

OVERVIEW

# UKRAINE 2014-2016 / CONFLICT

<b>CRISIS</b>	<b>Conflict, 2014-onwards</b>
<b>PEOPLE AFFECTED<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>4.4 million</b> (2.6 million for Shelter-NFI)
<b>PEOPLE IN NEED OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>3.8 million</b> (0.6 million for Shelter-NFI)
<b>PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE RESPONSE</b> (as of November 2016) <sup>2</sup>	<b>20,526</b> houses repaired <b>109,937</b> individuals received emergency assistance <b>438,882</b> individuals received NFIs

**SUMMARY OF THE RESPONSE**

Political unrest in Eastern Ukraine led to a humanitarian crisis, since the start of hostilities in early 2014. After three years, shelter-NFI needs remain high for IDPs, non-displaced populations with damaged dwellings, host communities and returnees. Along with covering immediate needs, the Shelter-NFI Cluster has promoted preparedness and durable solutions, especially focusing on winterization activities.



NOV 2013



- 1 Nov 2013: Protests commence in Kyiv; President Yanukovich flees in February 2014.
- 2 Mar 2014: Crimea crisis erupts; declaration of autonomous regions in Donetsk and Luhansk.
- 3 Apr 2014: Armed groups take control of the eastern Donbas region.
- 4 Jul 2014: Shelter sector activated and strategy developed.
- 5 Aug 2014: Preliminary Response Plan launched.
- 6 Dec 2014: Shelter Cluster activated.
- 7 Jan 2015: Debaltsevo crisis – third wave of displacement.
- 8 Feb 2015: Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) launched.
- 9 Sep 2015: First Winterization Guidelines produced focusing on Northern Donbass.
- 10 Feb 2016: Government suspends social payments to IDPs.
- 11 Mar 2016: Shelter-NFI Cluster rolls out Damage Database per address in Government Controlled Areas (GCAs).
- 12 Apr 2016: Subnational Cluster begins implementing a cooperation agreement with Donetsk and Luhansk authorities in GCAs to discuss transition options.
- 13 Jul 2016: Shelter Cluster Transition Plan is drafted.
- 14 Aug 2016: Second Winterization Guidelines produced focusing on North and South Donbass and on Non-Government Controlled Areas (NGCAs).

**CONTEXT**

Eastern Ukraine experiences long, harsh, winters. Average temperatures drop below 0°C from the end of November to mid-March, with an average low of -10°C and -20°C in the colder areas. Rainfall is consistent throughout the year. Rural villages, especially those with already restricted access, are at risk of being cut off during periods of heavy snowfall.

Following the Government of Ukraine’s decision to abandon talks that would bring the country closer to EU membership in 2013, political unrest led to a destabilizing humanitarian crisis. In March 2014, a **first wave of displacement** took place from Crimea, following its declaration as an Autonomous Republic, while violence escalated in Donbas region in the east, where it continued for two years. In 2016, shelling was concentrated in specific – rather than diffuse – areas.

**The political unrest has affected households in preparing adequately for the winter.** Homes damaged by shelling urgently needed to be repaired in time for winter, while the internally displaced and non-displaced alike struggled to meet basic needs, such as purchasing winter clothing and household items, or being able to pay for the rising costs of utilities.

<sup>1</sup> From Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Pre-Conflict Housing in Ukraine: Real Estate Markets and Tenure Dynamics. Shelter Cluster Ukraine, November 2016.



A focus of the Shelter-NFI response in Ukraine has been preparing for the harsh winter conditions. This included the distribution of firewood in the affected areas.

### SITUATION BEFORE THE CRISIS

After the process of mass privatization in the housing sector following 1991, access to adequate housing became limited and communal residential infrastructure and services – that had previously been maintained by the state – started decaying. The economic crisis of 2008 resulted in a reduction in foreign investment, leading to neglect of existing buildings and a halt of new construction. Inadequacies in social housing and housing policy failed to address the housing needs of low-income households (1.39 million people in 2013)<sup>2</sup>.

