

UKRAINE CRISIS: ICRC activities in January - May 2015



Providing food and essential household items

Between January and May 2015, the ICRC has distributed more than 15,000 metric tonnes of food and household items to some 440,000 people affected by the conflict in Donetsk and Luhansk regions on both sides of the front line. Over **220,000 people** – both residents and displaced – received hygiene items, blankets, tarpaulins and plastic sheeting. Around **215,000 people** received food, including more than **3,700 hospital patients**, children in orphanages and people living in homes for the elderly.

Improving living conditions

Almost **23,000 displaced people and residents** of Luhansk and Donetsk regions, on both sides of the

front line, received construction materials such as cement, bricks, timber and roofing, so that their houses could be made waterproof and habitable following damage by shelling. In addition, ICRC-donated equipment was used to repair power distribution networks and water supply systems in heavily-affected areas of Luhansk and Donetsk regions.

Safeguarding health care

Between January and May 2015, medical supplies to the value of nearly 500,000 CHF (including dressing materials, medicines, sutures, infusions, insulin, as well as consumables for hemodialysis and supplies for the treatment of people wounded in the hostilities) were in the pipeline or already donated to **63 hospitals and 17 first aid posts** in Luhansk and Donetsk regions, including **37 hospitals** in opposition-held areas. **Thirty surgeons** from government controlled areas of **Luhansk and Donetsk regions** improved their skills in the treatment of war wounded by participating in a war surgery seminar organised by the ICRC in Kramatorsk.

Visiting detainees

The ICRC visited people held in connection with the conflict in places of detention under the control of the Ukrainian authorities in Zaporizhia, Odesa, Poltava, Kharkiv, Artemivsk, Starobilsk, Mariupol and Kyiv, to monitor the treatment they were receiving and the conditions in which they were being held. **One hundred and ten people** detained in relation to the conflict were registered during **43 visits to 12 places of detention**.

The ICRC continued to visit people in penitentiary establishments in opposition-held areas, to assess the conditions of detention in those facilities. The organization provided hygiene items and food to more than **16,000 detainees** held in **19 Penitentiary Service facilities**. At the request of detainees, the ICRC passed on more than **100 family news messages** to relatives, with the agreement of the detaining authorities.

Tracing missing persons

The ICRC has been working with the Ukrainian Red Cross to document missing persons, in response to more than **300 tracing requests** from family members. Since January the fate and whereabouts of **53 persons** unaccounted for have been clarified.

At the request of both parties to the conflict, and in its role as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC took part in the hand-over of the mortal remains of **59 Ukrainian soldiers** and provided forensic support during the recovery of the bodies of deceased Ukrainian soldiers in Donetsk airport. The ICRC also facilitated the evacuation of **four civilians** and **a dead body** from Shyrokyne village in eastern Ukraine. The ICRC assisted forensic institutions (morgues) on both sides, by providing more than **1,200 body bags, and protective equipment** to manage the retrieval and handling of human remains in a dignified manner.

Dialogue with the parties to the conflict

The ICRC is maintaining contact with all parties to the conflict to draw their attention to the

consequences of hostilities on the civilians, about respect for the essential nature of the rules of international humanitarian law (IHL). Special emphasis is put on incidents that affect medical facilities, transport and health personnel, or cause damage to essential infrastructure such as water supplies and power networks.

Five training courses on integrating international humanitarian law (IHL) into the planning of military operations were held for **170 Commanders, planners and legal advisors of the Armed Forces of Ukraine**. **Four representatives** from the Ukrainian Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs, and from the Armed Forces of Ukraine participated in the fifth Regional Conference on IHL implementation held in Minsk from 18 to 20 March 2015. The conference, at which participants discussed progress on the implementation of IHL in their respective countries, was organized by the ICRC in cooperation with the Belarusian Ministry of Justice.

Protecting civilians from unexploded munitions

Following the ceasefire agreement that came into effect in February of this year, people have been returning to their homes. This, and the start of the farming season, led to a significant increase in the number of deaths and injuries related to mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW). The ICRC has therefore stepped up efforts to inform the population about how to stay safe, distributing **150,000 leaflets** and **3,000 posters** on safe behaviour in conflict-affected areas. The ICRC also trained Ukrainian Red Cross volunteers to educate others about the risks of mines and ERW.

Cooperation with the Ukrainian Red Cross

The ICRC worked closely with the Ukrainian Red Cross to distribute aid to displaced people and residents affected by the conflict in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and provided financial and technical support for its tracing, communication and emergency response services, including mine risk education (see above).

In a nutshell:



Provided food to some 215,000 persons in Luhansk and Donetsk regions, including in health care institutions and detention places



Provided medical supplies, such as medicine and dressing material to 80 hospitals and health posts in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, including 37 in opposition held areas



Provided construction material, such as cement, bricks and timber as well as roofing sheets for almost 23,000 persons in Donetsk and Luhansk regions to help repair damaged buildings



Visited and registered 110 people held in connection with the conflict in detention places under the control of the Ukrainian authorities and provided food and hygiene items to more than 16,000 detainees held in 19 penitentiary institutions on the territories under opposition control



Provided hygiene and other items to over 220,000 persons in Luhansk and Donetsk regions, including in health care institutions and detention places



Donated 11,380 pairs of gloves, 1,200 body bags and five kits for 250 DNA tests to forensic institutions

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