

HIGHLIGHTS

- Humanitarian access constraints in non-government controlled eastern Ukraine continue.
- Delay in winterisation activities is a major concern as temperatures are reaching freezing point and first snow expected shortly.
- Landmines and UXOs emerge as main risk to civilians after the renewed ceasefire, accounting for 81 per cent of all civilian casualties in September.



Credit: People in Need
Ukrainian child in a UNHCR sleeping bag

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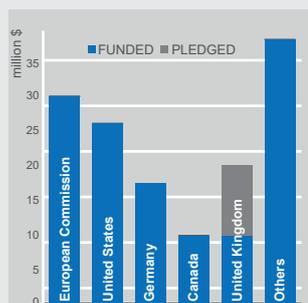
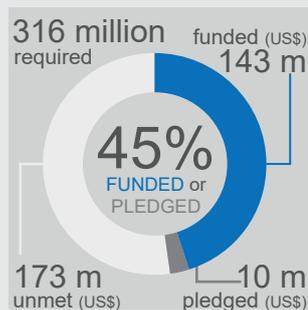
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FIGURES

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/>

Most operations remain at a standstill

As temperatures drop below zero, many people continue to have limited or no access to assistance as very few humanitarian partners have received authorization from the de facto authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk to operate. As such most operations have been at a standstill since 21 July.

On 23 October, the de facto authorities in Luhansk gave the 'green light' for the resumption of UN operations. By the end of October, UN agencies are the only humanitarian organizations to have been officially registered in the non-government controlled areas of Luhansk, while the status of other international NGOs' registration is unclear.

As of end-October, in Donetsk non-government controlled areas (NGCAs), only two international humanitarian organizations are authorized to operate. UN registration is still pending despite reassurances that all documentation was submitted and a positive outcome was imminent. Discussions are underway to resolve outstanding issues. No update is yet available on the registration of other NGOs in Donetsk.

While some supplies are being delivered to NGCAs, about 16,000 metric tons (MT) of humanitarian assistance, including food, shelter and non-food relief items and medical supplies, still await delivery.

The humanitarian community has repeatedly called on all parties to the conflict and other stakeholders to ensure free and unimpeded access and to minimize bureaucratic impediments as stipulated by the International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

Freedom of movement constraints

The restrictions on freedom of movement through the Temporary Order (TO) of 21 January 2015, and the suspension of public transport prevents the free movement of civilians across the contact line in both directions. It isolates people, impacts family unity and limits access to social entitlements, medication and humanitarian assistance.

Long queues of civilians waiting for up to 24 hours at a number of crossing points on the 'contact line' between government-controlled areas (GCAs) and NGCAs persist. This is a major concern as temperatures plummet. In addition, the presence of landmines in the adjacent areas is a serious risk for civilians waiting for hours to cross the 'contact line'. Unconfirmed reports indicate that, as fighting subsided, in some locations civilians try to circumvent crossing points passing through areas contaminated by landmines, Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

Humanitarian organizations have been calling upon the Government of Ukraine to simplify procedures for civilians, to open new checkpoints, to increase personnel at crossing points, to authorize commercial traffic across the contact line and bring the orders regulating movement of civilians and goods in compliance with the Constitution and laws of Ukraine as well as international norms and standards, as many of regulations are currently having a disproportionate impact on civilians.

Long queues of civilians waiting for up to 24 hours at a number of crossing points on the 'contact line' amid cold weather have been observed

Time running out for winterisation

Temperatures in conflict-affected parts of eastern Ukraine have dropped below freezing with the first snowfall expected the first week of November. This is a major concern and threat to the well-being of many civilians living on both sides of the 'contact line' whose homes have been destroyed or damaged because of the conflict. Eastern Ukraine experiences long, harsh winters and it is critical that vulnerable people in the conflict zone have at least one warm room and access to fuel and other essential items. Temperatures can drop as low as -20 Celsius for extended periods.



