

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



Check point at Stanitsa Luhanska. The sign on the car says "Children"
Photo: AiF

PROTECTION CONCERNS

- On 1-30 April 2016, OHCHR recorded 43 conflict-related civilian casualties in eastern Ukraine: eight killed (two women and six men) and 35 injured (11 women, 21 men and a boy; the sex of two adults is unknown). Of those eight killed: five were killed by shelling; two by explosive remnants of war (ERW); and one person was killed by small arms. Of those 35 injured: 18 were injured by shelling (including a 15 year old boy injured in the village of Olenivka in Donetsk region on 27 April); 14 by ERW and improvised explosive devices (IEDs); 2 by light weapons; and the exact cause of injury of one person is unknown. In total, from the beginning of the conflict in mid-April 2014 to 30 April 2016, OHCHR recorded 30,766 conflict-related casualties in eastern Ukraine (civilians, Ukrainian armed forces and members of armed groups), including 9,346 killed¹ and 21,420 injured.
- The Protection Cluster is concerned that the Cabinet of Ministers has not introduced amendments to the relevant by-laws and regulations to bring them in compliance with Law No 921 (former Draft Law 2166) despite being asked by Parliament to produce these amendments by 13 April, making it difficult for IDPs to renew their IDP certificates or to register as IDPs. The amendments should provide instruction as to how regional offices of the Department of Social Protection will: (i) enable habitual residents/stateless persons to register as internally displaced; (ii) enable the provision of alternative evidence to establish displacement; (iii) provide "way-forward" procedures as to how to verify IDP presence, given the removal of the requirement of the SMS stamp. In Severodonetsk there are cases of IDPs and stateless persons who are eligible for IDP registration and whose applications are being transferred to Kiev, where their requests are on hold; and cases of IDPs with alternative evidence (other than the internal passport and *propiska*) to confirm previous permanent residence in the NGCA or in contact areas of the GCA, whose requests to receive IDP registration are pending. Another concern is the lack of regulations explaining how village councils should create and maintain registers of IDPs. The recent case of Berdiansk, where lists of IDPs were published online and the public asked to verify IDP addresses, is an example of how confidential data may be misused and how IDP verification should not be done. According to Law 888, as of 10 December 2015, residence registration has been transferred to local city or village councils for all Ukrainian nationals. However, it is not clear if these local councils will become involved in 'verifying IDP presence'.
- Freedom of movement remains an issue in Luhansk oblast. The only official pedestrian crossing point at Stanitsa Luhanskaya Bridge was closed on 8 April by the Ukrainian Government due to increased shelling in the area. This resulted in longer queues in GCA/NGCA of Donetsk region. In addition, locals have reported several cases of people making payments (to the amount of UAH 150-300) to be able to cross the contact line to reach Luhansk city. People have resorted to crossing the line of contact unofficially across Severskyi Donec river in Slavyanoserbskyi district, even though this area has not been de-mined.
- The demand for shelter for GBV survivors is increasing, including for those who suffer violence from intimate partners who have recently returned from participating in the conflict in eastern Ukraine. However, lack of specialized shelter and safe spaces for GBV survivors remains a key protection gap. Even though some crisis shelters, including in the city of Zaporizhzhia and Druzhkivka (Donetsk region), provide shelter for a very limited number of GBV survivors, Kharkiv, Luhansk and Dnipropetrovsk do not have any such shelters at all. The Luhansk Regional Centre for Psychosocial Support is discussing with the state administration the possibility to provide shelter for SGBV survivors in Borovenki village.
- The Mine Action Sub Cluster is concerned about the increased risk of landmine and ERW accidents in spring and summer. This is due to seasonal agricultural work as well as the summer school holidays which result in additional movement of the population, thereby increasing the risk of exposure to potential mine and ERW injury.
- The humanitarian situation in Donetsk oblast remains precarious due to difficulties with accreditation. The harsh economic environment in the self-proclaimed 'DPR' is characterized by high inflation, rampant unemployment and increased poverty. The inability of the *de facto* authorities to provide basic services to the local population and IDPs remain a major challenge.
- The Child Protection Sub Cluster is concerned about reports of an increase in domestic violence families of demobilized ATO soldiers, which have a negative impact on the psychosocial well-being of children. There is an urgent need to provide psychosocial support to demobilized soldiers, especially those living in rural areas where there is less access to social services and employment and livelihood opportunities. Another protection concern for children is a proliferation of small arms among demobilized soldiers.

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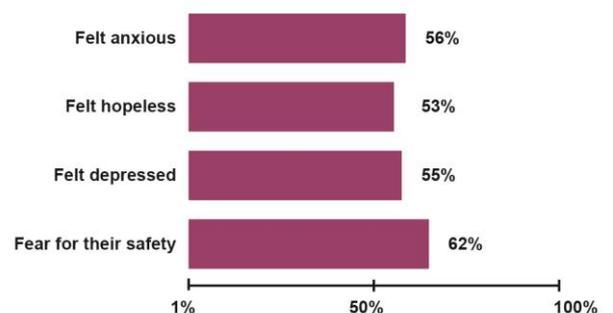
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¹ Including 298 people from flight MH-17.

