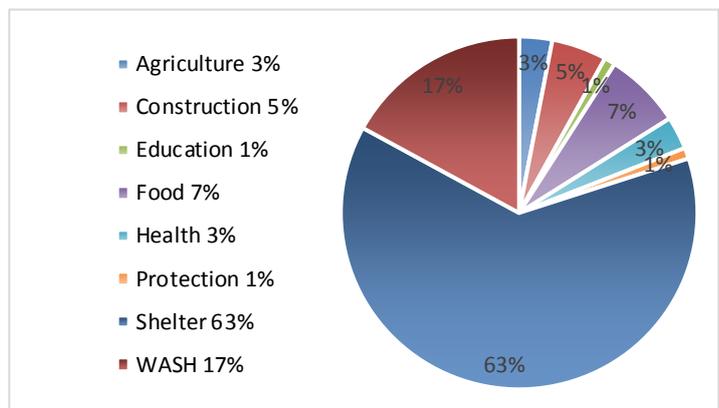
Calls for full, unfettered access to humanitarian organisations continue to be largely unheard despite obligations by all parties to the conflict vis-a-vis International Humanitarian Law and commitments made in the Minsk agreement. There remains much to be done in order to help the people of Luhansk and Donetsk survive the winter. Houses, schools and hospitals must be repaired. Medicines must be delivered. Food packages, hygiene kits, and coal and heaters must be distributed. Far greater cooperation by all parties is a must to ensure humanitarian assistance reaches those in need.

### Despite difficulties, aid delivery continues

Under the 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan umbrella, partners continue to provide much needed emergency aid to the vulnerable people across the frontline despite difficulties. As an example, In 2015 Shelter Cluster partners delivered Non-Food Items to almost 282,000 individuals and multiple-purpose cash grants for about 63,700 families. Food Security interventions reached 613,000 people, including 580,000 with food assistance and 8,200 families with

emergency agricultural support. Education Cluster organisations reached one million children with repair of facilities and school kits, and 403,000 children and adults with mine risk education. Health and Nutrition Cluster provided 165,000 individuals with mobile medical consultations, 28,000 patients with HIV/AIDS treatment, and about 31,000 children with complementary food baskets. Wash Cluster supplied over 170,000 hygiene kits and access to safe water for some 1.6 million people. Livelihoods and Early Recovery cluster reached over 7,000 people with employment and income-generation activities. Protection cluster provided psycho-social support to 159,000 individuals, 37,000 IDP children with access to child-friendly spaces and 40,000 people to legal services.

*Throughout 2015, the Logistics Cluster has delivered humanitarian aid in the amount of about 2,900 MT to Donetsk and Luhanska oblasts*



*On 14 January, UNHCR launched its Winterisation Coal Program, bringing some 13,000 tons of high-quality anthracite coal to households*

The beginning of winter in Ukraine resulted in extremely harsh road conditions, with snow making convoy movements very difficult. In spite of snowy and frosty weather, the Logistics Cluster has delivered over 2,900 MT since the end of October (see graph 1), when the UN were granted permission to re-start operations in Luhansk, additionally 400 MT of shelter items and medical supplies went to Luhanska and Donetsk oblasts in January.

## The most vulnerable struggle to survive the winter

Temperatures in January plummeted to a prohibitive -20 Celsius, compounding to the already serious humanitarian suffering of many civilians in conflict-affected areas of eastern Ukraine. Infrastructure has been severely damaged or destroyed in many locations, leaving many people without water, gas or electricity. Many houses have been damaged and are not ready for the winter. Coal is not affordable for many families because of high prices (3-4,000 UAH, or US\$ 120-160 per metric ton). There are anecdotal reports of people being sold stones painted black in markets. To cover their heating needs, some people in the countryside are illegally cutting trees, putting themselves in extreme danger, given the landmine and UXO contamination. Poor heating of most schools and kindergartens, especially close to the frontline, is also of concern.

UN agencies and NGOs continue assisting the most vulnerable with coal, water and family kits. On 14 January, UNHCR launched its Winterisation Coal Program, bringing some 13,000 metric tons of high-quality anthracite coal to households (2 MT per household) in Donetsk oblast in January-February. Yet this effort is insufficient to cover all needs. Partners continue to report severe security and bureaucratic impediments which hamper the effective delivery of critical winter supplies to those most in need.



