

Dangerous conditions in Ukraine after heavy fighting shuts down power, water – UNICEF

2 February 2017 – More than 2,500 children in the Donetsk region of Ukraine are without heat, electricity or water, prompting the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to call for an end to fighting in the area so that the infrastructure can be repaired.

Intense fighting in the town of Avdiivka on 29 and 30 January disabled electricity and water, including the Donetsk Filtration Station and the backup reservoir.

With temperatures plummeting to 1 degree Fahrenheit (minus 17 degrees Celsius), the situation could have catastrophic consequences for the residents of Avdiivka, according to a statement from UNICEF.

The UN agency's representative in Ukraine also voiced concern about the fighting, which has also caused six schools and four kindergartens in the area to shut down.

Not only are the lives of thousands of children in Avdiivka, and on all sides of the conflict, at risk, but to make matters worse, the lack of water and electricity means that homes are becoming dangerously cold and health conditions deteriorating as we speak, said Giovanna Barberis.

In addition to the 17,000 residents in Avdiivka, the non-functional filtration station supplied some 400,000 people in area with water.

Water is now rationed and there is a possibility that the piped household water supply will stop altogether, UNICEF said.

The UN Security Council has also voiced concern about the fresh fighting. On 31 January, the Council issued a press statement saying its 15 members were gravely concerned about the situation in the country's eastern region and its severe impact on the local civilian population.