

HIGHLIGHTS

- Humanitarian access remains constrained in non-government controlled eastern Ukraine, with relief agencies unable to deliver supplies for thousands of vulnerable people.
- Up to 1.8 million children in Ukraine are at risk of paralysis because they are not fully protected from polio.
- Access to safe water in eastern Ukraine is at risk with 1.3 million people affected. Water trucking for at least 150,000 people, hygiene supplies to over 60,000 and chlorination for water quality to another 900,000 people are jeopardized.



A mother and her child in eastern Ukraine © UNHCR

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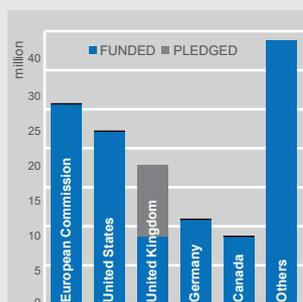
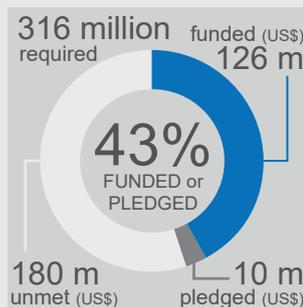
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FIGURES

People killed	7,883
People wounded	17,610
Internally displaced	1.5 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/>

Suspension of UN/NGO aid hits most vulnerable hard

During the past month, humanitarian organizations continued to face unacceptable access constraints: most humanitarian partners' operations in non-Government controlled areas (NGCAs) have been suspended since 21 July by the de facto authorities of Donetsk and Luhansk. Access to aid for some three million civilians living in NGCA has therefore been curtailed. In addition, despite constructive dialogue, the Government continues to impose heavy bureaucratic requirements on humanitarian actors to operate in Government-controlled areas close to the contact line, and to cross and operate in NGCAs.

Some 16,000 tons of humanitarian assistance, including food, shelter and non-food relief supplies, are ready for immediate delivery. At the moment, many hospitals cannot perform surgery because they lack anesthetic. Patients' lives are at risk without essential medicines such as insulin and tuberculosis vaccines. Some 150,000 people are not receiving monthly food distributions, 1.3 million people's access to water is at risk, and more than 30,000 people have not received shelter materials and the household items they urgently need.

On 23 September, the de facto authorities in NGCAs of Luhanska oblast announced their decision to reject the registration of all UN and INGOs operating in Luhansk and requested all but one organization to close offices. Since then, the head of the 'humanitarian committee' has stated that applications could be considered at a later stage, and the UN has been welcomed again to Luhansk to work on registration only, but not yet to restart operations. As of 1 October, in Donetsk, only three organizations were temporarily registered – and have re-started operations - while others have seen their registration rejected. The UN application is pending as – the Donetsk committee's head announced – the submission is not complete. It is however unclear what additional documentation may be required.

Ceasefire holds, bans on civilian and good movements remain

The cease-fire agreed by parties to conflict in eastern Ukraine in late August has largely held throughout September. While there have been reports of sporadic fighting, a significant reduction in violence has been observed. This is a major relief for civilians for whom insecurity, shelling and suffering have been a daily fact of life for the past several months despite the signing of Minsk II agreements in February 2015. However, the conflict remains unresolved and continues to have a disproportionate impact on five million civilians, who are living either close to the contact line or in areas beyond government control, or who have been displaced. Since end 2014, government legislation restricting freedom of movement of people and goods, payment of salaries and pensions, making hospitals, schools and other services in NGCA 'illegal' continue to create undue hardship for civilians.

About 1.3 million people's access to safe water in eastern Ukraine is at risk. Water trucking for at least 150,000 people, hygiene supplies to over 60,000 and chlorination for water quality to another 900,000 people are in jeopardy

Appeals to all parties to respect IHL, ensure access

The humanitarian community has been calling on the parties to the conflict to ensure free and unimpeded access as stipulated by International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and to reduce bureaucratic procedures to the minimum as the winter is fast-approaching.

