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Ukraine

**Special Update:
Deterioration of
Security Situation in
Eastern Ukraine**

unicef 

Highlights

- The situation along the 'contact line' has been deteriorating. During the period from 27 January and 3 February, the number of affected people in Avdiivka and critical areas on both sides of the 'contact line' has jumped from 17,000 to approximately 1.8 million;
- UNICEF is providing immediate life-saving WASH support (i.e. trucked water, hygiene kits, etc.) to the most vulnerable people in Avdiivka, based on a projected caseload of 20,000 people for the next three months;
- Coupled with the escalated conflict, harsh winter conditions have seriously affected the livelihoods of thousands of people in eastern Ukraine. UNICEF has prepared emergency winterization response to 20,000 people, including 4,000 children, who remain along the 'contact line'.
- In view of the seriousness of the situation and within the 2017 HAC, the CO urgently requires \$3,500,000 for multi-sector response of which \$2,250,000 will focus on ensuring the continuity of emergency safe water supply for 500,000 people for 3 months.

**27 January – 3 February
2017**

2,500
of children affected in Avdiivka

17,000
of people affected in Avdiivka
(Voda Donbasa, January 2017)

1,800,000
of people affected overall by
disruption of water supplies

250,000
of children along both sides of the
'contact line'

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Since 27 January, the sharp escalation in fighting along the 'contact line' in eastern Ukraine has had significant humanitarian consequences with the reported deaths of 7 civilians and 41 injured in addition to major damage to water and electricity infrastructure. The disruption of water supply systems, on which centralised heating is depending, is of great concern while temperatures are predicted to remain at -17 degrees C in the coming days. Overall, 1.8 million people, including 250,000 children, are affected by disruption of water supply in areas along both sides of the 'contact line' and face serious health risks should heating systems be stopped altogether. Considering the scale of the damage, a ceasefire is urgently needed for several days for electrical repairs, followed by water pipeline repairs. In addition, the risk of damage to chemical plants, mines and sewage canals pumping stations situated in the triangle around Avdiivka, Yasynuvata and Donetsk, may expose people to additional environmental hazards. The situation along the 'contact line' is rapidly deteriorating: over the period of a week, the number of affected people has increased from 17,000 to 1.8 million.



On 30 January, the Donetsk Filter Station (DFS) stopped working due to shelling for 48 hours, which damaged power lines. As of 3 February, it has still not been possible to make repairs, affecting up to 400,000 people, who receive water supplied by DFS. The Verhnikalmiuske Filter Station (VFS) situated in the non-government controlled area (NGCA) of Donetsk is now providing the water supply in the interim. Power lines to Avdiivka town and its neighboring coke plant were also shelled, leaving up to 17,000 residents of Avdiivka, without water and heating. On 1 February, shelling near VFS cut its electricity supply, resulting in a 24-hour discontinuation of the water supply to some 1.1 million people, including 160,000 children, living in Donetsk city, Mariinka and suburbs.

With water supplied by VFS returning to most parts of Donetsk city on 2 February, Avdiivka's water needs are supplied from a small local backup reservoir, which may run out in coming days, after which the town heating system is likely to stop working. This may trigger the evacuation of the entire population of the town. Attempts to fix power lines have failed, as the ceasefire did not hold.

Latest reports from the OSCE Monitoring Mission also highlight a major leakage of the southern Donbass water pipeline because of shelling near Avdiivka. This has affected more than 700,000 people in the south of Donetsk, who face a potential breakdown of heating systems and a high risk of a water shortage, particularly for the 350,000 people, whose water supply is fed by Krasnoarmiiske and Velykoandolska Filter Stations.

Humanitarian Leadership & Coordination

In the government-controlled areas (GCAs) the Donetsk Regional Military Civil Administration (RMCA) has called for humanitarian partners to ensure a coordinated approach under government leadership, and the head of the administration has discouraged single-agency assessments. The Ministry of Temporary Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons and the Donetsk RMCA are making efforts to ensure humanitarian needs in Avdiivka and other affected areas along the contact line are met.

The WASH cluster, led by UNICEF, has played a key role in monitoring and reporting on the impact of the fighting on the region's water infrastructure. The cluster produced technical incident reports, updating donors and embassies, and briefing the EU-coordinated donor meeting and the Humanitarian Country Team. The Education cluster is providing information updates and coordinating between the co-leads (UNICEF and 'Save the Children'), the local departments of education, and other partners in response to the recent escalation in conflict. The Education cluster along with Child Protection Sub-cluster is tracking school damages, school closures, relocation of children and immediate education-related needs.

Humanitarian Strategy

UNICEF, in close coordination with other UN agencies and both Government and de facto representatives on the ground, continues its emergency response program along both sides of the 'contact line.' UNICEF continues to address the needs of the most vulnerable children by ensuring their access to water and sanitation, education, safe learning spaces, child protection community-based services and immediate psychosocial support. By working closely with partner organizations, schools, community centers and through mobile teams, the programme will extend its support to most vulnerable communities in 'hot spots' on the 'contact line.'

