DRC Quarterly Protection Monitoring Report Ukraine

April–June 2024

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Introduction

This report summarises the findings of DRC protection monitoring conducted in Ukraine in Lviv Oblast in the West, Chernihiv and Sumy Oblasts in the North, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kharkiv and Donetsk Oblasts in the East, Mykolaiv and Kherson Oblasts in the South between April and June 2024.

This report seeks to identify trends in protection risks and rights violations, challenges facing conflict-affected populations, and barriers in access to services (particularly for the most vulnerable) across surveyed oblasts during the reporting period. Findings inform ongoing and planned humanitarian response, enable identifying vulnerable people for individual support, and support evidence-based advocacy on behalf of persons of concern. Findings from protection monitoring are visualised in an interactive dashboard, enabling DRC and all relevant stakeholders to easily access this data.

To view the Protection Monitoring dashboard summarizing the main findings for the reporting period, click here

Key findings include:

- Despite a decrease in the overall number of IDPs due to the IDP allowance scheme changes, increased mandatory evacuations and heightened hostilities in northern Kharkiv and Sumy oblasts have driven temporary displacements, with many evacuees choosing to stay within Kharkiv city due to a desire to return home once conditions improve. In Kharkiv oblast, 32% of respondents reported feeling unsafe, reflecting a significant increase from the previous period due to escalating shelling and deteriorating security conditions, which has heightened local fears and the sense of uncertainty about potential future attacks and evacuations.
- New mobilisation legislation effective from May 18, 2024, introduced several changes including the lowering the age of conscription age and required the updating of military records. These has increased public anxiety and conscription fears, leading to restricted freedom of movement and avoidance of formal employment.
- Recent legislative changes related to the IDP benefits and entitlements have transitioned from a blanket approach to a targeted system, causing confusion and administrative challenges amongst IDPs, who are now facing increased financial insecurity, emotional distress, and fears about covering basic needs. This situation is further compounded by high unemployment rates and a shortage of job opportunities, particularly for IDPs, exacerbating the financial strain and making it even more difficult to manage basic needs following the implementation of Resolution #332. As a result, IDPs are likely to employ negative coping mechanisms such as returning to unsafe areas amongst others.
- The state compensation mechanism for damaged and destroyed housing (critical for Ukraine's reconstruction), continues to face significant challenges including barriers to accessing documentation, lengthy and costly administrative procedures, and lack of information and legal support, and issues with standardized and consistent implementation due to a diversity of challenges; collectively hindering effective implementation, especially for those in rural areas and without proper housing ownership documents.

- The ongoing conflict continues to severely impact mental health across the population, with widespread stress, anxiety, and depression exacerbated by constant exposure to violence, loss, and fears about the future.
- IDPs continue to face severe housing challenges, including high rents and limited availability of affordable options, which exacerbate financial instability and force some into substandard living conditions or relocation abroad.

Methodology

Protection monitoring data has been gathered through a mixed methodology approach including in-person household surveys, key informant (KI) interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and direct observation. The report also reflects the findings of protection monitoring carried out at the level of the Protection Cluster community, which alongside other protection partners, DRC supports using structured KI interviews. The diversity of data collection methods allows for gaining richer information and more in-depth insights into individuals' and groups' perceptions of needs and capacities. This collection of data and information is complemented by secondary data review and information shared during coordination meetings at local, regional and national levels. DRC protection monitoring activities target a variety of groups including internally displaced people (IDP), returnees and non-displaced people directly exposed to and affected by the current armed conflict in both rural and urban areas.

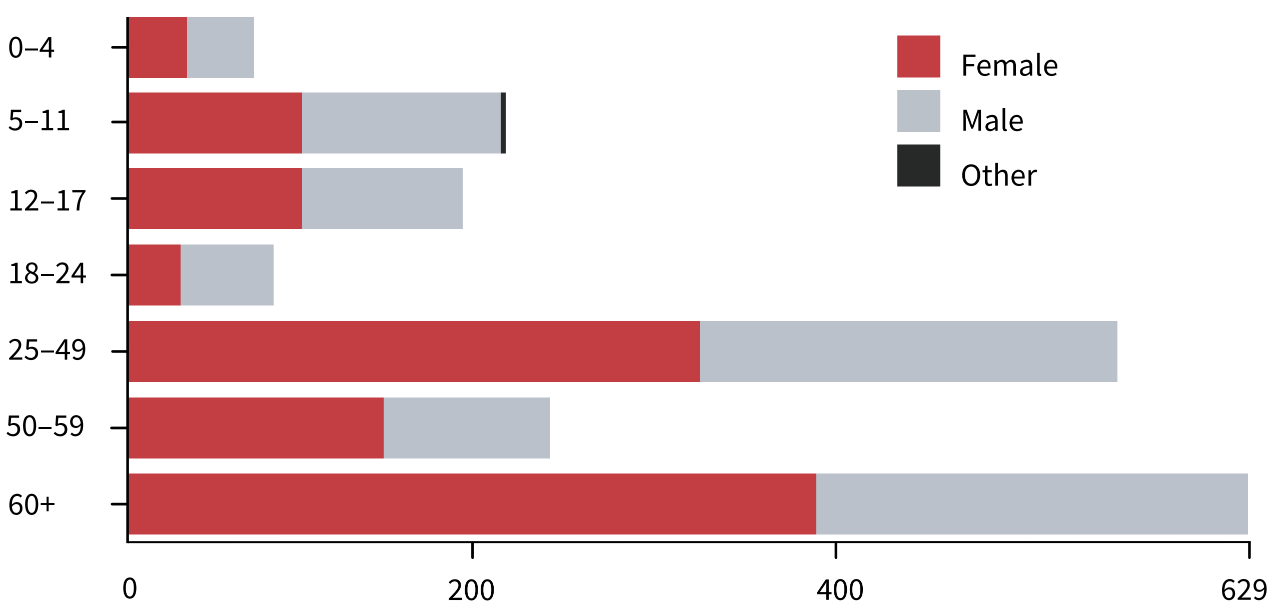
Between the 1st of April and the 30th of June 2024, DRC protection teams surveyed 746 households corresponding to 1,969 individuals. Most of the surveyed households were affected non-displaced (70% – 518 respondents). 25% (182 respondents) were IDPs and 6% (43 respondents) were returnees. A total of 99% of the surveyed individuals were Ukrainian citizens, 56% were females, while the average age of surveyed individuals was 43 years old.

Figure 1. Household respondents per displacement status

Non-displaced member	518	69.6%
IDP	182	24.5%
Returnee	43	5.8%
Unable/unwilling to answer	1	0.1%

The report also reflects the findings of one rapid protection assessment (RPA) conducted in Kharkiv Oblast following the ground offensive launched by the armed forces of the Russian Federation[1]. In addition, 173 interviews (including 57 National Protection Cluster KIIs) with representatives of local authorities, community group representatives and community leaders, social workers and activists were conducted, as well as 71 FGDs reaching 689 participants.

Figure 2: Surveyed households per age and gender groups



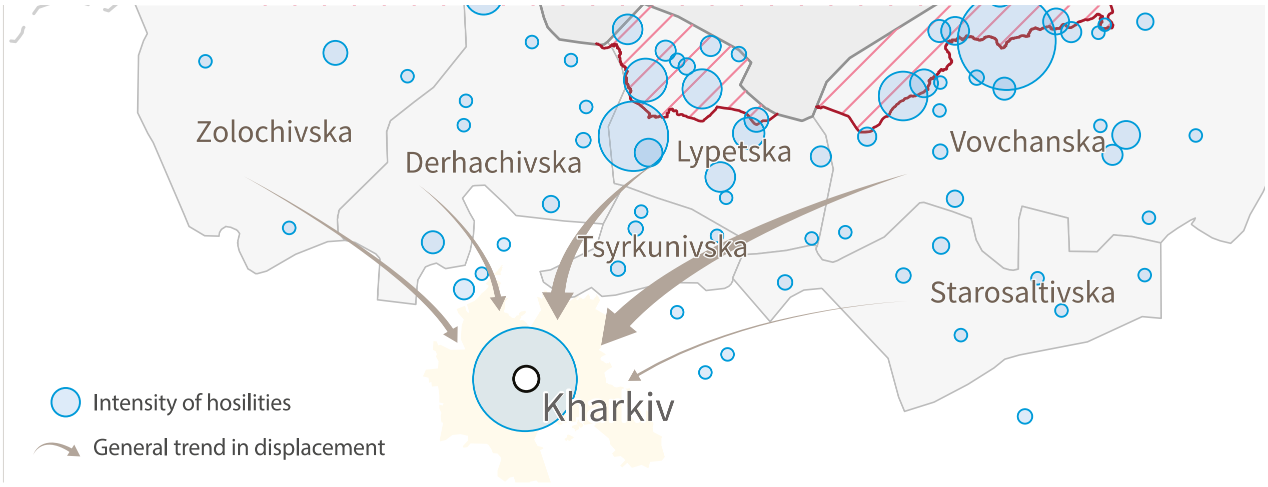
Context Update

Between the 24th of February 2022 and 29th of February 2024, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has verified that conflict-related violence has killed at least 11,111 civilians and injured 21,840, while 1,165 educational facilities and 479 medical facilities were damaged or destroyed, significantly hindering access to education and healthcare[2]. Between the end of March and the beginning of June, the armed forces of the Russian Federation conducted the largest campaign of attacks on critical energy infrastructure since the winter of 2022–2023[3], with over 70 attacks documented by the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) in April and May[4]. These attacks resulted in significant power outages and cascading disruptions to water supply, mobile and internet connectivity, and public transport in affected areas.

