

THE PROTECTION CLUSTER INCLUDES SUB-CLUSTERS ON CHILD PROTECTION, GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND MINE-ACTION



PROTECTION CONCERNS

- **Security situation:** In February, OHCHR recorded 73 conflict-related civilian casualties (11 killed and 62 injured) – the highest numbers since August 2016. This increase is attributed to the escalation of hostilities in Avdiivka/Donetsk/Makiivka area from 29 January to 3 February 2017, which was accompanied by massive shelling from artillery and multi-launch rocket systems of populated areas on both sides of the contact line.
- Fighting was concentrated in at least 22 settlements along the contact line in both GCA and NGCA. Donetsk, Avdiivka - Yasynuvata and Mariupol areas witnessed the heaviest shelling. Fighting was also recorded in Marinka, Zaitseve, Pisky, Opytne and Kamianka (Donetsk GCA). In Luhansk region, hostilities were recorded in Novozvanivka, Troitske (GCA), Novooleksandrivka (grey zone), Kalynove and Kalynove-Borshchuvate (NGCA), with a series of clashes and indirect fire attacks in and around Zolote.
- **Freedom of Movement:** extremely difficult and arduous conditions were observed at Stanytsia Luhanska - the only check-point in Luhansk region, with 2,500 to 4,000 people per day having to queue for up to seven hours in freezing conditions and then walk across the broken bridge. The slippery wooden ramps are inaccessible for older people, young children and persons with disabilities.
- **Humanitarian Access:** On 28 February, de facto authorities in the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) blocked all aid distribution hubs of the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation's Humanitarian Centre in Donetsk NGCA. The Centre provided humanitarian assistance in both Donetsk GCA and NGCA and for many people in NGCA it was the only source of humanitarian assistance.
- **Access to basic services:** Critical civilian infrastructure and facilities sustained heavy damage due to indiscriminate shelling of populated areas with explosive weapons. Heavy fighting in and around Donetsk affected **water provision** and triggered concerns over a looming ecological disaster. Shelling hit the Donetsk Filter Station (DFS) on 24 February, damaging the chlorine pipeline, water filters, tanks with clean water and a chlorine warehouse. Operation of the DFS was suspended, affecting 345,000 people on both sides of the contact line: in five districts of Donetsk, Avdiivka, Yasynuvata and four smaller settlements in the area.
- In Avdiivka, Donetsk city, Dokuchaievsk, parts of Makiivka, and Yasynuvata, many households had **no heating during a period of below freezing temperatures** and **hospitals had no water**, which affected access to healthcare.
- Due to fighting, people in Triohizbenka, Luhansk (GCA), had **no gas and heating**, having to cook and heat with electrical appliances. According to the law, a reduced tariff should be applied in such cases. However, due to delays in recalculation of the fees, people have to pay regular costs for electricity.
- On 23 February, Lifecell **mobile communication** provider was cut off in Donetsk, Makiivka, Horlivka, Yasynuvata and Khartsyzsk. Vodafone (MTS) is still operational, however, also with disruptions. The local provider in Donetsk NGCA, Phoenix, does not have the capacity to cover the increased needs.
- **Child protection / GBV:** La Strada, which operates a nationwide hotline reported an increase in violence against children by fathers who have been demobilized. La Strada is providing support through its hot line and field social workers.

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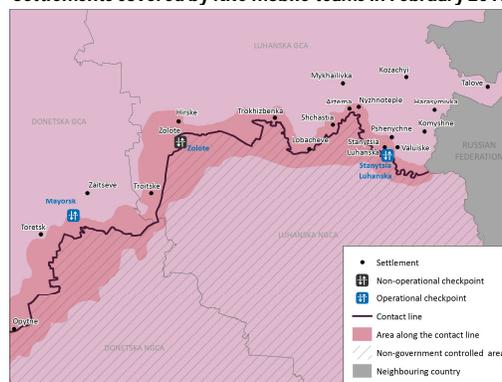
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HIGHLIGHTS

