

Shelter Cluster Ukraine

ShelterCluster.org

Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter

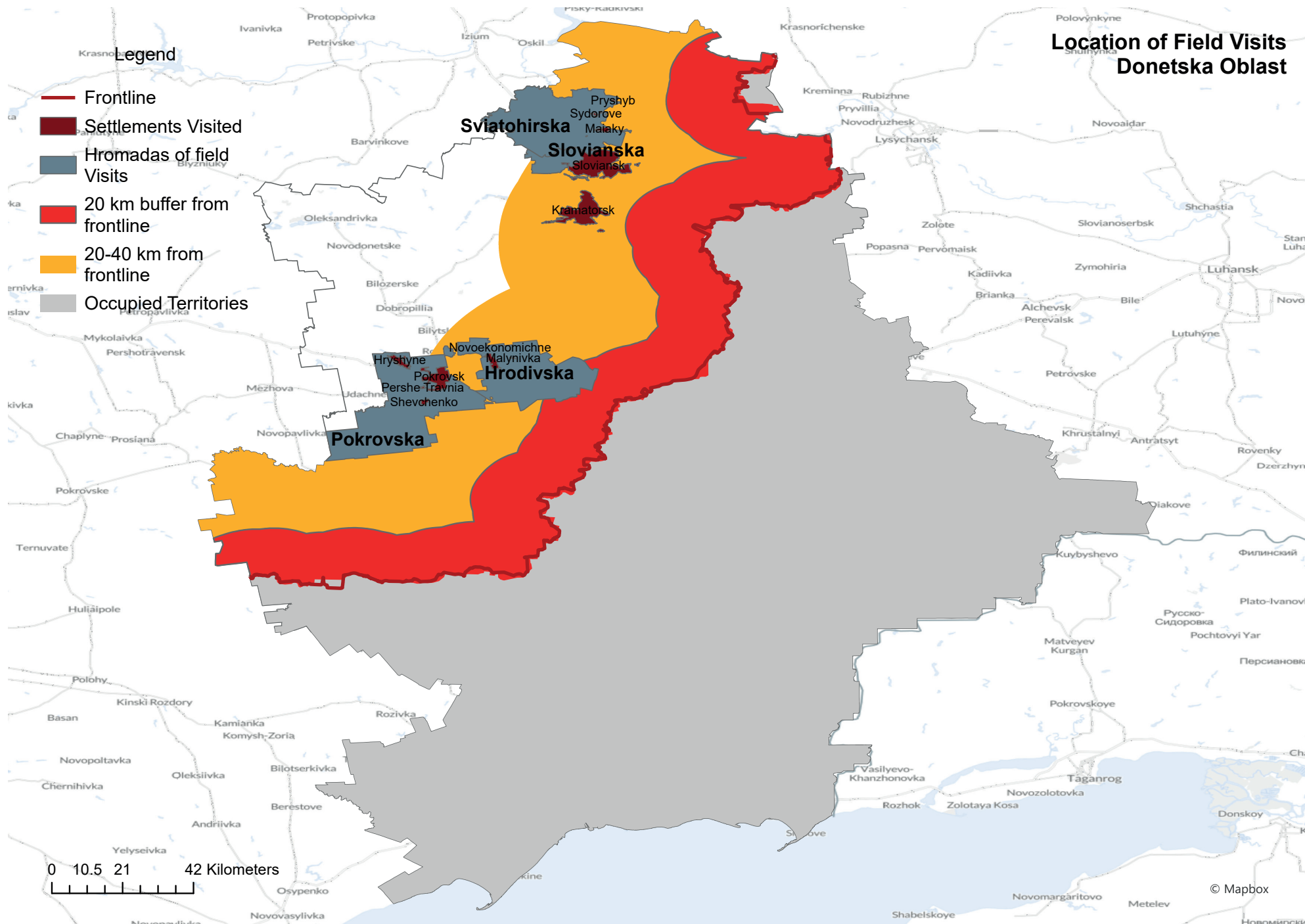
Shelter Cluster Mission Donetsk Oblast

18-20 March 2024

Field Visits to

Hrodivska, Pokrovska, Slovianska, Sviatohirska Hromadas

Location of Field Visits Donetska Oblast



Recommendations

Recommendation	To Whom
Partners and donors to look at improving support for housing and services for IDPS in other oblasts so that when evacuated, IDPs won't feel forced to return to areas of high insecurity	Partners and donors and other Shelter Cluster Hubs who have received Donetsk internally displaced and evacuated persons
Donors and partners with nexus projects to look into increasing the capacity of provision of alternative sources of fuel such as biofuel in the oblast as an alternative to wood and coal. Sunflower briquettes were appreciated by donors but there are not enough suppliers.	Donors and partners
Start winter planning and distribution process much earlier so that first solid fuel is distributed ahead of December	Shelter Cluster and also donors funding partners who will distribute solid fuel
Ensure transparent communication with authorities about beneficiary criteria and provide feedback on which persons are accepted to agencies' assistance programs	Shelter Cluster partners
Partners to coordinate with one another and to cross check beneficiary lists to prevent duplications at hromada and settlement levels	Shelter Cluster partners
Partners to use Winterization Guidelines as reference for quantities and types of fuel in communications with authorities	Shelter Cluster partners
With decreased funding, prioritize only the most vulnerable in solid fuel distributions	Shelter Cluster partners
Revise HNRP Handbook entry 1.2 on distribution of essential construction materials to local authorities to track both stock donated as it is consumed and also to help organizations on reporting on number of persons and households reached	Shelter Cluster Team at East team with support from National team