Credit:UNHCR People receiving wood packages within the Winterisation Program

Bad road conditions also significantly limit assistance provision, including ambulance services. Snow clearing equipment is limited or in poor condition. This increases risks for elderly, pregnant women, children and people with chronic diseases. Despite the State Emergency Service (SES) installing 144 heating points in Donetsk oblast, in December 2015 to end January, SES registered 206 cases of hypothermia, including 12 deaths, according to Donetsk military-civil administration.

## Water supply remains at risk for people in the conflict zone

*Essential service infrastructure has been severely damaged, affecting an estimated 2 million people across the frontline.*

The provision of water and electricity remains at risk despite a somewhat decrease in intensity of security incidents along the 'contact line'. During the course of the conflict, essential service infrastructure has been severely damaged, putting the water supply for an estimated two million people across the frontline at risk.

Some locations continue to experience significant service disruptions, affecting not only reliable supply of water for human consumption and domestic use, but also for heating (see above). Water is still being trucked into areas West and North-West of Donetsk city and in locations between Popasna and Alchevsk. Some progress, however, is being made: demining efforts are ongoing in order for service and repair teams to access crucial infrastructure in Luhanska oblast and near Horlivka.

The humanitarian community is supportive of the continued integrity of "Voda Donbassa," the provider of bulk water for approximately four million people on both sides of the 'contact line' in Donetsk oblast. Although the company management is physically divided by the frontline, successful communication and collaboration through the relevant authorities continues to prevent larger-scale and lasting negative effects of the conflict on the civilian population. The support of humanitarian community has been instrumental in keeping the system from collapsing and will remain critical until a more permanent political solution to the situation is found. Persistent challenges in assuring reliable, safe water supply and access to personal and environmental hygiene include limited safety and security for repair and inspection teams; bureaucratic hurdles and financial shortfalls for the provision of necessary materials, supplies and equipment; and in Luhanska oblast, the absence of pragmatic solutions for the effective management of shared water supply infrastructure.

In 2015, the WASH Cluster provided over 171,000 people with hygiene kits, ensured access to safe water for almost 1,6 million people and supplied over 100,000 people with emergency trucked water. In terms of service delivery, the supply of chlorine to treatment plants serving both sides of the "contact line" continued, including the recent delivery of 100 metric tons of liquefied chlorine gas to the Mariupol Water Treatment Plant in Donetsk oblast, serving more than half a million people. In December alone, UNICEF, through its partner ADRA, has positioned 50 water storage tanks along the 'contact line' near Mariinka, increasing water security for 10,000 people, including 1,800 children. This has been done in collaboration with the town officials, who identified the locations for the tanks and will ensure their maintenance. The NGOs Ukrainian Frontiers and Acceptance International continue to maintain toilets and hand washing facilities on the government-controlled side of checkpoints, providing safe and private sanitary facilities to those queueing for hours on end. Humanitarian assistance is also aimed at social institutions and particularly vulnerable individuals or households in support of currently short-funded authorities. Here, additional water storage capacity, equipment for water treatment, and hygiene articles bring temporary relief, including in non-government controlled areas.

## Positive changes in IDP legislation

On 24 December, the Parliament of Ukraine adopted the Law of Ukraine "On amendments to certain laws of Ukraine to strengthen the guarantees of the rights and freedoms of internally displaced persons». The main purpose of the Law is to improve the guarantees of the rights and freedoms of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and simplify registration procedures of such persons. On 13 January, the Law came into effect.

*Immunisation Round 3 is scheduled from 25 January to 5 February, with provisions for a possible one week extension due to seasonal flu*

The key amendments introduced to the IDP Law include extending the definition of an "internally displaced person" in accordance with international recommendations, establishing the IDP registration certificate with no expiration date, abolition of the requirement of the registration marking on the back of the IDP certificate, availability of alternatives to establish the fact of residence in the area from which the person relocated, the cancellation of the certificate of registration of persons who have returned to the abandoned place of permanent residence. These and other amendments should simplify the registration process for IDPs and lift unnecessary bureaucratic impediments for receiving their social payments and benefits.

## Polio immunisation Round 3 will be extended

The third round of polio immunisation, targeting all children from 2 months to 10 years, countrywide, is scheduled from 25 January to 5 February, with provisions for a possible extension until 21 February due to seasonal influenza. All vaccines, supplies and communication materials for Round 3 have been provided by UNICEF. UNICEF and WHO facilitated polio training of health workers from underperforming rayons in Kyiv City on 13-20 January.

