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## HIGHLIGHTS

- Humanitarians mark World Humanitarian Day
- Drop in civilian casualties, despite active hostilities
- Crossing the “contact line” - a mounting challenge for millions
- IDPs continue to face challenges to access essential services
- A lifeline for pensioners, as Court rules unlawful termination of pensions
- Humanitarian Response Plan is only 30 per cent funded



## World Humanitarian Day – Ukraine joins the world to call for increased protection of civilians

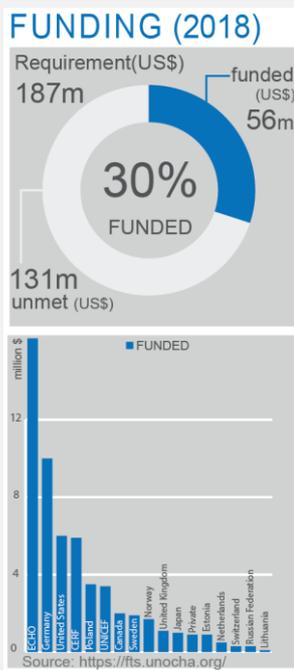
For over four years, hostilities in eastern Ukraine continue unabated. Shelling, small-arm fire and landmine contamination kill and maim civilians, and pose deadly threat to millions of people every single day. Critical civilian structures are damaged, disrupting access to lifesaving services, such as water and sanitation systems and hospitals.

On World Humanitarian Day (WHD), Ukraine joined the global campaign [#NotATarget](#). Hundreds of people gathered in Sievierodonetsk in Luhanska oblast and in Svitlodarsk in Donetsk oblast to mark the occasion, including humanitarian workers and local authorities. Their main message was simple: civilians, aid workers and critical civilian structures must not be a target. The events included educational and recreational activities for children and adults, where humanitarians talked about the impact of the crisis in eastern Ukraine and their work to reverse the deprivation of civilians trapped in active hostilities.

Marking the WHD, the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator, Ms. Osnat Lubrani, issued a [statement](#), where she appealed for a full and immediate respect for the international humanitarian law to protect the millions of civilians in eastern Ukraine who have not seen much but insecurity, deprivation and displacement. With the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan less than 30 per cent funded, Ms. Lubrani called on the international community to urgently upscale their support to help humanitarians alleviate the suffering of millions of Ukrainian men, women and children.

[World Humanitarian Day](#) is observed every year on 19 August to pay tribute to aid workers who risk their lives delivering humanitarian assistance and to rally support for people affected by crises around the world. It commemorates the day in 2003 when 22 people lost their lives in an attack on the UN offices in Baghdad.

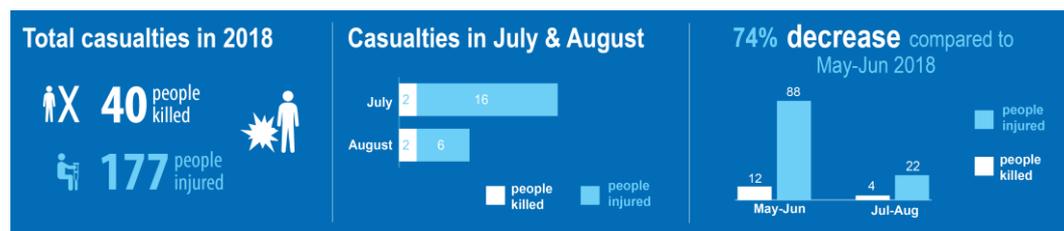
A social media campaign was also launched, where the humanitarian community in Ukraine joined the [living petition #NotATarget](#), ahead of the September General Assembly in New York.



## A drop in number of civilian casualties

A ceasefire was introduced to allow civilians to harvest in July. A second ceasefire followed at the end of August, so boys and girls in eastern Ukraine could go back to school safely. Hostilities however, continued and damaged critical structures, including housing and water supply systems, and threatened the safety of millions of men, women and children. Despite

frequent shelling, the number of civilian casualties actually declined from 18 in July, to 8 in August – one of the lowest total so far in 2018, according to OHCHR.



Whilst there was a notable decrease in civilian casualties during the reporting period, nothing takes away the cost that each family affected is forced to pay due to the conflict. Larisa<sup>1</sup>, a resident of a ‘contact line’ village, describes her life after she lost her son to shelling as **“worse than a nightmare... unimaginable pain that I would never ever wish to anyone...even to my worst enemy”**.

Since the hostilities began over four years ago, more than 3,000 civilian lives have already been lost, with almost 9,000 more injured. Behind these numbers, there are thousands of stories similar to Larisa’s, causing life-long scars. Urgent action is required to protect the millions of Ukrainian men, women and children living on both sides of the “contact line”.

## Record number of civilians cross the “contact line”



*Behind every number, there are real lives and unique stories of ordinary men, women and children*

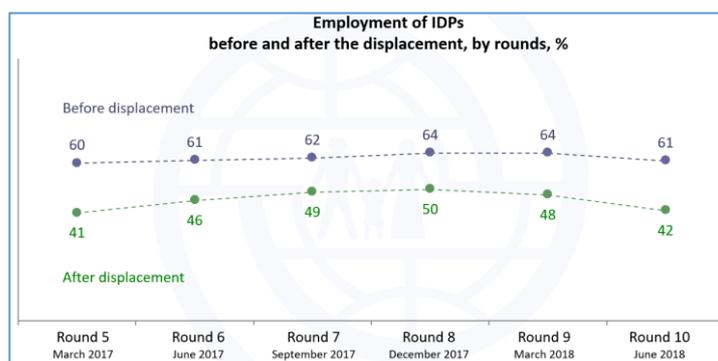
The “contact line”, which divides the conflict-affected areas, stretches over 420 kilometres. With only five official checkpoints for civilians to cross both ways, their protection and the right to movement are one of the most pressing concerns. Over 1.3 million civilian crossings were registered in August alone, a record since late 2015.

