



World Health Organization

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR **Europe**

Situation report # 1
January–March 2019

Ukraine humanitarian crisis



Procurement of medicines and medical supplies
Photo: WHO Ukraine

For the reporting period



1.3 million people
need essential
health services¹



32 conflict-related
injuries were
recorded during the
reporting period²



7 conflict-related
deaths were
recorded during the
reporting period



2 million
people
live in mine-
contaminated
areas along the
contact line

Key figures

Highlights

WHO emergency programme in eastern Ukraine

39	Health and Nutrition Cluster partners
1 300 000	People targeted by Health and Nutrition Cluster partners in 2019
12.5%	Funded operations in 2019
6 550 540	US\$ requested for operations in 2019

As the conflict in eastern Ukraine enters its sixth year, millions of people living on both sides of the contact line lack access to primary and specialized health care. To close this gap and to further strengthen the emergency health system in conflict-affected regions, WHO continues supporting specialized and hospital care through capacity-building and delivery of life-saving medicines and medical supplies.

With the support of WHO:

- Over 30 health-care specialists working in non-government controlled areas (NGCA) improved their knowledge and skills on trauma care and emergency preparedness.
- Over 32 000 patients in the conflict-affected areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions benefited from the medical supplies for trauma care, surgery and blood transfusion delivered by WHO.
- Eighty people with moderate to severe mental health disorders received assistance from community-based mental health teams.

¹ 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan – Ukraine

<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ukraine/document/ukraine-2019-humanitarian-response-plan-hrp>

² Data from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Situation overview

After five years of the crisis in eastern Ukraine, millions of people on both sides of the contact line still need humanitarian assistance. The latest re-commitment to the ceasefire that came into force on 8 March 2019 brought a limited respite from the violence. An overall decrease in the number of reported security incidents was observed in March, with 29% fewer incidents compared to February. Despite this, the water treatment stations frequently came under fire, which caused severe damage and interruption of water and electricity supplies.³

The health-care facilities along the contact line are often isolated, and many health-care workers have left. People on both sides of the contact line experience difficulties in accessing appropriate health-care services due to insecurity, disrupted transportation and lack of qualified health-care workers.

Following the introduction of the new health finance mechanism in the country, 1.74 million residents of Donetsk and Luhansk regions (government controlled areas (GCA)) chose their primary health care (PHC) providers.⁴ The ongoing health-care reform aims to expand the PHC coverage and improve the quality of health-care services through implementing the “money follows the patient” principle.

Over 40 000 measles cases were reported in Ukraine in January–March 2019. The Public Health Centre, Ministry of Health, reported 648 measles cases in Donetsk region (GCA) and 82 in Luhansk region (GCA). According to available information, in the first three months of 2019 the number of new measles cases reached 150 in Donetsk NCGA; however, uncertainties remain due to challenges in data verification.

Leadership and coordination

WHO leads health sector partners to jointly respond to the health needs of conflict-affected people in eastern Ukraine to improve health outcomes. The Organization ensures that gaps are filled through effective coordination and supports resource mobilization efforts to address the most pressing health needs.

Together with the Ministry of Health, WHO conducted the Emergency Medical Service (EMS) survey in Kyiv and the eastern regions of the country in February 2019. The survey aims to assess current EMS capacities, identify gaps and provide the baseline for recommendations to improve emergency health-care services and prehospital care in Ukraine.

Partner coordination

Since the beginning of the conflict in eastern Ukraine in 2014, WHO has led the Health and Nutrition Cluster, coordinating national and international health partners. Additionally, WHO co-chairs two Health and Nutrition Cluster working groups:

- the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Working Group
- the HIV/TB Working Group.

WHO and Health and Nutrition Cluster partners previously submitted inputs to [the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan](#). Ten projects were selected, requesting a total of US\$18.1 million. The projects cover the following areas:

- improving access to health-care services
- maternal and child health
- sexual and reproductive health
- mental health and psychosocial support including a project addressing suicide prevention
- health education and promotion of healthy lifestyle.