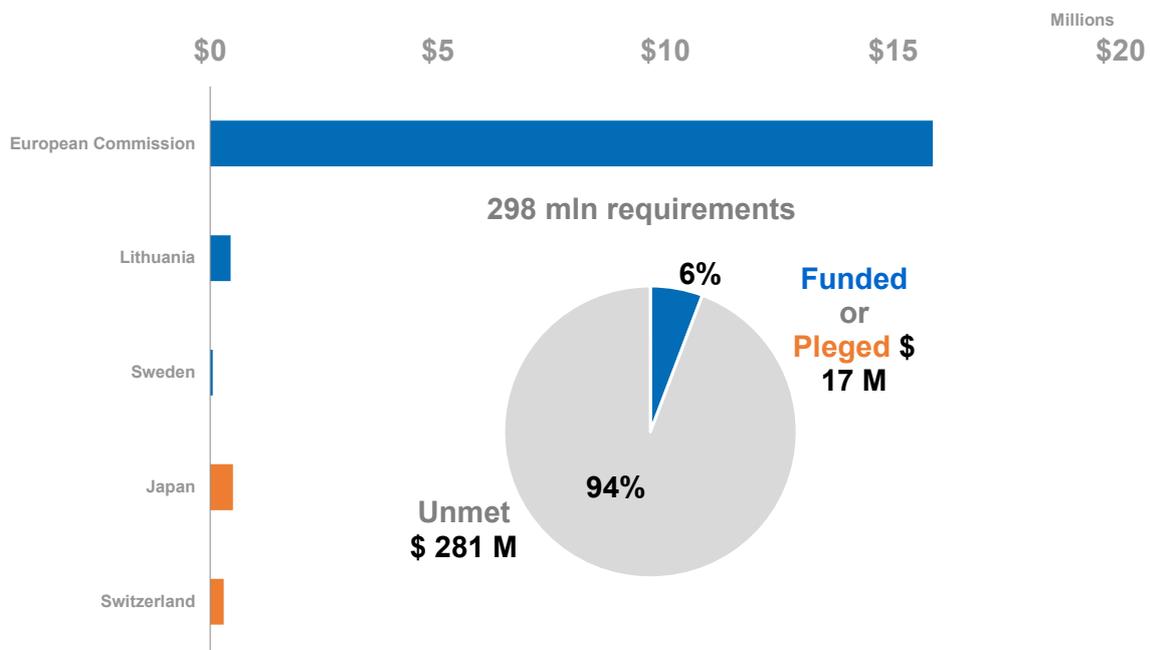
On 26 January, MOH officially announced Ukraine to be in the grip of a flu epidemic. Since October, an estimated 3.1 million people have been infected with the virus, including the H1N1 strain. As of beginning of February, MOH registered 201 lethal cases from flu and acute respiratory infections. Most schools extended winter holidays until 1 February, and some till 8 February, to prevent the virus from spreading. Because of the wide flu spread,

de facto authorities postponed Round 3 of immunisation campaign in NGCAs.

## Global Humanitarian Response Plan launched

The Emergency Relief Coordinator launched the 2016 Global Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) on 7 December in Geneva. The global call for funding to the unprecedented number of humanitarian crises worldwide amounted to US\$ 20.1 billion. The Ukraine 2016 HRP is featured in the global launch. The official release is pending finalisation of discussions with the Government.

The Ukraine plan, based on analysis of needs, targets 2.5 million among the most vulnerable of the 3.1 million people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance, countrywide. It does appeal for the donor to generously contribute to fund activities worth USD 298 million. The key priorities of 2016 HNO are protection of civilians, unimpeded access of humanitarian community to the affected population, supply of emergency water, food and shelter, and access to critical services and markets. The plan also calls for an urgent recovery framework to be put in place to ensure that many victims, and particularly those displaced for a long period of time, who now need jobs, housing and access to services and not necessarily life-saving humanitarian aid, receive support which is beyond the purview of the humanitarian response. The plan this year features projects of local organisations accounting for some 75 per cent of the appealing agencies. National partners did provide a significant



For further information, please contact:

Barbara Manzi, Head of Office, manzi@un.org, Tel. (+380) 50 440 9005

Inna Chepugova, Public Information Officer, chepugova@un.org, Tel. (+380) 50 382 4541