Highlights

- Discussions are ongoing with the de-facto authorities in non government-controlled areas (NGCAs) on brokering a pragmatic operational arrangement that will ensure the UN and NGOs are able to conduct their operations.
- Prices for medicines and food in NGCAs are between 60-100 per cent higher compared to Government-controlled areas (GCAs), meaning civilians are forced to make long and risky journey across the ‘contact line’ to buy supplies.
- Long queues are reported at the Volnovakha and other checkpoints in Donetsk oblast, with civilians waiting for hours with no access to food, water and sanitation or medical services. Some improvements in the electronic pass system reported.
- According to UNICEF, up to 1.3 million people in conflict-affected areas in Donetsk and Luhanska oblasts are estimated to have difficulties in accessing safe drinking water.
- The Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) is still very poorly funded with a shortfall of some US$202 million.

Key figures:

- PEOPLE IN NEED: 5.0 million
- PEOPLE TARGETED: 3.2 million
- NGCA: 2 million PEOPLE IN NEED
- Non-Government Controlled Area: 2 million PEOPLE IN NEED

Situation Overview

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 law (IHL) and customary IHL, parties to the conflict are responsible for facilitating access for humanitarian organizations to affected people. It is hoped that this engagement with the de-facto authorities on finding a practical resolution to the so-called “registration” issue will lead to the resumption of inter-agency aid convoys led by the Logistics Cluster to NGCAs, which have been suspended since 21 July. The de-facto authorities in the so-called ‘Donetsk people’s republic (DPR)’ issued a decree regarding ‘registration’ to all aid agencies operating in the area on 14 July. A similar requirement has since been introduced in the NGCAs of Luhanska oblast.

An immediate resumption of inter-agency aid convoys and humanitarian assistance to NGCAs is critical to address the needs of an estimated two million people. These people are vulnerable given the ongoing difficulties they experience in accessing social services, pensions and the banking system. Assistance is also needed for two million people living in areas along the ‘contact line’ where insecurity is a fact of life for many of them, and access to basic goods and services is problematic. Coping strategies are severely strained and with winter approaching assistance is needed particularly in the form of shelter materials.

There is a severe shortage of commercial flows of food, medicines and other essential items into NGCAs resulting in humanitarian needs and caused by regulations imposed by Government authorities. Civilians returning back to NGCAs report the reason for their travel are to bring supplies of food and medicines for their families due to shortage of those items or considerably higher prices in NGCAs. According to the June Market Update by the World Food Programme (WFP), food prices in NGCAs are 59 per cent higher than the national average. According to WFP, it is likely that if this...
During oblasts. The system reports that civilians are mainly reported from other open checkpoints. Significant protection concerns remain given continuing hostilities close to checkpoints, including the presence of unexploded ordnance. Civilians often queue for hours with no access to water, sanitation, food or medical services and in some instances overnight by the checkpoints exposing them to a high level of risk, as checkpoints are frequently a target of shelling. While there are fast track procedures for disabled, pregnant women and children aged up to five years of age, not all civilians seem to be aware of this facility. The checkpoint at Volnovakha is logistically constrained and despite the fact that more staff are manning the checkpoint, the process is lengthy. Civilians not travelling in their own vehicles very often stroll for several kilometers between the GCA and NGCA and cross the contact line walking. There are multiple reports that the people travelling in private vehicles offer to these people a ride at high prices. It is imperative that a system be established to ensure that people are not placed at risk for longer than absolutely necessary.