Deprioritize convoys as a modality of providing assistance in the region and prioritize programs that are able to provide services such as direct emergency shelter distribution at household level	Shelter Cluster partners
Consult with Hromadas on their capacity to cover repairs in common spaces prior to such interventions and target undocumented as needs for repairs	Shelter Cluster partners

Mission Schedule



The East Hub team of the Shelter Cluster conducted monitoring missions with Shelter Cluster partners on the 18th through 20th March. The purpose of these monitoring missions was to conduct the cluster's core functions of monitoring and evaluation particularly looking at the distribution of solid fuel and emergency shelter response. The Shelter Cluster would like to thank ADRA, Angels of Salvation, People in Need, Project Hope, and to the Donetsk Regional Military Administration for their participation and making themselves available during the monitoring mission. Special thanks is extended to Cluster Lead Agency for their logistical, security, and driving support to make this mission possible.

Monday 18th March 2024 Hrodivska Hromada

- Meeting with Pokrovskiy Raion and 6 frontline Hromadas (Pokrovska, Hrodivska, Novohrodivska, Myrnohradska, Selydivska, Kurakhivska) and Donetsk Regional Military Administration
- Visit with People in Need Solid Fuel beneficiaries in Novoekonovichne and Malynivka villages

Tuesday 19th March 2024 Sviatohirska and Slovianska Hromadas

- Meeting with Kramatorskiy Raion administration and Sviatohirska and Slovianska Hromadas
- Visit with ADRA solid fuel beneficiaries in Mayaky, Sydorove villages, and Project Hope beneficiaries in Pryshyb village
- Visit to Angels of Salvation emergency shelter builds in Sloviansk

20th March 2024 Myrnohradska and Pokrovska Hromadas

- Visit with ADRA solid fuel beneficiaries in Hryshino, Pershe Travnia, Shevchenko villages
- Visit with Angels of Salvation emergency shelter beneficiaries in Pokrovsk and site observation

