

## HIGHLIGHTS

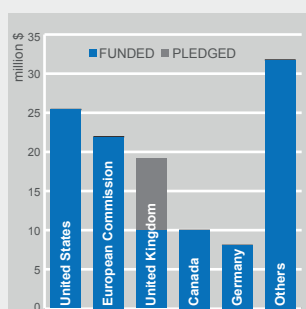
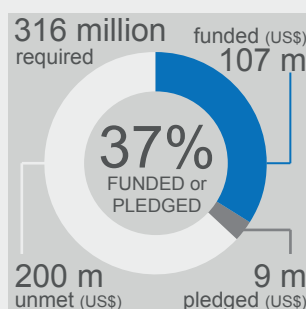
- Aid agencies facing major challenge of accessing the most vulnerable people affected by the conflict in eastern Ukraine.
- Critical delay of winterization efforts caused by suspension of aid convoys. Window of opportunity to be well prepared for the winter already closing.
- Due to ongoing hostilities about 1.3 million people are at risk of losing access to safe drinking water.

## FIGURES

People killed	6,829
Civilians killed	2,500
People wounded	17,064
Internally displaced	1.4 m
Externally displaced	1.1 m
People in Need	5.0 m
People targeted	3.2 m

Source: UNHCR, WHO, OHCHR

## FUNDING



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



Credit: OCHA/Jake Morland

## In this issue

Humanitarian access issues P.1

Lack of food and medicines P.3

Urgent Winterization P.4

Ongoing Water shortages P.5

## Overview of humanitarian access and challenges

Humanitarian organizations are facing the major challenge of accessing the most vulnerable of an estimated 5 million people affected by the conflict that began in April 2014 in eastern Ukraine. Access challenges vary from security concerns, bureaucratic impediments, and logistical and legal constraints. An estimated 2 million people living in areas along the contact line between Government forces and armed groups are the most vulnerable and the highest priority group in terms of aid operations. Half of these people are estimated to be living in Government-controlled areas (GCAs), while the remainder live in non-GCAs (NGCAs). Fire exchanges and shelling in many hot-spot locations along the contact line are constantly endangering the lives of many civilians and exacerbating their suffering. Their plight has been compounded by their inability to flee to safety, particularly across the contact line (from NGCAs to GCAs) due to complicated procedures on population movements in the area. This has been further aggravated by the lack of social services, disruption of trade, lack of access to pensions and other social-benefit payments, and lack of functioning banking systems in NGCAs. People living in GCAs have been similarly affected and cannot access basic services.

Most of the 2 million people have received limited or no assistance from humanitarian agencies, as aid organizations have been unable to reach these people due to insecurity and bureaucratic hurdles.

An additional 2 million people in NGCAs, further away from the contact line, are another priority group for humanitarian organizations, as they are trying to eke out living while facing similar everyday challenges of a lack of social-welfare payments, livelihood opportunities and functioning banking systems.

Humanitarian agencies are also concerned about the protracted displacement of 1.4 million people in GCAs. About 60 per cent of the registered IDPs are elderly people and about 13 per cent are children. Meeting their needs requires interventions by humanitarian and recovery/development actors in the immediate and longer term. The humanitarian community has repeatedly advocated to all parties to the conflict to guarantee free and unimpeded humanitarian access, including limiting bureaucratic procedures to the strict minimum. Under international humanitarian



Source: WFP

## Eastern Ukraine: Crossing points as of 12 August 2015



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.  
Source: OCHA

law (IHL) and customary IHL, parties to the conflict are responsible for facilitating access for humanitarian organizations to affected people. Intense discussions are under way at various levels to resolve the issue and find practical solutions, focusing on the humanitarian imperative of providing assistance to the people who need it most.

