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Photo: Nikita Yurenev (UNHCR)

INTRODUCTION

NGO "Foundation.101" has been implementing the initiative "Frontline Inspection" since September 2015. The aim of the initiative is to monitor the observance of human rights at the entry-exit control points on the line of contact, check the sanitary condition of control points and study public opinion on the work of inspectors and problems faced by citizens when crossing the line of contact.

The project is implemented in close cooperation with the Office of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, Donetsk regional military-civilian administration and with the kind support of the People's Project, USAID, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UNICEF.

As part of its Frontline Inspection initiative, Foundation.101 undertakes continuous polling of civilians at four entry-exit control points in Donetsk region.

This publication presents the results of the analysis of the survey, as well as observations of Foundation.101 monitors from monitoring visits.

The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of NGO "Foundation.101" and do not reflect the views of any of the mentioned partners.

1. METHODOLOGY

This report is based on a survey of people met while crossing the line of contact through the entry-exit control points in Donetsk region, as well as observations of monitors of NGO "Foundation.101" from monitoring visits to control points.

The survey was carried out in order to better understand the conditions at control points and identify major trends in the thoughts, concerns, and reasons for the crossing of civilians met at the four entry-exit control points "Zaytseve", "Marinka", "Hnutove" and "Novotroitske" from August 15th to September 31st, 2016. Foundation.101 monitors polled 3,842 respondents as part of this research.

The method of data collection at all entry-exit control points was the same. Respondents were given a survey consisting of 29 questions, each with single or multiple choice answers, which was developed by UNHCR in concert with Foundation.101. All respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, which was conducted anonymously.

The monitors of NGO "Foundation.101" polled people waiting in the queue at each entry-exit control point. Monitors surveyed people crossing the line of contact in both directions – those travelling from government-controlled areas (GCA) to non-government controlled areas (NGCA) and vice versa. The survey was conducted in the form of personal interviews with people in vehicles who were waiting to cross the line of contact, as well as with people who crossed the control point on public transport.

Interviewers were not accompanied by personnel working at the entry-exit checkpoints while they conducted the survey, and Foundation.101's presence at the checkpoints had been agreed upon with authorities in advance.

Observers from Foundation.101 monitored each of the four entry-exit checkpoints in Donetsk region twice a week. Monitors recorded the conditions in which citizens crossing the line of contact were processed by the State Border Service of Ukraine and the State Fiscal Service of Ukraine, as well as the sanitary conditions of control points and emergency cases which occurred while they were present at the checkpoint.

2. DEMOGRAPHICS

From August 15th to September 31st 2016, Foundation.101 monitors interviewed 3,842 persons met at entry-exit checkpoints. 58 per cent of the respondents were male, and 42 per cent were female.

More than 850 people were interviewed at each entry-exit control point: 1,046 people at the control point "Zaytseve", 968 people at "Marinka", 956 people at "Novotroitske", and 872 people at "Hnutove"¹.

55.7 per cent of the respondents (2,130 persons) were met while crossing from NGCA to GCA, and 44.3 per cent (1,894 people) were met travelling in the opposite direction.

14 per cent of respondents crossed the line of contact with children under 18 years of age.

According to the survey, 3.2 per cent of people met while crossing the line of contact are extremely vulnerable individuals, including those with disabilities or poor health.

Before the conflict, 88.5 per cent of the respondents lived in what is now NGCA, and 11.5 per cent lived on the territory which is GCA. At the time of interview, 76 per cent of respondents stated that they live in NGCA, while 24 per cent live in GCA.

18 per cent of respondents reported leaving their homes due to the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine. However, 21.8 per cent out of this number have returned back to their place of original residence. Among the reasons for return, people often cited the stabilization of the situation at their place of permanent residence (92 per cent), inability to find a job (19 per cent) and high rents (13 per cent). 1 per cent of respondents named the mistreatment of the locals among the reasons that led them to return to their permanent residence. The reasons for return of persons met match the major risks faced by IDPs: lack of a stable income source, and the high costs of rent and utilities.