PROTECTION RESPONSE

- The Protection Cluster **coordinated the provision of protection assistance to IDPs who were evacuated to other areas in Donetsk region**. Guidance on humanitarian evacuations and relevant protection principles that should be taken into account during evacuations was also disseminated to humanitarian actors.
- The Ministry of Defense and State Emergency Service worked to **remove unexploded ordnance and suspicious remnants of war** from areas affected by the recent escalation of hostilities. Halo Trust confirmed their 100 staff are ready to provide immediate support once safe access and a basic level of security are guaranteed. ICRC is providing **MRE sessions for people in Avdiivka**, focusing on areas impacted by artillery shelling.
- In Avdiivka, HelpAge provided **assistance to 282 older people** (73% women and 27% men). Additionally, the needs of 107 home-bound older people were assessed, and it was found that **only 10% of them receive assistance which meets their needs**. Many older people are homebound and/or isolated, preventing them from accessing central distribution points for humanitarian aid. There is **a need for targeted response** to ensure that the most vulnerable immobile older women and men have access to life-saving humanitarian assistance.
- Child Protection partners provided psychosocial (PSS) and educational support to **120 children** (54 girls and 66 boys) who were evacuated from Avdiivka, including **41 children evacuated without their parents** (21 girls and 20 boys). Protection partners monitored the situation of children not accompanied by their parents, to ensure that the state service for children had necessary documents and contact details of their guardians. Following the de-escalation of the situation, the majority of children returned to their homes with only 2 unaccompanied girls and 14 children with families remaining in Sviatohirsk.
- Since the outbreak of hostilities around Avdiivka (Donetsk GCA) and Popasna (Luhansk GCA), UNFPA/Ukrainian Foundation for Public Health **mobile teams working with GBV survivors provided psychological assistance to 1,086 people** living in the area.
- DRC, through implementing partner Mariupol Youth Union (MYU), reached **264 adolescents studying at technical colleges** in eastern Donetsk region through 10-module **life-skill training program**.
- NRC provided **legal assistance via mobile teams** in the areas along the contact line in Luhansk and Donetsk regions and at the check-points in Stanytsia Luhanska and Mayorsk.
- In February, a **court case regarding the suspension of an IDP pension was decided in favor of the IDP** in Pavlograd, Dnipropetrovsk region. The court considered the suspension of the pension under Cabinet of Ministers Resolution №365 to be unlawful. According to the court, the suspension of the pension due to absence from the GCA exceeding 60 days is contrary to the Law of Ukraine on Pensions. Pension received as a result of reaching retirement age, as well as other types of pensions received based on work experience, are earned by past labour and are a form of social protection. More details about the case can be found in the analysis by NGO "Right to protection", which brought the case before the court.

Settlements covered by NRC mobile teams in February 2017



ADVOCACY

- [UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and hazardous substances and wastes](#) called on the parties to the conflict to take measures against the threat of catastrophic chemical disaster due to the armed conflict.
- OHCHR published a [report on conflict-related sexual violence in Ukraine between 14 March 2014 and 31 January 2017](#). The report **highlights the trends and patterns of sexual violence committed in the context of the armed conflict**, the ongoing impunity enjoyed by perpetrators, and the lack of a comprehensive program to ensure that all survivors receive prompt and adequate access to an effective remedy.
- A Parliamentary committee considered the [Draft law 3593 on Temporary Occupied Territories](#). In order to draw attention to concerns about the restrictive impact on human rights contained in the law, **protection cluster partners organized a round table discussion** of this draft law with the author of the draft law, representatives of academia and various international and national actors. Following advocacy efforts by protection cluster partners, **the Parliamentary committee created a working group** to revise the provisions of the draft law.

TRAININGS/EVENTS

- Mine Action partners FSD and Danish Demining Group provided three **trainings on mine risk education** for national and international NGOs deployed near the contact line.
- Child Protection partners are engaged in **providing training to teachers, parents and guardians on PSS and community based child protection**, in Sviatohirsk, Avdiivka, Mariinka and Krasnohorivka.
- DRC, together with the National School of Judges (NSJ), completed **training for 101 judges** on IDP registration and civil documentation, HLP and compensation issues, as well as freedom of movement.