

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



"Peace without war", Vitaliy, 17 years, Luhansk oblast.
The picture is part of a children drawing exhibition "We are for peace" organized by "SOS Children Village" and Swiss Embassy.

PROTECTION CONCERNS

- The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) reports the overall trend of decreasing civilian casualties in the conflict zone of eastern Ukraine, as observed since September 2015, continued. In terms of civilian casualties, January 2016 has been the month with the least casualties since the beginning of armed hostilities in mid-April 2014. Between 1 and 31 January 2016, the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) recorded at least 18 civilian casualties in the conflict zone: 1 killed and 17 injured. Out of them, 16 adults (7 women and 9 men) and 2 children (a girl and a boy). Half of the casualties (nine injured) were caused by hand grenades and Improvised Explosive Devices (booby traps) urging for intensification of efforts on both sides of the contact line to confiscate hand grenades etc from the local population, and for seizing the practice of planting booby traps at least in those areas where civilians might easily set them off. Seven casualties (1 killed and 6 injured) were caused by small arms and light weapons including at least 3 injured in the contested village of Zaitseve (Donetsk region). The weapons that caused fragmentation wounds to two civilians are unknown. HRMMU investigates reports of civilian casualties by consulting a broad range of sources and types of information that are evaluated for their credibility.
- The Mine Action Sub-Cluster is concerned about the continued occurrence of accidents related to mines and other ERW causing considerable harm to the civilian population, as fatal casualties and injuries continue to be reported. With the onset of spring and the beginning of agricultural activities, as well as a possible uptake in the numbers of returnees to the conflict-affected areas, the numbers of ERW-related incidents can be expected to rise.
- The identification of victims of human trafficking remains a major challenge due to the limited capacity of authorities and to a weak referral system in place. The deteriorated socio-economic situation, especially regarding IDP single female headed households, makes them particularly vulnerable to engaging in survival sex to support their families with income. Lviv based NGOs stated that preventive measures to raise awareness about the risk of sexual and labor exploitation are necessary.
- There is a crucial need in shelters for GBV/Domestic Violence survivors in all conflict affected regions of Ukraine. State Centres for Psychosocial Support, NGOs "Slavic Heart", and Blago Foundation are ready to provide some places; however, they can neither cover demand nor provide adequate case management for the survivors. The GBV sub-cluster, therefore, continues advocating for establishment of safe spaces for GBV survivors particularly in conflict affected regions of eastern Ukraine.
- Freedom of movement remains a key concern. Despite the official information provided on the web site of the Security Service of Security of Ukraine stating the paper passes issued before 17 July 2015 are still valid, this is not the case in reality and some people, only holding a paper pass have not been able to cross the contact line in January. People also should be properly informed about the need to get electronic passes to avoid problems at the checkpoints.
- Passport controls and "customs" type activities are now taking place at *de facto* authority checkpoints at Zaitseve and Elenovka, resulting in long queues. Armed men from the so called "DPR" check passports and register details in a computer database and inspect luggage and goods and collect taxes.
- Protection partners inform that there have been challenges with implementation of the Law 921 (draft law 2166) as the offices of Department of Social Policy are still using CoM Resolutions No. 509 and 505 in their work as the mechanisms of implementation should be developed within 3 months after the Law has come into force. It leads to confusion and loss of time as IDPs who reach Department of Social Policy are requested to get the State Migration Service stamps on their IDP certificates which the State Migration Service is not putting anymore according to the Law 921.

