

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



© NRC, Stanytsia Luhanska checkpoint

## PROTECTION CONCERNS

- Security situation:** In April 2017, OHCHR recorded 62 conflict-related civilian casualties: 11 killed and 51 injured. On April 23, a mine-related incident killed one person and injured two staff of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine in Pryshyb (Luhansk NGCA). For the first time since the beginning of the conflict, the number of civilian casualties as a result of mine-related incidents outnumbered those as a result of shelling.
- Child Protection:** On April 10, a kindergarten in Dokuchaiivsk (Donetsk NGCA) was shelled, while 118 children were at the facility. On April 11, in Mariinka (Donetsk GCA) 128 children were evacuated from school to a nearby bomb shelter due to mortar shelling. No casualties were reported for both incidents.
- Access to social benefits and pensions:** In Luhansk oblast, pensioners have to undergo a physical verification by the Pension Fund and Department of Social Policy (DoSP) in addition to the ongoing verification by Oshchadbank. On April 3, the Pension Fund suspended pension payments to 64,000 IDPs registered in Luhansk oblast, based on information that they have not crossed any checkpoints, nor the international border over the past two months. Pensioners who are on this list have to apply for reinstatement of payments to the Pension Fund. This process will include verification procedure done by DoSP, which entails home visits, in order to verify IDPs' residential status at the address they provided.
- Access to housing:** IDPs residing in Berdyansk, Zaporizhzhia region, report that they need to find new accommodation before summer. As the city is a popular holiday area, many landlords let accommodation in summer on a daily rate. Therefore, IDPs have to either pay more to keep their accommodation, or move out and look for other options. In addition, IDPs in Selidove, Donetsk region, report that landlords demand a one-time fee of 1,000 – 2,000 UAH for allowing them to use their residential address in DoSP for verification purposes.
- Access to basic services:** On April 25, Luhansk Electricity Association cut electricity supply to NGCA of Luhansk region due to unpaid debts for water and energy utilities. The de-facto authorities restored electricity in some settlements; however, this solution may not be sustainable in the long term as debts mount.
- In April tens of thousands of civilians, particularly in NGCA, had their access to safe piped water interrupted on multiple occasions due to damage of the water filtering stations or power lines by shelling. See timeline below:

### PROTECTION CLUSTER CONTACTS

**Anna Rich**, Protection Cluster Coordinator, [rich@unhcr.org](mailto:rich@unhcr.org)

**Sadaqat Shah Roghani**, Child Protection Sub Cluster Coordinator [ssroghani@unicef.org](mailto:ssroghani@unicef.org)

**Olena Kochemyrovska**, GBV Sub Cluster Coordinator, [kochemyrovaska@unfpa.org](mailto:kochemyrovaska@unfpa.org)

**Martin Oubrecht**, Mine Action Sub Cluster Coordinator, [martin.oubrecht@undp.org](mailto:martin.oubrecht@undp.org)

**Tetiana Lialka**, Age and Disability TWG Coordinator, [Tetiana.Lialka@helppage.onmicrosoft.com](mailto:Tetiana.Lialka@helppage.onmicrosoft.com)

**Olena Lukaniuk**, House, Land and Property TWG Coordinator, [olena.lukaniuk@nrc.no](mailto:olena.lukaniuk@nrc.no)



## HIGHLIGHTS

### PROTECTION RESPONSE

- DRC opened **five psychosocial support rooms for people** living along the contact line in Donetsk oblast. In addition to PSS activities, DRC encourages partners implementing community-based activities to use these centres.
- In order to improve the capacity of checkpoints to process civilians and **reduce waiting time for civilians crossing the contact line at Mariinka checkpoint**, UNHCR provided four booths to the State Border Guard Service, increasing the number of staff by 20 persons. Each booth has a separate 'window' for people with specific needs.
- Save the Children have launched **child-to-child programs** in 11 schools in Kostiantynivka, Donetsk GCA.
- On April 24, NGO 'PROMIR' opened a **new psychosocial support center in Slovyansk**, which will also provide support to children and adults with disabilities.
- On April 5, DRC, with implementing partner Mariupol Youth Union, **opened two Youth Centers** - 1 in Kramatorsk and 1 in Slovyansk - which will provide life-skills training, seminars, social events and psychosocial support for youth.
- UNICEF, jointly with its implementing partners 'Ukrainian Frontiers' and Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, provided **stress-relief counselling** and resilience development sessions to **694 conflict-affected children and 666 adults** (parents, school personnel and teachers) at 6 schools and 9 kindergartens in Balakliya, Kharkiv Region.
- NGO 'Donbas SOS', jointly with the State Emergency, Service prepared a [booklet on Mine Risk Education](#) for people living along the contact line.

Locations of PSS rooms opened by DRC



### ADVOCACY

- NRC organized round tables in Sievierodonetsk and Kramatorsk to discuss mechanisms for **pension payments to people residing in NGCA**. The round tables were attended by representatives of oblast administrations, pension funds, social protection units and local courts.
- On April 7, NGO 'Right to Protection' organized a meeting between protection partners and representatives of Oschadbank to discuss **protection concerns faced by IDPs during the verification process**.
- On April 21, DRC organized a round table on 'Access to Justice and Advocacy' to discuss the **rights of children from NGCA who live in GCA without parents/legal guardians**. The round table highlighted the legal issues faced by conflict-affected children, the status of child victims of armed conflict as well as documentation of juvenile prisoners in NGCA.
- On April 28, the Council of Europe, in co-operation with Donetsk Regional Civil-Military Administration, held a roundtable in Kramatorsk on **challenges in the 'Grey Zone'** as part of the project "Strengthening Human Rights of IDPs in Ukraine".
- On April 28, NGOs 'Slavic Heart' and 'Convictus Ukraine' organized a roundtable on **'Improving Awareness on Prevention of GBV'** in Svyatohirsk.

#### Freedom of Movement

Following protection cluster partners advocacy efforts, on April 14, the State Security Service issued a new Temporary Order on crossing of the contact line containing a number of improvements:

- Unlimited duration of the permits for crossing of the contact line;
- People living in the areas along the contact line will no longer need to apply for a permit, as it will be sufficient to present a passport with residence registration;
- Broader list of documents that children born after 1998 can present to cross the contact line;
- Civil-military administrations in Luhansk and Donetsk regions were tasked with maintenance of the checkpoints within their area of responsibility.

### TRAININGS/EVENTS

- La Strada conducted a training for 30 operators of a police telephone 'hot-line' from Mariupol on identifying and responding to children's needs, child psychology and telephone communication with children living in/near the conflict affected area.
- In April, DRC conducted two workshops for 38 representatives of Children's Affairs Service of Donetsk oblast on two topics: 1) cooperation of authorities and child services on ensuring the monitoring of children's rights in situations of armed conflict; and 2) provision of psychosocial support aimed at stress reduction, burnout prevention and effective communication with clients.
- Protection partners in NGCA conducted **trainings on self-reliance and livelihoods** for 285 people, including 51 pensioners, 21 IDPs, and 131 returnees.
- NRC held a training on 'Standards of IHL; national legislation related to the protection of the rights of IDPs and conflict affected population' in Kramatorsk for 18 representatives of field staff of INGOs working in northern Donetsk region.
- NRC organized a training in Kramatorsk on 'Evidence of damage/destruction violations of HLP rights, and Registration Documents in Activities by Heads of Village (town) Councils' for 25 representatives of village councils and city state administration of Lyman, Sloviansk, Bakhmut, Kostiantynivka, Dobropillia raions and Toretsk area.