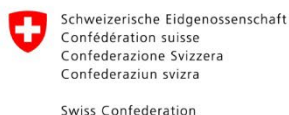


DRC



DRC Ukraine Newsletter: March 2022

One month into the Ukraine crisis, fighting continues to intensify and the number of civilian casualties is increasing across the country. Since the Russian Federation launched an offensive in Ukraine on 24 February, the conflict has caused 3,527 civilian casualties, including 1,430 killed, figures that are likely much higher and will continue to rise, according to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Actual figures are likely much higher as the conflict escalates and active fighting spreads across Ukraine.

In one month, more than 6.5 million people are estimated to be internally displaced in Ukraine, and around 3.6 million have fled the country – numbers that point to the fact of the rapidly evolving crisis by now having displaced almost one in four of the country's population of 43 million. With the scale and direction of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, 18 million people are projected to become affected, including up to 6.7 million people projected to be newly internally displaced (UN Flash Appeal 2022).

On 22 March, DRC issued a statement on Ukraine with key recommendations for urgent action to protect civilians from the effects of conflict.

Activities in Ukraine



DRC in Ukraine is operating despite the extremely harsh and unpredictable conditions. The focus is initially on multi-purpose cash programmes and small grants to Community-based Organisations and citizen initiatives to support immediate needs in their areas. DRC also supports the delivery of non-food items in areas where there are needs and once supply lines are established. For places where there is intense fighting DRC offers hotline counselling for legal and psycho-social support. Another critical activity is the dissemination of legal information as well as explosive ordnance risk education and with leaflets disseminated widely including at border crossing points, train and bus stations and other places where civilians concentrate.

“One of the critical needs right now is to ensure that there is rapid and unhindered access to those in need of protection and humanitarian aid. There is regular news about humanitarian corridors in Ukraine, but often these never become a reality and eventually, thousands of people remain trapped in areas with active fighting. Several of our DRC Ukraine staff are among those that cannot get out of areas in eastern Ukraine where the conflict is most intense and life-threatening. We do all we can to reach out to them – and we take all possible steps to immediately increase the support we can provide as part of DRC emergency response to the crisis here in Ukraine,” says **Brieuc Le Merle**, Country Director for DRC in Ukraine.

Protection



The ongoing armed violence in Ukraine put hundreds of thousands of people at risk. The unprecedented deterioration of the security situation resulted in a massive displacement of civilians both internally within Ukraine and crossing to third countries. The DRC Protection hotlines have been received numerous requests about searching for relatives and questions about shelters and assistance, many of them were referred to the relevant agencies.

The Protection Team has started monitoring collective centres for Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) throughout Ukraine. The information has been reported to Protection and Shelter clusters on regular bases. The needs of more than 20 centres were collected. Moreover, six centres applied to DRC for the improvement of living conditions for IDPs within the Community Based Initiatives which will be funded by DRC's own funds.

Additionally, the Protection Team continues the provision of Targeted Individual Assistance to civilians affected by mines or other explosive remnants of war. The geography of assistance has been extended to the whole of Ukraine to meet the needs of survivors. Such assistance is possible thanks to the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland.

**Photo made in a shelter for IDPs "New Lviv" which was organised on the base of a reopened student dormitory in Lviv city (western Ukraine). This is one of the shelters approved for a DRC grant for the improvement of living conditions.
©DRC Ukraine, Lviv, Lviv oblast, March 2022*

Legal Assistance



- DRC resumed legal assistance both via hotlines and mobile clinics. The recent requests were on refugee protection e.g. border crossing rules, crossing with minors, the validity of Ukrainian driving license in the EU, family reunification in case of asylum application, rights and social guarantees under the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), restoration of lost and expired documents while in abroad. Inquiries on national law included IDP certificates, child custody, and access to a pension.
- Also, the Legal Assistance Team elaborate the leaflets on the most frequently asked legal matters. We arranged the information cooperative with Mercy Corps in Ukraine and Poland. Options for planned legal aid needs assessment in Poland are being explored.
- DRC continues to produce Legal Alerts, providing analysis of all legislative, administrative, judicial and policy developments. The Legal Alert is disseminated to the 2,100 subscribers among representatives of other NGOs, embassies, and international organizations. Since 24 February DRC has developed 3 Legal Alerts covering issues of limitations under Martial Law, tax exemptions for charitable assistance, new rules for IDP registration, border crossing for people with disabilities and minors and others.

These activities are possible thanks to the support of the European Union through its Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, as well as Switzerland through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and UK Aid from the UK government.

Capacity Building Programme

- The Capacity Building Programme (CBP) Team completed the Rapid Capacity Needs Assessment in 13 Oblast Military Administrations (OMA), including seven hotspot oblasts facing hostilities and/or active combat activities. The assessment report will present the findings on the capacity needs of the OMAs and local authorities in IDP registration, data collection on the needs of IDPs, humanitarian response and coordination with the Government of Ukraine, UN Agencies and humanitarian organisations, capacity gaps and relevant support needs of Humanitarian Hubs established and operational in all OMAs. The Assessment Report will be publicly available on 8 April.
- CBP Team has continued regular monitoring of the Government of Ukraine crisis response since 1 March. The monitoring is focused on coordination architecture and humanitarian access as well as humanitarian efforts, gaps and needs reported by the Government of Ukraine. The monitoring results contribute to the design of DRC's humanitarian response.
- Furthermore, the CBP intends to facilitate learning and research opportunities for regional and local authorities concerning the management of displacement flows, assessment and registration of IDPs in 2 oblasts. This intervention shall be implemented in partnership with Joint IDP Profiling Service. The CPB will also extend its efforts to areas hosting a large number of new IDPs in Lviv and Zakarpattia oblasts to resolve or prevent conflicts in partnership with the Lviv Mediation Center.

Economic Recovery Livelihoods



With the support of the Danish International Development Agency, DRC provides financial support to 38 local partners (CSOs, local activists, private businesses) for emergency responses and life-saving operations for IDPs and conflict-affected people. With this assistance, DRC aims to reach at least 75,000 beneficiaries.

The assistance is provided to cover food (95%), NFI (74%), shelter (37%), medical (58%), and evacuation (11%) needs. This support will continue during the whole emergency phase and DRC will aim to support more local partners and reach more beneficiaries with humanitarian assistance. As of the 1st of April 2022, 25 local partners received financial support.

Furthermore, DRC economic recovery Team is continuing vetting of beneficiaries for multi-purpose cash and cash for rent assistance. As of today, 660 individuals have been selected for multipurpose cash support.

Humanitarian Disarmament & Peacebuilding



- The HDP Team is supporting the State Emergency Services of Ukraine (SESU) with consultation on Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), recognition of Explosive Ordnance (EO), and donations of requested gear;
- The HDP Team contacted Explosive Ordnance victims and their families to arrange documentation for Victim Assistance;
- DRC resumed with the provision of in-person online EORE sessions for children, adolescents, and adults, production and dissemination of EORE materials, launching of emergency EORE mass media campaigns, and conducting rapid needs assessments.

These activities are supported by the European Union, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, The German Federal Foreign Office, The Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and the Danish International Development Agency.