### SITUATION AFTER THE CRISIS

Just before the start of the conflict, 93.7% of the housing stock was privately owned, with 3.4% living in private-rental housing and 2.9% in communal housing. Individual houses outside major cities sustained shrapnel punctures to roofing, damaged windows, and in 3% of cases full destruction. With the escalation of hostilities in 2014, people fled the contact-line areas of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts (provinces), taking refuge in collective centres and apartments, or being hosted by relatives. Properties and income were left behind, with displaced families relying on their savings to meet basic needs. 93% of the houses that sustained damage in the Government-Controlled Areas (GCA) of Donetsk and Luhansk were privately owned, the extent of which was exacerbated by historical lack of maintenance and care<sup>2</sup>. 18,500 of these houses were in the GCA, while a similar scale of damage was estimated in the Non-Government Controlled Areas (NGCA)<sup>3</sup>.

As the conflict has continued for three years, resources and coping mechanisms have been seriously depleted. The situation was compounded by the suspension of social payments to IDPs, making pensioners the primary breadwinners, for 38% of affected families in the GCA and 60% in the NGCA<sup>4</sup>.

Returns were noted in 2016, both voluntary and involuntary (e.g. those forced to return home having depleted all their re-

<sup>3</sup> Due to limited humanitarian access in the NGCA, the figures are estimated through various sources.

<sup>4</sup> HNO 2017.

sources, or been evicted). Across the country, 59% of IDPs have stated a preference to return home because of their private property, highlighting the importance of private houses as a main source of capital<sup>5</sup>. Significant differences exist in the adequacy of shelter and access to basic items, services and utilities, between urban and rural contexts<sup>6</sup>. Groups with specific needs include IDPs, non-displaced populations with damaged dwellings, host communities, households experiencing multiple displacement, and returnees (sustainable return; formerly displaced, dwelling uncertain)<sup>7</sup>.

### SHELTER CLUSTER STRATEGY

The Shelter-NFI Cluster in Ukraine was established in December 2014, to respond to **urgent humanitarian needs** for shelter and NFIs during the sudden onset of the crisis, initially through unconditional cash grants. This has transitioned into **preparedness activities**, to enable vulnerable and affected households to better cope with protracted displacement, in often inadequate conditions – particularly in **dealing with the extreme winter**, as access to items, fuel and heating became increasingly restricted by dwindling household resources. Shelter actors have begun mainstreaming winterization preparedness into all repair works, prioritizing the creation of “one warm room”, before upgrading and insulating other areas of the house.

While continuing to coordinate the emergency and winterization response, the Shelter-NFI Cluster **promoted durable solutions** for IDPs and conflict-affected populations, through emergency assistance, transitional solutions, and the facilitation of longer-term shelter, until the minimum criteria for cluster deactivation would be met. This included a **transition of responsibility from the Cluster to national actors**, particularly the Oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk, who have taken a primary role in the emergency response<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> From IOM NMS Round 4, Sep 2016, cited in Pre-Conflict Housing in Ukraine: Real Estate Markets and Tenure Dynamics.

<sup>6</sup> Shelter-NFI Needs Assessment Report: Ukraine, Aug 2015, REACH / UNHCR.

<sup>7</sup> Shelter-NFI Cluster Strategy, June 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Draft Shelter Cluster Transitional Plan, July 2016.



TABLE 1 - WINTERIZATION ACTIVITIES\*

RESPONSE OPTION	DESCRIPTION	VALUE / COST
Winterization cash grant	Injection of a one-off, unconditional cash grant for utilities, NFI and clothes through bank transfer or vouchers	USD 100 per individual
Collective centre winterization	Basic repairs and NFI provision for collective centres sheltering people with specific needs (e.g. institutions, retirement homes, orphanages, accommodation for people with disabilities, etc.)	Up to USD 600 per individual
Solid fuel and heater	Distribution of heating items	USD 110 per household without heater; USD 200 per household with heater
NFI Clothing Set	In-kind provision of warm clothes, jackets, thermal underwear and shoes	USD 80-100 per person

\* Source: Shelter-NFI Cluster Activity Matrix, HRP 2017.