In addition to calling for a ceasefire, UNICEF has scaled up provision of immediate life-saving WASH services ensuring access to safe drinking water through bottled water distribution, water trucking, repair/restoration of water supply systems including supply lines, pumping and filtration stations and distribution of hygiene kits (children, family, institutional) and water containers. While immediate WASH needs are now being mostly met in the NGCAs following repair of the [Verkhniokalmiiska Filter station](#), the consequences of the upsurge in fighting in the GCAs, especially in and around Avdiivka, remains a major concern.

UNICEF is tracking damage to schools, school closures, and immediate education-related needs, and continues to advocate against attacks on educational facilities and together with partner organisations,

promoting Safe School Declaration to be adopted by the Government of Ukraine. UNICEF also continues to monitor situation of children to prevent separation during evacuation.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

WASH

The provision of safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene supplies, especially for children, are prioritized needs in case of any breakdown of infrastructure and population displacement. As of 1 February, UNICEF is ensuring the daily provision of drinking water for about 2,000 people in Avdiivka. As the town continues to deplete remaining water supplies in its 4,000 m³ emergency reservoir due to the lack of pumping capacity, UNICEF is providing immediate life-saving support (i.e. bottled water, hygiene kits, etc.), based on a caseload of 20,000 people for the next three months. As of 2 February, UNICEF has delivered 650 hygiene kits to support the immediate hygiene needs of around 1,300 people in Avdiivka.

CHILD PROTECTION

At least 60 children, 28 of whom are unaccompanied minors, were evacuated by local authorities from Avdiivka by the end of the day on 2 February. All children were relocated 140km northwest to a rehabilitation centre, "Perlina Donechiny", in Svyatohirsk and Donetsk Oblast. Through partner organizations, UNICEF has already begun to provide psychosocial support services for those children. Since 3 February, the evacuation of more children and their caregivers is ongoing.

EDUCATION

UNICEF estimates that nearly 1,400 children, of whom 475 are pre-school age, were attending eight educational facilities (five schools and three kindergartens) in Avdiivka when the massive shelling around the city's outskirts started in the evening of 27 January. As of 2 February, only one school out of five reopened, welcoming over 200 children from all closed schools. As of 3 February, another school reopened, with almost 30 students having attended the classes. Emergency educational supplies for learning and playing were immediately distributed to 200 children at an emergency heated shelter organized by the State Emergency Service of Ukraine. In addition, around 1,000 children will receive educational kits in the coming days.

Media & External Communication

In response to emergency in Avdiivka, UNICEF Ukraine issued a news note on 2 February calling for safe access to the area to carry out immediate repairs to the damaged water and electricity infrastructure. This will prevent the further suffering of more than 17,000 people – including 2,500 children – in the town, who are facing freezing weather without any heating. The news was released at the global, regional and national levels and was widely picked up by over 20 international media outlets, including *The Guardian*, *Xinhua*, *VOA News* and *Reuters*, and received over 26 mentions in the Ukrainian press.



Educational supplies for learning and playing were distributed to children at an emergency heated shelter organized by SES in Avdiivka (©UNICEF/ Artem Het'man/2017).



A resident of Avdiivka passes by a fresh shell crater as she carries a UNICEF family hygiene kit and a bundle of wood for heating (©UNICEF/ Eugeny Maloletka/2017).

Security

The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) noted a significant increase in ceasefire violations recorded in Donetsk Oblast between late January and early February, including over 10,330 explosions, compared with around 2,500 in early January. Over 9,250 explosions were recorded around Avdiivka and Yasynuvata.

Hostilities in eastern Ukraine significantly intensified in late January 2017. From 29 January onward, the security situation in Donetsk city area has rapidly deteriorated, with several close combat clashes and the use of heavy artillery reported in the triangle around Avdiivka GCA, Yasynuvata and Donetsk NGCAs. Between 29 January and 3 February, OHCHR recorded 48 civilian casualties (7 deaths and 41 injuries), all in Donetsk Oblast.¹ To compare, in December 2016, 21 civilian casualties were recorded (three deaths and 18 injuries). Moreover, UNDSS estimates that nearly 200 buildings, including private houses, residential buildings, kindergarten and schools were damaged because of indirect fire along the 'contact line' in Donetsk Oblast. The sudden uptake of hostilities caused severe damage to residential property and critical public infrastructure, including kindergartens, schools, medical facilities and industrial plants situated on the 'contact line.'

¹ Conflict-related civilian casualties in Ukraine, OHCHR, 3 February 2017.

Priority Funding Needs:

Within the 2017 HAC for the Ukraine CO, priority budget requirements for life- saving response supporting up to 500,000 people in need including 250,000 children for the period February-June, 2017. Within this, immediate WASH funding needs to sustain response to this latest crisis total \$2.25m. The CO is presently reviewing all possible options to secure these funds.

Appeal Sector	Requirements (US\$)	Funds received (US\$)
Health	300,000	
Water, sanitation and hygiene	2,500,000	250,000
Child protection	400,000	
Education	700,000	
Cluster/sector coordination	100,000	
Total	3,500,000	250,00

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