Despite the 15.5 per cent increase in civilian movement across the "contact line" in July compared to June (97,000 vs. 82,000), the number of civilian crossings remains low, representing just 7.5 per cent of 1.3 million crossings recorded in July 2019. Since the movement across the "contact line" remains limited to certain categories of people, 212,471 individuals, many of whom are likely residents of non-Government-controlled areas (NGCA), opted to transit through the Russian Federation via the crossing points (CPs) "Milove" (Luhanska oblast) and "Hoptivka" (Kharkivska oblast) to enter Government-controlled areas (GCA) in July. However, the limited capacity of these border crossing points and long processing times have resulted in reports of people spending up to 24 hours to cross to GCA.

**OPERATIONAL UPDATES**

On 22 July, the President signed a law cancelling administrative fines for crossing the uncontrolled section of the Ukrainian-Russian border to transit to GCA from NGCA. Following the entry into force of this law, NGCA residents will no longer be required to pay these fines at "Milove" and "Hoptivka" crossing points while COVID-19 restrictions are in place, provided that their justification for crossing falls under certain humanitarian exemptions.

While the law provides the possibility for the State Border Guard Service to exempt a person from paying a fine on other grounds, reportedly, it hasn’t been applied consistently to date. In addition, the application of this law should be extended beyond the period of COVID-19-related quarantine and apply in case of any other emergency-triggered closure of the "contact line" or introduction of severe movement restrictions.

On 28 July, to mitigate transmission of the COVID-19 Delta variant, the Government announced the reinstatement of app-monitored self-quarantine for people crossing international borders and the "contact line". Travellers vaccinated with WHO-approved vaccines will be exempt from self-quarantine, however NGCA residents vaccinated with Sputnik vaccines, will be required to provide a negative COVID-19 test result and/or self-quarantine. Furthermore, NGCA residents transiting through the Russian Federation (RF) to enter GCA may be affected by a new mandatory 14-day self-quarantine without the possibility to cancel it for all travellers who spent over seven days in COVID-19 Delta strain high exposure areas, which includes the RF. Travellers spending less than seven days in the RF will be required to provide a negative COVID-19 test, which might further increase processing times and lead to longer queues at the border crossing points.

On 28 July, the Cabinet of Ministers approved free-of-charge bus transportation services for people crossing the "contact line" on foot. Bus services will be provided by the State Enterprise “Reintegration and Reconstruction” to assist the elderly, people with disabilities, women with children and other low-mobility groups to cross the EECPs.

Humanitarian partners are working closely with the Ministry for Reintegration and the municipal company to work out the modality and technicalities of the provision of transportation services, processing times and lead to longer queues at the border crossing points.

1. The Parliament had adopted the law on 29 June, and it was pending President’s signature for some time.
2. The detailed list is available at link.
3. The provision came into force on 5 August.
4. WHO approved vaccines as of 15 July 2021 available at link.
5. Ministry for Reintegration.

**COMPARISON OF THE MONTHLY CIVILIAN CROSSINGS (2019 - 2021)**

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