3. REASONS FOR CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT

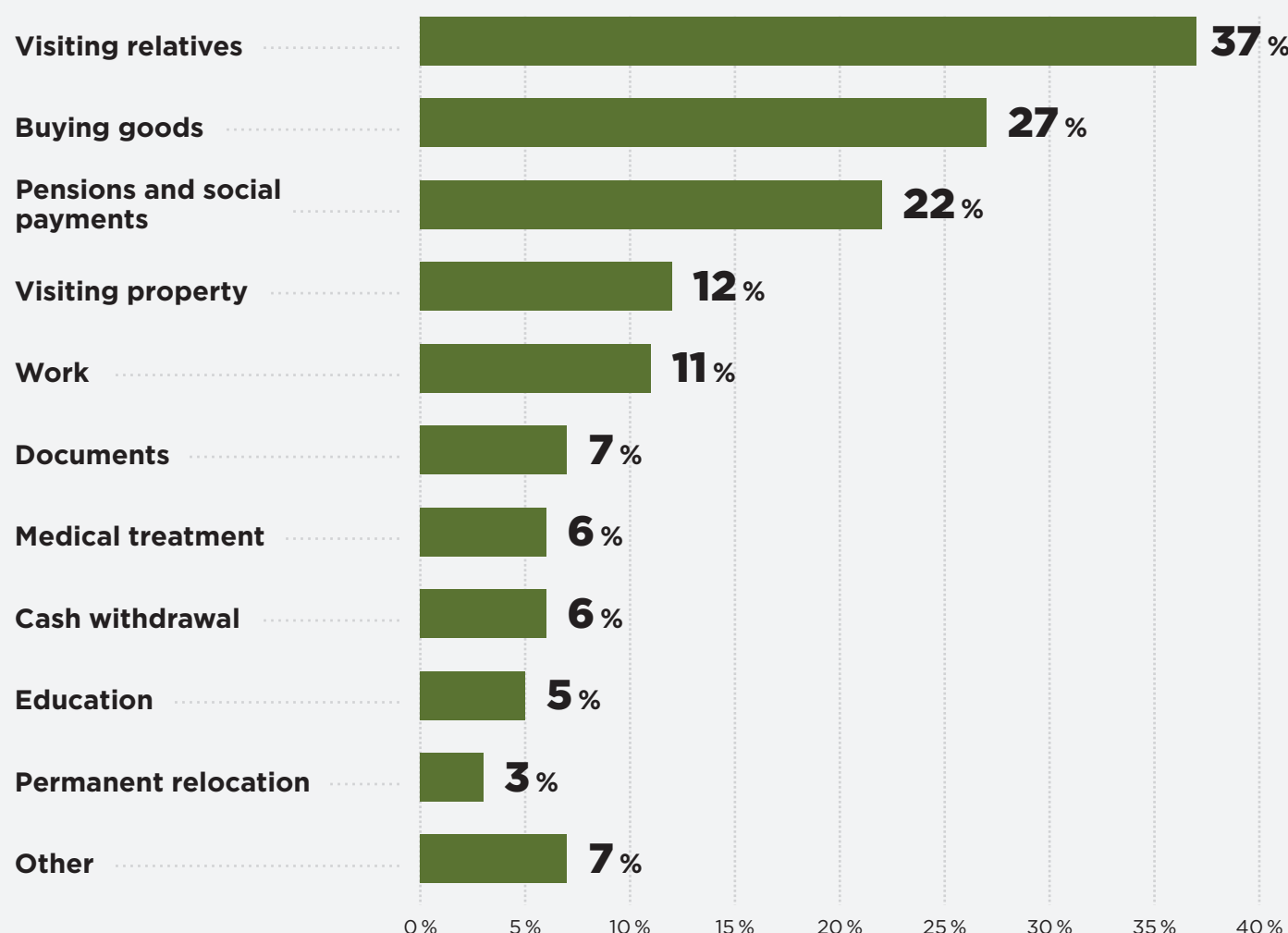
Respondents could choose multiple options as their reasons for crossing the line of contact. A plurality of persons met travel over the line of contact to visit their relatives (37 per cent). One in four of those crossing to visit relatives stated that they had lived with them before the conflict in Eastern Ukraine.

The second most commonly-identified reason given for crossing the line of contact is buying goods (27 per cent). 95 per cent of those who crossed to purchase goods bought food, 35 per cent bought medicine, 30 per cent bought clothes and 9 per cent purchased other products (including goods for children, school supplies, construction materials or household appliances). More than half of respondents try to buy at least two categories of goods at once and 12 per cent try to purchase food, medicine and clothing all at once.

Receiving pensions or other social payments was the third most cited reason for crossing the line of contact, and was identified by 22 per cent of persons met as their purpose for doing so.

¹ In the first half of 2016 1.34 million people crossed the control point "Zaytseve" in both directions, 1.103 million crossed "Marinka", 1.049 million crossed "Novotroitske", and 620 thousand people crossed "Hnutove". Data was published by the NGO "Foundation.101" and is available at <http://101.ua/en/news/20160916>

REASONS FOR CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT



Considering the significant financial and time resources² that civilians spend to cross the line of contact, some of them try to combine several tasks in one trip. In particular, more than a third of respondents indicated 2–3 reasons that led them to cross the line of contact.

Taking into account the current residence of respondents, the analysis of statistical data clearly indicates the problems faced by people who live in NGCA and who must cross the line of contact to access basic goods and services.