*The Government recently announced many positive changes in terms of facilitating humanitarian cargo to NGCAs*

Positive steps have been undertaken to engage with the Government of Ukraine on facilitating access to vulnerable people, and on bringing various laws and by-laws and the temporary order on population movements and movement of humanitarian cargo and personnel in line with the laws of Ukraine and international humanitarian principles. The Government recently announced many positive changes in terms of facilitating humanitarian cargo to NGCAs, including opening two new crossing lines, simplifying procedures, ensuring fast-track processes and dedicated lines for humanitarian cargo, and establishing staging areas away from the contact line.

The Government also announced that special humanitarian logistics centres will be established near operating crossing points, from which civilians from NGCAs will be able to access various services. However, concerns remain, partly because these logistics centres are located in insecure areas.

Aid organizations have been unable to reach vulnerable people in NGCAs since 21 July. Aid convoys have been suspended since then. This came after 14 July, when the de-facto authorities in NGCAs of Donetsk oblast issued a decree regarding registration to all

aid agencies operating in the area.

The Logistics Cluster leads, organizes and facilitates inter-agency aid convoys to NGCAs. However, since the suspension on 21 July, the cluster has more than 5,000 metric tonnes (MT) of humanitarian assistance in the pipeline, including food, shelter and non-food relief supplies, pending to be delivered to thousands of people in NGCAs. More than 16,000 MT of relief aid are in the pipeline for delivery to NGCAs up to the end of 2015, according to the Logistics Cluster.

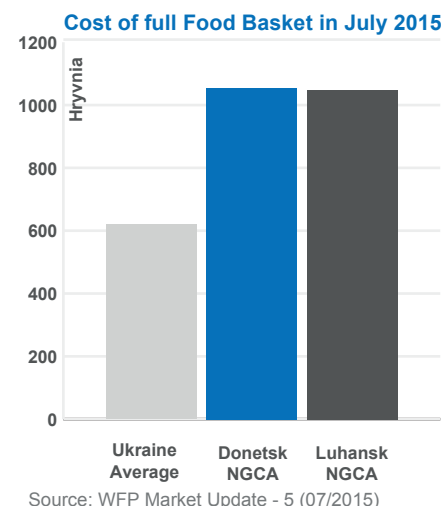
## Food and medical supplies to NGCAs are interrupted

According to the most recent market update by the World Food Programme (WFP) covering July, the cost of food in Ukraine increased by 42 per cent in July 2015 compared with July 2014. Moreover, data collected in June through the Kiev International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) shows that food insecurity is more severe in NGCAs compared with levels of the multi-sector needs assessment in the same region. Almost 40 per cent of the people interviewed by KIIS in NGCAs were identified as food insecure, which is a stark increase compared with 14 per cent food insecurity levels in March. In addition, food prices for a full basket in the NGCAs in July 2015 were reported as 70 per cent higher than the current national average.

*According to WFP, the cost of food in Ukraine increased by 42 per cent in July 2015 compared with July 2014.*

Food consumption is improving in NGCAs and GCAs thanks to assistance from aid agencies. In Luhanska oblast, only 46 per cent of families surveyed had acceptable food consumption prior to receiving WFP food assistance. The level increased to 75 per cent after the interviewees received food aid.

WFP estimates that the population's increased food insecurity will become more evident in the coming months due to access issues combined with overall increasing trend for food prices in NGCAs, poor access to income and reduced employment opportunities.



### Commercial food supplies blockage

The supply of food items and medicines from GCAs to NGCAs has become disrupted after the Government of Ukraine introduced new regulations on 16 June regarding the commercial flow of food and medicines to and from NGCAs, effectively blocking them. These blockages remain in place as of the end of August.

### Food-aid delivery continues in GCAs

On 12 August, WFP started its cash-transfer programme in Sieverodonetsk (Luhanska oblast), through its partner Mercy Corps, with the first distributions of food vouchers for some 6,000 people. More than 3,000 food vouchers have been distributed in Artemivskiy and Avdeevsky raions (districts). In addition, between 18 and 25 August, 5,000 food parcels were dispatched to villages in GCAs in the vicinity of the contact line. They will be distributed among targeted people in those villages.

