



Funded by
the European Union

DRC DANISH
REFUGEE
COUNCIL

DRC quarterly protection monitoring report Ukraine

April-June 2023





Table of contents

Introduction	1
Context update	1
Methodology	3
Population Movement	4
Main protection risks and needs.....	11
Life, safety and security	11
Liberty and freedom of movement	15
Legal documentation.....	16
Basic economic and social rights.....	19
Adequate standard of living.....	19
Access to healthcare	21
Access to education.....	24
Livelihoods and coping mechanisms.....	25
Recommendations	29





Introduction

This report summarizes the findings of DRC protection monitoring conducted in Ukraine in Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Volyn Oblasts in the West, Chernihiv Oblast in the North, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kharkiv Oblasts in the East, Mykolaiv and Kherson Oblasts in the South between April and June 2023.

This report seeks to identify trends in protection risks and rights violations, challenges and barriers in access to services (particularly for the most vulnerable) across surveyed oblasts during the reporting period, in order to inform the ongoing and planned humanitarian response, and support evidence-based advocacy on behalf of persons of concern. Findings from protection monitoring are visualized in an interactive dashboard which enables 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](#)

Context update

The intensity of conflict and fighting in Ukraine has increased in the first semester of 2023, causing severe devastation in communities across the eastern and southern parts of the country and having a detrimental impact on civilians residing near the front line. Homes, schools, water systems, and hospitals continue to be damaged, resulting in daily casualties among civilians. Mine contamination continues to pose additional significant challenges, not only for civilians attempting to return to their farms but also for humanitarian actors striving to deliver assistance. Insecurity and limited access continue to hinder humanitarian assistance in non-government controlled areas. Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kharkiv Oblasts in the East are at the centre of the international armed conflict, with areas of Kherson, Odesa, and Mykolaiv Oblasts in the South also impacted. Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, and Kharkiv Oblasts rank highest in severity of persons in need of humanitarian services, followed by areas of Dnipropetrovsk, Odesa, and Mykolaiv Oblasts. Donetsk, Kharkiv, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, and Mykolaiv Oblasts are regions most affected in terms of direct damage to civilian infrastructure and economic fallout¹.

¹ Protection Analysis Update, Ukraine, June 2023, Protection Cluster Ukraine, available [here](#)



Map 1: Map of territories not under the control of the Government of Ukraine – UNHCR (21 June 2023)

Country-wide air attacks intensified throughout the month of May through missile and loitering munition barrages targeting Ukrainian cities in an attempt to prevent Ukrainian Armed Forces from achieving operational preparedness to launch a counter-offensive. While this was largely focused in Kyiv, many other oblasts have seen increased attacks during the reporting period. As of June 2023, the Government of Ukraine has regained control of all of Kyiv, Sumy, Chernihiv, and Kharkiv Oblasts, as well as parts of Kherson, Mykolaiv, and Donetsk Oblasts. In June 2023, the Ukrainian Armed Forces began a counteroffensive in Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia Oblasts.

On the night of 6 June, the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plan (about 70 km upstream from Kherson city) collapsed, flooding around 80 settlements downstream and displacing thousands of civilians. Alongside destruction of homes and property, the widescale flooding has caused the movement of Explosive Ordnance (EO), with reports of landmines being carried by the water, causing further risk to civilians as they sought safety. In addition to creating displacement and humanitarian needs, agriculture and non-agriculture livelihoods have been severely impacted in affected areas, and long-term ecological and environmental consequences are expected. At the end of June, thousands of people remained displaced with limited ability to assess the damage



Map 2: Location of the Nova Kakhovka dam





to their homes and livelihoods. The breach of the Kakhovka dam and subsequent flooding of Kherson city and surrounding areas has had an immediate impact on local communities, infrastructure and the environment. Prior to the explosion, the dam held back water in the Kakhovka reservoir used to supply water upstream, carry water to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, and cool down the six reactors of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant in Enerhodar². More than 100 people have died and an estimated 17,000 individuals have been affected by the collapse of the dam. At the end of June, waters had receded in urban centres with villages and other locations still impacted.