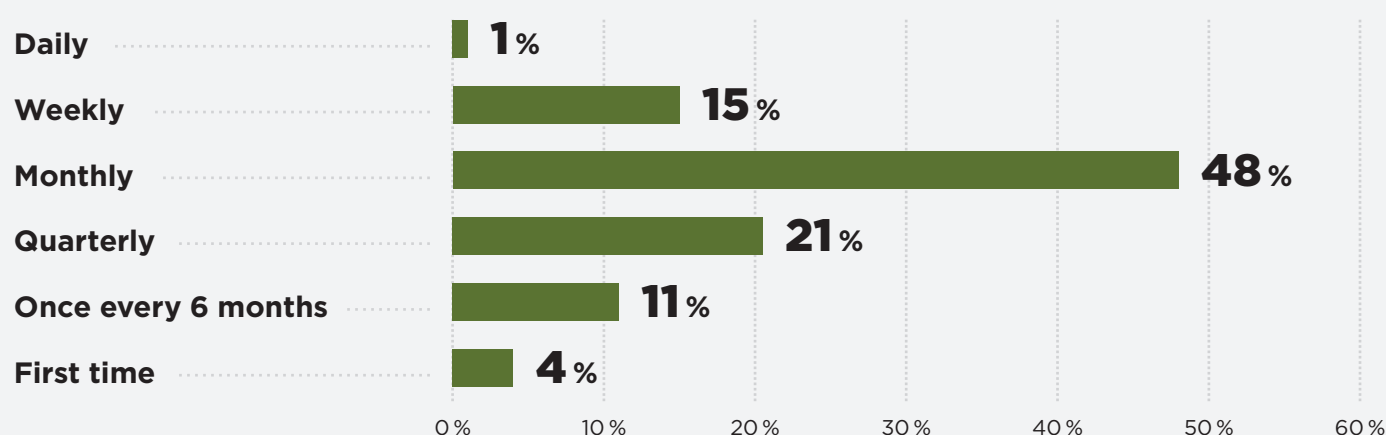
34.3 per cent of respondents residing in NGCA cross the line of contact to purchase food, clothing or medicine, while only 2.7 per cent of those living in GCA indicated buying goods as the reason for crossing. Those who live in the NGCA cross the line of contact to solve issues with the documents more frequently, in comparison to the residents who live in GCA (5.8 per cent vs. 1 per cent, respectively).

The most significant differences in reasons for crossing the line of contact for residents of GCA and NGCA are related to the separation of families, housing, and ownership of land and property. Only 3 per cent of persons met living in NGCA indicated "checking on property" as a reason for crossing the line of contact in contrast to 40 per cent of those met who currently reside in GCA. In addition, the residents of GCA are almost three times more likely to cross the line of contact to visit their relatives than those who live in NGCA (74.5 per cent vs. 25 per cent).

² 53 per cent of respondents spend up to 200 UAH on the trip, 43 per cent — from 200 to 500 UAH. See the section "The time and cost of crossing the line of contact"

4. FREQUENCY OF CROSSING

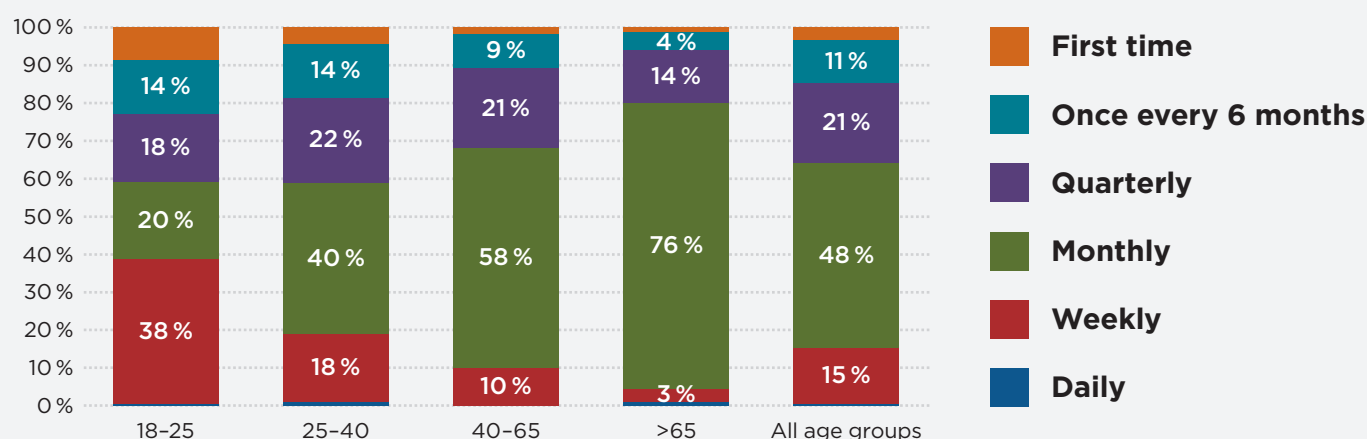
HOW OFTEN DO YOU CROSS THE LINE OF CONTACT?



Almost half of respondents travel across the line of contact at least once a month. 15 per cent of respondents travel weekly or more often and 1 per cent travel daily. 21 per cent of respondents cross the line of contact at least once a quarter, and 11 per cent at least once every 6 months. Only 4 per cent of respondents stated that they were crossing the line of contact for the first time.