[1] Rapid Protection Assessment, Kharkiv city, May–June 2024, Danish Refugee Council
[2] Report on the Human Rights situation in Ukraine, 1 March 2024–31 May 2024, OHCHR, available here
[3] *Ibid*.
[4] Humanitarian Situation Snapshot, Ukraine, April–May 2024, OCHA, available here

In May 2024 alone, at least 174 civilians were killed and 690 were injured in Ukraine, marking the highest monthly civilian casualty count recorded by OHCHR since June 2023. This surge in casualties was primarily due to a new cross-border ground offensive into the northern part of Kharkiv oblast launched by the armed forces of the Russian Federation on May 10th, targeting border settlements and intensifying attacks on Kharkiv city. This offensive led to heavy fighting, particularly around Vovchansk city and neighbouring areas, with armed forces of the Russian Federation eventually taking control of several Ukrainian settlements. The escalation in military activity prompted civilian evacuation processes and a new wave of displacements in Kharkiv and Sumy Oblasts. Concurrently, the intensified airstrikes on Kharkiv Oblast and Kharkiv city, including in densely populated areas, further exacerbated the humanitarian impact, resulting in a significant increase in civilian casualties.

Figure 3. New displacement in the northern hromadas of Kharkiv Oblast in April and May 2024[5]



Main protection risks and needs

Liberty and freedom of movement

Forced displacement

According to IOM DTM data[6], there were a total of 3,314,669 registered IDPs in Ukraine as of June 2024, representing a decrease of 70,000 individuals compared to March 2024. Kharkiv has become the oblast hosting the highest number of registered IDPs (388,118) in front of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast (373,301), and has now the country's highest proportions of IDPs compared to the non-displaced population with 17% of the population in the oblast being registered IDPs (the remaining being 28% returnees and 55% non-displaced population).

5 Humanitarian Situation Snapshot, Ukraine, April–May 2024, OCHA, available here

6 International Organization for Migration (IOM), July 11 2024. DTM Ukraine—Area Baseline Assessment—Round 36. IOM, Ukraine

The increase in registered IDPs in Kharkiv (+26,000) and Donetsk (+4,000) oblasts compared to the previous monitoring period is due to the escalation of hostilities in the northern border areas of Kharkiv and Sumy Oblasts.

As a result of the ground offensive and worsening security situation in northern Kharkiv oblast, mandatory civilian evacuation processes were initiated. By May 31st, the Relief Coordination Centre reported that 3,853 individuals were evacuated and registered at the transit centre in Kharkiv city, primarily from Vovchansk and Lyptsi[7]. Among these evacuees, 36% were elderly and 14% were persons with disabilities. Additionally, 3,831 individuals who self-evacuated from impacted communities were also registered. Up to 60% of evacuees were picked up by friends or family upon arrival in Kharkiv, and another 20% moved in with family or friends the following day after registering for services. This marks a shift from previous evacuations occurring in Kharkiv and Donetsk oblasts, where many people depended on collective centres. Many elderly individuals were reductant to evacuate from their homes, motivated by a desire to protect their property, crops, farm animals, and to care for relatives who were unable or unwilling to relocate. They were eventually persuaded to evacuate by the State Emergency Services, the National Police, and volunteers. During the evacuation, FGD participants received information about available services in Kharkiv city, providing them with a clear understanding of what to expect. Despite initial concerns about accessing services, many evacuees found that the support provided upon arrival exceeded their expectations. Although there were worries about the appropriateness of hosting evacuees in Kharkiv city due to increased shelling, FGD participants expressed a desire to stay in Kharkiv and plan to return to their communities once the situation stabilises[8].

The general sentiment among the population in Kharkiv city remains consistent with previous monitoring periods: those who wanted to leave have already done so, and those who remain will continue to stay. Despite an increased sense of uncertainty and an overall deterioration in the safety situation, none of the FGD participants expressed any intention of leaving the city. They do not want to leave their homes and do not believe that their overall quality of life would be better elsewhere in Ukraine. Consequently, most new displacements are assumed to involve people relocating within Kharkiv Oblast and city, such as to areas less frequently targeted by strikes like the southern part of the city, or mandatory evacuations.

> **Home is still better. Even when it is 'noisy'—we are at home. We can only be understood by someone who has experienced being left without everything, like a plant torn from the ground.**
>
> FGD participant, Kharkiv Oblast

As a consequence of the escalation of hostilities in the northern border areas of Kharkiv and Sumy Oblasts, local authorities have increased efforts to evacuate people from the 5-kilometer zone along the contact line in Sumy Oblast.

[7] "Evacuation from Vovchansk and Lipetsk communities, 10-31 May 2024", Relief Coordination Centre, 31 May 2024
[8] Rapid Protection Assessment, Kharkiv city, May-June 2024, Danish Refugee Council

Given the increasing frequency of conflict-related incidents in these zones, it is likely that mandatory evacuations will continue to rise. In addition, in June, nearly 800 IDPs, including 109 with disabilities, mainly from Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia oblasts, arrived at the Lviv railway station, as reported by medical and psychological service volunteers. Observations indicated a 20% decrease in the number of evacuees arriving in Lviv compared to the previous quarter.

Consistent with findings from the previous monitoring period, 56% of surveyed IDPs (88 individuals) indicated their intention to return to their place of habitual residence. The main factors influencing intentions to return reported by household respondents include an improved security situation (88%, 77 individuals), the cessation of hostilities (66%, 58 individuals), the Ukrainian authorities regaining Non-Government Controlled Areas (NGCAs) (18%, 16 individuals), repaired housing (16%, 14 individuals) as well as repaired infrastructure (15%, 13 individuals). KIs and FGD participants in Kharkiv and Donetsk oblasts identified the main barriers to returning (second to safety concerns), is damaged housing and a lack of employment opportunities, particularly because agricultural land remains mined in many border areas.

Figure 4. Intentions per displacement status

IDPs		
Return to the place of habitual residence	88	56.4%
Integrate into the local community	67	42.9%
Relocate to another area in Ukraine	1	0.6%
Non-displaced		
Stay in place of habitual residence	503	98.1%
Relocate to another area in Ukraine	6	1.2%
Relocate to a country outside of Ukraine	4	0.8%
Refugees and returnees		
Stay in place of habitual residence	41	95.3%
Relocate to another area in Ukraine	1	2.3%
Relocate to a country outside of Ukraine	1	2.3%

In Donetsk oblast, some people return because they miss a sense of home and want to rebuild their houses, however they often do not stay long, as upon returning, they realise it is still not safe enough, and repairing their homes alone is insufficient to rebuild their lives. Consequently, many returnees end up leaving again. Similarly, in Kharkiv Oblast, FGD participants noted that families previously considering returning are now more hesitant and waiting longer due to the deteriorating security situation and the consistently uncertain conditions.

Self-imposed confinement and restriction of movement

On April 18, 2024, the Law “On Mobilisation Training and Mobilisation” was adopted, which entered into force on May 18. This new law aims to increase mobilisation efforts by reducing the conscription age from 27 to 25 years old. In addition, within 60 days after its enactment, all conscripted men between the ages of 18 and 60 must have updated their military registration data. This can be done online through the “Rezerv+” mobile application or in person at Territorial Recruitment Centers (TRC) or Centers for the Provision of Administrative Services. Failure to update data after this deadline may result in fines and restrictions on men’s rights and freedoms. The enforcement of this new law has led to increased mobilisation activities, with a rising number of reports across the surveyed oblasts citing fear of conscription as a significant hindrance to their ability to move freely.

