

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



© E. Kaplin, an improvised outdoor shower installed in an abandoned playground as a result of water supply cuts in Opytne village, Donetsk region

PROTECTION CONCERNS

- Security situation:** In August 2017, OHCHR recorded 41 conflict-related civilian casualties: 7 killed and 34 injured. This is a **16 % decrease** compared to July 2017 and the lowest monthly number since January 2017.

On August 1, Vodiane village (Donetsk region, GCA) was shelled by a multiple launch rocket system (MLRS) 'Grad'. This was the first recorded case of MLRS use since the end of April 2017.

Fire incidents caused by hostilities and high temperature destroyed at least 209 houses as well as civilian infrastructure. As a result, 3 civilians were killed and 2 civilians were injured. Firefighting activities were complicated due to mine contamination of the affected areas and proximity to the contact line.

- Freedom of movement:** the military has placed restrictions on access to Sopino village (Donetsk GCA), located along the contact line. Since August, only people registered in the village or those, included in a list issued by local authorities, are allowed to enter the village.

- Access to social benefits and pensions:** Persons who have adult children or other relatives, but are not supported by them, cannot receive support from governmental social services, according to Ukrainian legislation.

An increasing number of IDP pensioners who registered the place of permanent residence in GCA face suspension of their pension payments, as regional pension funds require them to obtain/renew their IDP registration. Regional pension funds argue that current legislation creates obstacle to pension payment to persons who de-registered and ceased being IDPs.

The Department of Pension Fund of Stanytsia Luhanska raion can only process physical identification for **2 – 5 pensioners per day**, due to understaffing. Consequently, most pensioners are forced to stay overnight in the queue before the Department.

- Employment:** According to Toretsk City Council, (Donetsk GCA) two coal mines in the city are at risk of closure, because the program on development of mining works for the third quarter of 2017 was not approved by oblast authorities. As these mines are the main employer in the town, their closure would lead to unemployment for about **23,100 people**, or **33%** of the population.

- Access to basic services:** According to Protection Cluster partner monitoring, many settlements along the contact line experience limited water supply. For example, in August, water supply in Krasnohorivka **was reduced by 80%**.

Residents of the Pavlopil village (Donetsk GCA) face difficulties with access to potable water, as the water source is located in close proximity to the contact line and the owner of the water pumps can no longer take responsibility for their maintenance. Humanitarian actors are providing potable water, but this is not sufficient to meet the needs of the population.

Gas supply to Pikuzy village (Donetsk NGCA) remains cut off since July, **affecting 156 vulnerable persons** (86 households). The local authorities suggested that people buy coal for heating and cooking needs; however, most people do not have coal furnaces. This creates risk of potential displacement and further deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the village. One of the solutions proposed by the community is to provide stoves (burzhuyka), but neither the community nor the local administration have the funds available for procurement.

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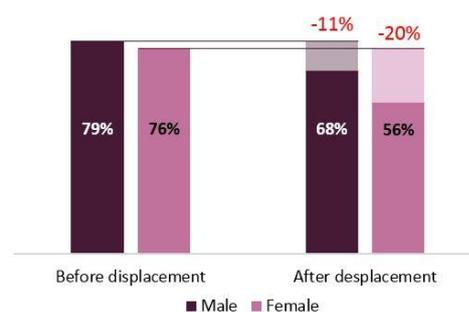
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Employment of IDPs, before and after displacement by sex