The main socio-demographic indicator affecting the rate of crossing the line of contact is age.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU CROSS THE LINE OF CONTACT? (AGE DISTRIBUTION)



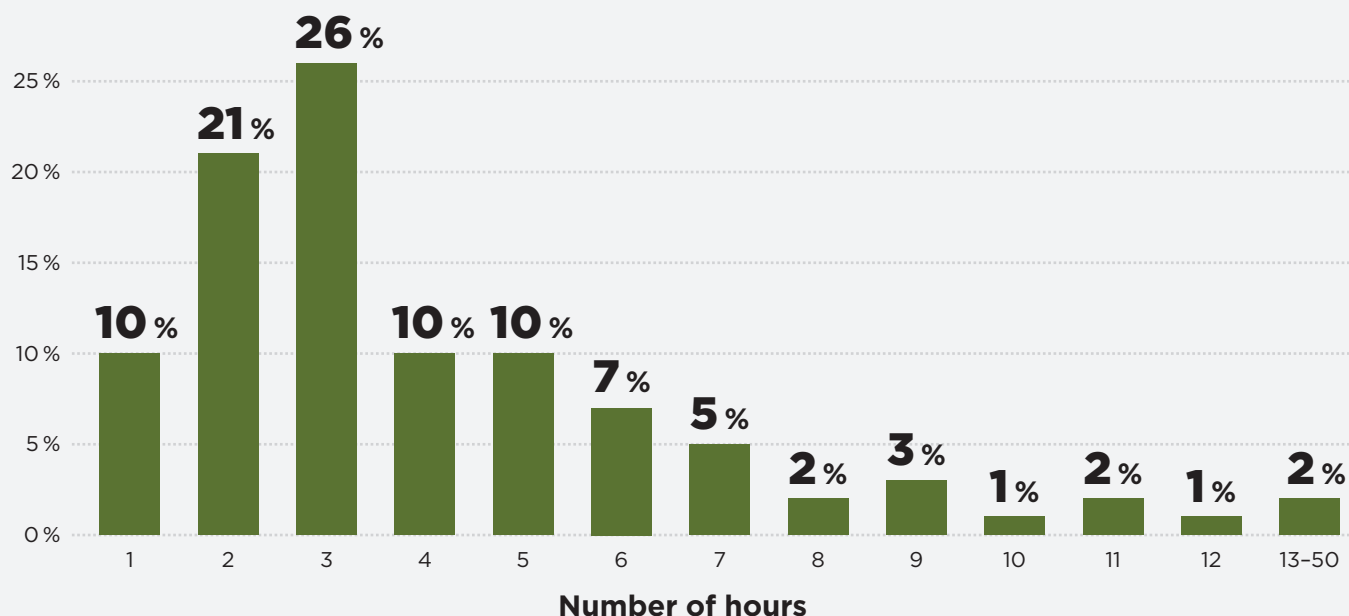
Persons met who are between the ages of 18-25 tend to travel more regularly than persons in other age cohorts. 38 per cent of respondents in this age group stated that they cross the line of contact at least once a week, while persons of retirement age tend to cross the line of contact once a month, a trend which is most likely associated with the need to withdraw pensions.

When responding to a question about their planned duration of stay in the area to which they were crossing, most interviewees (48.6 per cent) said that they plan to stay on the other side of the line of contact for one day or less; 40.1 per cent — for a week or less, and 6.7 per cent — for a month or less. Those who crossed the line of contact for up to 24 hours identified their reasons for crossing as follows: shopping (41 per cent), withdrawal of pensions (36 per cent), visiting relatives (23 per cent), and solving problems with documents (6 per cent).

5. TIME AND COST OF CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT

Persons met were asked questions about the time and cost of crossing the line of contact, as well as the problems associated with inability to cross entry-exit control points.

HOW MANY HOURS DID IT TAKE YOU TO CROSS ALL ENTRY-EXIT CONTROL ON YOUR LAST CROSSING?



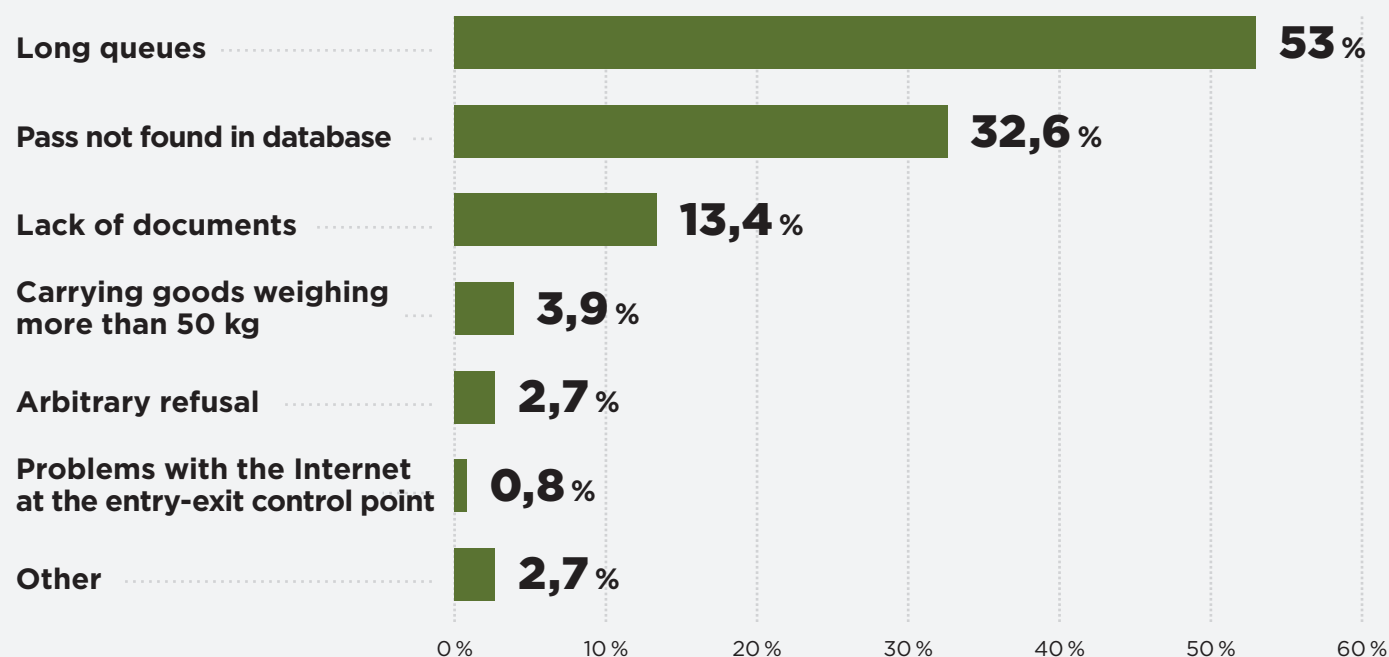
Most respondents spent 1 to 5 hours crossing all entry-exit control points on their way through the line of contact on their last trip. 10 per cent of respondents were able to cross the line of contact in an hour, 21 per cent — in two hours, 26 per cent — in three hours, 10 per cent in four hours and 10 per cent in five hours. Another 16 per cent of respondents spent on average six to nine hours crossing the line of contact. 6 per cent spent ten or more hours to complete their trip across the line of contact.