## Lack of medicines and medical supplies in the east

*Basic medicines between 20 and 100 per cent higher in NGCAs*

In many settlements in the NGCAs of Luhanska and Donetsk oblasts, there is a significant lack of medicines at pharmacies. Prices remain high for those drugs still available. Prices for basic and specialist medicines are between 20 and 100 per cent higher in NGCAs, with many residents and patients unable to afford them. There have been reports of medicines brought from Russia and Belarus available in NGCAs, but at high prices. There have also been numerous reports, including from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, of a lack of medicines and medical supplies in many medical and institutionalized care facilities in NGCAs.

In June 2015, KIIS assessed humanitarian needs in 27 towns and cities in NGCAs. The survey found that 52 per cent of the 2,097 interviewees reported medication shortages. Seventy-four per cent of the respondents reported shortages of cardiac medication (32 per cent), blood pressure pills (28 per cent) and sedatives (13 per cent).

According to Ukrainian health officials, about 11 million Ukrainians – or almost 25 per cent of the population – have high blood pressure. Approximately 15 per cent of these people have regularly taken medicine within the past year to control their blood pressure and related possible complications. This suggests that up to 750,000 people currently living in NGCAs might have high blood pressure. This includes an estimated 75,000 to 112,500 people (15 per cent of those who have the condition) who need to take high blood pressure medication regularly.

### Potential fall-out of lack of medicines for certain health conditions

*Half of the interviewed reported medication shortages.*

Up to 143,000 people in NGCAs will be at a much higher risk of developing severe complications due to cardiovascular disease (CVD), high blood pressure, stroke and heart attack, possibly leading to premature death. These people include 112,500 patients regularly taking medication for high blood pressure and 29,400 people at risk of CVD and stroke ([http://www.who.int/nmh/countries/ukr\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/nmh/countries/ukr_en.pdf), <http://www.who.int/gho/countries/ukr.pdf?ua=1>). This figure might be higher due to aggravating factors, such as increased stress and trauma, a less nutritious diet and inadequate health services.

According to the Health Cluster, a shortage of and lack of access to medicines will lead to increased acute events related to chronic disease. Not only would this cause premature death, but also increased cost burdens on families, decreased income due to the inability to work, increased care needs and increased disease transmission.

There have also been reports of a lack of anti-retroviral drugs for HIV/AIDS patients in NGCAs, which have one of the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in the country. There have also been reports of up to 400 deaths of diabetes patients due to a lack of necessary drugs and treatment.

*About 300 trucks of Shelters and NFI supplies need to be delivered to NGCAs.*

## Window closing for winterization efforts

With the winter fast approaching, the humanitarian community is extremely worried about the impact of current access challenges in NGCAs on winter preparedness and winterization efforts. If access continues to be restricted, aid agencies will be unable to transport, store and ensure sufficient supplies of critical non-food and shelter items to help thousands of affected people



Roof repairs with shelter material in Donetsk oblast during last winter.  
Credit: People in Need

*62 per cent chance of cold winter with extensive snowfall.*

prepare for the winter.

The Shelter and NFIs Cluster estimates that about 300 trucks loaded with various materials need to be dispatched by September. However, with no aid-convoys movements since 21 July, these supplies are waiting for permission to cross into NGCAs and deliver much-needed supplies. The Shelter and NFI Cluster planned to assist an estimated 30,000 people in NGCAs with those relief supplies.

### Winter action-plan report highlights major risks and concerns for winter

Concerns regarding the winter are aggravated by findings of the autumn/winter 2015-2016 Preparedness and Sustainability Plan of the Fuel and Energy Sector (FES). The plan was finalized in early August by the Ukrainian National Energy Resilience Planning team, which included Ukrainian, US, Canadian and EU experts. The plan has been commissioned by an inter-agency task force established following a Cabinet of Ministers resolution in July 2015.

