



Vika from Avdiivka is getting ready for her first day at school.
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UNICEF
Europe and Central
Asia Region (ECAR)

Ukraine
Situation Report – 24
February 2022



Highlights

UNICEF, together with partners, is at the forefront of the humanitarian response in eastern Ukraine and continues to reach vulnerable children and families affected by the conflict with essential services including health, education, protection, as well as water and sanitation. UNICEF is ready to scale up its humanitarian efforts to respond to the growing humanitarian needs across the country.

UNICEF is seeking **US\$ 66.4 million** to provide access to basic services including water and sanitation, immunization and health care, schooling and learning, psychosocial support, and emergency cash assistance for up to 7.5 million children.

Background

On 24 February, the Russian Federation announced a military operation on Ukraine that is likely to have a significant impact on the lives of children and families in communities throughout the country. There have been some movements of people from non-government-controlled areas into the Russian Federation. It remains unclear whether large scale movements of population will occur.

The security situation along the line of contact has been very volatile. On 21 February 2022, the Russian Federation officially recognized the independence of non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk. On 23 February, Ukraine announced that it would declare a nationwide state of emergency starting 24 February.

Now in its eighth year, the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine has taken a heavy toll on the civilian population of 3.4 million people, including 510,000 children living in Donetsk and Luhansk regions. This protracted crisis has disrupted the daily lives of children and families living on both sides of the line of contact between government and non-government-controlled areas, leaving them in continuous need of humanitarian assistance. The adverse effects of this crisis are compounded by the socio-economic and health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has put significant strain on the most vulnerable families and children. A recent polio outbreak in western Ukraine has further challenged the country's already fragile healthcare system.

Situation overview and humanitarian needs

Based on the latest available information, three educational facilities have been damaged in government-controlled areas and three in non-government-controlled areas over the past week. In non-government-controlled areas, schools have been closed since 21 February and there is no information on when schools will re-open or on alternative learning modalities. More than 350,000 school children currently have no access to education. In government-controlled areas, the Ministry of Education reported that 33 schools with over 5,500 students are closed for face-to-face learning due to insecurity in areas along the line of contact. Other schools in Donetsk and Luhansk are open, with the exception of those facilities that are closed due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The current military operation will only worsen impact on children and their access to basic services.

The direct and indirect effect of the protracted conflict in eastern Ukraine continues to significantly impact the lives of children and young people, leaving families on both sides of the contact line in urgent need of sustained humanitarian assistance. Critical water, sanitation, electrical and heating facilities, and school infrastructure have been damaged and are dilapidated, while access to learning is challenged by inadequate teaching methodologies. As a result, children's access to safe shelter, water, and schooling are threatened.

Children and their families require systematic protection services including to address gender-based violence, violence against children and to access psychosocial care. Mine risk education and mine victim assistance are critical as explosive ordnance contamination remains a major source of threat to life, safety and stability.

Access to quality health care services, including immunization, HIV/AIDS support, and emergency medical services remains limited, and the already weakened health system continues to be severely challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic. Child poverty has increased. Limited freedom of movement continues to curtail access to social benefits and services, civil documentation, and critical winterization needs.

As the crisis escalates, UNICEF is scaling-up its ongoing humanitarian response in Ukraine to ensure sustained delivery of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), immunization and health care, education, child protection and humanitarian cash assistance.

UNICEF preparedness and response actions

UNICEF, together with partners, is at the forefront of the humanitarian response and continues to reach vulnerable children and families affected by protracted conflict with essential services. In government-controlled areas, UNICEF's work with partners is being implemented with some disruptions due to the deteriorating security situation. In non-government-controlled areas, interventions are interrupted due to frequent shelling. UNICEF has staff in Donetsk, Luhansk, Kramatorsk, Mariupol, and Kyiv. A summary of the main areas of work include:

Health

UNICEF is supporting local authorities' emergency preparedness and response efforts by pre-positioning critical supplies to cover the immediate needs of internally displaced people in nine strategic *hromadas* (municipalities) in the east, centre and west of the country. UNICEF also continues to integrate its humanitarian response with longer-term resilience building efforts (nexus programming), by strengthening the capacities of local health facilities to deliver quality health care services, including primary healthcare in communities; emergency life-saving trauma care; as well as essential services to affected populations through mobile health teams in Kramatorsk, Novohrodivka, Mariupol, Mariinka, Bakhmut. UNICEF is also supporting the establishment of a contingency medical stock to ensure the continuity of health services provision.

UNICEF continues to support the government's response to the ongoing polio outbreak, including in preparing for the roll-out of a national immunization campaign for all children, strengthening cold chain systems, training and engaging community-based health personnel (e.g., 44 nurses, family doctors and paediatricians from 18 *hromadas* with low immunization coverage have received training), as well as through the procurement of vaccines for both catch-up and supplementary immunization campaigns.

UNICEF also continues its emergency response efforts to address the COVID-19 outbreak, including by working with *hromadas* to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates among people over 60, and by strengthening awareness raising and capacity building efforts (e.g., 100 doctors, nurses and healthcare managers were trained during an educational event on COVID-19 held on 1-4 February in Odessa).

Water and sanitation

At the request of local authorities and in close coordination with the WASH Cluster, UNICEF is providing water trucking and has so far distributed 3,840 five-litre bottles of drinking water, received as in-kind support from a local manufacturer.