On average, citizens spent 4.2 hours crossing all entry-exit control points and roadblocks on their last trip across the line of contact.

17 per cent of respondents reported that they had experienced a situation when they could not cross the line of contact.

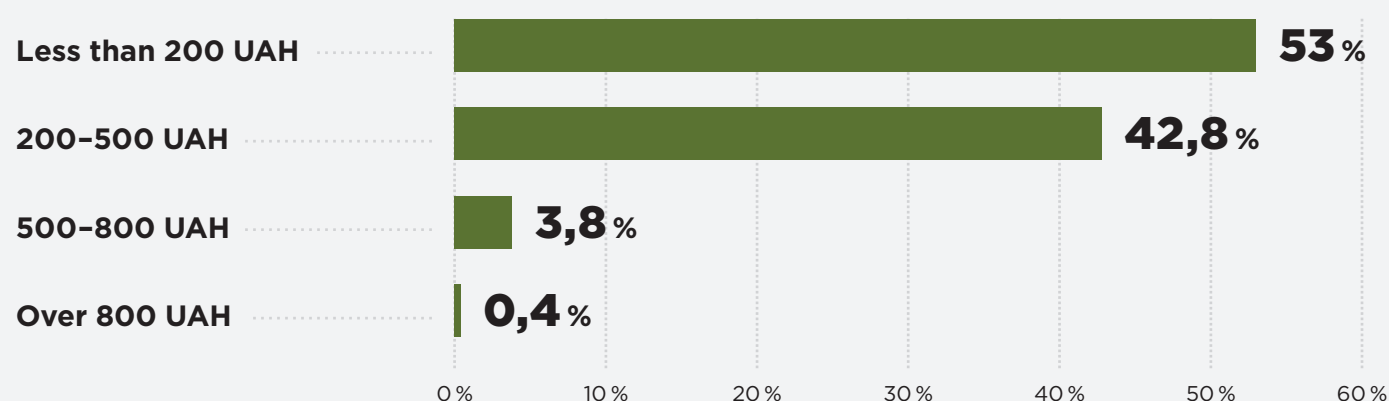
Inability to cross the line of contact and entry-exit control points in one day is usually associated with long queues (53 per cent), the fact that an individual's crossing permit is missing from the database (33 per cent) or lack of documents that a citizen should provide (13 per cent). In 10 per cent of cases, inability to cross the line of contact was connected with other problems, including the presence of prohibited goods or goods weighing more than 50 kg, which is prohibited by the "Temporary order of monitoring the movement of people, vehicles and goods across the line of contact in Donetsk and Luhansk regions". Among other reasons for inability to cross are arbitrary refusal of individuals by inspectors and problems with the Internet connection at the entry-exit control point which makes it impossible to check an individual's permit in the online database.

WHY YOU DID NOT MANAGE TO CROSS THE LINE OF CONTACT?



In cases when an individual did not manage to cross the entry-exit control point before it closed for night, 50 per cent of respondents returned back, 42 per cent spent the night in the car, 6 per cent stayed overnight at the homes of relatives or friends, and 2 per cent stayed in a hostel, hotel or rented apartment. The situation when people remain to spend the night near control points is concerning given the unstable situation and regular attacks near the line of contact. The situation is complicated by the fact that a great number of travelers are extremely vulnerable people and the conditions for waiting at the control points are unsatisfactory.