On 24 September, Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) Stephen O'Brien expressed his deep concern with regard to these latest developments. He called 'on the de facto authorities in both Luhansk and Donetsk to ensure the immediate resumption of UN and international NGO activities' and called 'on everyone with influence over the de facto authorities to use that influence to ensure the immediate resumption of humanitarian aid by UN agencies and international NGOs, and to win a commitment by the authorities to end interference in the provision of lifesaving assistance'.

Additional statements from donors, member states and other international actors requesting the immediate restoration of access have also been made.



Credit: UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien

Ukraine confirms first polio cases in 19 years

After 19 years, poliovirus has resurfaced in Ukraine. On 1 September 2015, the Government confirmed that two children had been paralyzed by a rare strain of the disease in the far west of the country. This is the first polio outbreak detected in Europe since 2010, and now threatens many unvaccinated children across the country.

While the detected strain of polio - circulating vaccine derived poliovirus type 1 (cVDPV1) – is rare, it is well documented and is only found in populations that are poorly vaccinated.

Low vaccination rates main risk factor

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), vaccination rates have been declining in Ukraine since 2009 and latest estimates show that, in 2015, just 14 per cent of children under the age of one have received three doses of polio vaccine. Coverage in older children is also low. Up to 1.8 million children across the country remain at risk of paralysis because they are not fully protected.

For every one child who is paralyzed by polio, it is estimated that up to 200 children are infected and can silently spread the virus. With very low coverage in Ukraine, there is a threat of a large outbreak, unless rapid and robust response is undertaken. To respond to the outbreak WHO, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other partners are working with the Ukrainian Ministry of Health (MoH) on a response plan in line with global quality standards and norms. At a minimum, three mass rounds of vaccination using oral polio vaccine (OPV) and targeting a minimum of two million children are needed to stop rapidly the circulation of the virus.

Under the directive of a National Task Force established to coordinate the outbreak response, two of these rounds are planned to reach all children under six years, while a third one is planned to reach all children under the age of ten.

About 10 million doses of polio vaccine needed for three vaccination rounds

The Government of Canada has provided 3.7 million doses of OPV for the response. UNICEF procured and delivered 1.5 million doses to Ukraine, while a further 2.2 million doses are expected to be made available to the Government by other donors. However, additional vaccines will need to be purchased to implement all three rounds of the large-scale immunization campaign and protect all children. The gap currently stands at 10 million doses.

Up to 1.8 million children in Ukraine are at risk of paralysis because they are not fully protected from polio

10 million extra doses of polio vaccine and \$12 million required to conduct three rounds of polio vaccination campaign

Based on a rapid assessment and micro-planning for the immunization response rounds, enhanced surveillance, personnel surge, and other operational needs, US\$ 3 million is required to fully and effectively respond to this outbreak. Moreover, \$ 7 million is needed to purchase the OPV for the second and third rounds.

An additional \$2 million is required to revitalize Ukraine's routine immunization system, which has been failing, since 2009, to protect Ukrainian children from other vaccine preventable diseases as well, according to WHO.

Water access concerns ahead of winter

Sustained access to safe drinking water in eastern Ukraine, both in Government-controlled areas (GCAs) and NGCAs, remains a major concern, with about 1.3 million people's access to safe water now at risk, according to the WASH Cluster. Due to humanitarian access constraints in NGCAs, water trucking for at least 150,000 people, hygiene supplies to over 60,000 and chlorination for water quality to another 900,000 people are jeopardized.

Mines and unexploded ordinance in areas of recent military presence and/or activity are a concern on both sides of the contact line: operations and repair crews continue to put their lives at risk in order to ensure service provision.

Aging but indivisible, critical supply systems

Donetska oblast, divided by the ongoing conflict, hosts one of Europe's largest water supply schemes providing around water to an estimated 3 million consumers across the frontline. Water is being used for domestic purposes and businesses, and is also crucial for the production of power and hot water on which the centralized heating systems run – a system which is particularly critical in winter, when temperatures drop well below zero Co for months.

