

HIGHLIGHTS

- Start of school season marked by sporadic clashes
- Winterization efforts scale-up as cold season approaches
- Civilians continue paying the highest price
- Protection concerns continue to impact the most vulnerable
- Humanitarian Response Plan revised amidst increasing needs and limited funding
- Ukraine commemorates the World Humanitarian Day



Fifth grade student Rodion, 11, stands by a window damaged by a stray bullet in a classroom at school No. 2, Marinka, Donetsk province. ©UNICEF Ukraine/2017/Artem Hetman

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Fragile ceasefire marks the start of school year

Millions of students across Ukraine returned to school on 1 September. The once joyful event for thousands of children living in the conflict-torn Donetsk and Luhansk provinces, particularly those along the 'contact line', has long been replaced by fear of insecurity and psychological distress. By the end of June, the conservative estimates of the Education Cluster suggested that some 650,000 students and teachers in more than 3,400 educational facilities suffer from widespread and cumulative impact of the conflict.

On the eve of opening of school year, a recently conducted **assessment** by UNICEF suggests that only in the Government controlled areas (GCA), there are approximately 42,000 school-age children and 290 operational education facilities within the 15 km of the 'contact line'. The assessment concluded that on both sides of the 'contact line' schools remain closed due to impacts of the conflict compounded with multiple factors. In non-Government controlled areas (NGCA) of Donetsk province alone, there are indications that more than 100 schools remain closed due to unrepaired damage to the facilities, risk of continued shelling and population movement. In GCA, the Education Cluster estimates that approximately 25 schools remain closed. Although some schools remain closed, it appears that a majority of students are able to enrol and attend other operational primary and secondary schools. The risks faced by school children along both sides of the 'contact line' are multifaceted. Further to continued daily clashes, there is a significant risk of mine presence and unexploded ordnance. In addition, damage or collapse of infrastructure and public transportation in many locations have led to further isolation of vulnerable communities. This isolation coupled with conflict and economic impacts are affecting the quality of access to education for the most vulnerable children.

In GCA within 15km of 'contact line'
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&
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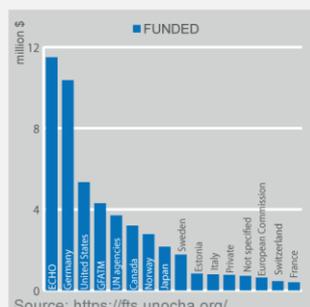
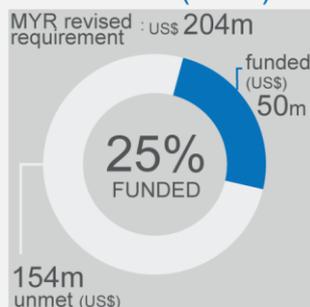


As the conflict continues unabated, parties to the conflict have recognized the necessity to halt clashes to ensure 'safe' return to schools. At the Minsk-led Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) meeting, an agreement was reached for yet another ceasefire, which was enforced on 25 August. This has led to a relative decrease in the number of security incidents in critical areas of concern. However, reports suggest that sporadic local clashes continue to be witnessed in both provinces, leading to an assumption that similar to previous cessation of hostilities, the 'return to school' ceasefire may well be short-lived. In his **statement** issued on 28 August, the UN Secretary-General welcomed the initiative and called for its sustainability, urging all parties to fully abide by its terms to protect the civilians.

Consequences of the conflict for civilians persist

According to OHCHR, at least 41 civilian casualties were verified in August (seven killed and 34 injured), which is a 16 per cent decrease compared to July, and the lowest monthly number of casualties recorded since January 2017. Relative lull in hostilities in August can be attributed by the fact that the number of casualties caused by direct shelling has reduced

FUNDING (2017)



assessment evidences an increased food insecurity in both GCA and NGCA, as some 1.2 million people (up from 620,000 people projected in 2016) were found to be either severely or moderately food insecure. Of this, some 800,000 food insecure people live in NGCA of the two conflict-affected provinces. The Cluster further stresses that, overall, the share of population with poor and borderline levels of food consumption has increased across the board, while the food expenditure basket has seen a reduction, mainly reflecting the increased cost of utilities, which negatively impacted food consumption of some vulnerable groups.