Among the surveyed households across oblasts, 30% (220 respondents) reported encountering barriers to freedom of movement. Of these, 13% (28 individuals) identified fear of conscription as a significant obstacle. For male respondents, this percentage rises to 20%. In all surveyed areas, it was reported that men at risk of conscription deliberately avoid public places, reducing their presence at checkpoints and in public spaces, limiting their movements and primarily staying at home. In southern oblasts, it was reported that TRC representatives were periodically checking men’s documents at checkpoints and in the streets. In Lviv oblast, surveyed male IDP residents in a collective centre reported feeling unsafe, as the administration regularly informs the local TRC about the number of hosted male IDPs. This led to monitoring visits by military personnel to the collective centre, assisted by site administration. A KI in Lviv oblast highlighted that the changes in the mobilisation law also impacted IDPs' intentions to potentially return to unsafe areas while men are reportedly quitting jobs to evade mobilisation, leading to financial strain and limited access to essential services. According to him, several elderly people living in a collective centre in Lviv city had been discussing returning to their area of origin in NGCAs because their well-being and survival were extremely challenging without financial support from their sons, who could not secure livelihoods due to fear of conscription. Employers must provide TRCs with information on employed conscripts and monitor their military registration status. Failure to comply results in fines for the employer. Consequently, men try to avoid formal employment to reduce mobilisation risks, leading to increased shadowy, unofficial employment.

> **Men living in the collective centre do not go out to avoid mobilisation, which has led to financial difficulties as they lost their jobs. They are unable to support their families, pushing some to think about returning back to their homes close to the frontline.**
>
> KI, Lviv Oblast

Many aspects of the mobilisation processes remain undeveloped and unclear according to KIs. There is a lack of clear and detailed information about deferment possibilities, procedures, and consequences of updating military registration data. A KI emphasised that men at risk of conscription have a low level of legal awareness and understanding of legislative norms, including grounds for deferment from military service. There was a case where TRC representatives refused to grant a deferment to a caregiver of a child with a disability because the necessary documents were not notarized. The caregiver was unaware of the grounds for postponement and did not know the mechanism for exercising this right. The TRC representatives should have informed him about his right to postponement but instead declared him fit for military service. Despite authorities' assurances about the simplicity and security of updating data, conscripts fear forced mobilisation and financial penalties, undermining trust in the authorities and affecting their psychological state.

Increased mobilisation measures brought about by changes in legislation, coupled with insufficient communication and clarification from the authorities on the changes, have created public anxiety around the heightened risks for eligible men. Issues related to updating military registration data and fines for violating mobilisation legislation are particularly relevant.

> **Many men are hesitant to update their mobilisation status because of the long queues at the conscription centre and the fear of fines, which negatively affects their movement.**
>
> KI, Lviv Oblast

A KI reported that a man who refused to undergo a military medical examination was issued a protocol and an administrative offence resolution, which previously could only be obtained through court proceedings. Despite appealing the decision, the authorities acted on it, and the man's property was seized. Citizens are given a 60-day period to update their military registration data; starting July 16, citizens who have updated their data will be sent summons to their indicated place of residence or their place of employment. Previously, summons were considered served only after confirmation of receipt. However, under the new amendments, such confirmation is no longer required. If a summons is sent but the person does not appear, resolutions will be issued, fines imposed, property seized, or the person declared wanted. Another concern reported is the violation of men's rights when they are forcibly delivered to the TRC. This practice often results in their cars being abandoned and their phones turned off, causing significant distress to their families. A KI believes that after the deadline for updating military registration data, abuses of authority by TRC representatives will become more frequent, leading to rights violations and increased corruption risks.

Life, safety and security

Sense of safety

35% of respondents (258 individuals) across the surveyed oblasts expressed a poor sense of safety, mainly attributed to shelling or threats thereof (90% of these respondents, totaling 234 individuals). This figure reflects a 3% decrease compared to the previous monitoring period and is higher for households with children, with 41% of households with at least one girl member reporting feeling unsafe.

Figure 5: Factors influencing the sense of safety

Bombardment/shelling or threat of shelling	234	90.7%
Landmines or UXOs contamination	31	12.0%
Presence of armed or security actors	26	10.1%
Other	18	7.0%
Fighting between armed or security actors	5	1.9%
Criminality	1	0.4%
Risks of eviction	1	0.4%

Kharkiv oblast reported an 11% increase in the proportion of respondents feeling unsafe compared to the previous monitoring period, from 21% to 32%. This increase can be attributed to the deterioration of the security situation, marked by an uptick in shelling attacks and territorial gains by the armed forces of the Russian Federation in the oblast, which shifted the frontline in the north of the oblast in May. Many settlements, especially those situated near the frontlines, continue to endure regular shelling and attacks, perpetuating a constant fear of violence. Participants in FGDs in Kharkiv noted that the atmosphere has become tenser, as people increasingly rely on Telegram for updates on the offensive and are worried about, and mentally preparing for further evacuations. The deterioration of the security situation further heightened their sense of uncertainty and served as a stark reminder to remain vigilant, reinforcing the need to stay prepared for potential emergencies. KIs in both Kharkiv and Donetsk Oblasts report that security concerns remain the primary obstacle to returning, particularly for families with children. FGDs with non-displaced individuals and returnees in Kharkiv Oblast revealed differing perceptions of safety: returnees felt significantly more unsafe compared to non-displaced residents, who have become more accustomed to the uncertainty and “conflict noises”.

> **Many people, especially those who have returned, are 'sitting on their suitcases'. They are afraid of the return of Russia.**
>
> FGD Participant, Kharkiv Oblast

Due to Kharkiv and Donetsk’s proximity to the Russian Federation and the frontlines, there is a pervasive sense of pessimism within communities regarding their abilities to protect themselves in case of attacks or when the air alarm sounds. Explosions often occur before the alarm or before residents have a chance to run and hide.

> **The danger is that it can fly over every time. Even someone who thinks quickly and runs quickly will not have enough time to hide.**
>
> FGD Participant, Kharkiv Oblast

In both oblasts, both KIs and FGD participants highlighted ongoing challenges with access to safe shelters. This issue is twofold as firstly, some settlements lack shelters altogether, and secondly, existing shelters often date back to the Soviet era and fail to meet modern safety standards or accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities.

KIs emphasised the urgent need and priority of constructing safe and accessible shelters, even if above ground, particularly in public areas such as transportation hubs, markets, and educational institutions.

> **We are at home, that's the main thing. Terrible? Yes. But you feel safe in your own home.**
>
> FGD Participant, Kharkiv Oblast

When shelters are inaccessible, people resort to seeking protection in their basements or remaining at home.

In June, attacks on civilian infrastructure escalated in Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhia oblasts. Two ballistic missile strikes targeted residential high-rise buildings in Dnipro city at the end of the month, resulting in civilian deaths and injuries. An attack on June 29 in Vilniansk, a town in Zaporizhzhia oblast that had not been attacked in the past year, resulted in the deaths of seven people and injured dozens more, including eight children. Consequently, the demand for collective sites in Dnipro and Zaporizhzhia cities to accommodate those affected by the attacks has increased, along with the need for emergency response services for the affected populations in these key regional cities. Notably, Zaporizhzhia oblast witnessed a significant increase in respondents reporting feeling unsafe compared to the previous monitoring period, from 24% to 50%.

On the other hand, in Lviv oblast, the majority of surveyed households reported feeling safe or very safe (93%). IDPs acknowledge the relative safety in the west of Ukraine, driven by limited military action, as the primary reason for their stay. In Stryi city, Lviv oblast, IDPs expressed that their physical safety takes precedence over economic stability. Despite challenges in finding jobs and securing livelihoods, the safety in the oblast outweighs these financial difficulties.

> **We stay here only because it is safe. No shelling. It is difficult here as there is no work at all. But in our city, people still sleep in basements at home.**
>
> FGD Participant, Lviv Oblast

Mine contamination

Demining remains a high priority and critical need in Ukraine, especially in frontline areas. Among household respondents who reported feeling unsafe, 12% (31 respondents) cited UXO (Unexploded Ordnance) contamination as a significant influencing factor. This number increases to 21% for oblasts where levels of contamination are higher (Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia oblasts).

Mines and explosive remnants of war killed 17 civilians and injured 62 more between March and May 2024, with 94% of the victims being men and boys. This represents an 84% increase compared to the preceding three months[9]. The majority of civilian casualties occurred in Donetsk, Kharkiv and Kherson oblasts, mostly in areas of the last two regions over which Ukraine regained control in the fall of 2022. In Kharkiv and Donetsk oblasts, compared to previous monitoring periods, mine contamination and the need for demining were mentioned significantly more often by both KIs and FGD participants, likely due to the change in season as this is typically an agricultural period and people are more frequently outdoors. KIs in both oblasts highlighted that mines prevent people from returning, particularly to mined agricultural lands, which are often a vital source of income for communities. Eighteen percent of mine-related incidents in Ukraine between March and May occurred while civilians were working their land during the spring agricultural season[10]. Mine contamination also restricts community movements, preventing people from venturing beyond clear paths to forests or gardens of uninhabited houses. In FGDs in Donetsk and Kharkiv, respondents often mentioned knowing individuals who were either injured or killed by mines, making mine contamination a very real and present issue for them.

