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## DRC's Secretary General visits Ukraine

In August, I had the pleasure to visit Ukraine. While I naturally wish that the circumstances had been different, I was amazed by the beauty of the country and the warmth and courage of the people I met, not least DRC staff. Despite the fact that many have themselves become internally displaced, they have been able to adapt and continue their impressive work and provide significant humanitarian support to vulnerable people in need.

In Kyiv, I saw bustling streets and understand how these can be misread as normalcy. Thousands have returned from displacement within or across borders people who have been forced to leave their homes are trying to rebuild lives from scratch. However, many are worried that they will have to flee again and throughout the city sirens, sandbags,

roadblocks and statues wrapped in protective by boxes illustrate that the war remains close — in minds and reality.

I had the opportunity to visit the north of Ukraine to see DRC's work with humanitarian mine action and explosive remnants of war. On the way there, I passed kilometer after kilometer of sunflower, corn and wheat fields — ready to be harvested. But many farmers in Ukraine understandably fear entering the fields or can't use surrounding roads due to risks of mines and unexploded ammunition. The level of contamination in Ukraine is at a scale that is hard to comprehend and will be seen and felt for many years to come. It was very humbling to see how day in and day out, DRC's demining team work methodically to clear and release key roads for safe and free movement of people in the local communities.

Among our DRC experts working to clear contaminated areas, is Olena. She told me how the war forced her to flee her home, a fate shared by many — and in fact most — DRC staff in Ukraine. She, like all DRC staff, remains dedicated to continuing the important work. “As a mother, I want my son to grow up in a safe environment,” she told me.

Continuing to contribute to the emergency responses, DRC moves towards strategies to respond to needs in Ukraine in the longer term, with activities in four out of five [DRC core sectors](#): Protection, Economic Recovery, Humanitarian Disarmament & Peacebuilding, and Shelter & Settlements. While investing in continued efforts in Ukraine and the region affected by displacement, DRC will continue to advocate the need to protect civilians in Ukraine — including those affected by the war in hard-to-reach areas — of whom many have limited access to lifesaving protection and humanitarian assistance.

Learn more about what we have done already in the [first six months of the response here.](#)

*Charlotte Slente,*

*DRC Secretary General*



**Protection**



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It takes sufficient cooking utensils to enable staff at collective sites hosting internally displaced to cook and provide people with meals. In Vinnytsia, DRC collaborated with Podil Regional Development Agency to provide cooking utensils to one of the largest collective centres in the oblast that has been set up in a Vocational Education Center and hosting around 400 people. With support from DRC, Podil Regional Development Agency purchased tables, rolling pins, bread moulds, and dough bowls that now helps the shelter cook food in a more efficient manner and has enabled the collective centre to serve more nutritious meals to the internally displaced people hosted there.

'Our equipment was obsolete. A kitchen utensil update is a remarkable help, and now it is more modern. Thank you for such kind help. We provide food for the displaced people three times a day, so the cooks are often under pressure, but when there are more tools & opportunities, things, of course, are getting done easier' — shared Oksana, representative of Podil Regional Development Agency.

*Nataliia Sychak, DRC Protection Officer, Kyiv*



## Protection: Legal Assistance



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In April, Ihor and his mother left Sievierodonetsk due to the hostilities that left their house completely destroyed.

After staying in Sumy Oblast, Ihor had to urgently look for a job, since his mother has a disability and need medical treatment. He went to the government-run employment service, but the documents necessary for employment with confirmation of his qualifications were destroyed along with the property in Sievierodonetsk.

In order to quickly retrieve new documents, Ihor turned to the lawyers of Chernihiv Public Committee for Human Rights Protection, a partner of the DRC.

Some of the destroyed documents were restored based on information in the state registers. Ihor was also helped to form an appeal to reproduce duplicate diplomas via information contained in the Uniform State Electronic Database for Education.

Finally, he was able to confirm his profession for employment in his speciality and will be able to provide for the needs of his family.

The provision of legal aid is funded by the European Union through its Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations.

