

Two people die due to health complications while waiting at the checkpoint

At least 16 civilians, mostly elderly, were treated for health issues while waiting long hours at the entry/exit checkpoints to cross the “contact line”. For two of them, any help came too late and they died, which is most probably due to the fact that in general the checkpoints lack sufficient and easily accessible health facilities, shade as well as cooling spaces. Despite the daily hardships, [1.2 million individual crossings were recorded through the five operational checkpoints in June](#) alone, as people seek access to basic services, try to maintain family ties and obtain social benefits, including pensions.

“After four years, the conflict in eastern Ukraine stretches capacities of millions of people to a breaking point”– ASG/DERC Ms. Ursula Mueller

“We often wait so long, I usually lose count. I usually spend a full day just to make it to the other side,” says Olga. Since 2015, she has crossed the “contact line” at the “Marinka” checkpoint twice a week to check on her grandmother and bring her much-needed medicines.



Civilians wait in line to cross the “Marinka” checkpoint, Valijon Ranoev/OCHA-Ukraine

Insecurity at the checkpoints remains a critical concern, which is mainly compounded due to mortar and sniper activities, whilst the heavy presence of landmines poses additional risk to civilians making this journey on a regular basis.

Water infrastructure targeted 57 times this year



Despite repeated calls for the protection of civilians and critical infrastructure, the Donetsk Filter Station (DFS) has been shelled on 21 occasions since the start of 2018, suspending the water supply for a total of 17 days. On 6 May, the DFS shut down its operations for three consecutive days after shelling had damaged some of its electricity lines. The same incident forced around nine water treatment staff to spend two consecutive nights in the station, as the shelling did not allow them to move. On 17 May, the DFS power lines were damaged yet again, cutting the clean water supply for 345,000 people for another six days.

Overall in May, critical water facilities came under fire on 13 different occasions, which translates into one incident every 48 hours, whilst 10 similar incidents were reported in June. Other infrastructure affected by shelling included the “Dokuchaievsk” Vodokanal, the first lift pumping station of South Donbas Water Pipeline and Horlivka Wastewater Treatment Plant. The WASH Cluster estimates that at least 57 incidents affected water utilities and sanitation facilities in the first six months of 2018.

First Security Council Statement on humanitarian impact of hostilities in eastern Ukraine

On 6 June, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) issued a [Presidential Statement](#) on Ukraine, where members “expressed grave concern about the recent deterioration of the security situation in eastern Ukraine and its severe impact on the civilian population”.

“Grave concern on severe impact of the conflict on civilians” - first ever UN Security Council Statement with reference to humanitarian impact of the conflict in eastern Ukraine



Assistant-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs & Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator Ursula Mueller/United Nations

The Statement also “emphasised the need for scaling up efforts to alleviate suffering of the civilian population.” It came after the 29 May [UNSC briefing on Ukraine](#), which was held for the first time since February 2017. The UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, the Chief Monitor of the Organization for Security and Cooperation Special Monitoring Mission (OSCE SMM) and the Assistant-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator (ASG/DERC) provided updates, while all Security Council members made interventions. The participants highlighted the deteriorating

security situation in eastern Ukraine and the worsening humanitarian impact on civilians. The ASG/DERC [noted](#) the dire humanitarian situation, which has stretched millions of Ukrainians to a breaking point. The ASG also made a reference to the call by the UN Secretary-General and 80 Member States for enhanced protection of civilians.

Positive Legislation Developments

The Kyiv Administrative Court of Appeal has overwhelmed a number of Cabinet of Ministers (CMU) provisions, which mandated verification of IDPs’ current locations for the purpose of granting and maintaining IDP pensions and social benefits. The Court has stated that the Cabinet “did not provide anti-discrimination expertise on the Resolutions prior to their adoption as required by Law”. The Court, according to the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) legal analysis, recognised the fact that these provisions indirectly discriminated IDPs on territorial and displacement grounds. According to the Court, the Law only requires IDPs to provide their place of residence, not their current location, and therefore there is no obligation to update the State on their absence at their declared place of residence.

Ukrainians living in the non-Government controlled areas (NGCA) have been able to receive pensions only if they travel to the government-controlled area (GCA) to register as an internally displaced person (IDP) and undergo a verification procedure. Over time, this linkage between IDP registration and eligibility for pension has disenfranchised different groups of people, all holding the legitimate right to receive a pension. According to OHCHR, over 600,000 people have therefore lost access to their pensions since the outbreak of the hostilities.