> **Residents find shrapnel or parts of explosive devices while cultivating the land or simply walking the streets.**
>
> KI, Kryvorizky Raion, Dnipropetrovsk oblast

Positively, most settlements visited in Kharkiv and Donetsk oblasts reported receiving mine awareness sessions from the Ukrainian State Emergency Service and humanitarian organizations. SES is also conducting demining operations where possible, however the process is slow. The creation of a State Register of Areas Contaminated with Explosive Ordnance was announced in June[11]. Developed by the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and managed by the State Emergency Service and the Centre for Humanitarian Demining, this register will monitor and plan demining activities. It will provide vital information for farmers, local authorities, and investors, using data from non-technical surveys and satellite imagery for real-time tracking. This initiative aims to enhance citizen safety and support economic recovery. Successfully cleared areas will be removed from the register, ensuring up-to-date information and efficient resource use.

Psychological distress

The security situation and ongoing conflict have taken a significant toll on people's mental health and well-being. FGD participants and KIs across surveyed oblasts reported a deteriorating mental state among the population, exacerbated by ongoing exposure to anxiety, stress, loss, and concerns about safety and the future.

> **I have been under continuous stress reading the bad news about bombing and destruction in Bakhmut. This has caused depression and negatively influenced my health.**
>
> FGD Participant, Lviv Oblast

[9] Report on the Human Rights situation in Ukraine, 1 March 2024– 31 May 2024, OHCHR, available here

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] "In Ukraine, a Register of Potentially Contaminated Lands with Explosive Ordnance will be created", Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, 7 June 2024, available here

In Lviv oblast, the constant influx of negative news has been identified as a significant factor causing psychological distress among IDPs. Newly-arrived IDPs have reported that negative news about their home areas exacerbates psychological stress, leading to physical health issues such as high blood pressure and depression.

KIs in Kharkiv and Donetsk oblasts have observed that local populations in conflict-affected areas have normalised stress and experience declining mental well-being due to continuous exposure to shelling and destruction.

> **If we talk about the psychological state of the population here, people are used to shelling and destruction. Now there is almost no panic and fear among the locals, as their psyche has adjusted to the shelling.**
>
> KI, Donetsk Oblast

Worries about children were reported as a major stress factor by 34% of household respondents (240 individuals). Compared to previous monitoring periods, FGD participants in eastern, western and southern oblasts highlighted increased concerns about the impact of conflict on children's mental health. In eastern and southern oblasts, it was reported that children who have grown up amidst ongoing conflict since 2022 are exhibiting withdrawn and antisocial behaviour. There is a pervasive sense that children are the most vulnerable and affected group, having lost their sense of childhood normalcy first to COVID-19 and now to the continued war and displacement. Reports indicate that children are in need of, or are increasingly utilizing specialised mental health care. In previously occupied Shevchenkivska hromada in Mykolaiv oblast, residents emphasise the need for sports facilities and playgrounds. Similarly, in Shyrokivska hromada, Mykolaiv oblast, there is a strong call to restore the local school, although efforts are hindered by a lack of support from local authorities.

> **Children who could not evacuate suffered a lot. Almost everyone is still under stress. We are even afraid to think what will be the reaction of children when civilian planes start flying. In general, it is scary to think that children know exactly what to do when the alarm sounds, where to run, where and why it is better to hide.**
>
> FGD participant, Kharkiv Oblast

In previously occupied Shevchenkivska hromada in Mykolaiv oblast, residents emphasise the need for sports facilities and playgrounds. Similarly, in Shyrokivska hromada, Mykolaiv oblast, there is a strong call to restore the local school, although efforts are hindered by a lack of support from local authorities.

> **Children have become indifferent and passive, in other words, antisocial.**
>
> KI, Zaporizhzhia Oblast

> **More than two years have passed since the start of the full-scale war. I noticed aggression in communication as people lost their homes, their jobs, and friends. While people have mostly gone through challenging times, I think children suffer more. There were constant explosions in my city and the child was afraid. When we moved here, the child slept on me at night for another month because of fear.**
>
> FGD participant, Lviv Oblast

The conflict has severely damaged key infrastructure such as schools, kindergartens, cultural centres, libraries, and village councils in many areas. This damage has led to decreased social activity and hindered community cohesion. For example, in Velyka Oleksandrivka hromada in Kherson oblast, the Veterans Council building was heavily damaged, impacting its social activities like fishing and excursions that previously helped build community spirit and break social isolation. Loneliness and isolation remain a prevalent issue noted in both KIIs and FGDs in surveyed oblasts, particularly among elderly individuals whose families have left and are now living alone.

> **In addition to children, lonely old people, whose children and grandchildren have gone abroad and do not plan to return, suffer a lot. The feeling that they may not see their relatives in their lifetime is very painful.**
>
> FGD participant, Kharkiv Oblast

Both KIs and FGD participants emphasised the fear and stress caused by the fear of military conscription, affecting both men of conscription age and their families. The legislative amendments to the mobilisation law have resulted in self-imposed isolation, including avoiding public spaces and withdrawing from community activities, and increased psychological distress among men of conscription age.

> **Everyone's psychological state has deteriorated: constant stress, anxiety, tension, poor sleep. Women worry about their husbands; mothers worry about their sons and grandchildren.**
>
> KI, Sumy Oblast

During FGDs in northern oblasts, some participants mentioned attending psychosocial support sessions, highlighting a high expectation for the provision of additional services. On the other hand, engagement with psychosocial and psychological services remains inconsistent, mainly due to the combined pressures of financial strain and ongoing safety concerns. IDPs residing in a collective centre in Lviv Oblast mentioned prioritising basic needs, such as financial security, and access to food and non-food items, over addressing their mental health issues.

Figure 6: Major stress factors

Fear of being killed or injured by armed violence	321	45.3%
Worries about the future	308	43.5%
Worries about the children	240	33.9%
Fear of property being damaged or destroyed by armed violence	219	30.9%
Displacement related stress	145	20.5%
Other	29	4.1%
Lack of access to employment opportunities	22	3.1%
Lack of access to specialized medical services	22	3.1%
Lack of access to basic services	17	2.4%
Fear of conscription	12	1.7%
Missing family members	6	0.8%
Stigmatization/discrimination	5	0.7%
Fear of being sexually assaulted	1	0.1%

Access to compensation schemes

IDP allowance

In March 2022, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine introduced an IDP allowance (Resolution 332) to provide social support to vulnerable IDPs. This monthly allowance is available to IDPs who were displaced after January 1, 2022, IDPs whose homes were damaged or destroyed, and children of IDPs, with higher amounts for people with disabilities and children.

By March 1, 2024, approximately 2.5 million IDPs were receiving this allowance. However, an amendment to the law on January 26, 2024, which came into effect on March 1, introduced substantial changes to the IDP allowances scheme[12]. The new approach transitions from a blanket to a targeted system, designating ten specific vulnerable categories of IDPs for continued support over the next six months. Following successful advocacy efforts by the Protection Cluster, the number of vulnerable groups was expanded to 15. These groups include pensioners whose pension does not exceed UAH 9,444 per month, persons with disabilities of groups I and II, children with disabilities, children deprived of parental care and orphans. However, further attention is needed, as the current eligibility extension for these groups is set to expire on August 30, 2024. While some categories of IDPs benefitted from an automatic extension, others must submit new applications to continue receiving assistance. IDPs who needed to re-register and submit their applications before April 30 received payments covering March and April and will continue to receive them for six months. However, IDPs who missed the deadline and did not submit their applications by the end of April lost the opportunity to receive payments for March and April. Moving forward, payments will be calculated from the month when the relevant application is submitted.