Although the checkpoints have been up and running for over three years, crossing the “contact line” today is still a gruelling experience. Insufficient medical facilities, tents – critical during extreme heat in summer as well as cold in winter – and water supply systems at all checkpoints are coupled with extreme insecurity due to occasional shelling, sniper-fire or landmine contamination. While some checkpoints are being improved, including with additional crossing facilities for civilians, the men, women and children are facing significant challenges to maintain their family ties and to access markets, hospitals and pensions. For example, on 19 July, a 79-year-old male died while waiting to cross the “contact line” due to health complications. Unfortunately, these cases are not unique, and occur too often.

## Uprooted: the displaced face economic and social challenges

New data collected by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) shows that the employment situation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) deteriorates. In June, only 42 per cent of IDPs surveyed were employed. This is a 6 per cent decrease from March 2018, when data was collected for the previous survey. IDPs have also witnessed their average income decrease since December 2017. By June 2018, it had fallen to less than UAH 2,100, or US\$77, per month. This is less than the national subsistence level calculated by the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine (MoSP), which stood at more than UAH 3,300 in June 2018.

<sup>1</sup> Name changed to protect identity



IDPs struggle to access health care due to medicine and services costs; one third of the IDPs have not seen a doctor in over a year.

The MoSP estimates that some 1.5 million people are internally displaced across the country. At the

end of 2017, the Government approved the “Strategy of Integration of Internally Displaced Persons and Implementation of Long-Term Solutions to Internal Displacement until 2020”. Whilst IDPs’ access to various state benefits has slightly improved, they still face challenges to find a home or a job, and to access essential services, such as health care.

### A lifeline for thousands of elderly people unable to receive pensions

After a lengthy legal process on 4 September, the Grand Chamber of the Supreme Court ruled in favour of an internally displaced person whose pension had been terminated earlier due to burdensome logistical and legal requirements established by the Cabinet of Ministers.

Since June 2016, these procedures force the residents of the non-Government controlled areas (NGCA) to physically travel to the Government controlled areas (GCA) to register themselves as internally displaced and go through a verification process every now and then to obtain their pensions. This process meant that many, who are unable to travel due to their physical condition, lack of resources and other reasons, were simply denied access to their hard-earned entitlements. According to [UNHCR](#), less than half of the 1.2 million people claiming a pension in the NGCA in August 2014 were still doing so in July 2018. Whilst the decision of the Court is a unique case, it should serve as a lifeline and help hundreds of thousands of people restore access to their pensions.

### More than 700,000 vulnerable Ukrainians received aid

**“Thank you for this. I would not have survived without humanitarian aid,”** says Mariia, a displaced elderly, now living in Toretsk (Donetska oblast), referring to the support she received from humanitarians recently. More than 700,000 vulnerable men, women and children on both sides of the “contact line” received some form of assistance, such as housing and non-food items support, medication, water and sanitation, schooling or vital protection services. This analysis comes after the humanitarians issued an [update](#), covering the response efforts for the first six months of 2018.

In the last two months, humanitarians also delivered emergency aid and critical equipment to restore access to essential services. In these two months, 12 humanitarian convoys were facilitated through the “contact line” to reach the vulnerable men, women and children in need with vital assistance.

The Russian Federation informed OCHA New York that they dispatched two convoys to Donetska and Luhanska oblasts (NGCAs) reportedly carrying some 1,000 tons of baby food, medicines and medical supplies<sup>2</sup>.

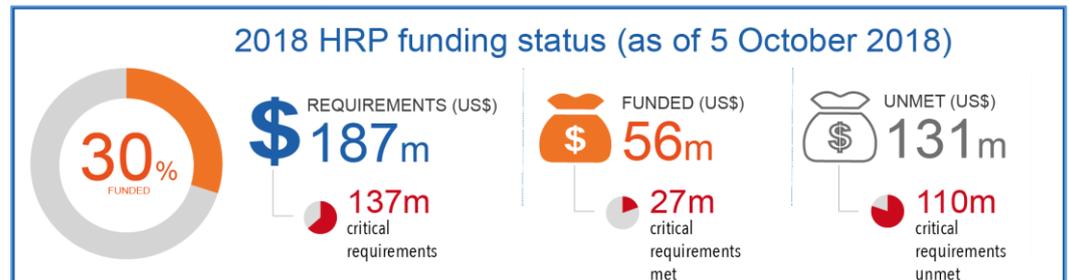
*More than 700,000 Ukrainian civilians received vital humanitarian assistance and protection services*

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

## A 70 per cent funding gap challenges operations

Despite repeated calls to increase funding, eight months into 2018, the Humanitarian Response Plan remains significantly underfunded. As of 5 October, only 30 per cent (or US\$56 million) of the requested \$187 million had been received. Urgent support from the international community is needed to scale up humanitarian operations ahead of the winter months, further deepening people's vulnerability.

*Urgent need to address the 70 per cent funding gap to help 2.3 million Ukrainian civilians*



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