

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



© NRC, Line at the Stanytsia Luhanska Checkpoint – September 2016

## PROTECTION CONCERNS

- Human Rights:** The [15th Report of the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine](#) released by OHCHR in September 2016 describes the deterioration of the human rights situation in eastern Ukraine, as a result of escalating hostilities between June and August, and the continued disregard for the protection of civilians by both sides to the conflict.
- Civilian Casualties:** Following a renewed ceasefire as of September 1, OHCHR recorded 19 cases of civilian casualties in the conflict zone of eastern Ukraine – four times fewer compared to the previous three months.
- Freedom of Movement:** Long queues at checkpoints continue to be the primary concern of people crossing the contact line, according to a survey conducted by the NGO "Foundation.101". Twenty-three percent of respondents travelling by car could not cross the contact line due to long queues.
- Social benefits and pensions:** IDPs in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (GCA) report delays of one to two months in verification inspections required for the resumption of suspended social benefits and pensions. This results in IDPs missing payments, leaving them without money to pay for essential items such as food and medicine and at risk of eviction due to inability to pay rent.  
 The large number of IDPs applying for social benefits and pensions has led to queues exceeding 300 people in the Department of Social Policy (DoSP) offices in some regions, such as Bilovodsk in Luhanska Oblast. IDPs applying for financial assistance in some regions, such as Bakhmut, Donetsk Oblast, are being given their first appointments for January 2017 by the DoSP. This further delays IDP access to financial assistance, leaving many without any means of support.
- Access to accommodation:** On September 1, higher tariffs for electricity and utility services came into effect, imposing additional financial burden on already depleted resources of IDPs and conflict-affected people. In addition, IDPs who are unable to obtain residence stamps in their passport or lease agreement are not eligible for utility subsidies. This situation will only deteriorate as winter approaches, with IDPs unable to pay gas utility bills when heating throughout Ukraine is switched on in October.
- Forced evictions:** There has been an increase in the number of IDPs living in collective centers who are facing eviction due to their inability to pay utility costs. Owners of collective centers seek to evict IDPs before winter sets in, when it is more difficult to evict people due to adverse publicity that surrounds evictions in winter.
- Involuntary returns:** Protection Cluster partners providing legal counselling to IDPs note a sharp rise in the number of people intending to return to NGCA because they cannot afford to live in GCA as a result of depleted savings, delays in payments of social benefits and pensions and inability to pay the increased utility costs.
- Registration:** Unaccompanied IDP children in Luhansk Oblast face difficulty with IDP registration because they need to provide documentation to confirm previous residency in NGCA close to the contact line, which is difficult to obtain due to security constraints.  
 DoSPs in Berdiansk, Berdianskyi, Vilniansky and Rozivskyi raions refuse to issue IDP certificates to children born to parents where only one parent is an IDP.
- Gender-based violence:** La Strada, which operates a nationwide hotline, reports an increased number of calls concerning domestic violence in families of demobilized soldiers.

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### KEY FIGURES

 **3,1 M**  
People in Need

 **2,5 M**  
People Targeted

 **665,783**  
People reached (Jan-Sept 2016)

 **116**  
Partners\* including 9 in NGCA

### KEY DOCUMENTS

Protection Cluster Strategy [ENG](#) | [UKR](#)  
July 2016 3W Map [ENG](#)

Legal Aid Directory [ENG](#) | [UKR](#) | [RU](#)

Peacebuilding and Reconciliation Note  
[ENG](#) | [UKR](#) | [RU](#)

### USEFUL LINKS

[Humanitarian Response](#)  
[Global Protection Cluster](#)  
[Legal Aid Directory Map](#)

\*Partners with completed, ongoing or suspended activities

## HIGHLIGHTS

### PROTECTION RESPONSE

- UNHCR and local NGO launched a **bus route between Donetsk-Snizhne** in Donetsk NGCA, to facilitate travel, as public transportation was disrupted due to armed conflict. Beneficiaries included persons with specific needs, older people, single women and students.
- The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA) team provided **legal counselling to IDPs at Zaitsevo checkpoint**. Key concerns related to documentation, in particular **birth and death registration, pension payments and HLP rights**. IDPs were reluctant to provide personal data, as they feared that this may be shared with government authorities and may lead to the suspension of social benefits and other payments.
- HelpAge International opened **nine Community Safe Spaces for older people in Donetsk region**: Kramatorsk, Svitlodarsk, Bakhmut, Avdiivka, Pokrovsk, Toretsk, Konstantinovka, Mariupol and Kaminka. IDPs and host communities will use the centers for psychosocial activities aimed at overcoming isolation, depression and loneliness.
- The **Department of Child Protection and Adoption** of the Ministry of Social Policy **will second their specialists to work at a [nation-wide hotline](#)** operated by the NGO La Strada, for one day each month.
- DRC's psychosocial support program for children** was given approval by the Ministry of Education, and can now be implemented in schools throughout Ukraine.

### ADVOCACY

- Following UNHCR advocacy efforts, [Parliament adopted a number of resolutions related to the administrative-territorial structure of Donetsk and Lugansk regions](#), changing the subordination of a number of villages located along the contact line from towns located in NGCA to towns located in the GCA. As a result, **thousands of people** residing in Katerynivka, Orikhove, Zaitsevo and Station Mayorska **will be able to receive social benefits and pensions**, which are only available to residents of GCA, after they were suspended by the government in 2014.
- The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of IDPs, Chaloka Beyani carried out a visit to Ukraine** to follow up on the [recommendations made in his 2014 report](#) to the UN Human Rights Council. During his nine-day visit, which was facilitated by OHCHR and UNHCR, the Special Rapporteur met with Government officials, UN partners and civil society organizations, as well as IDPs and conflict-affected communities.
- The Protection Cluster gave a presentation on Key Protection Challenges** at the Humanitarian Country Team retreat, **to ensure that protection concerns were central to the humanitarian planning process for 2017**.
- The Danish Refugee Council (DRC), in partnership with CEDOS and Human Rights Information Center, launched a project on **delinking administrative and other services** provided to IDPs and conflict-affected people **from the residence registration system**.



### TRAININGS/EVENTS/VISITS

- Professor Walter Kaelin**, a former UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of IDPs (2004-2010) visited Ukraine in the framework of a global study commissioned by OCHA Headquarters on the impact of long-term displacement.
- NRC and the Donetsk oblast Department of Justice organized a **seminar on IDP access to social benefits** for local authorities.
- DRC held a workshop on **“Non Government Controlled Areas: the Minsk Agreements, International and National Law Frameworks”** which was attended by 60 participants from 39 organizations.
- The Age and Disability Technical Working Group** provided training on inclusive programming to shelter program staff in Kramatorsk. The training covered the concepts of age and disability, as well as sex, age and disability disaggregated data; physical accessibility and accessibility for all; and communication skills for communication with older people and people with disabilities.
- The Council of Europe Project “Strengthening the Human Rights Protection of Internally Displaced Persons in Ukraine” completed a **series of trainings** for new NGOs on **“Effective representation of the rights and freedoms of IDPs”** in Sviatohirsk and Sievierodonetsk.
- The GBV Information Management System (IMS) Global Technical Team provided a **training on GBVIMS Basic Tools** to the organizations vetted for the roll out (Ukrainian Foundation Public Health, La Strada, IMC, Medecins du Monde, Zaporizhzhia Regional Centre of Psychosocial Support), as well as other organizations recommended as potential GBVIMS users in Ukraine.