According to KIIs conducted with local authorities in Kharkiv and Donetsk oblasts, officials responsible for registering and assisting IDPs are well-informed about recent legislative changes. They are proficient in explaining these changes and assisting IDPs with the necessary paperwork. Information about updated criteria for re-registration has been disseminated through administrative websites, social networks, and local information sessions organised by authorities. However, FGDs conducted with IDPs in all surveyed oblasts indicated that the communication and information dissemination for IDPs regarding the re-registration criteria and process was insufficient, with many participants indicating being unaware of the new conditions for receiving IDP allowances, and some finding out about the changes only after their IDP allowances were suspended. Participants in FGDs conducted in Kharkiv and Donetsk oblasts noted an inadequate information flow between authorities and IDPs, with local Starostats (community leaders) often lacking comprehensive information or resources to conduct thorough information sessions in various settlements. In Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhia oblasts, some FGD participants criticized the demeanour of state employees towards IDPs seeking information or re-registration as “rude” and “indifferent.” In Mykolaiv oblast, IDPs expressed deep concerns over inadequate information sources. They lamented the lack of interaction and communication between themselves, local authorities, and social protection bodies regarding IDPs' issues and needs. Information about changes in aid criteria and re-registration mechanisms was reported to be insufficiently communicated. While officials mentioned that IDPs could personally contact social protection specialists or the administrative services centre for explanations, they noted that mass dissemination of legislative changes fell outside their mandate. Instead, IDPs typically relied on television broadcasts, general news channels on social networks and relatives for updates.

> **I don’t quite understand. I read the article on the Internet myself. I re-registered myself. I wrote an application for myself and my daughter. The social protection department did not explain the changes in advance.**
>
> FGD participant, Sumy Oblast

[12] Resolution #332 can be accessed [here](). DRC issued a special legal alert on IDPs, accessible [here]()

Consequently, IDPs frequently turn to IDP councils or NGOs for support and information. In Kherson oblast, FGD participants highlighted the establishment of social media groups within Muzykivska hromada to disseminate up-to-date information on re-registration procedures for social benefits. These groups involve representatives from the centre for administrative services and village councils, offering IDPs reliable answers to their queries. Additionally, specialists from the administrative services centre visit villages periodically to facilitate re-registration processes.

The re-registration procedure for IDP benefits has proven complex and time-consuming, with challenges widely reported in all surveyed oblasts, including long queues, extensive waiting times, unclear documentation requirements, disruptions in the online system, incorrect application submissions and incomplete document sets, leading to frustrations among applicants and delaying benefit disbursements. Instances of lost documents or limited access due to family members residing in occupied territories further complicated matters. Confusion about payment timelines and frequent delays in receiving payments were common. Additionally, issues arose from unclear divisions of responsibilities between local authorities and the Social Protection Department, as well as a lack of mechanisms for tracking payments. Most IDPs in Kharkiv and Donetsk oblasts reported preferring in-person registration for IDP allowances due to challenges with the online system, which requires technical skills and internet access. This preference is particularly pronounced among elderly IDPs. Non-elderly IDPs attempt online registration but encounter difficulties uploading required documents, as the system often fails to recognise them or rejects submissions. Consequently, KIs anticipate that in-person registrations will remain prevalent despite associated transportation costs. However, local authorities and social protection department staff face challenges due to high workload and staffing shortages, suggesting a need for additional support to ensure smooth implementation of the new procedures and effective response to inquiries and issues.

Both KIs and FGD participants highlighted the stressful nature of the re-registration process for applicants, who fear rejection and subsequent lack of income sources. Accessing additional required documents poses logistical challenges, particularly in regional administrative centres with limited transportation options. Without proper documentation, IDPs may struggle to prove their status or meet the criteria for allowance extension, risking the rejection of their applications. In Dnipropetrovsk oblast, some FGD participants mentioned that individuals had to provide additional proof of their vulnerable status or income level, including proof of living separately from a spouse whose income exceeds the threshold set by updated legislation in order to to extend IDP allowances, sometimes leading to divorces or the avoidance of maintaining joint households to increase income through IDP allowances. In Lviv oblast, IDPs were frequently asked to provide supplementary documents to prove eligibility not mandated by law, such as proof of relatives' income and certificates of divorce.

> **People have to queue up at the Department of Social Protection from 5 a.m. Many violate curfews to occupy the first places in line just for tickets, even though the department starts to operate at 8 a.m.**
>
> KI, Department of Social Protection, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast

Local authorities' KIs in both Kharkiv and Donetsk oblasts reported minimal discontent overall with the new IDP allowance criteria, particularly among the vulnerable groups whose allowances have remained largely unchanged.

In Mykolaiv oblast, a KI endorsed prioritising vulnerable IDP categories for continued social benefits, streamlining resource allocation and reducing state financial burdens. However, some categories of IDPs including men of conscription age, single caregivers with children studying offline and pre-retirement individuals deemed less competitive in the job market, have expressed significant dissatisfaction and concerns over the recent legislative changes. In particular, men of conscription age are less inclined to register with employment agencies due to fears of conscription. In eastern oblasts, IDP males reported that the requirement to present a health certificate and updated military registration documents at employment centres discourages many from registering as unemployed or applying for IDP benefits. Despite these concerns, no FGD participants reported instances of conscription resulting from these changes. A KI from Kherson oblast argued for universal assistance to all IDPs from unsafe areas where active hostilities are impeding recovery, contrasting it with those from safer regions where support could be income-dependent. This viewpoint reflected concerns that IDPs from occupied territories and areas with active hostilities faced severe limitations in accessing the compensation scheme for damaged and destroyed housing because compensation commissions[13] do not assess damage in red zones. In Dnipropetrovsk oblast, respondents also highlighted the issue faced by persons with disability who have not yet received the GoU disability status. The absence of official disability status has direct implications on their eligibility to receive the IDP allowance, leading to further challenges in covering their specific needs, including medical care, specialised equipment, and other essential support services.

Local authority KIs do not anticipate a significant impact on IDPs' ability to meet basic needs despite reductions in IDP allowances. According to them, these allowances were already minimal, and many IDPs have sought additional income through agricultural work or seasonal employment since their displacement in 2022. Humanitarian assistance such as food aid, non-food items, and hygiene kits also supports IDPs, reducing reliance solely on government allowances. However in contrast, FGD participants voiced deep concerns about covering their basic needs in the absence of sufficient job opportunities, especially in rural areas. This has led them to deplete savings and reduce spending on essentials such as medicine, food, and education. Instances of evictions from rental housing or moves to lower-quality accommodation were reported, driven by decreasing family incomes and insufficient funds for rent and utility payments. Increased demand for social protection services was noted in some oblasts, with concerns about diminishing humanitarian aid exacerbating insecurity among IDPs. Efforts to supplement incomes through temporary or mismatched employment highlighted ongoing struggles in the absence of adequate job opportunities. In Sumy, FGD participants highlighted that while registered at the employment centre, they are assigned to community service, which is recorded in their employment record book. This position is often significantly lower in rank than their previous roles before displacement, potentially impacting their future employment prospects.

Another concern raised is the obligation for IDPs to continue paying utilities at their place of origin while also covering utilities and rent at their current residence. This creates a significant financial burden, worsened by the cessation of the IDP allowance.

> **Now, I have to choose between buying medications and paying for my child's school needs.**
>
> FGD Participant, Lviv Oblast

[13] Compensation commissions are responsible for evaluating housing damages, which serve as the basis for determining compensation eligibility or the issuance of certificates for the purchase of new housing

People pay their rent, medicines are expensive, travel is expensive, prices for everything are high, so there is not enough money. I believe that it doesn't matter how much a person receives, it's how much they spend. For example, I have to pay the rent in Parafiyivka and utilities in Kharkiv, where I still have my apartment. My apartment was destroyed, and I have no money for repairs, but my benefits were taken away.

FGD participant, Chernihiv Oblast

The increased financial insecurity heightens emotional distress among IDPs, with many in eastern and western oblasts reporting symptoms of anxiety and depression. In northern oblasts, FGD participants noted a rise in alcohol and substance abuse. KIs in Zaporizhzhia oblast also highlighted that financial strain could significantly increase the exposure of vulnerable IDPs, particularly single women, to exploitation and violence.

Young people have been deprived of their benefits and have no jobs, so they are constantly worried about what to eat, how to buy firewood, and how to pay for utilities.

FGD participant, Sumy Oblast

There is consensus among KI and FGD participants in Kharkiv and Donetsk oblasts that changes in IDP allowances alone are unlikely to incentivise IDPs to return, particularly if their home areas remain unsafe or lack viable employment opportunities. Many IDPs from eastern and southern oblasts lack habitable homes due to conflict damage, further deterring return. This aligns with findings from the Protection Cluster Monitoring Tool, which indicate that the risk of IDPs returning to unsafe areas due to changes in IDP allowance payments has been relatively low, with only 8% of respondents considering a return to such areas[14]. However, in Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Sumy oblasts, KIs noted that the discontinuation of IDP allowances, combined with rising living expenses like rent at new residences, have heightened concerns about financial instability and increasingly pressured IDPs to consider returning to their areas of origin or relocating to rural areas where rental costs are lower. In Lviv oblast, IDPs participating in FGDs expressed fear and anxiety about potentially having to return to the areas adjacent to the frontline due to the discontinuation of their allowances coupled with the high cost of living in their current places of residence. Those whose houses were destroyed feel stranded with nowhere to go, facing an uncertain future.