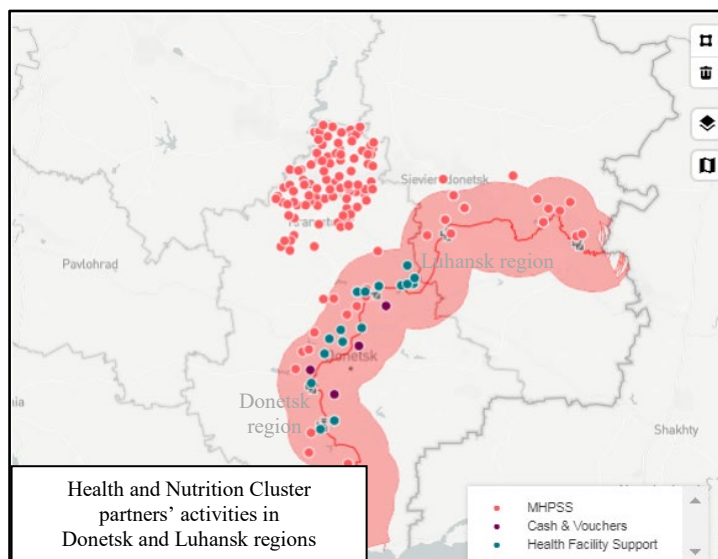
³ Source: UN OCHA

⁴ Source: National Health Service (NHS)

As a co-chair of the MHPSS Working Group, WHO organized a workshop on [A common monitoring and evaluation framework for mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings](#).⁵ This tool is designed to guide the assessment, research, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of MHPSS programmes in emergency settings. The tool was shared with mental health professionals and health partners working in the conflict-affected regions.

Information and planning

The [Health and Nutrition Cluster 3W dashboard](#),⁶ launched in February 2019, was developed to map Health and Nutrition Cluster partner activities. The dashboard is designed to provide key information regarding which organizations (who) are carrying out which activities (what) and in which locations (where). The dashboard facilitates mapping of the four key areas of Cluster partners' interventions in eastern Ukraine: health facility support, mobile clinics, cash and voucher support for health-related expenses, and mental health and psychosocial support. The mapping of activities at the settlement level provides Cluster partners with an interactive online tool for visual analysis and identification of gaps and overlaps in humanitarian assistance. Over the last four months, nine partners have reported on 96 activities, mainly in Donetsk region.



Health operations and technical expertise

Improving trauma care and emergency response



To improve the quality of health-care services and reduce health risks for over 40 000 people in need in NGCA of Luhansk region, WHO trained over 30 health workers on trauma and emergency care and life-saving procedures.

Prompt medical intervention after injury increases the patient's chances of survival and recovery. With this guiding principle in mind, WHO experts shared best practices and know-how from international experience with Ukrainian anaesthesiologists, trauma care specialists and surgeons – critical pillars in the post-trauma survival chain.

Improving infection prevention and control in hospitals

WHO supplied an autoclave, a pressure chamber for sterilization of surgical instruments and materials, to the orthopaedic and trauma care department of the Luhansk regional hospital.

⁵ A common monitoring and evaluation framework for mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings. Geneva: Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Reference Group for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings; 2017.

⁶ To access the dashboard use following credentials: user name: HCpartner; password: HCpartner.

The Luhansk regional hospital is a displaced facility – previously located in what is now an NGCA – that serves the needs of almost one million people living in the region, including internally displaced people. Within six months, the sterilization infrastructure of the trauma care department was fully modernized and provided with disinfection equipment and furniture.

The project [“Improving infection prevention and control in hospitals”](#) is supported by the Government of Japan and aims at improving disinfection capacities through the training of health-care workers and the provision of sterilization equipment to selected hospitals.



Staff of the trauma care department during the training on use of the new sterilization equipment



“The orthopaedic and trauma care department conducts up to six operations every day. The new equipment provides us with the confidence that our patients are protected from hospital-acquired infections.”

