In Ukraine IDP children including these two girls from Donetsk oblast are in need of urgent psychosocial support as well as basic hygiene supplies.

**Highlights**

- Ukrainian Parliament adopted the law on the rights and freedom of IDPs on 20 October 2014. The law provides framework for IDP registration so that they can enjoy their rights as Ukrainian citizen and it prepares for durable solutions to displacement.

- State Emergency Service (SES) reports the total number of internally displaced persons (IDP) at 442,219 as of 31 October. At least one third of them are children.

- According to UNOCHA, Ukraine’s pharmaceutical supply is on the verge of collapse, while the Ministry of Health has called for support to replenish life-saving essential medicines.

- UNICEF monitors report that as of 28 October the majority of schools in Donetsk are closed due to continuous shelling.

- UNICEF has launched a project in eastern Ukraine, which will reach out to over 400 school psychologists to help them work directly with children suffering from high level of stress.

- UNICEF collaborates with OCHA to improve oblast level sector coordination in Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhia and Kharkiv. In these oblasts, UNICEF collaborates with local partners in child protection and WASH to widen coverage of UNICEF’s humanitarian assistance to the crisis’ affected children.

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1The 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.

2The 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.

3The Luhans 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.

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

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

The continued shelling and ceasefire violations continue to affect children’s safety and wellbeing. Further damage to Ukraine’s infrastructure is reducing the state’s ability to care for the most vulnerable and impacting children’s schooling. The State Emergency Service (SES) reports that 442,219 people have been internally displaced in Ukraine as of 31 October. At least 3,724 have been killed and 9,205 wounded in Eastern Ukraine as of 21 October according to OHCHR and WHO.

However, significant progress has been made in ensuring IDPs have access to services. On 20 October, the Ukrainian Parliament adopted the IDP law, creating a legal framework to provide assistance for the humanitarian needs of IDP children and their caregivers.

The country’s health system is increasingly fractured, unable to respond to daily needs and Ukraine’s pharmaceutical supply is on the verge of collapse with almost no medicines available. There is a critical need for pediatric ARV medicines and vaccines. In the area of education, the majority of schools in Donetsk are closed due to continuous shelling. However, most schools and kindergartens remain open in Luhansk. The water and sanitation situation is showing some improvements. In government controlled areas water is now available. However, thousands of people are living in bomb shelters with no access to water, hygiene, sanitation, or food and the controlling of biological contamination remains a priority for the humanitarian community. There is increasing tension being reported between host communities and IDPs. With winter just around the corner, UNICEF is working closely with partners on the ground to ensure that IDP needs are met.

UNICEF is pleased to note the UNILEVER’s CEO visit to Ukraine where the joint campaign has been implemented to mobilize funds for children and families in need. We continue to advocate for the urgent support from donors to turn funding pledges into reality.

Adoption of IDP law
UNICEF welcomes the adoption of the IDP law but continues to be concerned by the lack of human resources and capacity of the local authorities to enforce the legislation, as well as insufficient budget support. In brief, the law:
- Provides simplified procedures for IDP registration so that they can enjoy their rights as Ukrainian citizens.
- Helps prepare for durable solutions to displacement, which might entail either settling into jobs, schools, and homes in another part of the country or voluntarily return to previous locations of residence.
- IDPs and IDP children now can legally claim their rights to entitlements from the state.

However, UNICEF has made recommendations to ensure the effective implementation of the IDP law, including:

- The need to raise people’s awareness on the new law, and the rights and services they are potentially entitled to.
- The capacity of the Ministry of Social Policy (MoSP) should be strengthened to endure speedy and effective registration of IDPs under the new law.

The MoSP has established a working group for the development of the national plan of action on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child with a focus on displaced children as a key vulnerable group whose rights need to be protected with the support from UNICEF.