From the start of the Russian Federation military offensive launched on 24 February 2022 through 18 June 2023, OHCHR recorded 24,862 civilian casualties in the country: 9,083 killed and 15,779 injured³. The violence has internally displaced more than five million people and forced more than eight million to flee to neighbouring countries including Moldova and Poland⁴. From February 2022 to June 2023, an estimated 4,043 acts of violence targeting civilians have been recorded across Ukraine. Three quarters of incidents consisted of shelling, artillery and missile strikes, rendering Ukraine the deadliest country in the world for violence in 2022 and causing continued untold harm to civilian populations⁵.

Methodology

Protection monitoring data has been gathered through a mixed methodology approach including in-person household (HH) surveys, Key Informant (KI) interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), direct observation, and Rapid Protection Assessments (RPAs). The report also reflects on the findings of protection monitoring carried out at the level of the Protection Cluster community, which DRC participates in, and which is conducted through structured key informant interviews. The diversity of data collection methods allowed 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 (IDPs), returnees and non-displaced people directly exposed to and affected by the current armed conflict in both rural and urban areas.

Between 1st of April and 30th of June 2023, DRC protection teams surveyed 1,421 households corresponding to 3,493 individuals. The majority of the surveyed HHs were IDPs (61% - 872), out of which 58% were displaced between February and May 2022. 33% (469) were non-displaced respondents and 5% (67) were returnees. 96% of the surveyed individuals are Ukrainian citizens, 60% are females, while the average age of surveyed individuals is 42 years old. Apart from the elderly surveyed group, where the number of female respondents for the monitoring period is two times larger than the number of male respondents, the gender distribution of the other age groups remains relatively balanced. In addition, 90 KIIs (including representatives of local authorities, national and international NGOs, members of local/community-based organisations, community group representatives, social and health workers) and 27 FGDs reaching 296 participants were conducted.

² <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-conflict-update-3-9-june-2023>

³ Ukraine: civilian casualty update 19 June 2023, OHCHR, available [here](#)

⁴ Ukraine Humanitarian Response 2023, Situation Report, Last updated on 26 May 2023, OCHA, available [here](#)

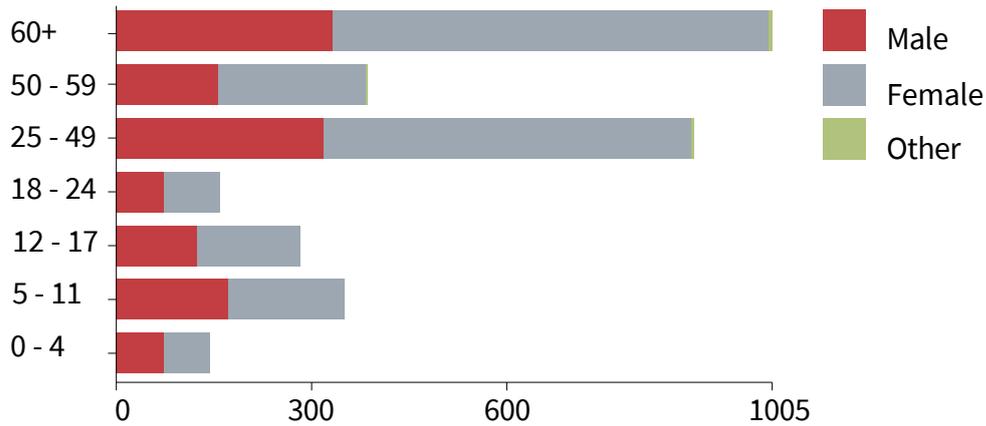
⁵ Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), 2 June 2023, Ukraine Conflict Monitor



Respondents per displacement group

IDP	872	61.4%
Non-displaced member	469	33.0%
Returnee	67	4.7%
Unable / unwilling to answer	12	0.8%
Refugee	1	0.1%