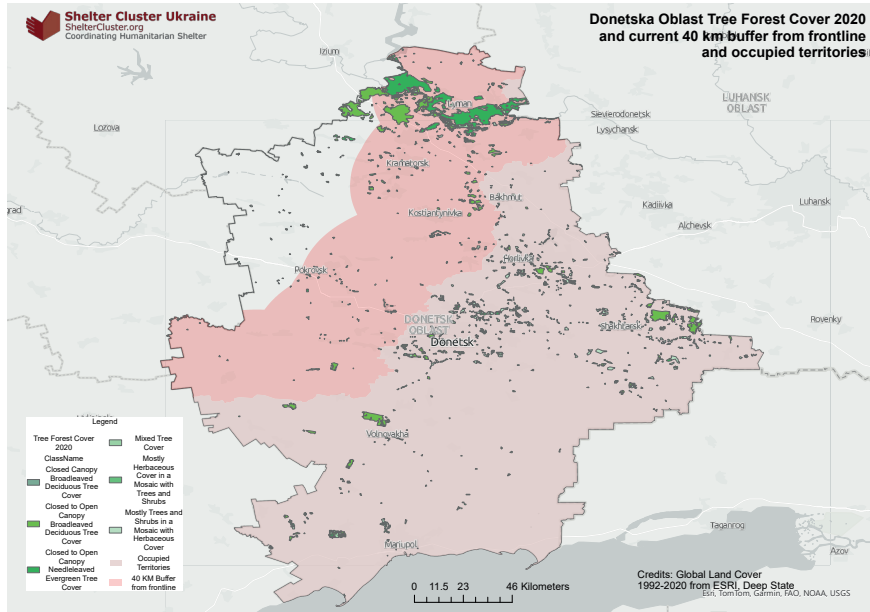
Context



After 10 years of occupation, the humanitarian situation in Donetsk Oblast has continued to dramatically deteriorate. Since the full-scale invasion in February 2022, 58% (13,349.35 m²) of the oblast is currently occupied. Approximately 32% (8500 square metres) of Donetsk Oblast is found within 40 kilometres of the frontline in areas still under the control of the Government of Ukraine (GCA- Government Controlled Area). Various villages in the frontline area are facing the consequences of daily shelling that has caused damages to apartments and private houses to which partners are mobilizing an emergency shelter response daily since the beginning of the year. In addition to witnessing damaged schools and damaged housing, mission participants heard the regular drum of artillery fire and explosions coming from the frontline which was approximately 20 km to 40 km in distance from most of the locations visited.

The mission enabled Shelter Cluster team to discuss with authorities and beneficiaries on their thoughts about evacuations and the security situation. In terms of priorities, most authorities insisted on continuing to provide prioritized emergency shelter support given the daily shelling, improving on the way that solid fuel distribution was conducted, and in improving clarification on issuance of e-vidnovlennya and its issuance for repair needs. In one village, the mission met with IDPs who had been displaced from Avdiivka during the 2014-2015 period who were not again willing to live the region. One beneficiary had been evacuated to Poltava for approximately four months. She was prompted to return to her village outside of Pokrovsk because she was sharing a cramped two-bedroom apartment with another family. This indicates the need to invest in better housing solutions in other oblasts to meet the needs of IDPs after they have been evacuated to other oblasts. Certain locations of Donetsk Oblast are currently under mandatory evacuation, where children will be prioritized along with their parents, but it was acknowledged by many authorities that many people are not willing to go, particularly among the elderly. Several elderly people had left during occupation of Svitohirska Hromada and had returned and stated they would leave again as they did not want to live under occupation.