In addition, of concern is the increase in application of negative coping strategies in NGCA from 40 per cent in 2016 to 87 per cent in 2017. The assessment also indicates the direct correlation between food security and unemployment and limited livelihoods opportunities. Finally, the FSA confirms that the most vulnerable groups remain single-headed households with children, elderly, female headed households and households with no active employment.

Fire damages agricultural land and housing

Fire caused by the hot season over the period of July to August has damaged hundreds of hectares of farmland and forestry. The situation in the conflict-affected areas of eastern Ukraine was more severe, as ongoing hostilities further contributed to increase in cases of fire and consequent damage to agricultural land and critical infrastructure, mainly housing. With a worsening **socio-economic and food security situation** in the area, this may have a negative impact, as it may translate into a loss of income for the local economy in the near future. In August alone, field reports suggest that over 750 hectares of agricultural land and forests were affected by fire on both sides of the 'contact line'. These incidents, which were caused by both heat waves as well as direct shelling, reportedly killed at least seven and injured eight civilians. According to the Shelter and NFI Cluster's initial analysis, some 78 houses were damaged in August alone. The work of firefighting brigades was often obstructed by limited access to the areas, including due to the risk of mine presence and ongoing insecurity. Reportedly, one firefighter was killed and two others were injured due to shelling, while extinguishing fire in NGCA of Donetsk province.

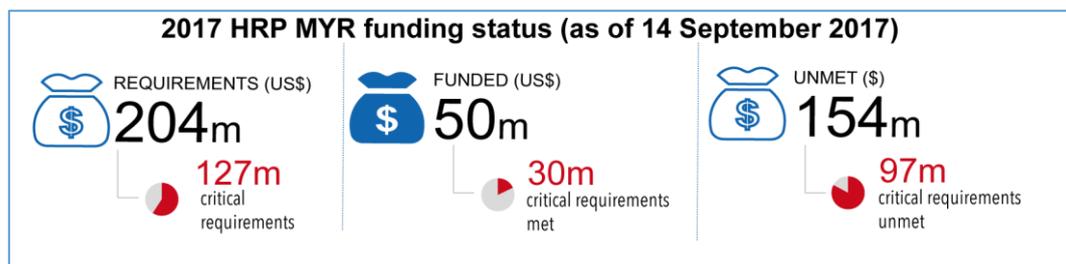
Underfunding leads to cancellation of HRP projects

Revision of response plan: underfunding leads to cessation of critical projects

The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) has concluded the **Mid-Year Review** (MYR) of the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). Cognizant of the very low funding level at mid-year, the MYR has taken a pragmatic and realistic approach to determine what is critically needed for the remainder of 2017. On the one hand, the MYR has prompted an overall increase of the number of people in need from 3.8 to 4 million, due to an increase of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) caseload. On the other, the number of people targeted has slightly decreased, from 2.6 to 2.4 million, prompting a decrease in the overall requirement from US\$214 to \$204 million. The reduction of around US\$10 million is driven predominantly by underfunding, the impact of which not only prevents partners from implementing the planned programmes, but also forces some key partners to cease their operations in Ukraine, cancelling their HRP projects. Other programmatic factors include exclusion of seasonality-sensitive activities and partners' inability to operate in NGCA, due to limited humanitarian access.

PEOPLE IN NEED	
HRP 2017: 3.8M	MYR REVISION: 4.0M
PEOPLE TARGETED	
HRP 2017: 2.6M	MYR REVISION: 2.4M
REQUIREMENTS (US\$)	
HRP 2017: 214M	MYR REVISION: 204M

As of 14 September, of the revised US\$204 requested, only 25 per cent has been funded. A funding gap of US\$154 million needs to be urgently addressed to both jumpstart and sustain the much-needed winterisation support in anticipation of the upcoming harsh and life-threatening winter.