### SHELTER-NFI RESPONSES

83% of Shelter-NFI assistance has been provided in-kind. Monetized assistance in NGCA was not considered a viable option due to limited access to financing and markets for communities along the contact line. While **unconditional cash** was used prevalently in 2015, **restricted cash** has always been used as a modality for shelter repairs. Starting in 2016, as shelter partners moved into **heavy repairs and reconstruction works**, mixed modality (a combination of delivery of materials, provision of construction support and transfer of cash to finish repair works) was increasingly used by shelter partners. In 2016, closer links were developed with government authorities to coordinate the delivery of assistance with the coverage of heating and utility subsidies. A major focus of shelter and NFI activities have been in **preparing for and mitigating the effects of low temperatures** (see table 1). Other shelter activities, such as repairs, were an important feature of winterization activities, to achieve adequate shelter conditions and protection of vulnerable populations (see table 2). Other activities included the provision of **permanent social housing** for IDPs and vulnerable groups (in need of housing) who did not wish to return to areas of hot conflict, but lacked adequate accommodation. **Contingency plastic sheeting** was also provided.

The Cluster has **developed a series of tools** to support partners in the implementation of activities. These included the collection of a database of damaged houses in partnership with



Interventions included housing repairs (Starohnativka, Dec 2015).

local authorities in the GCA; the development of winterization guidelines, drawing on lessons learned during the response in 2014-2015<sup>9</sup>; a referral database focusing on winterization, as well as other needs, to keep organizations updated<sup>10</sup>; and preliminary feasibility assessments for a profiling exercise, to identify durable solutions for the most vulnerable IDPs<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Available at <http://bit.ly/2juGgT2> and <http://bit.ly/2kFoTRe>.

<sup>10</sup> For more information on the referral system, visit <http://bit.ly/2kj0qUp>.

<sup>11</sup> More information can be found on the Profiling Technical Working Group page: <http://bit.ly/2ki0HXr>.

TABLE 2 – MAIN SHELTER AND NFI ACTIVITIES\*

RESPONSE OPTION	DESCRIPTION	VALUE / COST
Cash for rent or other shelter-linked monetized solutions	Securing adequate and to-standard shelter. As a response for potential eviction. Possibility to decommission Collective Centres.	USD 600-700 per year per household for rural and urban areas (this varied by city)
Acute emergency repairs	In areas where active conflict damaged houses or where conflict has restarted. Plastic sheeting, wooden battens for quick repairs of openings and roofs, cement and in some special cases sand.	USD 40-80
Light and medium repairs	Roofing materials and glazing to stabilize living conditions.	USD 400-500 for light repairs; Up to USD 1,000 for medium repairs
Structural (heavy) repairs	Partial reconstruction of one or several walls. Full concrete ring beam and retrofitting for the structure. Partial flooring and partial opening (warm room). Full roofing. Partial insulation. Basic sanitation and heating system.	Up to USD 4,000 per household of two persons; USD 500 per extra person
Essential utilities, network repairs and connections	Conditional on other works being implemented in the community, and repairs are complementary to other general activities.	USD 100-250 per household
Reconstruction	Reconstruction on existing foundations of a new, structurally sound small house. Average 10 to 12m <sup>2</sup> per person (gross surface area), insulated, with basic furniture (bed), heating system, and sanitation. May include possibility of future expansion.	USD 8,000 per household (two persons) plus USD 1,000 per extra person
NFI (general)	Essential household item provision, e.g. kitchen kit, hygiene kit (if not covered by WASH sector); bed and mattresses if needed.	USD 200 per household
NFI (bedding set)	In-kind provision of bed linen, pillowcase, blankets.	USD 16 per linen set; USD 8 per blanket



Some projects aimed at re-building completely destroyed houses (Sloviansk).