According to the findings of a survey conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) in 30 towns and cities affected by conflict in eastern Ukraine between 2-11 September, water supply remains a problem in the Donbas region.

The survey carried out for the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation, a major local humanitarian response organisation, said that 17 per cent of the region's surveyed residents complained about the quality of water. More than 30 per cent of urban water supply has not been restored, according to the survey. The most problematic situation with the quality of water is in Lugansk, Svetlodarsk, Snezhnoie, Kirov, Ilovaisk, Yenakiyevo, Alchevsk and Avdeevka, according to KIIS.



Credit: Voda Donbasa
Repairing a major water pipeline between Makeevka and Donetsk city.

Conflict and damaged water infrastructure

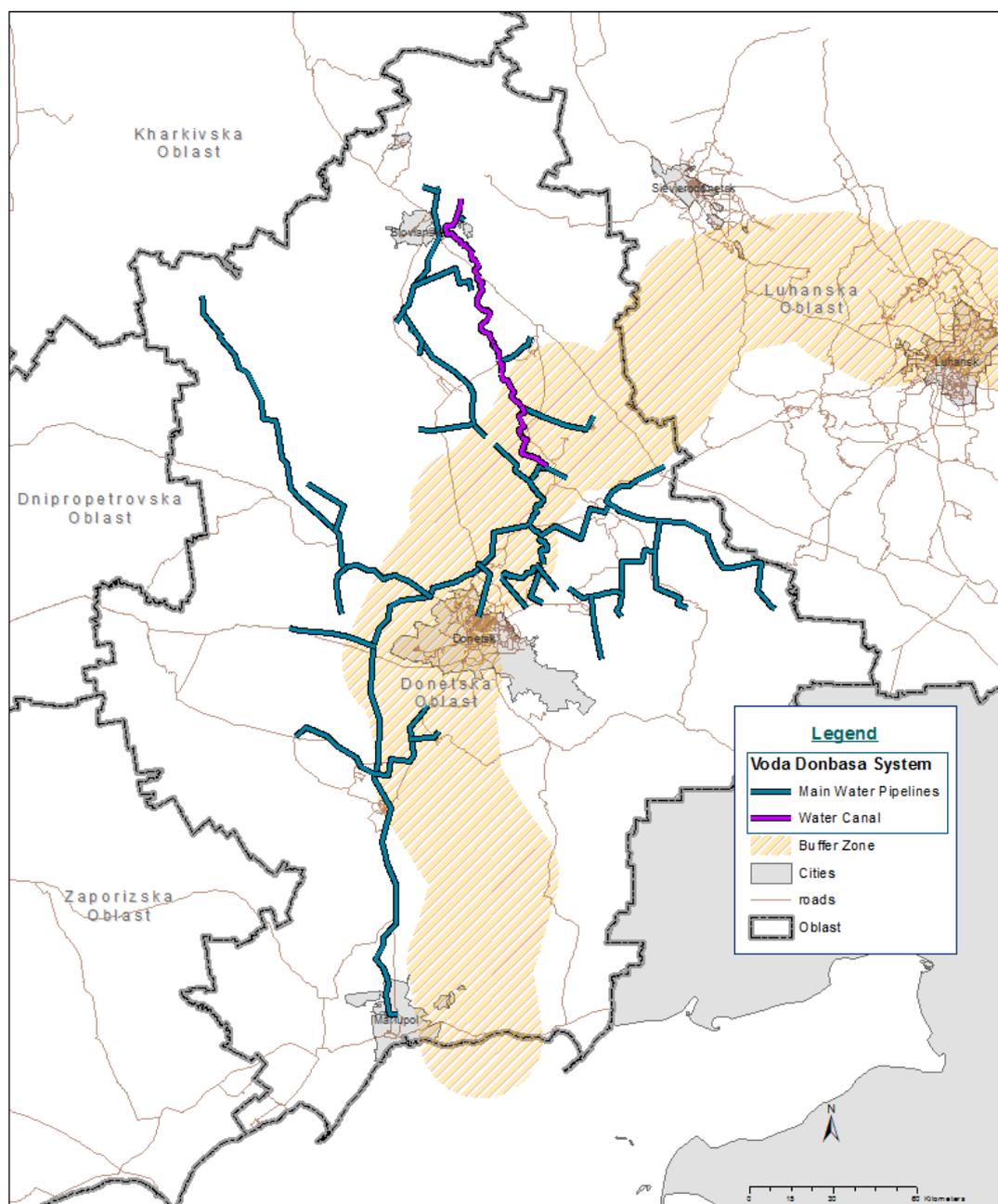
Much of the water conveying and treatment infrastructure is located along the 'contact line' where until recently exchanges of hostilities occurred. Utilities providers on the ground, supported by various humanitarian actors, are now carrying out inspections and, where needed, repairs so to ensure continuous supply during the cold season.