My neighbour was forced to return home to Mozanivka because she could not afford to pay for housing in another region of Ukraine.

KI, Sumy Oblast

I am divorced, and I have two children. I am considering returning home to Kramatorsk. Otherwise, we will try to go abroad.

FGD participant, Lviv Oblast

[14] Overview of findings of the Protection Cluster Monitoring Tool on the impact of changes in payments of IDP allowance, Protection Cluster Ukraine, April 2024, available here

> **I'm also considering returning to Bakhmut, maybe even to the ruins, because no one will kick me out.**
>
> FGD participant, Chernihiv Oblast

> **No one shares their plans, but most people have nowhere to return because everything is destroyed.**
>
> FGD participant, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast

Compensation mechanism for destroyed and damaged housing

Since May 2023, the eVidnovlennia state programme is crucial for Ukraine's reconstruction, providing financial support for repairing and restoring homes damaged by military actions. In its first year, the programme has allocated substantial funds, highlighting its effectiveness and importance. In Donetsk oblast, a local authority's KI mentioned that the state compensation mechanism is functioning effectively. Some community members have successfully restored or rebuilt their homes, while others have received certificates allowing them to purchase new homes. The KI believes this incentivises returns to safer areas in Donetsk oblast, through enabling people to afford to return home, rebuild, or purchase a new home, thereby gradually rebuilding their lives. In Zaporizhzhia oblast, where nearly 12,000 houses have been registered as damaged or destroyed, 714 residents have received UAH 48.6 million in compensation for repairing damaged housing. According to Vitaliy Lytvynenko, director of the Department of Housing and Communal Economy and Construction of the Zaporizhzhia Regional State Administration, 857 applications have been approved so far. Of these, 432 owners of damaged houses received over UAH 23.7 million while 88 applicants received over UAH 112 million for destroyed houses. In May 2024 alone, more than UAH 1.6 million was awarded to 19 owners of damaged houses in Zaporizhzhia city[15]. The Zaporizhzhia City Council has adopted an additional social care programme for those who lost their homes. Owners or co-owners who received a certificate for a destroyed home and consequently lost ownership will be eligible for continued financial assistance from the city for housing rental. This programme provides cash payments of UAH 10,000 monthly until the owners use the certificate to acquire a new home.

A total of 441 applicants were rejected due to the inability to confirm housing ownership or to assess the level of damage, especially in rural areas where proximity to the contact line impedes the conduction of assessments by the compensation commissions. However, there is a positive development for owners of real estate properties abandoned in NGCAs, who may finally have a chance to receive compensation through remote sensing following the finalisation of a test project under Resolution #1185[16]. In Zaporizhzhia Oblast, the Executive Committee of Melitopol City Council (located in Zaporizhzhia city) reviewed four applications for compensation for destroyed housing at commission meetings. Two residential buildings were declared destroyed, and the owners were issued housing certificates.

[15] "Another 19 residents of Zaporizhzhia will receive funds for repairing damaged housing", Zaporizhzhia City Council, 28 June 2024, available here

[16] On 27 October 2023, the Government of Ukraine adopted Resolution #1185 launching the pilot project that will aim at the examination of destroyed housing on the territories that are currently beyond the control of the Government of Ukraine, through the use of technology for remote sensing of the Earth. See DRC Legal Alert: Issue 100, 1 October–31 October 2023, available here; Legislative Update on displacement-related legislation, October 2023, UNHCR

For the other two properties, the destruction could not be verified remotely. The Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories, and Infrastructure of Ukraine determined that the commission can verify the destruction of certain categories of real estate using remote sensing information. This allows for the establishment of the destruction of real property objects and provides compensation to their owners. However, due to the high cost of remote verification, it is uncertain whether and how soon the project will be able to expand to other areas.

However, since April, financing for compensation programmes for damaged and destroyed property has been exhausted. New tranches are expected from the Council of Europe Development Bank for destroyed property and the World Bank for damaged property. Moreover, the implementation procedure of the Ukrainian Law on Compensation for Destroyed and Damaged Property and the Registration Procedure of Damaged and Destroyed Property remains complicated for those lacking ownership documents, technical certificates, or inheritance issues. Across the surveyed oblasts, 25% of household respondents reported facing access barriers to obtaining documentation, marking a 5% increase compared to the previous monitoring period. Lengthy administrative procedures (42%) and the high cost of these procedures (36%) remain significant barriers. However, the most commonly reported barrier was a lack of information, cited by 47% of respondents. Additionally, 18% of respondents identified a lack of legal support as a significant barrier. FGD participants in Velyka Oleksandrivka hromada, Kherson oblast, where only one overburdened notary public is available, reported that many residents were unable to access the compensation mechanism due to challenges in obtaining property documentation, certifying documents and performing registration actions such as house registrations. In addition, FGD participants in southern oblasts reported that residents who returned after de-occupation and began rebuilding their homes independently face additional challenges in receiving compensation. Individuals who have rebuilt destroyed property on their own and applied for compensation face delays. Often the Commission has not conducted timely inspections, leading to the property being classified as damaged rather than destroyed. When applying for compensation for damaged property, individuals often choose funds for materials over professional restoration. This results in delays and non-compliance with repair schedules and reporting due to their lack of professional expertise.

Non-discrimination and equality

Overall, across the surveyed oblasts, only 1% of household respondents (7 individuals) reported poor intra-communal relationships, mainly due to tension over access to humanitarian assistance. In Kharkiv oblast, people noted that during these difficult times, the community often tries to support each other as much as possible. When new IDPs arrive, they are frequently assisted by local authorities with various issues, such as obtaining IDP certificates, allowances, housing, and accessing humanitarian aid. This percentage is slightly higher in Lviv Oblast, with 4% reporting poor intra-communal relationships. IDPs residing in Drohobych city, Lviv oblast, noted that language barriers initially posed significant problems with the non-displaced population. For example, they were initially refused service in a grocery store near their collective centre because they spoke Russian. This conflict was later resolved as IDPs learned and switched to Ukrainian in public communication with the local population. Social cohesion and integration activities have been actively promoted in Drohobytska hromada by both duty bearers and the IDP community, demonstrating a commitment to enhancing community engagement and participation. Notably, IDPs residing in the collective centre have established a civil society organisation that conducts art therapy workshops for community members, bringing IDPs and local people together.

> **This initiative improved the IDPs' psychological state and their integration with the local community.**
>
> KI, Drohobytska hromada, Lviv Oblast

On the other hand, Roma families facing multiple protection risks were identified in Drohobych and Sambir cities, Lviv oblast. These included substandard living conditions, which pose health and safety hazards; the absence of legal rental agreements, leaving families vulnerable to sudden eviction; and limited access to employment opportunities due to discrimination and stigma, which exacerbates their financial instability and hinders their integration into the local community. According to Roma families, it has been challenging to find appropriate accommodation due to the size of Roma households living together in one place—up to 16 family members in a single apartment—and the general reluctance to rent apartments to Roma community representatives.

In southern areas formerly occupied by the Russian Federation, a heightened tension and polarisation between residents was observed. The conflict has divided residents into pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian factions, leading to feelings of betrayal and distrust. Pro-Russian residents feel marginalised, while pro-Ukrainian residents suspect their neighbours of collaboration. This tension complicates efforts to rebuild social cohesion and trust within the communities.

Basic economic and social rights

Right to housing

Access to temporary accommodation

Consistent with previous monitoring periods, IDPs continuously face significant challenges in finding housing after displacement, largely due to the high cost of rent and limited availability of affordable or social housing. This situation places additional financial strain on IDP families, who often have to allocate a large portion of their income to cover rent, leaving them with insufficient funds for other essential needs like food, hygiene, and medicine. Consequently, some may be forced into substandard housing conditions, which negatively impacts their health and well-being. For instance, in Voznesenska hromada, Mykolaiv Oblast, high rental prices, averaging 8,000-10,000 UAH per month plus utilities, are unaffordable for many IDPs. Additionally, apartment owners are hesitant to rent to IDPs, fearing tax audits and fines. There is a hostel in the hromada where IDPs can find temporary accommodation, but it is not free, and no special benefits are provided for IDPs. A similar issue is observed in Yuzhnoukrainska hromada, Mykolaivska Oblast, where an influx of IDPs due to the relocation of "Energo Atom" employees and the construction of a fuel plant has significantly increased housing rental prices. A social hotel exists but charges 90 UAH per day per person. Despite requests for a modular town, local authorities have not provided a satisfactory solution. Additionally, IDPs in all surveyed oblasts shared that they struggle to cover the utility costs in their new residences because the state continues to charge them for utilities in their places of origin.