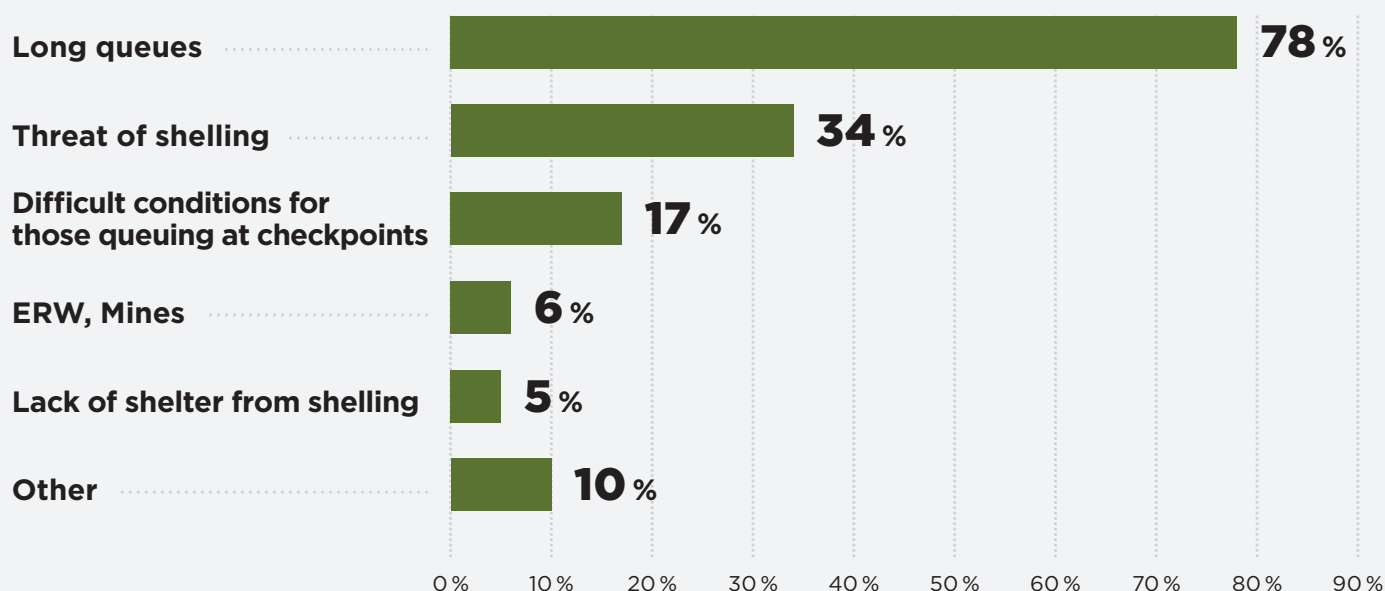
HOW MUCH MONEY DID YOU SPEND ON THE ROAD?



Regarding the financial costs associated with crossing line of contact, almost all respondents reported spending 500 UAH or less on the trip (in one direction). 53 per cent of respondents spent less than 200 UAH and another 43 per cent spent from 200 to 500 UAH. Also, 4 per cent reported spending 500 to 800 UAH on the road, and 0.5 per cent spent more than 800 UAH.

6. CONCERNS WHILE CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT

WHAT ARE YOUR CONCERNS WHILE CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT?



The biggest concern among citizens who cross the line of contact is long queues and wait times. Overall, 78 per cent of respondents expressed their concern about this fact.

The threat of shelling was the second most commonly-cited concern of those crossing the line of contact.

A third of all respondents are concerned about this risk. During the monitoring visits, the observers of NGO "Foundation.101" recorded 5 cases of shelling or explosions near the entry-exit control point in August and 2 cases in September. In August, most shelling incidents were recorded near the entry-exit control point "Marinka". For instance, the shelling was heard on August 19th, 26th and 27th, and on August 27th monitors recorded explosions. Individual cases of shelling were documented near the control points "Novotroitske" and "Hnutove". In September, Foundation.101 observers recorded two cases of explosions near the control point "Novotroitske".

On the third place among the causes of concern are poor conditions of waiting at the control points (17 per cent). The next one is the presence of explosive devices, mines and tripwires (6 per cent) and the lack of shelter from shelling on the road (5 per cent). Less than 1 per cent of respondents expressed concern about factors such as abuse of authority, problems with public transportation (to and between the checkpoints) and the threat of sexual or gender-based violence.

Citizens who reported other factors of concern are often concerned that vans are not allowed to pass through the checkpoints with more than three passengers. Also, they are concerned about the inability to get into a preferential queue with a child, a sick person, or a person with disabilities³.

³ According to information provided by the Eastern Regional Directorate of State Border Service of Ukraine, the presence of the "preferential queue" at the entry-exit control point on the line of contact in Donetsk and Luhansk regions is not regulated by legislation. However, a decision on an "out of turn" admission of vehicles to the territory of the entry-exit control point can be made by the State Border Service officer (senior border guard at the control point) in exceptional cases, when there are objective reasons (seriously sick people, people with disabilities and children up to 1 year).

The main factor influencing the concerns of citizens when crossing the line of contact is the entry-exit control point through which they travel. For example, long queues are of least concern to those traveling through the control point "Hnutove", and the biggest concern of those traveling through "Zaytseve". With 78 per cent as the average rate of concern about long queues, this figure significantly varies at different entry-exit control points. For "Hnutove" it is 49 per cent, for "Novotroitske" 75 per cent, "Marinka" — 84 per cent, and for "Zaytseve" — 99 per cent.

