

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



PROTECTION CONCERNS

- OHCHR in their recent quarterly report noted a continuing and steady trend of hostilities, with severe impact on the civilian population, and both Ukrainian armed forces and the armed groups are responsible for indiscriminate shelling and resulting civilian casualties. Since the start of hostilities and until 6 September at least 7,962 people have been killed, if one is to add the 117 killed during the Maidan protests, it shows that 8,000 persons have been killed in Ukraine in the last year and a half. This is a conservative estimate.
- It is imperative that measures to regulate actors providing humanitarian response are done in line with humanitarian and human rights law. Any administrative constraints limiting access and presence of humanitarian organizations in the Non-Government Controlled Area (NGCA) may narrow the humanitarian space limiting humanitarian action, including protection and human rights monitoring, protection activities such as Psycho Social Support (PSS), mine risk education, legal assistance as well as space for local civil society to operate.
- The restrictions on Psychosocial Support (PSS) in the NGCA jeopardize the provision of crucial psychosocial support to children and caregivers that are receiving psychosocial accompaniment by local NGOs and INGOs. The need for psychosocial support is very high in Luhansk and Donetsk where children are still exposed to violence. Recent surveys revealed high level of psychosocial traumatized stress in 37% of school children.
- Restrictions on mine-risk education in the NGCA affect substantially all children in need within the NGCA and at the contact line. Cluster munitions used in urban and rural areas are blocking access to family allotments and collective farms. The population in these areas is still experiencing the conflict first hand, and need to be aware of the dangers involved, particularly children.
- There are concerns over the return of soldiers with high probability of having Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). They may engage in negative coping strategies including alcohol and drug abuse, aggression and violence. PTSD often remains unaddressed among soldiers. Domestic violence has been reported to be on the rise based on the numbers of calls to hotlines and reports by children in schools of witnessing their fathers display violent behaviors. There are challenges to their reintegration in communities and lack of specialized programs. The Government should put in place adequate reintegration programs while civil society organizations can complement by targeting demobilized families throughout different psychosocial programs; however the resources are limited and fragmented.

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Key Documents:

[Protection Cluster Strategy](#)

[Protection Cluster 3W](#)

[Advocacy Note Freedom of Movement](#)

[Advocacy Note Evacuations](#)

HIGHLIGHTS

- On 25 August, the President signed Decree No. 501/2015 adopting the National Human Rights Strategy. The document outlines the State's priorities in protection of human rights and sets out a roadmap towards 2020. Protection and durable solutions for IDPs, as well as protection of population residing in NGCA feature as strategic priorities.
- The Protection Cluster has developed a guidance document on vulnerability criteria on how to address protection and vulnerability in their work, and highlights aspects to consider in operations to ensure a protection focused humanitarian response in Ukraine GCA and NGCA. The Protection cluster held several thematic meetings, including one on the so called "grey areas" to brainstorm together with partners on definition of this area (geographical, security related, administrative), on the specific protection concerns of persons living in these areas and on key messages based on the concerns. Another thematic meeting was dedicated to the issue of trafficking with a presentation of trends by IOM and discussion with partners on prevention measures, including increase awareness-raising activities.
- For the period 1-31 August, Dombas SOS hotline received 2,516 calls, the majority (23%) coming from Donetsk and Luhansk (NGCA). Ten per cent (10%) of callers from the NGCAs inquired about organisations supporting IDPs. 71% of the callers are women and 45% are pensioners (as per IDP registration). The number of issues concerning the procedure of crossing the contact line, permits, mechanism also decreased although it is still the most frequently asked question. There was a significant 7% increase of the number of inquiries about humanitarian aid provided by NGOs to IDPs. Questions about programs that seek to support IDPs who want to open their own business are also on the rise. People are interested in which areas and regions of Ukraine such programs are active. Citizens who phoned from the occupied territories noted that the biggest problem they name is the provision of medicines.
- A GBV assessment, commissioned by the GBV Sub-cluster, has been initiated and will be rolled out in 5 conflict affected regions in the GCA, while putting the survey on hold in NGCA due to the security situation and the non-availability of referral pathways and services. The survey questionnaire and its methodology were developed through a consultative process. The Ukrainian Centre for Social Reforms will be conducting the survey.
- Inter-agency GenCap advisor for Ukraine facilitated 5 two-day trainings on "gender equality in humanitarian action" in Kiev, Dnipropetrovets'k, Kharkiv, Severodonetsk, and Kramators'k, to equip humanitarian actors with information and tools to better understand how gender dimensions feature in humanitarian contexts, and how to better integrate a gender and protection lens in their work. The majority of participants (84 in total) were protection actors from UN, international NGOs as well as local organisations.
- In August four NGOs KrymSOS, Vostok-SOS, Employment Center of Free People, New Donbas opened the Hub "House of Free People" as a step to unite the efforts of non-governmental organizations and activists working with IDPs in Kyiv. The Hub will provide IDPs with PSS and legal counseling, humanitarian aid and professional advice on employment issues, as well as discuss other important concerns serving as one center for provision of different types of assistance.
- Danish Refugee Council and Right to Protection, in partnership with UNHCR, continued implementation of the "Protection Umbrella" project. A Free Legal Aid Network for IDPs has been established in 20 Regions and a Protection Monitoring and Outreach network in 16 oblasts (including along the contact line), and a Small Grants scheme was launched to support 20 local NGOs and community based organizations in implementing protection focused initiatives. The Free Legal Aid Network offers mobile and office-based legal consultations and unites 6 prominent legal NGOs: 10 April (Desyate Kvitnya), Chernihiv Human Rights Committee, Gorenje Foundation, Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union, Vinnytsia Human Rights Group. The network of R2P and DRC community protection outreach provides information sharing with the affected communities, tailored individual protection assistance to the most vulnerable, and supports community-led protection initiatives with small funds.
- NRC continued to work on the issue of birth registration of children born in NGCA both through courts and Ministry of Justice. In August 2015 the Government approved the draft amendments to the Civil Procedure Code, which provides a simplified procedure for obtaining birth or death certificates for the citizens who live in the NGCA. In the case of child's birth either a parent or other legal representative has the right to go to the GCA and apply to the court in order to establish the fact of child's birth and provide all documents that confirm the birth of the child. The court is obliged to consider the request within 24 hours and make a decision which shall enter into force immediately.
- UNHCR has provided individual protection assistance grants as in-kind targeted support to address acute protection needs of extremely vulnerable IDPs who are in a situation leading to steep marginalization (e.g. acute medical condition un-addressable through public healthcare schemes, threat of eviction, lack of basic amenities, arrangements for disabled, etc.). 100 families were assisted through KrymSOS and Danish Refugee Council in August. Urgent medical assistance (treatment in acute medical conditions, medicines) account for the overwhelming majority of the cases being assisted. Major profiles of beneficiaries: caregivers in large families, persons with specific needs (psychological disorders, sensorial and mobility impairments), elderly persons without family support.
- OHCHR/Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine continued interviewing possible victims of human rights violations in Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Lviv, and Odesa, as well as in the non-Government-controlled city of Donetsk, and also continued monitoring the activity of the working group on judiciary of the Constitutional Commission.