Source: IOM National Monitoring System June 2017

HIGHLIGHTS

PROTECTION RESPONSE

- Protection Cluster partner provided **focused psychosocial sessions for 213 elderly people** in NGCA in order to improve psychosocial well-being by reducing stress and decreasing depressive symptoms and anxiety.
- Protection Cluster partner in Donetsk NGCA provided **PSS face-to-face and phone consultations to 112 individuals**, including 17 pensioners, 2 IDPs and 48 returnees on the following issues: depression, career guidance, children and parents relations, stress-resistance and stress-management, aggression prevention, coping with divorce, personal problems.
- NRC ICLA provided **counselling and legal assistance to 267 beneficiaries from NGCA**. The most frequently asked questions were related to obtaining death certificates for persons who died in NGCA; obtaining and restoring internal passports; suspension of pensions and other social benefits; electronic passed for crossing the contact line and obtaining birth certificates for children born in NGCA.
- Right to Protection provided **individual primary and secondary legal assistance** for 2,094 persons (1,516 female\578male). The most often requests were related to social benefits and pensions – 55%; freedom of movement and voluntary return – 15%; IDP registration – 14%; personal documentation – 6%.
- DRC opened an **outdoor playground/sports area** for children, youth and adults in Avdiivka.
- UNHCR partner Proliska completed **three community-based projects** in Donetsk GCA focused on **improving conditions in two kindergartens and one school**.
- HelpAge International distributed **hygiene kits to 200 immobile beneficiaries** in Donetsk and Luhansk regions.
- Polish Humanitarian Action provided **multipurpose cash grant** for over **300 beneficiaries** in Zaporizhzhya region, which can be used for **purchasing medicines and hygiene products**, so that families can save costs to prepare their children to school.
- In January-August 2017, UNFPA/Ukrainian Foundation for Public Health psychosocial support mobile teams provided **psychological assistance to 18,689 GBV survivors** in 5 eastern regions of Ukraine.
- In January - August 2017, IOM provided **grants for vocational training, self-employment or micro-business** to almost **5,500 IDPs** and conflict-affected people in 24 regions of Ukraine.

Only 17% and 22%
of respondents
respectively in Luhansk
and Donetsk GCA were
aware of the government
legal aid hotline

Source: UNDP 'Security and Justice', 2017

ADVOCACY

- IOM released the latest National Monitoring System "[On the Situation of IDPs](#)". The main issues for IDPs were being able to afford rent and utilities, as well as unemployment.
- In Mariupol, DRC facilitated a **roundtable** discussion on "**Housing solutions for IDPs, the conflict-affected and host communities in Ukraine**" with 20 participants from nine organizations, including local councils.
- On August 30, HRMMU met with the CabMin Commissioner for the rights of persons with disabilities to discuss **conflict-related issues directly affecting persons with disabilities**, particularly in relation to freedom of movement and social protection. HRMMU shared a number of guidance notes and materials developed by the humanitarian community, including the Protection Cluster.
- Humanitarian organizations staged a **photo exhibition** in Mariinskyi Park in Kyiv **in order to raise awareness about the millions of people affected by the conflict** in eastern Ukraine.
- R2P prepared a **leaflet for IDPs who were displaced within their own settlement** to inform people how to obtain IDP registration and targeted assistance.
- On August 16, NRC organized a **round table** in Sievierodonetsk on "**Protection of labor rights of IDPs**" for 28 representatives of Ministry of TOT and IDPs in Luhansk oblast, Department of Justice of Luhansk oblast, the tax office of Luhansk oblast, Pension Fund of Luhansk oblast, Luhansk regional state labor service, employment centre, UNHCR and NGOs among participants. The participants discussed problematic aspects of the procedure for confirmation of work experience in NGCA, non-payment of the unified social tax by employees, etc.

Reasons to return and living in the NGCA, %

	March	June
Ownership of property in NGCA and difficulty or inability to pay rent in GCA	78	73
Family reasons	36	45
Lack of employment opportunities in GCA	9	19
Failure to integrate into local community at the place of displacement	9	18
Limited access to social services - health care, education etc.	9	8
Suspension of social payments / pensions	0	3
Other	11	5
No response	3	1

*Note: Respondents could choose more than one option
Source: IOM National Monitoring System June 2017*

TRAININGS/EVENTS

- On 30-31 August, NRC conducted a training in Kreminna for 23 legal officers and attorneys of free secondary legal aid centers of Luhansk and Kharkiv oblastson "**Secondary legal aid for IDPs and conflict-affected population: judicial practice and legal framework**", with the participation of the Luhansk oblast Appeals Court and Territorial Department of Justice of Luhansk oblast.