Those who cross at the control point "Zaytseve" are the least worried about the threat of attacks. With the average rate for the threat of shelling of 34 per cent, at the entry-exit control point "Marinka" it is 47 per cent, at "Hnutove" — 43 per cent, at "Novotroyitske" — 42 per cent and only 5 per cent at "Zaytseve". Bad waiting conditions mainly worry people who are traveling through "Zaytseve" (28 per cent) and "Marinka" (24 per cent), while at "Novotroitske" and "Hnutove" the numbers are 9 per cent and 8 per cent, respectively.

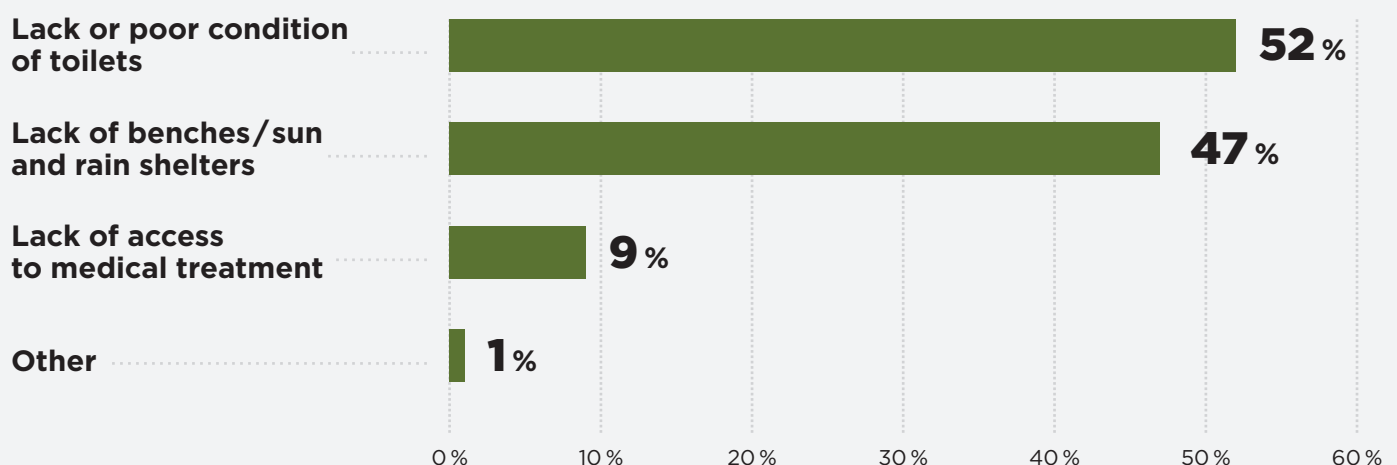
Experience crossing the line of contact has some influence on the formation of a person's concerns. Analysis of survey data shows that the level of concern about possible adverse circumstances among citizens who cross the line of contact for the first time is on average lower than among those who have already had experience crossing the line of contact. Most likely, this is due to the fact that people who travel for the first time simply don't know what to expect.

It should be noted that other factors such as age, gender, direction of movement (towards GCA or NGCA) have little or no influence on differences in concerns of citizens.

7. CONDITIONS AT THE ENTRY-EXIT CONTROL POINTS

People who expressed concern about waiting conditions are mostly dissatisfied with the lack or poor condition of toilets and the lack of benches and shelter from rain and sun.

WHAT PROBLEMS WITH WAITING CONDITIONS HAVE YOU FACED?



In general, the monitoring conducted by the NGO "Foundation.101" has discovered that, to some extent, the means of ensuring sanitation are present at all entry-exit control points. However, the number of such facilities and their condition differ significantly from one entry-exit control point to another.