Monitored households per age and gender groups



Graph 1 & 2 : Report Demographics

Population Movement

Forced displacement

According to IOM data⁶, the majority of IDPs reside in Kharkiv (689,000 IDPs) and Dnipropetrovsk (625,000 IDPs) Oblasts, frontline locations with strained government services and limited access for humanitarian actors. Between March and April, increases in the stock of IDPs registered were higher in eastern oblasts of Ukraine, including in Kharkiv, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Dnipropetrovsk Oblasts, while a general decrease in registered IDPs was observed in western and central oblasts. Eastern and Southern oblasts host proportionally higher shares of registered male IDPs as well as higher shares of registered IDPs over 60 years old⁷.

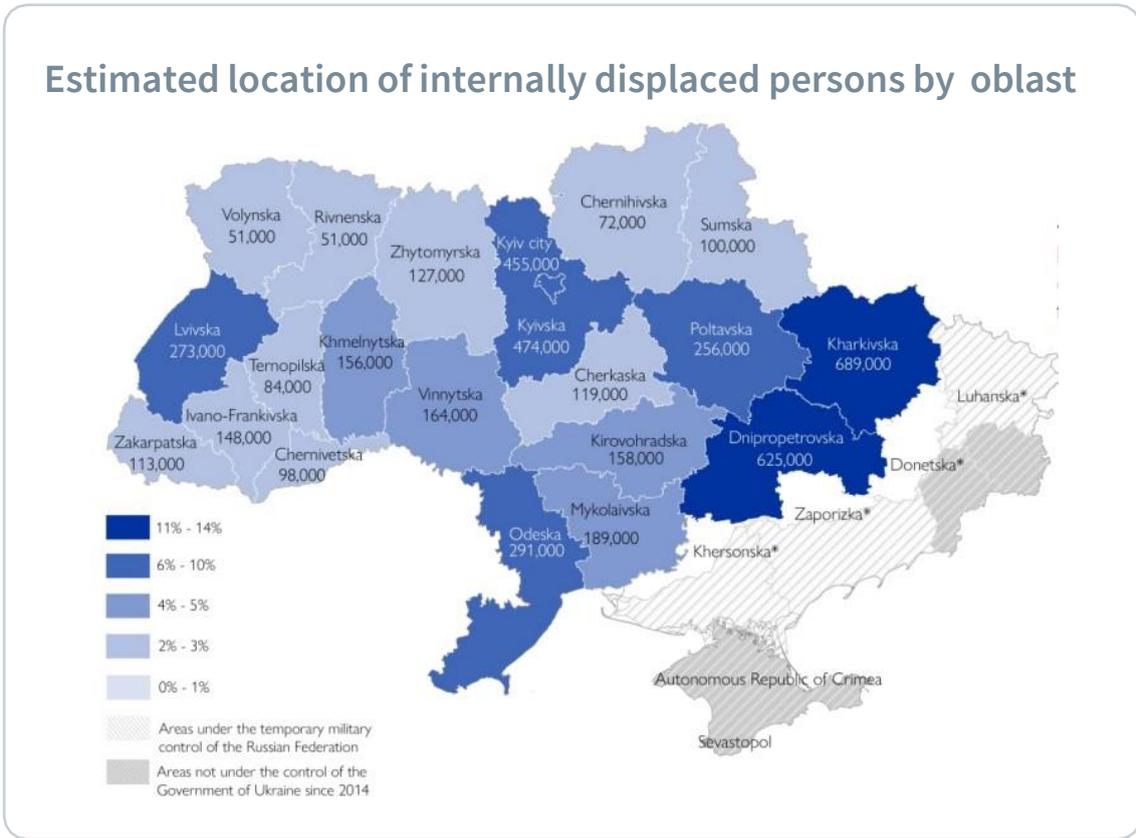
⁶ Ukraine Internal Displacement Report, IOM, Round 13, June 2023, available [here](#)

⁷ Registered IDP area baseline assessment Ukraine – Round 23, IOM, April 2023, available [here](#)