Restriction of movement for people and goods affects more than **200,000** people in NGCA "contact line" areas

Shelter assessment in the east – homes of one in five IDP families damaged or destroyed

An assessment of shelter and NFI needs was conducted during summer 2015. REACH team was deployed to Ukraine in the framework of its on-going partnership with the Global Shelter Cluster to facilitate an assessment of Emergency Shelter and NFI needs between May and July 2015. The assessment sought to provide representative and quantitative information about Shelter and NFI needs of IDP households in five oblasts (Kharkivska, Donetsk, Luhanska, Zaporizhska and Dnipropetrovska) across eastern Ukraine, and to establish a baseline of needs, against which the humanitarian shelter and NFI response can be monitored and tailored.

The assessment found out that 6.3 per cent of IDPs respondents in the five eastern oblasts reported complete destruction of their homes, while 15.5 per cent reported severe damage. The one in five IDP households whose homes were reported as severely damaged or destroyed are likely to require significant support to repair or rebuild their homes, an important barrier to future return for these households, according to the assessment.

Up to 100,000 population in need require winterisation assistance

Meanwhile, Shelter and NFI Cluster partners estimate that between 7.2 - 13.3 per cent of population in need requires winterisation assistance depending on type of items and location. Taking into consideration the lower estimates this would equal to around 50,000 - 100,000 people, including those in NGCAs.

As a result of suspension of the UN and INGO activities in NGCAs, shelter cluster partners have not been able to deliver shelter and NFI supplies to an estimated 30,000 people in NGCAs.

In GCAs, as of end of October winterisation distributions are ongoing and planned by Shelter and NFI Cluster partners, including repairs, insulation, fuel and other essential supplies.

Explosives are now main threat to civilians

The revamped ceasefire agreed by the parties to the conflict since 1 September has largely held for the past two months, resulting in sharp reduction in civilian casualties. During September 2015, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) recorded 43 civilian casualties in the conflict zone (nine killed and 34 injured) – a more than 55 per cent reduction compared to an average monthly casualty figure of 95 between 16 February and 15 August. The main risk threatening the lives of civilians however shifted from direct violence to ERW and IEDs. Landmines, ERW and IEDs accounted for 81 per cent of all civilian casualties (both killed and injured) in September.

While both parties to the conflict and other actors are carrying out demining work in various locations near the 'contact line', the scope of contamination outweighs available capacity and resources. Increasing civilian casualties are a testimony to that.

The one in five IDP households whose homes were reported as severely damaged or destroyed are likely to require significant support to repair or rebuild their homes

81% of 43 civilian casualties in September caused by mines / UXOs



Landmines, ERW and IEDs accounted for 81 per cent of all civilian casualties in September

As winter sets in, there is a risk that casualties will increase as civilians might increasingly venture into heavily contaminated areas in search of firewood. In spring, the need to cultivate land could increase exposure to risks related to mine and UXO contamination. Furthermore, the 'logistics centres' established by the Government close to the contact line are in close proximity to contaminated areas. These centres are intended to somewhat minimize some of the effect of the commercial and financial restrictions imposed since early 2015 to people living in areas beyond government control. Landmine risks need to be handled urgently - not only near the logistics center but also along all check-points and along the way where people wait in line for hours and often step into fields for sanitary purposes.

This highlights the need for coordinated, complementary mine action activities, including humanitarian (and in some instances of early recovery/recovery-related) demining, Mine Risk Education, etc.

Estimates by the 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'. Meanwhile, the suspension of access and operations in NGCAs deny mine risk education activities for 200,000 children.

Polio vaccination campaign started across Ukraine on 21 October and will target 4.7 million children

Polio immunization campaign launched

After an outbreak of circulating vaccine derived poliovirus was reported in Ukraine in September, a nationwide polio vaccination campaign started on 21 October set to reach over 4.7 million children in both GCA and NGCAs. The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) welcomed the start of the campaign and are actively supporting it.

The outbreak can be stopped through a nationwide immunization of children according to guidelines from the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. During the first two rounds, 2.8 million children aged 2 months to 6 years will be immunized. An additional 1.9 million children aged 6-10 years will also be reached in the third round.