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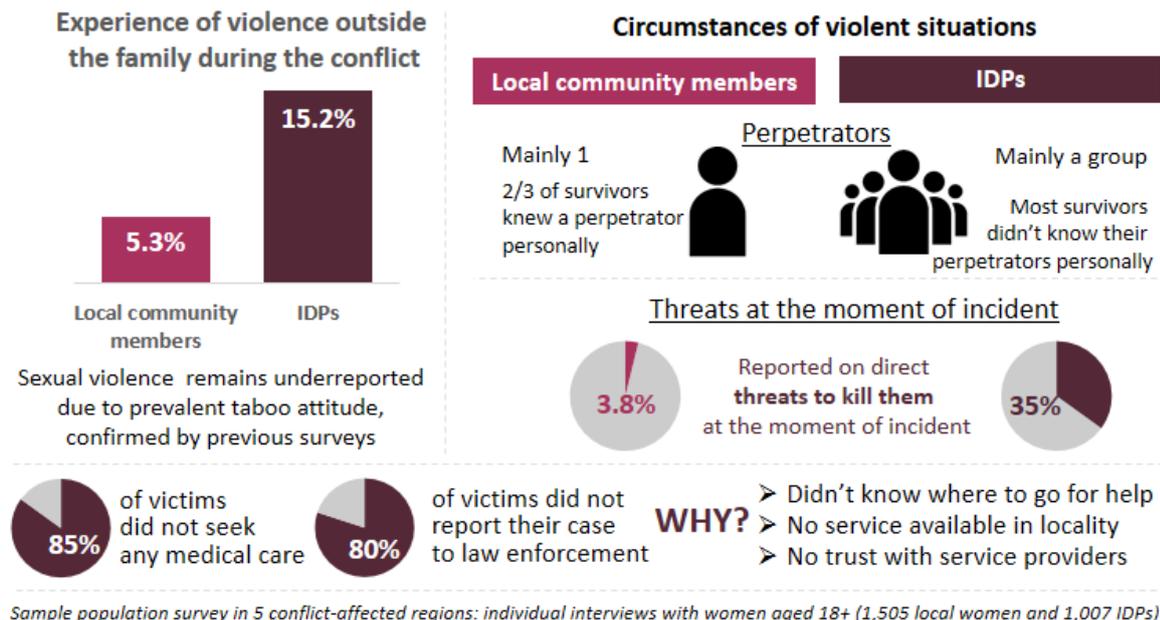
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Gender-based violence in the conflict-affected regions Survey report by Ukrainian Center For Social Reforms / UNFPA



HIGHLIGHTS

- Law No. 2254 as of 26 January "On amendments to some Laws of Ukraine on enhancement of social protection of children and assistance to families with children" envisages amendments that would make children aged 14-18 able to apply for IDP registration. Children under 14, disabled people or incapacitated people must apply for registration through a legal representative. For children under 14, unaccompanied by legal representatives or relatives, an application for registration must be filed by a representative of the custody and guardianship agency at the place of stay. For children under the care of social services, an application for registration must be filed by the head of the relevant institution.
- In his speech on the 29th of January, President of Ukraine mentioned 21 killed Ukrainian soldiers who were minors. Coalition of children's right wrote an official letter for clarification of this statement.
- Representatives of Child protection sub-cluster, Education cluster and UNICEF had a meeting with Ministry of education and science regarding declaration of safe schools which will be signed in near future.
- The Protection Cluster Coordination team delivered a half day protection mainstreaming training for humanitarian organizations active in the area in Severodonestk. 22 participants attended, representing local and international NGOs, UN agencies and working in different sectors.
- Between 21 and 28 January, NRC organized a series of trainings for 46 community mobilizers from Luhansk, Kharkiv and northern Donetsk oblasts (GCA). These trainings, delivered by experts from relevant local authorities and national and international NGOs, aimed to equip the community mobilizers with knowledge and tools in providing dissemination of critical information to IDPs and conflict-affected communities in their respective areas of activities. Starting February 2016, the community mobilizers will provide information group session for IDPs and conflict-affected communities.
- Training modules on GBV were conducted in Donetsk and Kharkiv oblasts for NRC mobilisers and lawyers. These modules were the part of training for NRC legal staff working with IDPs, local communities in the so-called "grey zone" and on the contact line.
- The Mine Action Sub-Cluster supported the technical humanitarian Mine Action Needs Assessment Mission, conducted during the period of 23 January - 5 February. The objective of the Joint UN Assessment of Mine Action Needs was to identify potential gaps and key priorities for international mine action assistance. The mission reaffirmed the need for more systematic coordination of action, better sharing of information and the rapid stepping up of humanitarian mine action activities, including mine risk education, identification of dangerous areas, their demarcation, and their clearance as well as for a comprehensive approach to support victims of mine-related incidents.
- Informational meetings of UNFPA/UFPH psychosocial mobile teams and local police were conducted in two raions of Kharkiv city, Iziurm city and Kharkiv oblast. The meetings were initiated by the police to discuss the issues of GBV and further partnership between police and mobile teams.
- In Severodonestk, the PIN "Social Bus" project was launched, with free buses running from the contact line locations; Stanitsa Luhanska – Severodonestk, Zolote-Severodonestk, Popasne-Severodonestk. There is also a Social bus in Bilovodsk region taking persons to the raion centre from remote villages. The service is available to persons over the age of 60.
- During the month of January NRC Information, Counselling, Legal Assistance (ICLA) program in both Luhansk and Kharkiv oblasts provided: information to 1,222 beneficiaries, counselling to 382 beneficiaries and legal assistance to 26 beneficiaries.