Estimated location of internally displaced persons by oblast



Map 3: Estimated location of internally displaced persons by oblast
Source: OCHA

The majority of IDPs surveyed during the monitoring period reported having left their place of habitual residence between February and May 2022 at the onset of the escalation. The main factors influencing departure reported included shelling and attacks on civilians for 83% (717) of respondents, destruction or damage of housing, land or property due to conflict for 37% (319), as well as infrastructure damage/destruction for 19% (165) and lack of access to essential services for 15% (128). Multiple displacements have mainly affected IDPs currently residing in Zaporizhzhia Oblast (47%), Dnipropetrovsk Oblast (16%) and Lviv Oblast (12%). 57% (489) of the IDP respondents reported security concerns during displacement, including shelling or missile attacks (94%). Several other protection threats were reported by respondents, including harassment at checkpoints (7%), physical assault (3%), arbitrary detention (3%), looting/robbery (3%). One Gender Based Violence (GBV) incident and one abduction incident were also reported.



Factors influencing departure

Shelling, attacks on civilians	717	83.0%
Destruction or damage of housing, land and/or property due to conflict	319	36.9%
Infrastructure damage/destruction	165	19.1%
Lack of access to essential services (health, water, education, etc.)	128	14.8%
Occupation of property	121	14.0%
Exposure to UXOs/landmines	95	11.0%
Lack of access to livelihoods, employment and economic opportunities	83	9.6%
Lack of access to safe and dignified shelter	66	7.6%
Other	54	6.3%
Criminality	19	2.2%
Seeking family reunification	10	1.2%
Fear of conscription	3	0.3%

Graph 3: Factors Influencing Decisions to Depart Areas of Origin

New displacement movements during the monitoring period were concentrated in the South, following the Nova Kakhova dam damage. The attack on the Kakhova dam on 6th June caused massive flooding, affecting both government controlled and non-government controlled parts of Kherson Oblast including the city of Kherson, and Mykolaiv Oblast, resulting in thousands of individuals being displaced in both oblasts. Contrary to initial expectations, a majority of families affected by the flooding opted to remain near their places of origin, and not receive evacuation support from the authorities, as households preferred to be able to return home as soon as the water levels reduced. As a result, officially, less than 3,000 individuals were evacuated to other oblasts. 14 temporary evacuation centres and 7 collective sites were established in Kherson Oblast hosting 423 people, while evacuated people with limited mobility were accommodated in hospitals.

Similar trends were observed in Kharkiv and Chernihiv Oblasts. Kharkiv Oblast has the highest reported number of IDPs indicating this as their area of origin (with 25% of the total number of surveyed IDPs originating from this oblast), in addition to hosting the highest number of IDPs (with 14% of the total number of surveyed IDPs residing in this oblast)⁸.



In Chernihiv Oblast, the vast majority of new IDPs displaced due to the intensification of shelling in border areas have relocated within the same oblast during the monitoring period. For example, Novhorod-Siversk hromada counts 2,346 registered IDPs, including 767 individuals who were displaced within the hromada itself, as indicated by the Head of Department of Social protection. FGD participants indicated that people prefer to move within their hromada when possible, and not to relocate far away from home.

Family separation

Across surveyed oblasts, 35% (495) of respondents reported having been separated from family members. The main categories of family members separated include children above 18 (for 43% of the respondents), partners (including husband and wife) (25%), and other relatives (24%). Concerningly, 5% of the respondents reported children under 18 as separated family members. The main reasons for family separation include family members remaining in the area of origin (36%), displacement in another country outside of Ukraine (26%) and displacement in another location of Ukraine (26%). 9% of the respondents have also reported their separated family members to be serving in the military. Protection monitoring data indicates that adult children are separated from their families because they are more mobile and have been able to move to safer regions of Ukraine or abroad. 24% of the respondents having reported family members staying in the area of origin indicated that their family members were unable to travel as a result of age or physical impairment. Single female caregivers, whose partners remained in the area of origin or were enlisted/conscripted into the military reported facing considerable challenges in finding job opportunities due to the lack of childcare services.