The first round will use 3.7 million oral polio vaccines, procured with funding from the Government of Canada. UNICEF has appealed to

international donors to support procurement of additional polio vaccines, which are urgently required to complete all three polio rounds.

The de facto authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk announced that a three round polio immunization campaign will be conducted in NGCAs during a three-month period targeting all children aged between 3 months and six years. The immunizations will be carried out using vaccines provided by the Russian Federation, according to the de facto authorities. It is estimated that up to 500,000 children need polio immunization in NGCAs of eastern Ukraine.

The Ukraine's Ministry of Health declared a polio outbreak on 1 September with two con-



Credit: WHO
Deputy Minister of Health launching polio immunization campaign with vaccination of his own child

firmed cases, the first time in 19 years. Neither of the infected children, aged 10 months and 4 years, had been vaccinated against the disease. Routine immunization coverage rates in Ukraine have fallen dramatically in the past five years to as low as 50 per cent. This year, the level of immunization against polio among children under 12 months dropped further to 14 per cent. Insufficient vaccine supply and the conflict in eastern Ukraine have contributed to low levels of coverage. This outbreak, combined with the low level of vaccination rates, countrywide, risks children's health and well-being nationwide and threaten Europe's polio-free status.

Conflict inflicts heavy damage to education

Over the past 18 months the conflict in Ukraine has caused and continues to cause major disruption to the education sector, with one in eight of registered IDPs being children, schools damaged or destroyed and significant drop in enrollment rates in conflict-affected areas in the east.

Impact of the conflict on children and education

Some 9 per cent of the IDPs are not attending school, an alarming figure considering the 99 per cent pre-crisis enrolment rate

As of 16 October, about 194,000 children have been registered as IDPs across Ukraine, or about 12 per cent of the total caseload, according to the MoSP. October 2015 enrolment data from the Ministry of Education and Sciences (MoES) provides additional insights on the numbers of location of children IDP. These corroborating data sets reveal that a staggering one out of every four children living in the GCAs of Luhanska and Donetsk oblasts are IDPs.

The widespread displacement of students and their families, teachers and education personnel, as well as uncertainty in the country have affected the education quality, the teaching and learning process for both IDP and hosting populations, and caused months of lost school days (REACH assessment 2015). While the impact has been felt across Ukraine, it is most palpable in the conflict-affected east. An assessment conducted by a cluster partner in October 2015 shows that 9 per cent of school-aged children living along the 'contact line' and areas of high IDP concentration in GCAs are not attending school. The drop in enrollment from 99 per cent pre-crisis level is alarming.

For government-controlled areas, the MoES data shows a 20 per cent decrease in IDP enrolment from Kharkivska and Dnipropetrovska oblasts, whereas there has been a 25 per cent and 7 per cent increase for GCAs of Luhanska and Donetsk oblasts respectively, indicating a probable return of IDPs to their pre-conflict residences. This adds pressure on the already strained education facilities of these oblasts.

Education infrastructure has also been damaged by the conflict. In NGCAs alone, nearly 200, or one of every five schools, has been damaged or destroyed. Where schools are still functioning, many are not prepared for the winter and are cut off from the damaged public utility systems (heat, water, electricity). Presence of mines and UXOs at or on the way to school limits access further. Mine risk education is required for all learners and educators. Of particular concern is the lack of access to kindergartens. This is most pressing for IDP families with very young children. If one parent, usually the mother, must stay home to care for children, the family cannot restart their lives.



Need for psychosocial support, conflict resolution and mine risk education

Learners, teachers and hosting communities have suffered extreme psychosocial distress and the general breakdown in the social structure around the educational system. Many of the IDP children have experienced violence before their displacement, and continue to express symptoms of psychological distress, reducing their ability to concentrate and to learn. In this context, trained teachers play a crucial role in providing a protective environment where learners can return to normalcy. Hosting communities are fatigued and conflicts have arisen between hosting and IDP communities. Teachers and students must learn to mitigate and avert conflict in the classroom.