According to the report, there are two forecasts for the upcoming winter in Ukraine: the Ukrainian meteorological forecast predicts a mild winter similar to last year's, while a UK-based international meteorological body says there is 62 per cent chance that most of Western Europe and Ukraine will experience a cold winter with extensive snow. If the forecast of the UK-based body materialises, this will be a stark difference to last year's winter, and it would have significant humanitarian implications in view of potential threats and risks in the FES.

The upcoming winter is particularly concerning for the NGCAs that had gas supplies last winter. There are indications that it is unlikely there will be gas supplies to NGCAs paid or delivered by the Government of Ukraine.

According to the report experts, there are two main concerns in terms of the FES prior to winter: natural gas and coal stocks are quite low, and unless the situation is reversed dramatically, this could have major implications in terms of the power supply, district heating and water supply. All three are interconnected: if there is a shortage of or a sudden stop in the gas supply, this will affect power generation and district heating. The worst-case scenario is that there is no gas for district heating and power generation, coupled with not enough coal to support the power grid. This would halt the entire power and heating infrastructure, creating a potentially life-threatening situation for thousands of people.

## Water supply for over 1.3 million people at risk

According to the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Cluster and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), more than 1.3 million people in conflict affected Eastern Ukraine, both in Government-controlled (GCA) and non-Government controlled area (NGCA) are at risk of losing access to safe drinking water.

### Frequent damages to vulnerable water supply systems

Ukraine's aging central water supply systems have suffered from the effects of unsustainable tariffs, limited routine maintenance, and lack of adequate asset management long before the start of the conflict in the east of the country. Two of these major schemes supplying water to the majority of the densely populated and highly industrialized cross the



UNICEF and People in need serving 150,000 people with water in Luhanska oblast.  
Credit: People in Need

*Six main water stations in Luhanska oblast not functioning.*

so-called buffer zone surrounding the 'contact line'. Exchange of hostilities along this line between Government forces and armed groups continue to damage water and power supply infrastructure, putting an extra strain on already limited capacities of the utilities at local level. Emergency repairs can be challenging and time consuming due to insecurity and limited resources, frequently leaving tens of thousands of people without piped water for weeks and months.

During the month of August, six main water stations in the vicinity of the 'contact line' in Luhanska oblast were not functioning as a result of damage because of conflict and/or lack of maintenance and repair owing to insecurity and lack of resources. In addition, four water stations in the area were operating at significantly reduced levels, limiting water availability at household level to a few hours per day.

Access to piped water is also threatened in parts of Donetsk oblast. Shelling in and around Donetsk city has left parts of the town without access to piped water, while in other areas water supply is rationed as a result of damages. Mariupol, a port city with a population of 500,000 in the south of Donetsk oblast, is heavily dependent on water from the Seversky Donetsk-Donbass channel, which repeatedly sustained damages. Substitute alternative water sources continue to be depleted.

Local authorities and utility companies, supported by local and international organizations, struggle to maintain minimum service provision through water trucking, as well as distribution of bottled water as a last resort. At present, 120,000 people in Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts are reliant on trucked water whilst others have to revert to potentially unsafe water sources.

*Ongoing hostilities prevent repair works.*

### **Water quality at risk**

The schemes under discussion are mainly supplied with surface water, which requires various stages of treatment to be safe for human consumption. In the present situation, the provision of safe water to a large population is challenged by decreased access to materials and supplies for treatment. Water treatment stations lack much needed chemicals as a result of decreased revenue generation, as well as additional expenses for repairs and the provision of temporary services. Water quality laboratories are unable to purchase required equipment and reagents.

Restricted supply of water and challenges in ensuring adequate treatment particularly put the vulnerable population such as children and the elderly at risk of WASH-related diseases.

### **An urgent need to protect water supply infrastructure**

In response to above situation, the international humanitarian WASH community puts emphasis on supporting and strengthening the existing water supply systems in order to keep critical service provision at operational levels. What is crucially required, however, is the cessation of hostilities that can damage and destroy civilian infrastructure.