Limitations of humanitarian WASH response

There are nine partner organisations working in the WASH cluster. Access issues are becoming more severe and affect their ability to operate and ensure that thousands of people have access to safe water. Most actors concentrate on support to specifically vulnerable populations through the provision of hygiene kits (or vouchers for hygiene items), water trucking where supply interruptions occur, and provision of materials and/or supplies for repair works.

Dependency on a single source for the bulk of the water supply puts the system at risk of large-scale supply disruptions. Unimpeded flow is required in order to prevent this open channel from freezing in the winter. The consequence of failing to do so would be a system shut-down, with severe consequences as water, heating and electricity supplies might no longer operate

Water supply systems in the Donbas region



Mines and UXO kill and injure civilians

As the ceasefire in eastern Ukraine has brought a reduction in violence and shelling for civilians, land mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) continue to pose a serious threat to many people in the conflict area.

Landmines, ERW and IEDs killed 44 civilians and injured another 92 in eastern Ukraine between 16 February and 15 August 2015 (OHCHR)

The Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) recorded, between 16 February and 15 August 2015, some 575 civilian casualties in the conflict zone of eastern Ukraine. About a quarter of those or 310 casualties were related to explosive remnants of war (ERW) or improvised explosive devices (IED). This included 44 civilians killed and another 92 injured by ERW and IEDs.

Estimates by mine action sub-cluster partners indicate that at least 30,000 hectares of land in eastern Ukraine might be contaminated, particularly in areas along the 'contact line'.

The threat of land mines, ERW and IEDs affects daily lives of people in those areas, including their agricultural activities, search for firewood and movements.

MRE survey in parts of Donetsk and Luhanska oblasts

Three partners of the mine action sub-cluster have conducted a survey on landmine/ERW risk education in GCAs of Donetsk and Luhanska oblast. According to the findings of the survey, 26 per cent of all respondents and 13 per cent of all children have seen a mine and or ERW. They have seen these items in what would have otherwise be considered as safe areas, such as roads, fields, allotments, streets, gardens, cemeteries and playgrounds. Over 30 per cent of all respondents are concerned about mines and ERW.