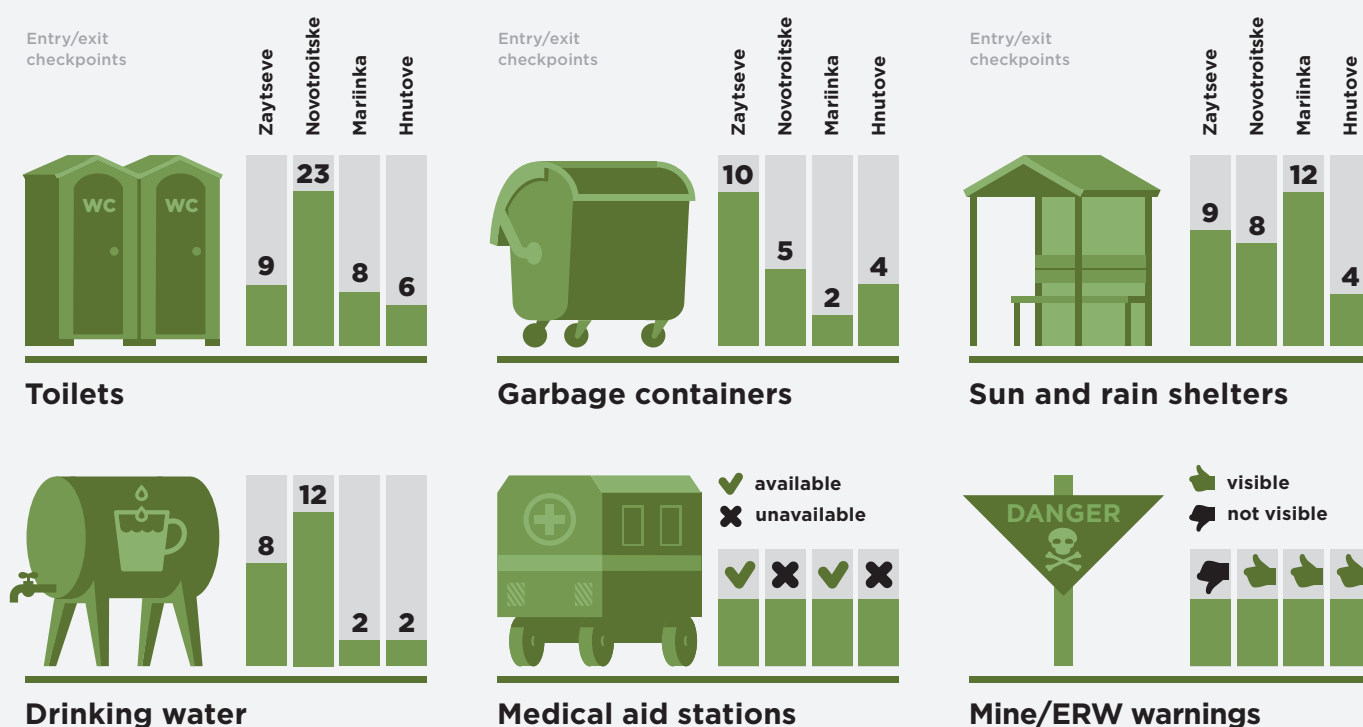
For example, the number of toilets at the entry-exit control point "Novotroitske" is 23, while there are about three times fewer toilets at other control points: 9 at "Zaytseve", 8 at "Marinka" and 6 at "Hnutove". Also, the cleanliness of toilets varies by location. In August and September, the only entry-exit control point at which monitors recorded satisfying conditions for toilets was "Zaytseve". At the remaining entry-exit control points the toilets were either dirty or unsuitable for use.

Also, in August-September, persons waiting at all entry-exit control points had constant access to water, however the number of water tanks differs depending on the control point. Most of them are at the entry-exit control point "Novotroitske" and "Zaytseve": 12 and 8 water tanks respectively. While at "Marinka" and "Hnutove" there are only 2 tanks each.

Points of medical treatment were recorded by observers only at control points "Zaytseve" and "Marinka". In September, at the entry-exit control point "Hnutove", the elderly woman started feeling bad while standing in a pedestrian queue on the side of the uncontrolled territory. Employees of the State Service for Emergency Situations provided medical aid to her, and the border guards put her in the first car which was headed towards GCA.

In general, during the survey, citizens noted that one of the problems in providing access to toilets and drinking water is their location. Thus, toilets and tanks with technical and/or drinking water are packed around the entry-exit control point, where the line accelerates and citizens do not always have time to use these facilities because of the risk of losing their place in line or holding up those who are behind. Meanwhile, there are no toilets and water tanks along the queues, further from the control points.

PRESENCE AND CONDITION OF INFRASTRUCTURE AT ENTRY/EXIT CHECKPOINTS IN DONETSK REGION



September 2016

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Promoting the freedom of movement across the line of contact

To implement the Action Plan for the implementation of the National Strategy on human rights for the period until 2020, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers decree #1393-r dated November 23rd, 2015, the Security Service of Ukraine should amend the "Temporal order of monitoring the movement of people, vehicles and goods across the line of contact in Donetsk and Luhansk regions", which will restore the possibility of crossing the line of contact by public transport.

2. Improving waiting conditions

In order to improve the waiting conditions at the entry-exit control points, military-civilian administrations should ensure the establishment of additional shelters for protection against adverse weather conditions (shelters from the sun and rain during the warm season and heating points during the cold season), both on the controlled territory and the "gray" area.

To improve the conditions of providing medical assistance, military-civilian administrations should ensure the establishment of additional medical aid points, both on the controlled territory and the "gray" area.

3. Improving sanitation

To improve the sanitary condition of entry-exit control points, military-civilian administrations should ensure regular cleaning of toilets and garbage disposal from the roadside.

To improve the conditions of water supply, military-civilian administrations should cover more of waiting area with drinking water tanks, both on the controlled territory and the "gray" area.

4. Raising awareness about the risks associated with mining

To raise awareness about the risks associated with mining and explosive remnants of war, the State Border Service of Ukraine and the Antiterrorist Center at the Security Service of Ukraine should strengthen the awareness about mining along the roadside close to the places of waiting.

5. Providing decent treatment during the personal inspection of citizens at the entry-exit control points

To provide decent treatment during the personal inspection of women at the entry-exit control points, the State Border Service of Ukraine and the State Fiscal Service of Ukraine should provide a sufficient number of female workers.

PARTNERS