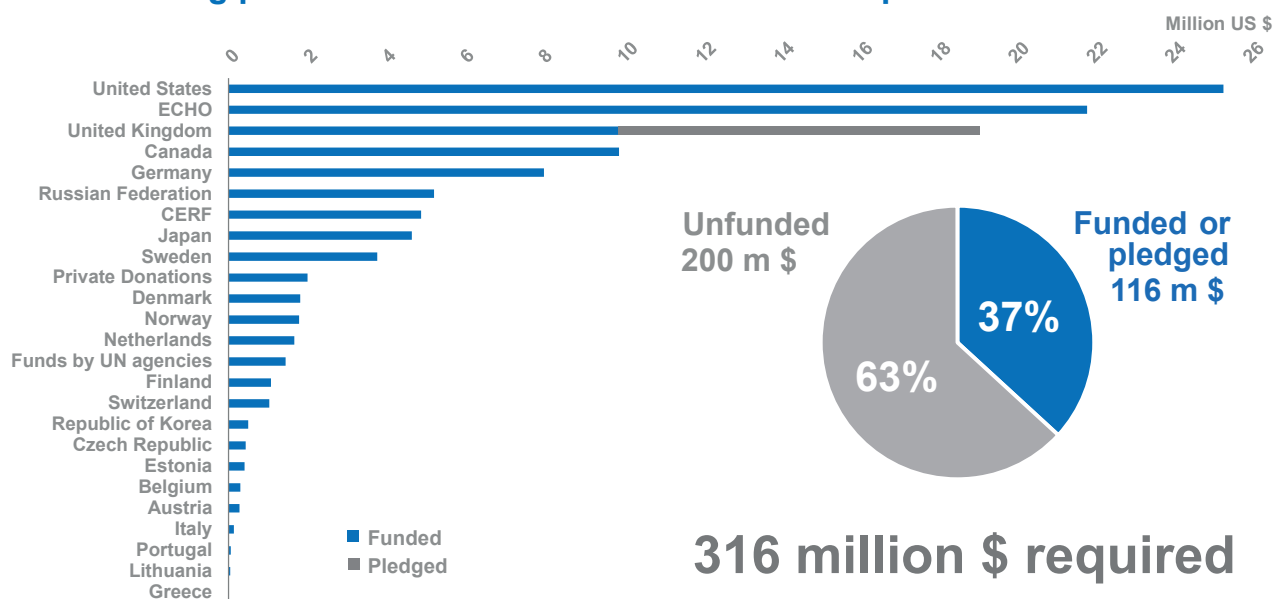
## **Low funding for Humanitarian Response Plan**

The 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan for Ukraine remains underfunded, according to the Financial Tracking Service (FTS). By the end of August, donors disbursed and pledged about US\$114 million, which is equivalent to 37 per cent of the \$316 million required. This includes \$104.9 million (33 per cent) disbursed and another \$9.2 million pledged (3 per cent). The shortfall is about \$200 million.

The Government of the Russian Federation dispatched three convoys to NGCAs during August (14, 20 and 27 August), according to the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations. According to the Russian Emergency Ministry website, over 45,000 MT of supplies have been transported from Russia to NGCAs since mid-August 2014, including food, medicines, NFIs, and educational and other essential supplies.

<http://ukraine.humanitarianresponse.info> | [www.unocha.org](http://www.unocha.org)

## Total Funding per Donor to Ukraine Humanitarian Response Plan 2015



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

For further information, please contact:

**Barbara Manzi**, Head of Office, [manzi@un.org](mailto:manzi@un.org), Tel. (+380) 50 440 9005

**Jake Morland**, Desk Officer, [morland@un.org](mailto:morland@un.org), Tel. (+1) 212 963 2066

**Alimbek Tashtankulov**, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, [tashtankunlov@un.org](mailto:tashtankunlov@un.org), Tel. (+380) 95 284 7322

**Albert Abou Hamra**, Information Management Officer, [abouhamra@un.org](mailto:abouhamra@un.org), Tel. (+380) 95 275 2693

OCHA humanitarian bulletins are available at | <http://ukraine.humanitarianresponse.info> | [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)