To ensure effective use of available resources, record and recognize the contributions, an appeal has been made to donors and partners to reflect contributions pledged, disbursed and received at <https://fts.unocha.org>.

In the face of these limitations and persistent challenges, the humanitarian community remains committed to stay and deliver, while effectively maximising available resources to respond to the needs of conflict-affected people. Multi-sectoral assistance through in-kind and cash-transfer modalities continued to reach the most vulnerable in both GCA and NGCA. In addition, on 24 August, the 68th convoy of the Russian Federation reportedly arrived to Donetsk city (NGCA). The convoy reportedly included some 700 tons of baby food, books, medical equipment and medicines to be distributed to the most vulnerable in NGCA of Donetsk and Luhansk provinces.

IDP registration refined, but impediments exist

Protection concerns impacting the most vulnerable persist across the board

Improving the process of registration of IDPs at their new place of residence is essential, as it allows them to claim critical state benefits, such as pensions and housing assistance. Since the start of the conflict, many bureaucratic and legislative impediments have created obstacles for IDPs during residence registration process, while efforts to improve the legislative basis continue across all areas. According to the Danish Refugee Council/Danish Demining Group (DRC/DDG) [analysis](#), on 9 August, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine amended the Rules of Registration of Place of Residence, which excludes an IDP certificate from the list of documents, which confirms the registration of place of temporary residence. It is expected that this amendment will help to avoid speculations on the nature of residence of IDPs, be it temporary or permanent. Despite this development, the analysis further suggests that the local authorities still deny registration to IDPs at their permanent addresses, e.g. in NGCA, guided by an argument that the legislation allows to carry out registration only within respective territories for the members of their communities. This means that the local authorities cannot register a person at an address in a city or village other than the one where they function. The Protection Cluster partners continue advocating for amendments to offer these vital documentation services to the conflict-affected people in an easy and simplified manner.

In addition, according to the analysis prepared by Protection Cluster partners, IDPs and people residing in NGCA and Crimea struggle to easily obtain passports. There is a lack of consistent information about the timing required for processing the passport applications. On multiple occasions, IDPs and people residing in NGCA and Crimea were requested to invite relatives or neighbors for verification purposes of the passport applicant, which is challenging as many have been displaced to other regions or cannot travel from NGCA. These bureaucratic processes continue to result in financially cumbersome and frequent delay of the renewal and obtaining of passports.

Steady increase in cases of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is of critical concern

According to the GBV Sub-Cluster, since February 2016, the National 24/7 hotline for GBV survivors received some 20,806 calls. The sub-cluster stresses that some 10 per cent of these calls come from Donetsk and Luhansk provinces, including NGCA. Particularly, more than 5,200 GBV cases were reported, when survivors called to obtain information, and psychological or legal consultations. Of this, some 40 per cent were attributed to sexual and physical violence. As GBV cases increase, the sub-cluster continues to provide targeted assistance to the GBV survivors, despite limited resources. In August alone, some 1,200 survivors obtained psychological and psycho-social assistance, while 24/7 shelters for GBV survivors continue providing safe space accommodation and complex psychological, social and legal support to the GBV survivors.



Ukraine commemorates the World Humanitarian Day

As civilians continuously pay the highest price for the conflict that is not of their making, the humanitarian community in Ukraine, the Government of Ukraine and the affected communities joined efforts to commemorate the **World Humanitarian Day** (WHD), annually marked on 19 August. With an aim to increase awareness of the daily suffering of civilians and the tireless efforts of the humanitarian workers among public, a four-day photo exhibition was held in Kyiv. Two fair events in Kramatorsk (Donetsk province) and Sievierodonetsk (Luhansk province) were held, where national and international organizations mobilized resources to raise the spirit of humanism. All events were guided by the global protection campaign of #NotATarget, advocating for the protection of civilians and the aid workers amidst ongoing conflict, and calling for parties to the conflict to abide by the International Humanitarian Law and human rights principles.

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