On 16 June (effecting 7 July), Government authorities introduced an electronic pass system to cross the ‘contact line’. While the electronic system experienced some technical issues in its initial stages, people who have submitted their applications reported that the online system is operating without major problems. Nevertheless, the challenges with regard to freedom of movement for civilians persisted during the reporting period. Long queues of people, sometimes up to two kilometers long, were reported at the Volnovakha checkpoint in Donetsk oblast, which is currently the main open crossing to and from NGCAs, with similar situations reported from other open checkpoints. Significant protection concerns remain given continuing hostilities close to checkpoints, including the presence of unexploded ordnance. Civilians often queue for hours with no access to water, sanitation, food or medical services and in some instances overnight by the checkpoints exposing them to a high level of risk, as checkpoints are frequently a target of shelling. While there are fast track procedures for disabled, pregnant women and children aged up to five years of age, not all civilians seem to be aware of this facility. The checkpoint at Volnovakha is logistically constrained and despite the fact that more staff are manning the checkpoint, the process is lengthy. Civilians not travelling in their own vehicles very often stroll for several kilometers between the GCA and NGCA and cross the contact line walking. There are multiple reports that the people travelling in private vehicles offer to these people a ride at high prices. It is imperative that a system be established to ensure that people are not placed at risk for longer than absolutely necessary.

The United Nations has been advocating with Government authorities for multiple viable crossings to be established both for civilians and humanitarian cargo. Government interlocutors have stated that they are working on the issue and indicated their agreement to establish alternative crossing points across the ‘contact line’, staging areas away from checkpoints to reduce risk to civilians, developing a simple single documentation for humanitarian cargo and simplified checking procedure at checkpoints.

Access to safe water remains one of the most acute needs of children and adults in eastern Ukraine. Up to 1.3 million people in conflict-affected areas of Donetsk and Luhanska oblasts are estimated to have difficulties in accessing safe drinking water, according to UNICEF. Over 470,000 people, including 118,000 children, are facing serious problems in accessing safe water in NGCAs of Luhanska oblast. Many families have to rely on trucking or travel to neighboring villages to get water from functioning wells.

Despite all these constraints, between January and June 2015, humanitarian partners provided some 1.9 million people with access to safe drinking water. More than 89,000 families across the country were provided with non-food items, acute shelter repairs, and cash grants. Another 34,000 people received medical consultations and 31,000 children received nutritional supplements. During June, food security cluster partners delivered food vouchers and food parcels to 64,000 people. Moreover, 286,000 people received mine risk education. Psychosocial support reached over 55,000 children. Livelihood activities benefited about 62,000 people, mainly in GCAs. The Logistics Cluster facilitated humanitarian cargo movements across the contact line (until temporary suspension of inter-agency convoys on 21 July).

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) is scaling up its emergency operation in eastern Ukraine to reach over 500,000 conflict-affected people with food assistance by the end of 2015, specifically focusing on Donetsk and Luhanska oblasts.

During the reporting period, clashes and exchanges of fire between the Ukrainian armed forces and armed groups continued in the conflict zone of eastern Ukraine with military and civilian casualties growing. In total, since mid-April 2014 to 27 July 2015, at least 6,832 people (both military and civilians) have been killed and 17,087 were injured wounded in the conflict zone of eastern Ukraine.¹

¹ This is a conservative estimate of the UN Human Rights Mission in Ukraine (HRMU) and the World Health Organization based on available official data: casualties of the Ukrainian armed forces as reported by the Ukrainian authorities; 298 people from flight MH-17; and casualties reported by medical establishments of Donetsk and Luhanska oblasts: civilians and some members of the armed groups. The HRMU and WHO believe that the actual numbers of fatalities are considerably higher.
Funding

According to the Financial Tracking Service (FTS), the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for Ukraine remains significantly underfunded. While some contributions are yet to be recorded, as of 14 August, disbursements and pledges total US$114 million, 36 percent 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 $202 million. Donors and agencies are invited to provide information on funding by email to fts@un.org or through the online contribution form at fts.unocha.org.

During the period of 16-30 July, as reported by the Russian Federation (RF) three convoys arrived from the RF in areas beyond government control to deliver in total over 3,000 metric tonnes (MT) of aid, including food, medical supplies and other items.

Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2015 Ukraine Funding

Source: FTS, *an additional humanitarian funding of $54 million (not featured in this graph) is outside HRP 2015.

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