

### ●●●● PROTECTION HIGHLIGHTS

**Protection of Civilians:** In September, the number of security incidents slightly increased compared to August (471 and 440 cases, respectively). Conflict parties continue to increase their presence along the contact line, which is likely will lead to the deterioration of the security situation in the upcoming months. At least 31 civilian houses were damaged. On 9 September, due to the shelling near Skotuvata (Donetsk region), the movement of the trains was suspended for two weeks. OHCHR recorded nine civilian casualties – including eight in the non-government controlled territory (NGCA). From January to September 2021, 84 civilian casualties were recorded (58% due to mines/ERW) – a 34% decrease compared with the same period in 2020.

**Freedom of movement:** In September, the number of crossings through the entry-exit crossing point (EECP) ‘Stanytsia Luhanska’ dropped by 23% compared to August (from 85,043 to 65,255 crossings). COVID-19 related requirements (install ‘Vdoma’ mobile app; undergo 10-days self-isolation/isolation in medical facilities or take COVID-19 tests) contributed to the decrease and were extended until the end of the year. On 13 September, the Cabinet of Ministers amended [Resolution #1236](#) allowing vaccinated residents of NGCA to enter GCA without [undergoing self-isolation](#) or COVID-19 testing. The results of the [monitoring](#) of the situation at the international border crossing points (IBCPs) ‘Milove’ and ‘Hoptivka’, conducted by UNHCR and NGO Right to Protection (R2P) in August-September, showed a positive impact of the amendments to the [Law 1583-IX](#) on lifting the fines against NGCA residents entering GCA through IBCPs. In August, the number of fines decreased from 1,052 to 83 at IBCP ‘Milove’ IBCP and from 164 to 2 at IBCP ‘Hoptivka’. Starting from 10 October, the ‘LPR’ de-facto authorities introduced significant crossing restrictions through the EECP ‘Stanytsia Luhanska’. To leave Luhansk NGCA, the NGCA resident should be included in the list formed by the local authorities based on the following grounds: medical treatment, burial, provision of care to a close relative, and education. The same [заксцуврку](#) is applied to GCA residents entering Luhansk NGCA. The number of crossings through the IBCP ‘Milove’ reportedly did not increase yet.

**Access to pensions:** Oshchadbank prolonged the validity of the IDP bank cards till 1 January 2022. [Starting from 1 January 2022](#), the cards will no longer be prolonged automatically. IDPs will have to visit Oshchadbank branches to collect re-issued cards.

On 22 September, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted [Resolution #999](#), allowing pensioners (including IDPs residing in NGCA) to undergo physical verification with the Pension Fund (required once a year) remotely via the website using an e-signature generated by the mobile app ‘Diya. ID’. Digital verification will also allow IDP pensioners not to undergo physical verification with the Oshadbank every 90 days (this requirement was suspended during COVID-19 restrictions). Despite this positive development, after the suspension of the COVID-19 restrictions, IDP-pensioners will be still required to cross the contact line every 60 days to keep their IDP certificate valid.

**2022 Draft State Budget:** On 15 September, the Government approved the [draft State Budget for 2022](#). The document points to a 300% increase of financing explosive risk ordnance education (from 5,000K to 15,000k), and a 300% increase of the subvention to local infrastructure projects of the Territorial Communities (from 62,550K to 187,650K). However, the draft does not indicate the allocation for the programme ‘Affordable housing’ (50/50 programme) or subventions to local budgets to finance the programme ‘Housing for IDPs’. Budget decreases are noticed on compensation for housing destroyed as a result of the conflict (by 41% from 114,000K to 80,853K), and on Free Legal Aid (decrease of 37,5%) which could impact staffing structures on FLACs.

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### ONLINE DASHBOARDS/MAPS

- [Protection Cluster 5W – Q3 \(January-September\) 2021](#)
- [Checkpoints: people’s monthly crossings](#)
- [Settlements Map](#)
- [Explosive Ordnance Risk Education \(EORE\) Sessions](#)
- [Legal Aid Directory](#)
- [MHPSS and GBV Services](#)

## OPERATIONAL RESPONSE

- **Protection and legal counseling:** NGO Right to Protection (R2P) provided legal aid to 596 persons; and individual counselling to 1,311 persons at EECs and IBCPs. Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) provided information, counselling, and legal assistance to 714 persons. NRC's community-based network of paralegals provided 225 legal and individual counselling in the settlements along the contact line. NGO Donbas SOS provided individual counseling and legal assistance to 1,496 persons through its hotline. Hotline operators registered increased interest among NGCA residents in COVID-19 vaccination and how it affects self-isolation requirement when entering Ukraine from Russian Federation. NGO Proliska supported by UNHCR provided protection counselling for 1,473 persons and provided social accompaniment for 390 persons. Most issues raised in individual counselling were related to access to humanitarian (43%), freedom of movement and 'Vdoma' mobile app (28%).
- **Individual Protection Assistance:** UNHCR provided individual protection assistance to 67 conflict-affected people and 10 IDPs who suffered from COVID-19.
- **Awareness on Vaccination:** The Protection Cluster's Technical Working Group on Age and Disability, led by HelpAge, hosted seven training sessions on how to convey messages on the importance of COVID-19 vaccination and support conflict-affected populations to take an informed decision about it. Approximately 300 field staff of protection partners attended the sessions, facilitated by UNICEF and Ukrainian Catholic University. Protection partners conducted information sessions on vaccination to 7,600 older people living along the contact line, and so far at least 700 older people informed that they decided to get vaccinated.
- **Mine action:** The HALO Trust cleared 17 hectares of mine-contaminated land and conducted online and offline Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) sessions for 23,636 children, teachers, and caregivers in Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia regions. DRC-DDG finalized a 2-year project in Luhansk region which included humanitarian demining and livelihood support. Over this period, DDG released over 72 hectares of ERW contaminated land; identified 811 hectares of Hazardous Areas, and conducted EORE sessions for over 2,000 persons.
- **Transportation services:** NGO Proliska provided transportation services to 1,092 persons from 39 isolated settlements to improve access to social, health, and administrative services for people living along the contact line.
- **Capacity building:** NRC conducted two two-days legal trainings for 64 land plot planners of Territorial Communities and Civil-Military Administrations (CMAs) in Luhansk region. The trainings covered land auctions, practical aspects of the land market, escheat legacy, change in the purpose of a land plot, and land law for CMAs.
- **Community support:** UNHCR in cooperation with Polish Humanitarian Action and Toretsk CMA reconstructed and equipped a multi-functional community center in Druzhba village, where will be provided critical services for the local residents and ill allow locals to save time and money. Save the Children jointly with NGO Slavic Heart launched Community Center and Case Management Unit in Popasna. The center will provide gender-sensitive psychosocial support; PSS and case management for children and their parents; sports activities and art therapy for children who have experienced traumatic events.



©Save the Children / Opening of the community center in Popasna



©NGO Proliska / Social buses launched within UHF project

## ADVOCACY

- On 23 September, OHCHR presented a 32nd [Periodic Report on human rights situation in Ukraine](#) including key trends in the protection of civilians in the conflict zone; the impact of hostilities and COVID-19 on civil, political, and socio-economic rights of civilians; as well as provided recommendations to the relevant stakeholders.
- On 9 September, Save the Children jointly with the Ministry of Education hosted a round table to accelerate the implementation of the [Action Plan](#) on implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration, signed by the Ukrainian Government in August 2021.