Solid Fuel



As was first highlighted in the 2016-2017 winterization lessons learned exercise in Ukraine, the decline in quality and access to coal in the Oblast has only increased since that winter period and now has arrived at its full culmination. In driving through Dobropillia, Shelter Cluster team observed the smell of poor-quality coal, and visited one storage unit of a beneficiary where the quality of coal could be observed. Many solid fuel beneficiaries were used to having the normal amount of 3 tons of coal for each winter season. While wood and wood pellets have been used as an alternative for several years, it is notable that many of Donetska's Oblasts forests have been devastated by ongoing military activity. The mission observed barren lands where once forests stood, and authorities in Kramatorskiy raion mentioned that they were trying to salvage damaged wood from the Lyman Forest but that the quality of this wood was significantly reduced. Given that both fuels have long been deemed as harmful for the environment, and the quality and supply of solid fuel continues to be quite challenging in the oblast alternatives are required, but they will require a more investment for partners and it would require changes in heating appliances. Beneficiaries noted high quality of sunflower briquettes, at the same time but there is only one enterprise in Donetska oblast which is not able to cover all needs. Additionally this enterprise is highly dependent on the raw materials.

Distribution of solid fuel arrived quite late with some beneficiaries only receiving their solid fuel amount the day prior to the monitoring mission. Local authorities recommended that the winterization planning period should start earlier to ensure that coal is delivered at least by December to cover the frigid winter months. Many of the beneficiaries were pensioners earning a typical pension of around 3000 UAH a month which makes it impossible for them to afford a full quantity of solid fuel on their own.

In terms of preference for solid fuel or cash for purchasing of solid fuel, the mission was limited to only observing those beneficiaries who received solid fuel, so it was not possible to get an overview of how beneficiaries are spending cash assistance for solid fuel. Nevertheless, all local authorities and beneficiaries stated that they would rather receive solid fuel as a form of assistance. They stated that if they received cash, they would spend it on other items and not be able to heat their house for winter at the coldest months. Several starostats and hromada representatives stated that those who received cash from some





organizations called to complain that they were still waiting to receive solid fuel, and when they explained that the cash was distributed to cover their needs, the cash was already spent on other items. The mission did not have the opportunity to visit or talk with any of these beneficiaries mentioned. Nevertheless, throughout the monitoring mission, advertisements for purchasing of coal and firewood were observed, meaning that a market of items is existing.

Hromadas mentioned a challenge of knowing how organizations were selecting beneficiaries and which exact beneficiaries were selected by organizations. In terms of the lists compiled for humanitarian organizations, hromadas shared that they are usually prioritizing IDPs, especially those recently evacuated from recently occupied or areas of significant military activity, large families, people with disabilities, wards of the state, people over 70 years of age, and people injured during shelling. After they provided the lists to organizations who were planning to work in their hromadas through the solid fuel tables, they were not sure which organization was covering which exact beneficiaries, and how they selected the beneficiaries from that list. There were also social tensions created in some communities, because of the timing of delivery of assistance in various organizations and types and amounts of assistance delivered to beneficiaries because in one hromada or village people were assisted by different organizations. One hromada authority mentioned that throughout the hromada, coal, wood, and briquettes were distributed by various organizations. Given the confusion on the beneficiary lists, hromadas also mentioned the concern, that some organizations registered beneficiaries who were not on their lists of most vulnerable persons, which further created confusion as other people received assistance before those other vulnerable groups. Given the vulnerability of beneficiaries in the Oblast including the elderly, local authorities mentioned a special appreciation for ADRA Ukraine's assistance which included door to door distribution, and authorities encouraged partners to continue this style of assistance.



Feedback was also given by local authorities that there was some misunderstanding created when agencies improperly communicated the type and amount of solid fuel that they were providing. It is recommended that the agencies understand the measurements and specifications related with the type and amount of solid fuel they are procuring, providing, and distributing. Further



support on specifications are mentioned in the Shelter Cluster's winterization guidelines. Authorities made mention of the need to better disaggregate this different type and amount of solid fuel amongst agencies within hromadas to not contribute to social tension as wood, coal, and briquettes, and cash were all being provided in various settlements within one hromada.

Within the discussion on expected needs and plans for the next winter season local authorities stated that during the winter season 2023-24, about 50% of beneficiaries have been covered by humanitarian organizations in comparison with the 2022-23 season, when hromadas received state subsidies which covered two times more than humanitarian assistance. Local authorities are expecting a further decrease of local budgets for the next winter season. They are therefore relying on increased humanitarian assistance next year, as well as decreasing the criteria for such selection to only the most vulnerable categories.