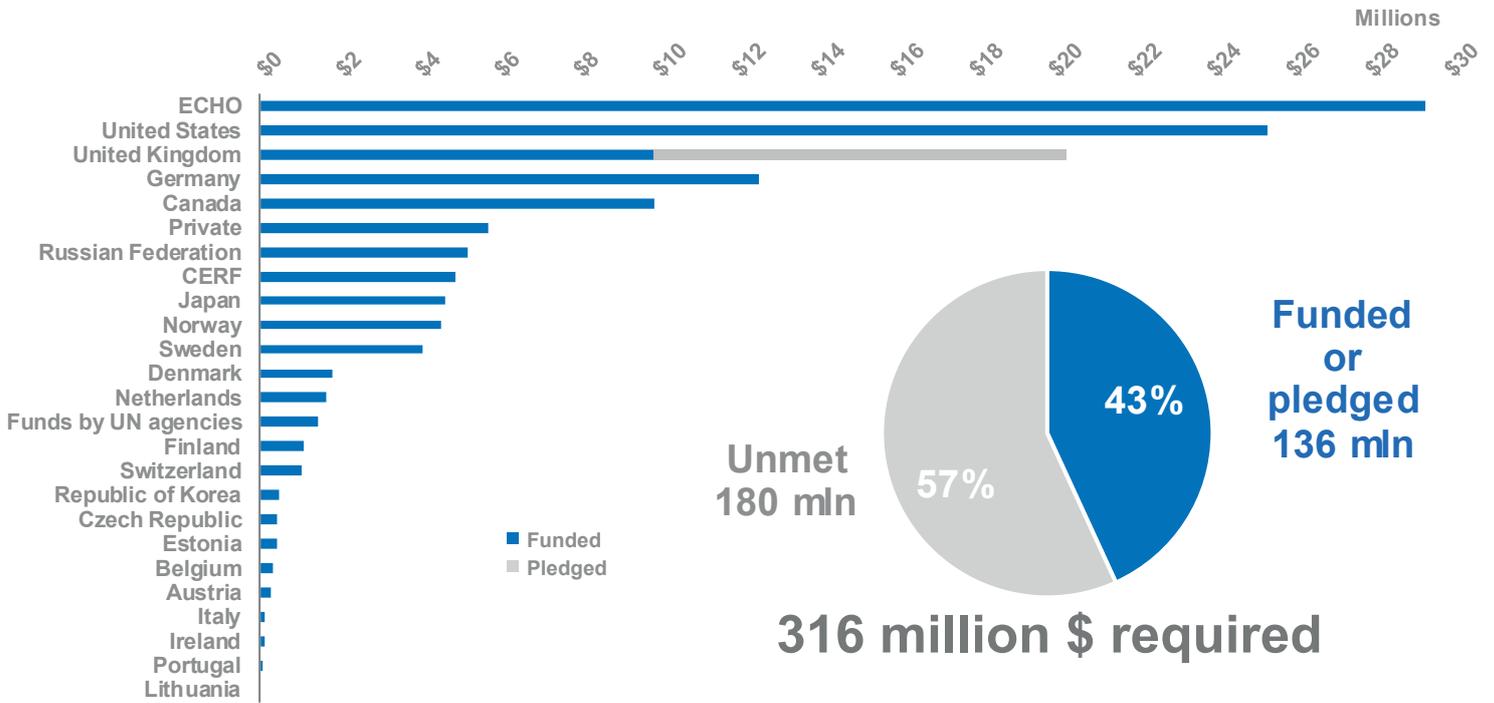
Credit: UNICEF
An ERW in an urban area in eastern Ukraine.

A relatively high percentage of all respondents, on average 30 per cent, could not distinguish mines/ERW from ordinary objects. The responses related to the recognition of landmines/ERW indicate that further MRE activities need to work on this aspect as a relatively large number of respondents were unable to distinguish hazardous from non-hazardous items, particularly among children.

Humanitarian Response Plan funding low

The 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan for Ukraine remains underfunded, according to the Financial Tracking Service (FTS). By the end of September, donors disbursed and pledged about US\$136 million, an increase of \$12 million since end of August. The total amount of funding and pledges is equivalent to 43 per cent of the \$316 million required. This includes \$126 million (40 per cent) disbursed and another \$10 million pledged (3 per cent). The shortfall is about \$180 million.

The Government of the Russian Federation dispatched three convoys to NGCAs during September (on 17, 24 and 30 September) and delivered more than 3,600 MT of relief supplies, according to the Russian Emergency Ministry (EMERCOM). Since August 2014, over 49,000 MT of relief supplies have been transported from Russia to NGCAs, including food, medicines, NFIs, and educational and other essential supplies, according to EMERCOM.



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

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