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**CHALLENGES**

The lack of access in NGCA severely restricted humanitarian coverage. Regular liaison with local authorities and creating opportunities to work with local organizations on the ground remained essential. Advocacy efforts have been key to meet the humanitarian needs, though **poor information sharing** between stakeholders severely constrained the informing of good advocacy. **Lack of early recovery programming** destabilized the population and forced them into worsening humanitarian conditions, or secondary displacement. There was also a **lack of technical resources**, particularly in the NGCA. While communities close to the front line have not experienced shelling for over a year, traditional development donors would not fund any reconstruction or access-to-housing projects in these communities, due to the **continued and unpredictable instability**<sup>12</sup>.

**LOOKING FORWARD**

- By the end of 2016, **short-term humanitarian needs of IDPs remained high**, as the conflict prolonged and resources depleted. The most vulnerable non-displaced populations, mostly residing near the contact line, required continuous support, due to ongoing damage to shelter and infrastructure, alongside access to markets for fuel and NFIs.
- **Self-ownership of housing** in Ukraine presented an opportunity for resilience and recovery, being an asset of economic stability.
- **Topping up acute and primary repairs** through larger-scale structural and reconstruction activities was an integrated part of the early recovery process, and included the revitalization of basic infrastructure. As part of this effort, the Shelter-NFI Cluster began **cooperating with the Education and Health Clusters**, in order to create a database of damage and repair for schools and hospitals.
- Given the neglect of common premises, infrastructure and utilities in residential buildings following privatization, it was proposed that programmes include social **programming, specialized institutions (such as elderly care facilities), or access to credit** to facilitate renting and acquisition of housing.
- In 2016, the Cluster initiated discussions with development donors, to **provide guidance on vulnerability profiling**, in order to come up with specific policies for better targeting of needs.
- **Compensation programming for damage and losses** might secure the rights of citizens who lost assets and family members.
- The **Housing, Land and Property Technical Working**

<sup>12</sup> Draft Shelter Cluster Transitional Plan, July 2016.

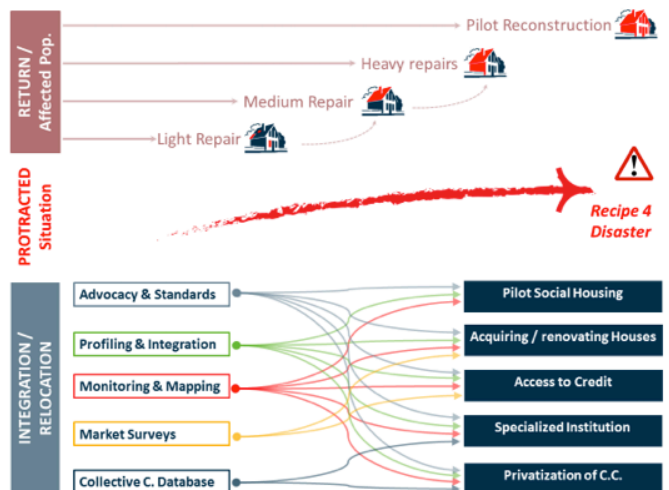


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Multistorey buildings (top) and houses (bottom) in conflict zones sustained significant damage due to shrapnel punctures, and required urgent repairs.

**Group** was established, between the Protection and Shelter Clusters.

- **Recovery programming also had to consider the “ghost-town effect”** of settlements along the contact line to mitigate the likelihood of displacement or secondary displacement. These areas were characterized by damaged houses or lack of adequate housing, unemployment, low wages, lack of available transportation, lack of social services, poor road conditions, and lack of medical and educational services.
- **Next steps to foster peaceful co-existence** could include managing absorption capacity of the housing sector, developing social housing initiatives, supporting proper urban development, stimulating community support, and engaging various stakeholders (including the private sector, humanitarian actors and local authorities).



This diagram was used to orientate actors in a conflict setting, and to come up with possible solutions to facilitate a longer-term path towards recovery.