*Volodymyr Vynogradov, lawyer, Chernihiv Public Committee for the Protection of Human Rights, Sumy*



**Capacity Building**



*©DRC Ukraine, Uzhhorod, Zakarpattia Oblast, Mykhailo Melnychenko*

Since 24 February 2022, many Ukrainian civil society organisations (CSOs) have committed their efforts to help providing emergency responses to the severe humanitarian crisis resulting from the conflict escalation. Many CSOs had to significantly alter their operations to address the immediate needs of displaced persons and conflict-affected populations across the country.

To support such organisations in more effective delivery of emergency assistance, DRC works to support CSOs as local humanitarian actors by strengthening their individual and organisational capacities. Particularly, DRC interventions in this area cover psycho-social and professional development of CSOs personnel, and enhancement of their performance according to the global humanitarian standards and best national and international practices.

In June 2022, DRC started cooperating with seven Ukrainian CSOs which had received funding for humanitarian activities from the Ukraine Confidence Building Initiative (UCBI) III. Currently, they operate throughout Ukraine and are based mainly in western parts of the country as some of them have relocated from eastern and southern regions due to intense hostilities.

Today, DRC provides psycho-social counselling and mentorship support to 33 CSO representatives, including heads of organisations, programme and support staff, field workers and volunteers. They will also receive a package of sessions designed by DRC and focused on operating in a humanitarian emergency context.

DRC will continue support to Ukrainian CSOs to enhance the delivery of humanitarian aid to those in need and to become accomplished members of the humanitarian community.

*Serhii Havrylenko, Capacity Building Coordinator, DRC Kyiv*



## Economic Recovery



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Iryna, a mother of four, along with her own mother, is IDP from Lyman in Donetsk Oblast. Her husband decided not to remain in Lyman, to take care of the house. Iryna, who is pregnant, the children and their grandmother fled to Volyn Oblast, where the local authorities provided them with free housing. She did not receive any financial support from anyone, nor the few INGOs there.

The family's income is all based on government subsidies with 860 Hryvnias per month per child and 1,700 Hryvnias per month as a large family allowance from the government. Iryna's mother is close to retirement age and cannot find a job. Iryna is now on maternity leave and will soon give birth to her fifth child. The multi-purpose cash assistance of 39,960 Hryvnia allowed Iryna to buy much-needed baby food, hygiene items, and warm clothes for the children.

"Our family fled Lyman with practically no belongings. With winter coming, it is extremely important for us to have warm clothes available," says Iryna.

DRC will continue the financial support via MPCA activities throughout Ukraine and plans to expand the implementation to be able to support more people in need. The provision of this support is funded by the Ukrainian Humanitarian Fund.

*Alina Bondarenko, Economic Recovery Officer, DRC Dnipro*



## Humanitarian Disarmament & Peacebuilding



©DRC Ukraine, Skive, Denmark, 2022

The number of Explosive Ordnance (EO) littered across Ukraine has exponentially increased since 24 February. Contamination has spread from two Oblasts in eastern Ukraine — where DRC has been working on Mine Action since 2015 – to at least 14 other Oblasts.

EO contamination has now become so omnipresent to Ukrainians that every second person has reported spotting them at one point. This is documented in [DRC's rapid need assessment](#). As one of the first organisations in Ukraine to restart Humanitarian Demining and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) activities, DRC continues building its internal capacities to be able to face the need for mine action.

In a long-standing and unique civil-military cooperation, DRC, Danish Church Aid (DCA), and Danish Armed Forces organised the annual five-week-long EOD IMAS Level 3 training in Skive, Denmark, over the summer of 2022. Four DRC Mine Action personnel from Ukraine attended, three of them female. Through an intensive schedule, learning about practical tools, theory, and essential guidance from the foremost EOD experts, all four passed the [rigorous examination](#). By now, they have all returned to Kyiv and Chernihiv Oblasts where they contribute to clearing Ukraine of dangerous remnants of war.

With their support, DRC has already identified 454,132 square metres of EO contaminated

areas, cleared 135,780 square metres of contaminated land, and detected 264 dangerous items.

*Nick Vovk, Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding Programme Manager, DRC Kyiv*



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