Emergency Assistance and Response in frontline areas



Since the end of January, the region has been the target of almost daily shelling to which emergency shelter is required. UNHCR's partner, Angels of Salvation, has been one of the first responders to these attacks with distribution of OSB boards, tarpaulin, and when required full emergency shelter kits. The mission had the opportunity to talk with some of their beneficiaries in Pokrovsk and observe AoS installations in Sloviansk and on the road through Myrnohrad.

Beneficiaries of Angels of Salvation were pleased with the speed of which the materials were delivered and appreciated the fact that the emergency shelter materials were given according to the specific needs of their apartments which mostly had their windows damaged.

During consultations with Pokrovskiy raion hromadas, Shelter Cluster East had an opportunity to ask about how to support implementation of Shelter Cluster strategic activity 1.2, "distribution of essential construction material to local authorities, Oblast humanitarian hubs emergency services for self-help repairs." Authorities mentioned the need to have materials such as OSB and roofing sheets as they are experiencing almost daily shelling. Specifically, Selidovske hromada has made a request for Shelter Cluster to pre-position such materials in stock for new strikes that occur. They mentioned a good cooperation with Angels of Salvation. The opportunity to provide information back to donating humanitarian organizations was discussed, and the hromadas mentioned that they could easily share updates on which individuals and households were provided with such assistance and how much of the stock would be used. Therefore, this activity should be modified in the Shelter Cluster activity handbook to reflect this need for monitoring.

In terms of the Shelter Cluster's work on the standard operating procedures for an emergency, Donetsk Oblast does not have as large cities as Zaporizhzhia, Dnipropetrovska, and Kharkivska Oblasts, but has the challenge of needing to work in frontline areas of sealing the building envelopes of damaged houses. This requires having the personnel to support in the distribution of items and provision of the technical assistance for supporting beneficiaries in receiving the appropriate items and installation of items. It was discussed with Angels of Salvation that they found it a bit challenging to coordinate with other agencies, as they had invested a lot on having functional emergency response teams who