HIGHLIGHTS

- On 14 April the Prime Minister of Ukraine, Volodymyr Groysman, announced the creation of the Ministry of Temporary Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced People, to be headed by Vadym Chernysh, who was previously the Head of the Donbass Recovery Agency. However, so far the Statute of the new Ministry hasn't been adopted and therefore its terms of reference are unclear.
- UNFPA-supported trainings on GBV for healthcare and PSS service providers resulted in the development and endorsement of the Guidelines on Providing ObGyn Assistance to GBV survivors by the Health Care Department of the Dnipropetrovsk Regional State Administration. The Guidelines, issued on 12 April, provide detailed instructions on the utilization of reproductive health kits supplied by UNFPA, specifying who is eligible for medication; the timing and prescription schemes for each type of medication and the transfer of kits from one health care facility to another (for cases where there is a survivor and no medication available). The medical regimens, list of health care facilities supplied with reproductive health kits and the contact details of psychosocial mobile teams operating in Dnipropetrovsk region were developed
- The Coordination Council on Family, Gender Equality, Demographic Development, Domestic Violence, GBV and Human Trafficking Prevention was established under the Kharkiv City Council on April 22, 2016. The coordination mechanism, established with the support of UNFPA and the GBV Sub Cluster, will assist with efforts to agree on referral pathways and the survivor-centered GBV services. The UNFPA membership in the Council presents an opportunity to introduce international standards and humanitarian experience of preventing and responding to GBV.
- On April 20, 2016 the charitable foundation "Slavic Heart" opened a Family Support Centre in Sviatohirsk. The Centre aims to assist people with specific needs, including both IDPs and local citizens. The Centre also assists survivors of gender based violence. The provided services include short-term accommodation, psychological support, legal aid and several types of social services.
- Given recent information from the prosecutor in Mariupol that eight children were sentenced for involvement with armed groups in 2015 and nine cases are currently under investigation, the Child Protection Sub Cluster has developed recommendations on the prevention of recruitment and use of children in armed conflict that includes the need to review legislation regulating recruitment and use of children by armed forces, and to conduct public information campaigns on child protection laws and training for people working in social services and educational institutions.
- Booklets outlining referral pathways for cases of unaccompanied children, disabled children, street children, child prostitution and family violence have been developed and distributed among relevant stakeholders in Zaporizhia. The Child Protection Sub Cluster is now exploring ways to replicate this in other regions of Ukraine.
- The NRC Legal Aid Centre in Kramatorsk was officially opened on 5 April 2016. NRC also relocated its Legal Aid Centre in Kharkiv to Stanytsia Luhanska.
- On 27 April, NRC and the Department of Justice of the Luhansk oblast, organized a seminar for fifteen lawyers and civil servants concerning IDP registration and inheritance proceeding with respect to property in NGCA.
- HelpAge in Donetsk Oblast provided bus services to 432 older people and people with disabilities to enhance access to social services, undertook 204 community-based home care visits, and provided hot drinks to 27,580 beneficiaries at the Zaytsevo checkpoint.
- In Luhansk Oblast HelpAge provided cash assistance to 1,658 older people, undertook 5,200 home based care visits for vulnerable and lonely older people and people with disabilities, 95 community based rehabilitation and psychosocial support activities, 971 older people and people with disabilities used social buses, of which 371 traveled to the checkpoint at Stanitsa Luganska. HelpAge also providing bicycles, mobile cardiographs, nurse packing bags and analyzers for glucose and cholesterol in Luhansk Oblast.
- According to the April 2016 Nutrition Assessment of Older People in GCA and NGCA by UNICEF/CDC/WHO, more than 62.1% of older men and 79.9% of older women have at least one or more non communicable disease with a high prevalence of hypertension and cardiovascular diseases. Furthermore, the prevalence of psychosocial distress is high amongst older people, as indicated in the HelpAge report: "Voices of Older People" (May 2016). This is partly because the mental health of older people remains a blind spot in humanitarian policy and practice.
- The Age and Disability Technical Working Group, under the Protection Cluster umbrella, is developing Guideline on Hygiene Items for older people and people with disabilities for the WASH Cluster, facilitating the integration of "Age and Disability" components within the Shelter Cluster Guidelines on Structural Repairs and Reconstruction and providing technical support on inclusion of "Age and Disability" to individual partner organizations.
- Twenty one internally displaced orphan children who have difficulties with civil documentation were identified in Odessa region. They have either outdated IDP certificates, no ID documents at all or recently received passports with residence registration in their current place of residence. In addition, none of these children have received IDP financial assistance. They are now being assisted by UNHCR partner '10th April'.
- A UNHCR expert mission on disabilities visited Kyiv, Odessa and the East of Ukraine. They held a number of focus group discussions with IDPs, refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities. The main issues raised were problems with accommodation, medical assistance and employment or other sources of livelihood.

Effect of crisis on older people's well-being



Older voices in humanitarian crisis: Calling for change report by Help Age International