The changes in access to IDP allowances, combined with rising living expenses, including rent at their new residences, has exacerbated financial instability concerns.

Despite the low number of evacuations from the southern frontline settlements in Zaporizhzhia Oblast, there has been an increase in requests for accommodation in collective sites in Zaporizhzhia city. In Chernihiv oblast, KIIs highlighted that many IDPs are seeking more affordable housing and financial support to cover rent and utility bills, while the shortage of available affordable housing options in the region exacerbates these challenges. In Lviv Oblast, an elderly IDP from Donetsk Oblast, who could not afford the rent in Horodok, left Ukraine for the European Union in search of social assistance. Similar concerns were reported by IDPs in Sumy oblast, where high rents and the cancellation of IDP payments forced some families to relocate to rural areas or even return to their places of origin. KIIs in Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhia oblasts highlighted that without adequate financial support, IDPs struggle to maintain a minimum standard of living during the first three months following displacement.

On May 30, 2024, the Government of Ukraine amended Resolution #930, which was initially adopted on September 1, 2023. This resolution defines collective sites and sets minimum standards for their operation, including requirements related to organisational and legal principles of the site functioning, the availability and state of various engineering systems, the space arrangement and necessary infrastructure, sanitation and hygiene facilities, as well as equipment of the collective site premises with the necessary household and other appliances. The amendments introduce several key changes. The deadline for collective sites to meet the minimum standards has been extended to January 1, 2025. Additionally, the lists of collective sites in each oblast will now be updated every two months. IDPs can now stay up to 60 days at these sites without personal documentation, an increase from the previous 30-day limit. The capacity for accommodation has also been revised to allow more than four people per room. Furthermore, collective centres that have been renovated with funds from international donors will not be removed from the official list of sites. However, there is an ongoing trend of closing both private and public collective sites. Private centers are closing as owners repurpose or sell the facilities due to the administrative burden of running them, while public centers are being repurposed for other uses, such as dormitories, schools or kindergartens, rather than continuing to host IDPs. In Birky, Lviv Oblast, a private collective centre that had been hosting IDPs was closed by its owner, who stopped offering free accommodation and ceased operations. As a result, several families, including those with young children and individuals with disabilities, chose to leave Ukraine and relocate to Germany due to the inability to afford rent and find affordable housing. Consistent with previous monitoring periods and linked with the increased closure of collective sites, the resumption of offline schooling in various areas, and high rental costs, the predominant worry among IDP household-level respondents reporting concerns related to their current accommodation remains the risk of eviction (46%, 32 respondents).

Access to various social services (including temporary accommodation) for men of conscription age in Lviv oblast is hindered by bureaucratic challenges. For instance, at one collective center in Lviv, male IDPs are required to register with the Territorial Recruitment Centre (TCR) and Social Services within three days of arrival. According to Protection Cluster partners operating in the oblast, men aged 40-60 have faced significant difficulties in being accommodated in collective centres throughout the region. A notable incident in Drohobych city underscores this issue, where several men, including an individual with a disability, were initially approved for accommodation but were subsequently turned away upon arrival without clear explanations for the denial. This situation highlights the barriers that men of conscription age face when accessing social services and support.

Figure 7: Concerns about current accommodation

Accommodation's condition	100	43.7%
Security and safety risks	67	29.3%
Risk of eviction	33	14.4%
Lack of support for damaged housing	20	8.7%
Lack of functioning utilities	19	8.3%
Overcrowded/lack of privacy	7	3.1%
Lack or loss of ownership documentation	7	3.1%
Not disability inclusive	3	1.3%
Lack of connectivity	2	0.9%

Right to Education

In Kharkiv and Donetsk oblasts, children continue to attend school primarily online. However, in Kharkiv oblast, some schools have adapted by operating in shelters or metro stations, allowing students to attend in-person classes either full-time or part-time. In Zaporizhzhia oblast, 79 schools are now functioning in a mixed format, with education taking place exclusively in shelters and children studying in shifts. According to the Secretary of the Zaporizhzhia City Council, 28 out of 117 educational institutions in the oblast lack shelters and will thus remain unable to reopen for the time being. As shelling continues to pose risks in frontline areas, there is a growing trend toward constructing 'underground schools'. The Zaporizhzhia Oblast Administration plans to establish 10 such institutions by the end of the year.

> **The integration has been smoother than expected, but the schools are struggling with the increased number of students and lack of resources. My child needs special support that the school cannot always provide due to limited staff availability.**
>
> FGD participant, Lviv Oblast

Two of these will be built in Mykhailivska Hromada, Zaporizky Raion, where all 600 school-age children currently study remotely due to the lack of shelters. In Lviv Oblast, KIs and FGD participants from Stebnyk, Drohobych, and Lviv cities reported that while IDP children are generally welcomed in local schools, significant challenges remain. Limited resources, including a shortage of teachers and educational materials, have strained schools.

Right to Health

Access to healthcare remains a significant challenge, particularly for elderly individuals facing mobility restrictions and limited access to public transportation. Compared to the previous monitoring period, there has been a substantial increase in reported barriers, with 45% (333) of household-level respondents indicating difficulties in accessing healthcare, an increase of 10%.

Figure 8: Barriers to access healthcare services

Lack of specialized health care services	218	66.1%
Distance—lack of transportation means to access facilities	113	34.2%
Lack of available health facility	108	32.7%
Cost associated with transportation to facilities	92	27.9%
Cost of the services provided/medication	81	24.5%
Safety risks linked with access to/presence at facilities	16	4.8%
Lack/shortage of medication	12	3.6%
Not accessible for persons with disabilities	10	3.0%
Long waiting time	5	1.5%
Other	4	1.2%
Requirement for civil documentation	1	0.3%
Discrimination/restriction of access	1	0.3%

The primary barriers reported include a lack of specialised healthcare services (66%, 218 respondents), the distance and lack of transportation means to access existing facilities (34%, 113 respondents), a lack of available health facilities (33%, 108 respondents), the cost associated with transportation (28%, 92 respondents) as well as the cost of the services provided (25%, 81 respondents). These issues highlight the ongoing need for improved healthcare access and infrastructure to support those with mobility limitations and other barriers.

The ongoing war has led to a shortage of medical specialists, as many have relocated to safer areas or abroad. In Velyka Oleksandrivka, Kherson Oblast, local authorities and humanitarian organizations have worked to restore medical services and equip the local hospital with new equipment. However, the community still lacks highly specialised doctors such as haematologists, oncologists, and traumatologists. This forces residents to travel to Kryvyi Rih for specialised care, a journey made difficult by poor road conditions that increase travel time and health risks for patients needing urgent care. In both Chernihiv and Sumy oblasts, the significant shortage of pharmaceutical services in the region, primarily due to the absence of local pharmacies, was highlighted. As a result, individuals requiring medication often have to rely on paramedics who travel to raion centres to purchase the necessary drugs. These paramedics then deliver the medications to remote areas on designated days of the month, creating delays and challenges in accessing timely pharmaceutical care. In Lviv oblast, despite the availability of a functioning health system for both IDPs and non-displaced populations, the scarcity of specialised medical services in smaller settlements and the need to travel long distances to obtain necessary treatment represent significant barriers to accessing healthcare.

> **The lack of specialised medical care forces us to travel long distances to receive the necessary treatment, which is both costly and time-consuming.**
>
> FGD participant, Lviv Oblast

The lack of regular and accessible public transport is a significant barrier to accessing essential services, including healthcare. In remote settlements and areas outside major towns or cities, public transport options are particularly scarce, while ambulances face significant difficulties in reaching remote villages due to the poor condition of the roads. The lack of available transport forces many residents to rely on costly taxis, which are unaffordable for a significant portion of the population. In Shyroke and Znamyanka hromadas, Mykolaiv Oblast, bus drivers often prioritise passengers traveling longer distances, leaving those traveling shorter distances without transport options. Despite numerous appeals to local authorities, these issues remain unresolved. In Kharkiv and Donetsk Oblasts, residents often rely on private carriers or infrequent “social buses”, which can be expensive and thus inaccessible to many. During FGDs conducted in Chernihiv Oblast, it was noted that carpooling is the primary transportation option for residents in remote hromadas. However, traveling to hromada or raion centres, or to Chernihiv city, can cost up to 2,000 UAH, which is unaffordable for many. Participants emphasised the urgent need for social taxi services to facilitate transportation to essential services, including both primary and specialised healthcare.

Changes in IDP allowance payment policies have exacerbated these difficulties. The cessation of IDP allowances for some individuals has impeded their ability to meet basic needs, including healthcare.