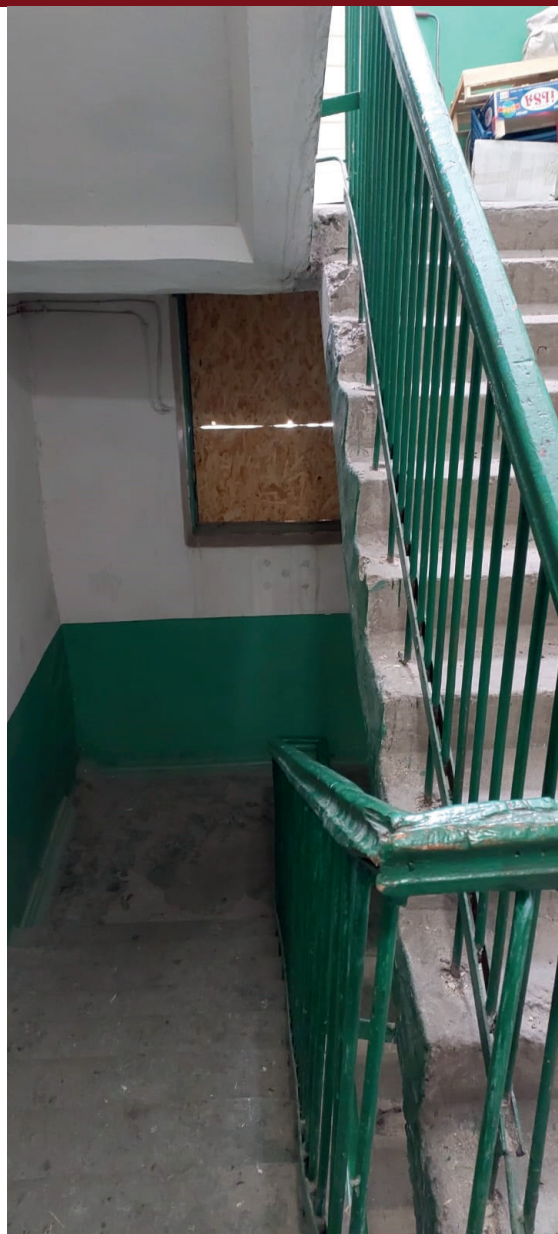


were able to deliver at scale in the first 24-60 hours in the aftermath of shelling incidents. As other agencies are still interested to support in the region with emergency shelter materials, the Shelter Cluster team should look at further contextualizing the standard operating procedures in Donetsk Oblast to take account of location, proximity to the frontline, number of households impacted, and capacity of agencies. Furthermore, the scale of the strikes in Donetsk Oblast are continuing to grow, and one single agency will not be able to cover all the needs in one year. There is a need for other agencies to also support in emergency repair areas.

During discussions with local authorities, the Deputy Governor of Donetsk Oblast highlighted that the approach of delivering humanitarian aid convoys was not considered effective for delivering humanitarian assistance. Given the needs created by daily shelling and damage to civilian infrastructure, the convoy approach was not considered the right way of addressing needs of frontline affected persons and communities. As this population has received much basic assistance including food assistance, it could be observed that some aid dependency has been created in the region. The Oblast raised their concerns that it is more important to know how the needs of displaced citizens residing in other oblasts such as legal assistance, access to housing services and compensation for those whose homes were fully destroyed, and other basic services, so that they can have their needs covered while in their displacement as the oblast continues to remain unstable.



Repairs and State Compensation



Throughout the oblast it was noted that the state compensation was in the process of working and that hromadas and starostat were supporting their residents in receiving access to the state compensation. ESK (Emergency Shelter Kit) recipients reported that they had heard from their neighbours that the state compensation took about two months from the date of the damage to be issued. On top of their assistance, they were hoping for such assistance to be able to fix their own repairs in the apartment.

Some hromadas can conduct repair of common spaces in the multistorey buildings (such examples have been observed in Pokrovsk) which allows to people to obtain compensation for repair (E-vidnovlennya). This hromada stated that they have the capacity to cover 30% of such needs created in multistorey buildings, but other hromadas lack this capacity. During the discussion with emergency shelter beneficiaries, municipal workers could be seen installing roofing sheets (shiffer) to cover damaged roofs of these apartments. Lack of documentation especially in rural places where the percentage of people who do not have ownership documents could be 40% or more is a continual obstacle to receiving state compensation, and many of these people need repair support.

Kramatorskiy Raion authorities mentioned that several people were renting accommodation in Sloviansk while they were awaiting to receive state compensation to start repairs on their damaged property, and the population of people is now around 52,000, while the population of Svitohirska is only about 1000 since the end of occupation, indicating the extent of damages caused in the hromada. Local authorities stated that they were waiting for the summer period to have an idea of how many returnees may return to these locations. Given that Svitohirska Hromada was subject to occupation, there are more concerns about demined areas also limiting access to all houses damaged throughout the Hromada. This is also limiting access to livelihoods and agricultural land and authorities mentioned the lack of equipment that they must fully demine the territory that was impacted by the devastation.

Several of the organizations on the mission had provided such assistance in various modalities. ADRA had conducted distributions of light repair construction materials such as windows, doors, and roofing slates which were appreciated by their beneficiaries and had a good result. Unfortunately, there was not an



opportunity to visit the interior of these houses but it seems to be a good approach for private houses. Project Hope mentioned their concern about 2024 repair works as being dictated by the security situation, given continually deteriorating situation. Frontline Hromadas recommended that partners should conduct repairs greater than 20 km away from the frontline given the continued shelling that impacts private houses and multistory buildings on a regular basis.