Reason for remaining in the area of origin

Stayed to take care of properties	90	43.1%
Unable to travel as a result of age or physical impairment	50	23.9%
Unable to travel due to safety and security concerns	25	12%
Stayed to keep the jobs	23	11%
Other	9	4.3%
Unable to travel due to safety and security concerns	7	3.3%
Unable/unwilling to answer	4	1.9%
Unwilling to leave due to fear of conscription	1	0.5%

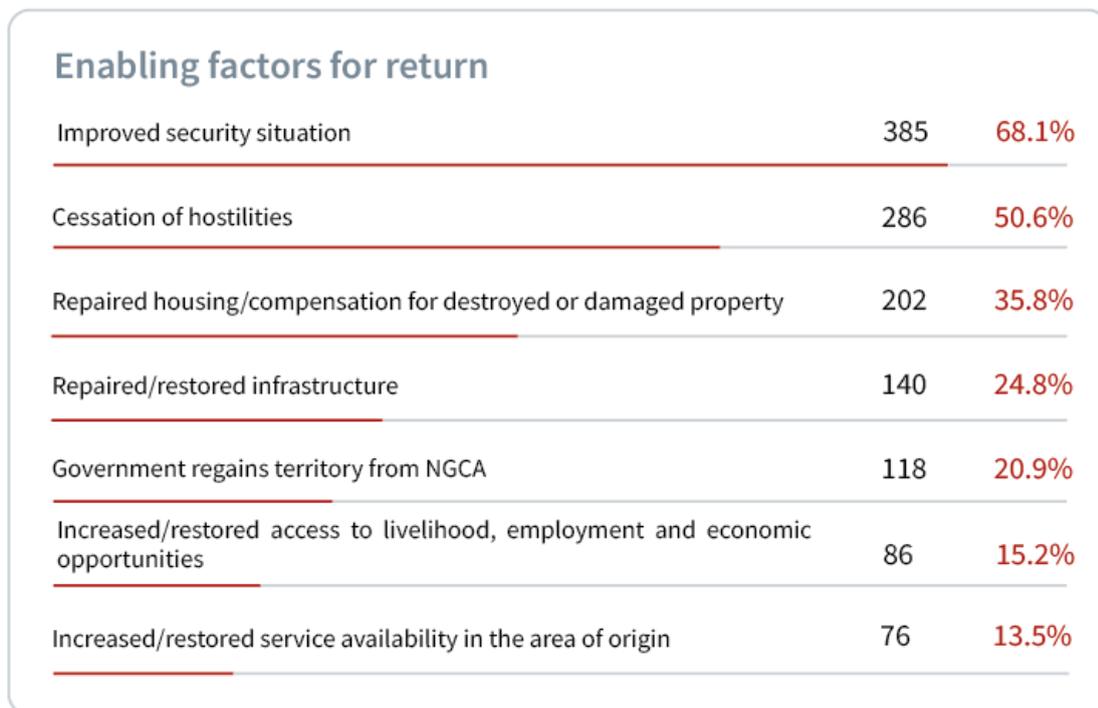
Graph 4: Reason for remaining in the area of origin

⁸ Ukraine Internal Displacement Report, IOM, Round 13, June 2013, available [here](#)



Intentions

66% of the IDP respondents across surveyed oblasts indicated their intention to return home. For IDP respondents coming from Mykolaiv, Kherson, Chernihiv and Kharkiv Oblasts, the ratio is significantly higher: 84% (36 respondents) for Mykolaiv Oblast, 84% (116 respondents) for Kherson Oblast, 81% (58 respondents) for Chernihiv Oblast, 74% (94 respondents) for Kharkiv Oblast. Across various oblasts and protection monitoring activities, the main reason reported was the lack of financial resources and livelihood opportunities in the location of displacement, high rental expenses, as well as the need for restoration of damaged properties and reunification with family members. However, IDPs willing to return are facing considerable barriers in having the capacity to return, including security constraints related to the ongoing war (fighting, threat of airstrikes and other safety issues), their homes and areas of origin being outside the control of the Government of Ukraine, damages to their properties, as well as difficult accessing essential services in areas of origin⁹. News of an IDP residing in a collective site of Kriviy Rih (Dnipropetrovsk Oblast) who died when returning home in Kherson due to an explosive ordnance left in his yard has reportedly created fear among IDPs residing in the same collective site and discouraged them from returning home in the near future.