In Stebnyk city, Lviv Oblast, FGD participants reported that IDP allowances were previously used to purchase medicine and other health-related necessities. The end of these payments has compelled families to cut back on healthcare expenditures.

> **It was a stable small amount of money, but at least some help. Now, without assistance, I have to choose between buying medicine and food.**
>
> FGD participant, Lviv Oblast

Right to Work

A high proportion of surveyed individuals reported having at least one household member who is unemployed and actively seeking work. This figure remains high at 14% (107 respondents) overall, with IDP respondents experiencing a higher rate of 29%, marking a 7% increase from the previous monitoring period. The primary factors contributing to unemployment, which align with previous reports, include a lack of job opportunities (68%), responsibilities related to housework and childcare (16%), physical impairments or limitations (14%), and a mismatch between skills and job market demands (12%).

Finding sustainable employment opportunities remains a significant challenge and a barrier to return in Donetsk and Kharkiv oblasts. Many factories and industrial plants have ceased operations, and agricultural land that has been mined further limits job availability. As a result, the primary employers in these areas are no longer operational or hiring, making it difficult for individuals to find work.

> **Unfortunately, people of working age are reluctant to return to the village because there are no jobs here. The fields are mined, and the farm is broken.**
>
> FGD participant, Kharkiv Oblast

Residents of Voznesenska hromada in Mykolaiv oblast report a shortage of large employers, although small businesses are on the rise. Many available jobs are traditionally male-dominated, leading women to seek retraining. There is a surplus of professionals in fields such as sewing, law, land management, and laboratory work, while there is a pressing need to train specialists in skilled trades like welding and masonry. Young people from Mykolaiv oblast are reportedly leaving for larger cities or abroad due to a lack of local job opportunities. In Shyrokyivska hromada, the ageing population exacerbates this issue, highlighting the need to create new enterprises to retain youth and combat declining birth rates. In Yuzhnoukrainsk hromada, it was highlighted that the limited availability of spots in kindergartens and the requirement for parents to be employed for admission significantly impact access to employment opportunities. Additionally, the lack of inclusive education facilities and adequate support for children with special needs limits caregivers' ability to work.

The implementation of Resolution #332, which introduces significant changes to the IDP allowances scheme, mandates that IDPs register with local employment centres. However, these centres are struggling to cope with the high demand due to a shortage of available jobs. In addition, the cancellation of IDP allowances has intensified competition within the local job market, making it even more challenging for IDPs to secure employment.

Furthermore, the job positions offered often do not match the applicants' skills or salary expectations, exacerbating the challenge of finding suitable employment. Many IDPs have relocated from regions with different job market conditions, creating a disconnect between their professional backgrounds and the available job opportunities. Although authorities, humanitarian, and development organisations have introduced requalification training programmes to address this issue, the demand for suitable employment vastly exceeds the number of available opportunities. As a result, many IDPs continue to face underemployment or unemployment despite these efforts.

> **Many people in the community are struggling to find jobs. The available jobs are often not suitable for everyone, especially those with limited skills or physical abilities.**
>
> FGD participant, Lviv Oblast

In addition to these issues, there is a notable reluctance among employers to hire IDPs. In Donetsk Oblast, a KI observed that employers are hesitant to hire IDPs despite their skills and experience. The main concern is that IDPs might relocate or return to their original homes, making them a less attractive investment compared to local residents, who are perceived as more stable employees.

Figure 9: Main source of income

Social protection payments	543	73.8%
Salar—formal employment	269	36.6%
Humanitarian assistance	91	12.4%
Casual (temporary) labour	58	7.9%
Assistance from family/friends	20	2.7%
No resource coming into the household	9	1.2%
Savings	6	0.8%
Other	3	0.4%
Business/Self Employment	3	0.4%
Debt	2	0.3%

Due to all these challenges, many IDPs are forced into low-paid jobs that do not match their qualifications, leading to financial instability and reduced living standards. For instance, IDPs from Energodar, Zaporizhzhia Oblast, working at the Yuzhnoukrainska Nuclear Power Plant, often find themselves in positions below their previous roles, such as engineers working as locksmiths. This downgrade in professional status and income exacerbates stress and uncertainty.

Across the surveyed oblasts, 74% of respondents (543 individuals) identified social protection payments as their primary income source, a figure consistent with previous monitoring periods. However, there has been a notable decrease in reliance on humanitarian assistance, dropping from 27% in the second quarter of 2023 to 12% in the second quarter of 2024. In contrast, 37% of respondents (269 individuals) now report salary from formal employment as their main source of income. In Donetsk oblast, a KI noted that local authorities are worried that, as humanitarian aid decreases, people may struggle to adjust. The concern is that residents, accustomed to receiving aid, might become reluctant to seek employment and instead expect the government to fill the gaps left by reduced aid. This situation could create an unsustainable dependency on aid, making it challenging for individuals to transition to self-sufficiency.

Despite these sources of income, 54% of respondents have reported gaps in meeting their basic needs, reflecting a 9% increase from the previous monitoring period. To cope with these financial challenges, respondents have employed various strategies. 28% of individuals are using their savings, while 18% have reduced their food consumption. Additionally, 17% depend on support from family or external sources. Notably, 27% of respondents have reported having no coping strategy in place.

Recommendations

To the authorities

- Develop and implement comprehensive communication strategies to ensure IDPs are well-informed about changes to the IDP allowance scheme. Use multiple channels, including official websites, social media, local information sessions, and direct outreach, to provide clear and timely updates on re-registration criteria and processes.
- Ensure that re-registration services are accessible in both urban and rural areas, with additional support for those facing transportation or technological barriers.
- Increase staffing and resources at CNAPs (administrative service centres) and social protection departments to manage the higher workload and ensure effective assistance to IDPs.
- Provide clear and timely information on the future of eligibility for the 15 vulnerable categories once the current extension expires on August 30, 2024, to ensure continued support and minimise uncertainty for affected individuals.
- Develop and implement policies and programmes aimed at enhancing employment opportunities for IDPs by investing in retraining and vocational training initiatives, offering micro-grants to support entrepreneurship, and creating a supportive environment that incentivizes businesses to hire IDPs and promotes their economic integration.

- Address ongoing challenges in receiving government compensation for damaged and destroyed houses in frontline areas and NGCAs, including by regularly updating the Ministry of Reintegration's registry and exploring funding opportunities to sustain remote sensing efforts.
- Improve the dissemination of information regarding the new mobilisation law, including clear guidance on deferment procedures and updates on military registration requirements. Accessible legal counselling services should be implemented to help conscripts understand their rights and obligations.
- Strengthen oversight of the mobilisation process to prevent potential abuses of authority by TRC representatives. Establish mechanisms for reporting and addressing rights violations and ensure that conscripts are treated fairly and with respect.
- Expand legal aid services, including legal awareness and legal assistance, to address the reported barriers that individuals face in accessing the compensation mechanism for damaged and destroyed housing.
- Develop and implement effective alternatives to disrupted transportation services to ensure continued accessibility for affected populations.

To the humanitarian community

- Monitor and assess the impact of Resolution #322's changes closely, particularly as the current extension of eligibility for 15 vulnerable categories approaches its expiration on August 30, 2024, to ensure continued support for affected individuals.
- Expand awareness efforts in relation to Resolution #322 by launching targeted information campaigns in remote and rural areas to ensure that residents are well-informed about the changes and their implications.
- Support IDPs in navigating the re-registration process by providing legal counselling, assistance with document preparation, and help with accessing online services. Provide legal counselling and assistance upon rejection of applications.
- Implement reskilling programmes to enhance employment access for IDPs, focusing on providing new skills and knowledge relevant to the local job market, to mitigate the impact of changes in IDP allowance payment policies and prevent unsafe returns to areas of origin.
- Prioritise legal support to address HLP issues and documentation barriers, thereby facilitating access to government compensation mechanisms for damaged and destroyed housing and addressing a key obstacle to return for IDPs.
- Expand cash-for-rent programmes as an interim measure to mitigate housing challenges.
- Increase the provision of child protection and specialised mental health services for children, especially in high-risk areas, to address trauma-related issues and support the long-term development and well-being of children affected by the conflict.
- Ensure access to MHPSS services by increasing their availability and accessibility, including in rural areas. Increase engagement and support for men of conscription age who face additional anxiety related to conscription issues.

- Enhance legal awareness and assistance about the new mobilisation law. Monitor and address rights violations experienced by conscripts.
- Enhance the dissemination of information on assistance criteria and share clear Complaint and Feedback Mechanism information to reduce tension and personal conflict within communities.
- Enhance social cohesion and integration by supporting community-led activities that promote mutual understanding, positive social interactions and experience-sharing between IDPs and host communities.

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