Kristina Petrova,
Surgery nurse at Luhansk regional hospital

[Improving surveillance and immunization](#)

In January–March 2019, WHO continued its activities aimed at improving laboratory surveillance in conflict-affected areas. Three laboratory mentoring visits to the NGCA of Donetsk and Luhansk regions provided training on quality management in laboratories for 16 laboratory specialists.

In response to the ongoing measles outbreak, the Ministry of Health with support from WHO, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and other partners has been conducting a number of catch-up vaccination campaigns accompanied by targeted communication and community engagement activities. To close the gaps in immunization coverage, the additional vaccination campaign targets all unvaccinated children aged 1–18 years old.

[Improving access to mental health services](#)

WHO continues to support the Ministry of Health of Ukraine in developing the Mental Health Concept and draft National Action Plan on Mental Health until 2030, and supports the transformation of the mental health care system to make it more accessible on a primary health care level.

In February 2019, a national-level workshop was organized and facilitated by WHO to develop the capacity of doctors and nurses in basic mental health care and to adapt the [mhGAP intervention guide](#) to the Ukrainian context. Over 30 specialists from mental health, primary health care and social care sectors, including those working in conflict-affected areas, were trained as national trainers on mhGAP.



Participants of the mhGAP training in Kyiv

Community-based mental health care

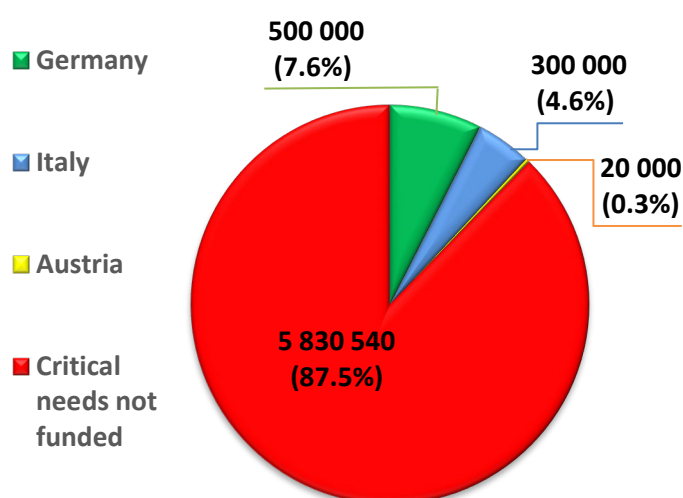
Eighty people with moderate to severe mental health disorders living in conflict-affected areas received assistance through the community-based mental health team in Sloviansk, Donetsk region. This team works along the contact line and in areas with a high concentration of internally displaced people, providing evidence-based primary health care, mental health care and psychosocial support. The mental health team cooperated with family doctors and provided consultations to patients with mental health disorders at primary health care facilities.

Finance and administration

In the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan, WHO requested US\$ 6 550 540 that will allow:

- complete comprehensive surveys in specific health areas such as trauma care and emergency medical services;
- provision of assistance to improve services in selected secondary and tertiary health-care facilities in GCA and NGCA;
- strengthening of capacities in the areas of laboratory services, infection prevention and control, and other specific health programmes;
- distribution of essential medicines, medical supplies and equipment to selected secondary and tertiary health-care facilities on both sides on the contact line;
- improvement of service provision in selected primary health care facilities and mental health;
- provision of support to the referral early warning system.

WHO funding request
in the 2019 Humanitarian Response
Plan (US\$)



Our partners

The new project “Emergency Health Care Response in Eastern Ukraine: Treating and Preventing Communicable and Noncommunicable Diseases” supported by the Government of Germany will allow WHO to continue its efforts in treating and preventing communicable and noncommunicable diseases on both sides of the contact line. Over 20 000 people living in conflict-affected areas in eastern Ukraine will have better access to mental health care services, and over 50 000 people will be protected from disease outbreaks through improved laboratory surveillance.

In addition, the Government of Italy supported WHO activities in improvement of immunization and infection prevention and control in conflict-affected areas.

Visit the WHO Ukraine web page: <http://www.euro.who.int/en/countries/ukraine>

Contact information:

Anna Borshchevska, Communications Officer
borshchevskaa@who.int