



**UN RESIDENT AND HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR IN UKRAINE, OSNAT LUBRANI**

**STATEMENT ON INJURED WATER WORKERS IN EASTERN UKRAINE**

(KYIV, 11 January 2019) – The UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine, Ms. Osnat Lubrani expresses her concern, as three water workers were injured after their vehicle came under fire on 10 January and appeals for greater protection of civilians and critical infrastructure in eastern Ukraine.

“It is unacceptable that water workers face lethal risks while carrying out their normal duties – ensuring that water continues to flow to millions of people,” Ms. Lubrani says, referring to an increasing number of incidents affecting water workers in eastern Ukraine. “I commend the brave workers who today, despite these unacceptable risks, will continue to operate the pumping station and the nearby Donetsk Filter Station,” she stresses.

The three workers of water company “Voda Donbasu” came under fire while clearing snow on an access road to a major pumping station. The incident, which now brings to total of 11 water workers injured in the last nine months, left one of them seriously injured, while two others sustained minor injuries. Their vehicle was destroyed. Water company “Voda Donbasu” delivers clean water through several pumping and filtration stations to more than 3.5 million people on both sides of the “contact line”.

“Clean water is a human right and in eastern Ukraine is needed, not only to make sure children, women and men, already affected by the active conflict, stay healthy, but also to operate inter-dependent centralised heating facilities, which are critical in the middle of winter,” Ms. Lubrani says.

While no water workers were recorded injured in 2016 and 2017, last year saw a sharp increase in incidents affecting both water workers and facilities. “Shelling and landmines have also greatly impacted water facilities, with 88 incidents recorded in 2018” says Ms. Lubrani, noting that these incidents also led to water supply stoppages on several occasions, affecting millions. “Any targeting of civilian workers or infrastructure, or intentional disruption of access to water supply and heating systems, is a clear violation of International Humanitarian Law,” Ms. Lubrani reiterates. “Obligations to spare civilians and protect these vital critical infrastructures under the international laws must be upheld,” Ms. Lubrani concludes.

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