Child protection

Ten mobile teams are providing psychosocial care to children and caregivers in government-controlled areas, as well as case management support for the most vulnerable families with children. These include foster care families, family-based care homes and extremely vulnerable internally displaced families with children.

UNICEF is working with the government to establish a coordination mechanism to provide child protection services. A child protection hotline has been established in government-controlled areas and plans for the evacuation of children from institutional facilities are being put in place.

In coordination with the Ministry of Social Policy, State Social Service, *hromadas* and other partners, UNICEF is supporting training on emergency preparedness, case management for vulnerable children and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. This training is targeted for the social service workforce and staff of institutions for children (e.g., baby homes, child-care institutions, family type institutions, detention facilities for children in conflict with the law) in 24 *oblasts* (provinces).

UNICEF is exploring the possibility of replicating the success of the 'Blue Dot' child friendly spaces to provide critical support to children and families on the move. These spaces were established along anticipated routes of major migration flows - often done in conjunction with local municipalities in strategic areas. They provide key information to traveling families, safe spaces for mothers and children, and the ability to identify unaccompanied and separated children and ensure their protection.

Education

In partnership with the Ministry of Interior, State Emergency Services, *hromadas* and other partners, UNICEF is will deliver a series of trainings targeted for teachers, volunteers, and administrative staff of education facilities, including on life skills education, emotional support, conflict resolution and non-violent communication, as well as psychosocial support. UNICEF is also supporting the development of emergency preparedness protocols and the training of school personnel on their application.

Social protection

There is a planned top-up of humanitarian cash assistance to 3,000 vulnerable families through an amendment of the existing programme between WASH and *Triangle Génération Humanitaire (TGH)*.

A cash feasibility assessment is being initiated in close collaboration with the Cash Working Group and the Ministry of Social Policy – UNICEF will support the relevant technical assistance. UNICEF will support an assessment of the preparedness of the national social protection system and is also working on amending the existing contingency partnership cooperation agreement with TGH, to be ready for a multipurpose cash intervention, as necessary.

Supply and logistics

UNICEF's country office in Ukraine currently has sufficient medical, hygiene and emergency education supplies to support 3,000 families prepositioned in warehouses in Kyiv and Kramatorsk.

An initial supply delivery - which includes winter clothes for children, health supplies, recreational kits, early childhood development kits and water and sanitation supplies - is scheduled to reach Kyiv between 28 February to 3 March. These supplies will serve over 20,000 people. Given the uncertainty of the situation and the significant costs and logistical challenges of airlifting supplies, the priority remains prepositioning essential items in the available warehouse in Kyiv and to deliver those to *oblasts* as the agreements with municipalities progress. If the situation allows, the first batch of supplies will be delivered to non-government-controlled areas through a UN convoy and distributed through implementing partners on the ground.

A second supply delivery to support wash and sanitation, health, child protection and education activities is expected to be delivered between 5 and 7 March. This will serve 40,000 of people. A detailed distribution plan is under development.

Long-term agreements with local suppliers for WASH supplies are available and the agreements for education supplies are being renewed. Partnerships with municipalities in nine oblasts are being discussed and an agreement will be established to preposition supplies in eastern, central, and western Ukraine.

Partnerships

UNICEF's country office has 15 active partnership cooperation agreements with partners, including civil society organisations, international NGOs (e.g., ADRA, People in Need, Terre des Hommes etc.) in government- and non-government-controlled areas. Eight additional partners in child protection and education have been identified. For any response beyond government- and non-government-controlled areas, UNICEF is exploring other partners on the ground.

Funding overview

Within the fragile and complex fragile situation, UNICEF has been working to maintain ongoing life-saving humanitarian programmes for hundreds of thousands of children and families in eastern Ukraine and to scale up emergency preparedness and response actions across the country. UNICEF has developed, a modular, scalable contingency plan, aligned with inter-agency scenarios and reflecting UNICEF's Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies (CCCs). The aim is to reinforce and expand UNICEF's existing humanitarian response through key partners in eastern Ukraine and leverage ongoing humanitarian-development programming that provides integrated social services through strategic partnerships with *hromadas* (municipalities) in key *oblasts* (regions) across the country. UNICEF's plans cover the key sectors of Health and Nutrition, Child Protection, WASH, Nutrition, Education and Social Protection) with UNICEF contributing to overall interagency targets. UNICEF will continue to deliver ongoing humanitarian response to the protracted crisis in eastern Ukraine under the current [Ukraine 2022 HAC](#), and to scale up support in response to the growing needs across the country.

For this, UNICEF requires a total of US\$66.4 million to continue to safeguard children's rights to safety, health, education, psychosocial support, protection, as well as water and sanitation services.

Communication

UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell issued a [statement](#) on 24 February to draw public attention to the impact of ongoing military operations on children and UNICEF's work to protect children.

UNICEF Ukraine continued its advocacy efforts to protect child rights in the conflict-affected areas in eastern Ukraine by producing human interest stories and other communication content through multimedia channels. In 2021, UNICEF Ukraine social media channels grew significantly, gaining over 800,000 followers, with 1.6 million visitors to UNICEF Ukraine's official website. UNICEF Ukraine also continued to amplify the voices of children and their families, reaching over 12 million people on a monthly basis through its digital channels.

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