Teaching and learning materials have become prohibitively expensive for parents due to drops in income, employment and increase in the costs of goods. The direct and indirect costs of education are heightened for families with many young children.

Recognition of school certificates is an issue

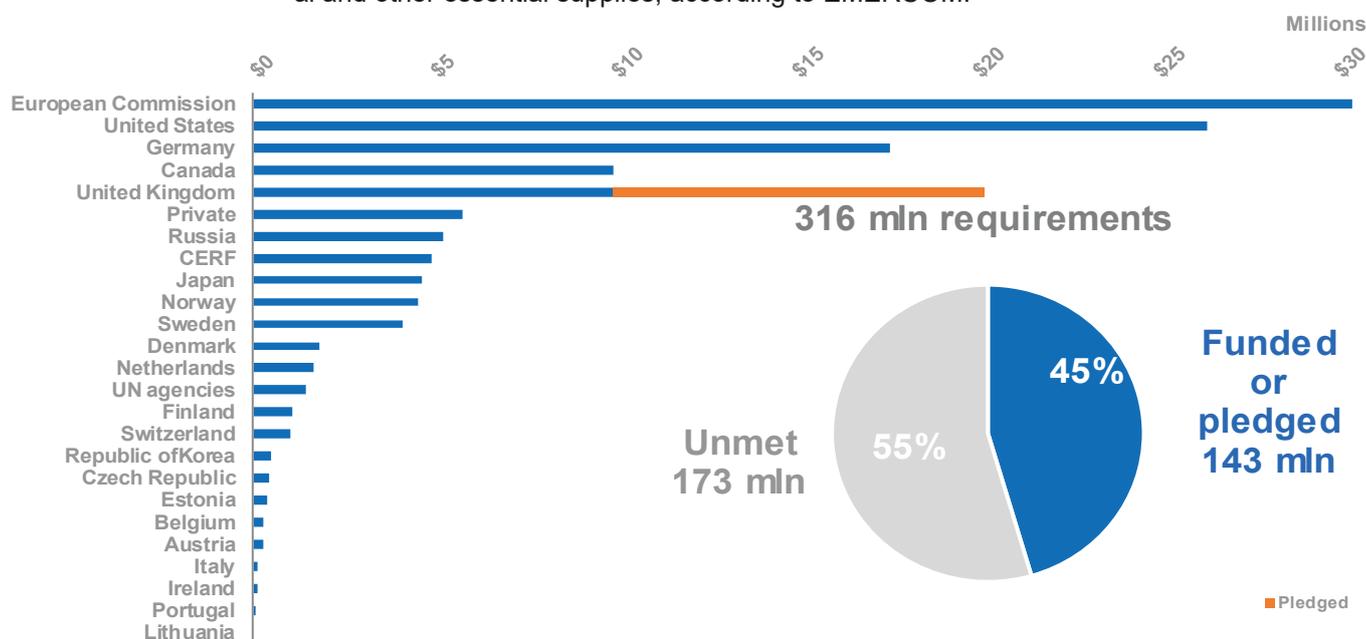
Currently, the school certificates issued by the de-facto authorities are not recognized by Ukraine. The long-term consequences for the 180,000 learners remaining in the NGCAs that will need to have their certificates recognized in the future are not clear.

Humanitarian Response Plan funding low

HRP 2015 for Ukraine remains underfunded, with the gap standing at \$172 million, according to FTS

The 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan for Ukraine remains underfunded, according to the Financial Tracking Service (FTS). By the end of October, donors disbursed and pledged about US\$143 million, an increase of \$7 million since the end of September. The total amount of funding and pledges is equivalent to 45 per cent of the \$316 million required. This includes \$133 million (42 per cent) disbursed and another \$10 million pledged (3 per cent). The shortfall is about \$173 million.

The Government of the Russian Federation dispatched two convoys to NGCAs during October and delivered more than 2,100 MT of relief supplies, according to the Russian Emergency Ministry (EMERCOM). Since August 2014, over 51,000 MT of relief supplies have been transported from Russia to NGCAs, including food, medicines, NFIs, educational and other essential supplies, according to EMERCOM.



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