Health
UNOCHA reports that due to financial and other constraints the procurement of vaccines and medicines by the state and oblasts has not been carried out on time. Among the needed medicines are those for the treatment of TB, HIV, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, newborn diseases and congenital diseases.

Disposable materials for HIV testing of newborns in all regions of Ukraine ran out in September. The current stock of pediatric medicines covers needs until October-November 2014. In some regions, children now receive crushed adult tablets, which could lead to inadequate dosing. Khmelnytska oblast is practically out of stock of HIV diagnostic tests for pregnant women. All other regions have sufficient stock of the test until January 2015. Access to HIV testing for pregnant women in Luhansk oblast is extremely limited. Pregnant women from Donetsk oblast are having tests done on time. Children born to HIV positive mothers in Donetsk and Luhansk oblast have not had early HIV testing since May-July 2014. This could lead to belated diagnosis of HIV-infection and consequently to belated treatment. The Global Fund has agreed to reprogram their budget in order to cover urgent needs in ART and reduce the potential gap in the therapy of HIV/AIDS patients.
Education

UNICEF monitors report that as of 28 October the majority of schools in Donetsk are closed due to continuous shelling. Most schools and kindergartens remain open in Luhansk. After visiting Novoazovsk, UNICEF monitor reports that 14 out of 19 schools and 13 out of 19 kindergartens are working.

According to UNICEF field monitors in Kharkiv, some IDPs feel pressured to return home due to threats that their homes in areas of active fighting will be taken over by the armed groups. While UNICEF continues to verify this information, as of 20 October, the Kharkiv Regional Education Department reported a small decrease in the total number of IDP children in schools. UNICEF with Education sector colleagues are looking into the actual causes.

At least five kindergartens and seven schools were damaged by shelling in Makivka and 30 educational institutions were damaged in Horlivka, Donetsk oblast. Many children from Donetsk, Dzerzhynsk, Illovaysk, Shakhtarsk, Illovaysk, Volnovaha, and Yasynovata are arriving in Sloviansk from areas of active fighting without proper school supplies.

According to a national toll-free hotline for children run by NGO La Strada Ukraine and supported by UNICEF, IDPs are facing the following challenges: lack of acceptance in schools and kindergartens for IDP children; difficulty for IDP teaching professionals to find work as teachers; questions related to allowances for IDP students and status of “temporary” students; requirements to attend school in Donetsk and Luhansk oblast; needs for employment and payment for housing. UNICEF continues to work together with the Ministry of Education and provide recommendations to ensure the rights of children and young people to education.

WASH

According to a recent UNICEF WASH assessment in government-controlled areas, the situation is improving. Water is now available in most areas visited by the mission; however, the quality of drinking water is of major concern. People are either buying bottled water or boiling it before they drink. Although the water supply system is operational as of 20 October in Dobropillya, Krasnoarmiisk, Kramatorsk, and Vuhledar, local authorities are worried about further damage to the system in case of renewed fighting.

Although as of 23 October the power supply line for Donetsk pump and filtering station was restored, Debaltseve and Kirovskoje receive only 50% of needed water. Torez city receives only 30% of the water it needs, while Dokuchaevsk is still without water. UNICEF field monitors in Donetsk have reported that thousands of people are living in bomb shelters with no access to water, hygiene, sanitation, or food. In mid-November UNICEF has distributed over 500 hygiene kits in Donetsk city to ease the situation of those affected. The procurement is currently in place for the next stock of hygiene supplies as well as drinking water to be delivered in the next few weeks. The focus should now be on controlling biological contamination through household treatment options and awareness raising campaigns.

IDP centers require additional toilet facilities to ensure minimum standards. The provision of hygiene kits will ease the burden, especially for vulnerable families, such as those with many children, single mothers and the unemployed.

Provision of hygiene kits in schools with high IDP intake is also an area for immediate response for WASH partners.

UNICEF Field monitor in Kharkiv met with the Chief Sanitary Doctor of the Kherson oblast. According to him, more than 50% of the centralized water supply sources do not meet the requirements of sanitary rules and norms in the majority of settlements.