The Cabinet of Ministers Amends a Number of Governmental Resolutions on IDP Access to Pension and Social Benefits

The CMU adopted an important [Resolution](#) on access to Pensions and Social Benefits by the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). According to the DRC’s legal analysis, the Resolution introduces a number of positive amendments to existing regulations, with a summary of key changes below:

- Children of IDPs, born after the escalation of hostilities in eastern Ukraine in April 2014, can now be considered as IDPs and are therefore eligible for state benefits.
- IDP students of a certain age are now entitled to monthly benefits of UAH 1,000 (almost US\$40) during their time of study, which is a substantial increase.
- IDPs who receive social payments and pensions through the national post and cannot take care of themselves (people with heavy disabilities and other people with a relevant medical certificate) are not required to physically go to the “Oschadbank” – an issuing bank. The post officer will do the so-called identification, when delivering the money.

- Children of a certain age, who have a passport and were added to the so-called unified IDP register, can now obtain an IDP certificate regardless of the place of residence indicated in their Identification Documents.

Cabinet of Minister Resolution Removes the Requirement of Rental Contract for Accessing IDP Housing Subsidies

On 27 April, the CMU adopted Resolution No. 329 heavily amending the rules for housing subsidy entitlement. Housing subsidies (also known as ‘utility subsidies’) are granted to vulnerable social groups whose income is not sufficient enough to cover the utility costs. According to DRC’s legal analysis, IDPs were previously required to submit rental contracts to access such benefit. Therefore, many IDPs were deprived of the benefit, as they were unable to obtain formal rental contracts from their landlords. The Resolution has now removed such a requirement and replaced it with the condition to submit an inhabitant’s declaration instead.

Although, impact of these latest legislative changes is yet to be seen, this is still a positive development since accessing social benefits, pensions and essential services, including housing, among other needs, is one of the critical challenges, which IDPs and affected communities face daily.

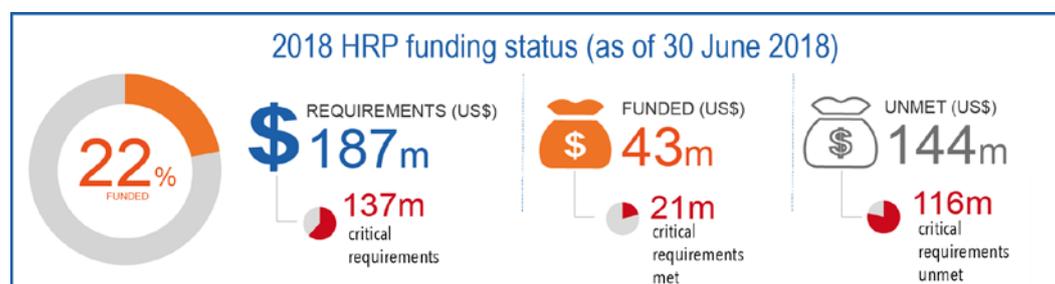
Urgent funding needed for critical humanitarian operations

Humanitarian agencies reach the most vulnerable men, women and children with much-needed assistance and protection services on both sides of the “contact line”. However, the lack of required funds challenges humanitarian activities. As of 30 June¹, only 22 per cent of the required US\$187 million for the [Humanitarian Response Plan](#) were funded. Halfway through 2018, the 81 per cent funding gap means that many of the seasonal critical projects remain unimplemented, either fully or partially. Some of the clusters, such as Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) have received less than 10 per cent of the required funds. More funding is urgently needed to maintain critical humanitarian operations on both sides of the “contact line”.

The Russian Federation informed OCHA New York that it dispatched two convoys reportedly carrying 800 MTs of baby food, educational kits, medicine and rescue equipment² to Donetska and Luhanska oblasts (NGCAs) on 24 May and 28 June.

In order to ensure effective use of available resources and record and recognise the contributions, donors and partners should reflect their contributions pledged, disbursed and received at <https://fts.unocha.org>.

2018 Humanitarian Response Plan – a 78 per cent funding gap needs to be urgently addressed



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¹At the time of publishing the funding stood at 27 per cent as of 13 August

²OCHA reports on what has been communicated in New York, but is not in a position to verify this information.