Highlights

- The crisis in Eastern Ukraine escalates with increasingly violent clashes and casualties reported. The situation is particularly tense in Donetsk Oblast, especially in Slavyansk city.

- UNICEF launches a rapid assessment of the impact of the crisis on children in Donetsk Oblast.

- UNICEF delivers hygiene kits for displaced families and ECD kits for children.

- During the month of April, a UNICEF supported national hotline for children receives 1,378 calls, an analysis of which indicates increased levels of anxiety at the current situation by children.

- Challenges remain in the provision of government assistance to IDPs

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1 The Donetsk region number of children aged 0-17. Source: Department of the Social protection of the Population, Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine triangulated with UNHCR and Civic Sector data.

2 The Kharkiv region number of children aged 0-17. Source: Department of the Social protection of the Population, Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine triangulated with UNHCR and Civic Sector data.

3 The Luhansk region number of children aged 0-17. Source: Department of the Social protection of the Population, Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine triangulated with UNHCR and Civic Sector data.

4 These are the Eastern regions covered: Luhansk, Donetsk, Kharkiv, regions bordering with Russia. Children 0-17.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Overview
As armed clashes and confrontations escalate in Eastern Ukraine, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on 24 April, 2014 issued a note of deep concern “about continued violence in eastern Ukraine, which has led to loss of life, further instability and which is contributing to a climate of fear and anxiety”. UNICEF rapid assessments indicate that children and young people in the east are being impacted psychosocially. There are growing concerns that education is being disrupted in some of the more tense locations. Long lines of cars are reported queuing at checkpoints established for the exit and entry into Crimea at times up to 7-10 km long.

The outflow of people from Crimea seeking temporary or permanent residence in mainland Ukraine continues on a small scale. The overall number of IDPs who have arrived from Crimea stands at 7,200 (UNHCR, 29.04.). Regions, which in the past had high numbers of IDPs such as Lviv, are now discouraging new arrivals.

Inflation, a sliding local currency, increasing commodity prices and a reduction in government social spending is putting further financial stress on families and vulnerable children adding to the large pool of people at an increased risk of falling into poverty.

Routine immunization coverage has dropped to staggeringly low rates in recent years. The current crisis puts immunization across the country under further pressure in terms of resources and access. UNICEF is advocating with the Government of Ukraine to prioritise immunization as a key health intervention. Especially worrisome is the low level of protection against poliomyelitis among children under one year. Currently less than 50% of under-one year olds are immunized with three doses of polio vaccine (2012 MICS), which puts Ukrainian children at an imminent risk of an outbreak of polio.

UNICEF in Ukraine remains concerned about the situation unfolding, below the threshold of an international humanitarian crisis, but with significant impact on children. In the absence of donor commitment to provide emergency assistance, the country is struggling with mobilizing funding for assistance to children arriving from Crimea, as well as those living in the centre of unrest.

Humanitarian Needs
UNICEF Field Monitors continue to monitor newly arriving IDPs in Southern and Western Ukraine, in particular children with special needs. They report access to school and pre-school education for Crimean Tatar children in temporary facilities remains of concern and is being addressed by a UNICEF partner NGO in Vinnytsya. The Monitors are now also reporting cases of discrimination by some members of local communities against the displaced families. Access to cash and social benefits is an ongoing problem for many IDPs, as processes are handled by authorities with varying levels effectiveness in different regions. Reimbursement for the rent of temporary accommodation in sanatoriums and summer camps by local governments is a major issue. So far, civil society organizations have been covering most of the costs.

In Eastern Ukraine UNICEF has identified possible psychosocial issues among children in response to the severity of the violence and fear. UNICEF Field Monitors report occasional ad-hoc closures of schools in Donetsk Oblast. In Slovyansk, the schools that are operating are experiencing low attendance of pupils because parents are concerned about allowing their children to go to school.

Humanitarian leadership and coordination
UN agencies continue to fine-tune contingency planning based on the changing scenarios in country with support of OCHA.

**Summary Analysis of Programme response**

UNICEF’s main response has been to closely monitor the impact on children of the fast paced developments as well as supporting and monitoring the needs of children from displaced families located in different regions of Ukraine. UNICEF Field Monitors are active on the ground and provide weekly reports to the CO. UNICEF initiated this week a rapid assessment of psychosocial needs of children in Donetsk Oblast. A research company has been selected and the assessment will be conducted through individual interviews and focus groups discussions, covering 200 children.

During the month of April, a UNICEF supported national hotline for children (LaStrada) received 1,378 calls from children all over Ukraine. An analysis shows there is significant stress and anxiety among children who are struggling to comprehend developments and are witnessing increasing level of TV and media images of violence.

UNICEF is monitoring and advocating with government about the impact of austerity on vulnerable families and children, in particular of the austerity conditions as part of a pending IMF rescue package.

UNICEF is working with an NGO in Vinnytsya Oblast to provide psychosocial support to 78 children and 70 women through both individual and group counselling sessions. The NGO also conducts master classes and development lessons for children in order to compensate the lack of interaction with children outside the temporary accommodation centers and gaps in their schooling. Information materials promoting vaccination for Islamic IDPs, and materials for doctors in host communities have being developed and will be disseminated through local partners and at health centers, where vaccines are administered.

Governmental and non-governmental partner organization as well as UNHCR in Lviv and Vinnytiya continue to supply hygiene kits to IDP families identified as needing them by UNICEF Field Monitors. In Kherson oblast, infant hygiene kits are provided to arriving IDP families at the checkpoint close to Crimea.

**Supply and Logistics**

UNICEF delivered and provided following kits to displaced families:

- 10 family kits delivered to Vinnitsa
- 20 family kits delivered to Lviv
- 20 ECD kits delivered to Vinnitsa
- 20 ECD kits delivered to Lviv
- 5 ECD kits delivered to Odessa

One ECD kit is expected to be utilised by 10 children.

**Next SitRep: 16 May 2014**

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