UNOG Bi-weekly press briefing: COVID-19 Ukraine - OCHA

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Shotlist

2. **SOUNDBITE (EN) Jens Laerke, Spokesperson for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA):** “This closure of the contact line has limited the ability to organize humanitarian convoys into non-government-controlled areas and only two UN organized convoys delivering Covid-19 related supplies have crossed into Donetsk since the beginning of the Covid crisis”.
3. Medium shot: UN Geneva and UN flag alley behind gates at UN Geneva, filmed from the Place des Nations. A motorcyclist passes from left to right.
4. **SOUNDBITE (EN) Jens Laerke, Spokesperson for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA):** “Some humanitarian exemptions have been made for crossings both ways. 325 people were granted such exemptions between the 21 March and the end of April. But that – as I mentioned – is compared to 900,000 crossings normally every month”.
6. **SOUNDBITE (EN) Jens Laerke, Spokesperson for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA):** “Ukraine, as you know, is a humanitarian situation with a particular caseload of elderly people who are very vulnerable because they cannot access their pensions or family support on the government-controlled side of the contact line”.
7. Medium shot: UN Geneva flag alley, with UN flag in background.
8. SOUNDBITE (EN) Jens Laerke, Spokesperson for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA): “Across Ukraine, there are 15,648 confirmed cases, there are some 408 deaths as of yesterday”.


10. SOUNDBITE (EN) Jens Laerke, Spokesperson for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA): “In Luhansk, the non-government-controlled area, there are 232 confirmed cases and in Donetsk, again the non-government-controlled area, there is 184, a total of 416 confirmed cases in the non-governmental controlled parts of eastern Ukraine”.

11. Medium shot, UN palais building with UN flag
Almost no humanitarian aid is entering the non-government-controlled areas in Ukraine due to Covid-19 lockdown measures.

Since the third week in March practically no humanitarian aid has reached eastern Ukraine beyond the “contact line” that separates the government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas of the country.

During a virtual press conference at the UN in Geneva, Jens Laerke, Spokesperson for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said that “this closure of the ‘contact line’ has limited the ability to organize humanitarian convoys into non-government-controlled areas and only two UN organized convoys delivering Covid-19 related supplies have crossed into Donetsk since the beginning of the Covid crisis”.

Laerke added that “some humanitarian exemptions have been made for crossings both ways. 325 people were granted such exemptions between the 21 March and the end of April. But that – as I mentioned – is compared to 900,000 crossings normally every month”.

In 2014 Russia annexed Ukraine’s southern Crimea peninsula and a full-scale conflict between Government forces and separatists took place in the country’s east. The current measures introduced by the Ukrainian government and the Russia-backed separatists to control the coronavirus have exacerbated the humanitarian situation near the contact line in eastern Ukraine.

About half a million Ukrainian pensioners from territories regularly crossed the contact line into government-controlled areas. All of them received a state pension.

OCHA’s Jens Laerke explained that “Ukraine, as you know, is a humanitarian situation with a particular caseload of elderly people who are very vulnerable because they cannot access their pensions or family support on the government-controlled side of the contact line”.

The Government of Ukraine and the de facto authorities in Luhansk and the have recently approved deliveries of health supplies into Luhansk through one entry point, called “Stanytsia Luhanska”. However, humanitarian aid must be delivered on foot as the passage of trucks is not allowed.

OCHA’s spokesperson said that “across Ukraine, there are 15,648 confirmed cases, there are some 408 deaths as of yesterday”. He added that “in Luhansk, the non-government-controlled area, there are 232 confirmed cases and in Donetsk, again the non-government-controlled area, there is 184, a total of 416 confirmed cases in the non-governmental controlled parts of eastern Ukraine”.

Humanitarian agencies continue their operations on both sides of the contact line with existing stockpiles, targeting a total of some 2 million people.