Child protection

UNICEF Field Monitor received information that there are children fighting in the conflict area. UNICEF is currently trying to verify this information.

Civil society representatives pointed out at the lack of clear decision-making procedures regarding IDPs situation, which is causing tensions in some communities. The lack of preschool spaces continues to be a critical issue for IDP boys and girls and their families and generates tension amongst host communities. Key response priorities for UNICEF and partners in the region include psychosocial support, working to support IDPs/ host communities, financing of medical support.

Interagency Coordination and Partnerships

On 30-31 October UNOCHA conducted a workshop on Strategic Response Plan (SRP) development. UNICEF is leading on two sectors, Education and WASH and is contributing to Protection and Health sectors. SRP will be presented in Geneva on 8 December. UNICEF has completed the final draft of Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) Work Plan. The overarching aim of the plan is family unity and wellbeing, under which falls the prevention and response to family
UNICEF has participated in regional field coordination meetings together with OCHA in Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kharkiv. UNICEF collaborates with OCHA to improve oblast level sector coordination in these oblasts and continues to identify local partners in child protection and WASH sectors to help widen UNICEF’s humanitarian assistance to the crisis’ affected children. Three field-based Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) coordination hubs have been established in Zaporizhzhia, Kharkiv, and Dnipropetrovsk in collaboration with OCHA.

Summary Programme Response

Education
UNICEF has finalised the plan for the distribution of educational supplies to 12,566 IDP children in Kherson, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Odesa, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk and Luhanks oblasts. The Ministry of Education and Science together with UNICEF has defined the emerging needs of children in Donbas region to ensure smooth functioning of the education facilities over the winter period. The most pressing needs are clothes and boots for IDP school children and power generators for schools, education supplies and furniture. This information is shared with the Education sector members.

UNICEF distributed 140 education bags to children from Luhansk who participated in a camp for IDP children in Lviv oblast, organized in cooperation with the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Social Policy.

WASH
UNICEF visited governmental-controlled areas in eastern Ukraine to assess urgent WASH needs and explore areas of cooperation and partnership. The assessment has revealed that there are very few NGOs currently working in WASH in Ukraine. UNICEF is looking for partners who have capacity and experience in WASH to work in the conflict affected areas.

A detailed sector assessment is required in the conflict-affected areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

Child Protection
4,622 calls were received to UNICEF supported hotline for the month of October. More than 150 IDP children and caregivers have received psychosocial support through group and individual counselling by UNICEF partners in the field.

UNICEF has launched a project in eastern Ukraine, which will reach out to over 400 school psychologists to help them work directly with children suffering from high level of stress. The psychologists will be trained, coached and supervised and UNICEF has reached an agreement with the MoES to ensure that psychosocial response is the priority for their work in schools reaching children and their families. Initial training and planning has begun for the 20 regional trainers in Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv.

Health
UNICEF together with Ministry of Health of Ukraine launched an information campaign to raise awareness on the risk of polio amongst mothers and the need for vaccination against it. The campaign is rolled out nationally and includes outdoor advertising, digital promotion and posters in all children health facilities. UNICEF continues to advocate for funding to address the immediate need of IPV and OPV vaccines in the context of high risk of polio outbreak in Ukraine. Also, UNICEF with partners is providing technical support to the Government of Ukraine to enable systematic changes in forecasting and procurement of vaccines.

In order to prevent the consumption of infant formula among IDP children, UNICEF has developed information materials on breastfeeding in emergencies. The materials will be disseminated within baby/family kits in the IDP accommodation centers. There is some evidence of distribution of infant formula to families with IDP children.

UNICEF monitors have reported that pregnant women often face challenges with access to safe delivery services, UNICEF is therefore launching a process for the procurement of emergency health kits and midwifery kits designated for health facilities and WHO mobile units.

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