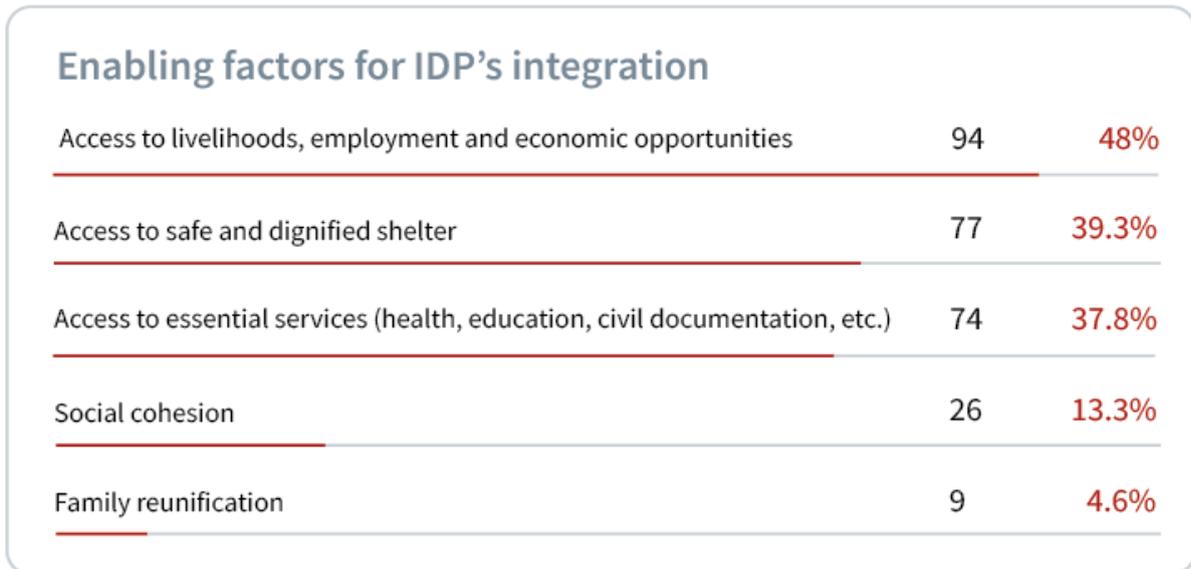
Graph 5: Factors influencing intentions to return

⁹ Ukraine Internal Displacement Report, IOM, Round 13, June 2013, available [here](#)



Monitoring data indicates that most IDPs return by their means using private or public transportation and relying on their support networks. FGD participants in Kharkiv Oblast indicated that the relations and attitudes between people who stayed in their areas of origin, and those who had been displaced and returned remained the same. According to KIIs and FGD participants, in the city of Mykolaiv, the influx of returnee populations has put pressure on the quality and availability of local resources and essential services including housing, water supplies, healthcare facilities and educational institutions.

28% of IDP respondents across surveyed oblasts reported their intention to integrate into their displacement community, indicating factors such as access to livelihoods, employment and economic opportunities (48%), access to safe and dignified shelter (39%) and access to essential services (38%) as primary contributing factors. For IDP respondents coming from Dnipropetrovsk oblast, the main intention reported is the integration into the local community of their current place of residence (55%), while returning home comes as a second main intention with 36% of IDP respondents.



Graph 6: Factors influencing intentions to integrate

Among non-displaced respondents, 98% (455) reported that they intended to stay in their place of habitual residence, and only 2% indicated their plan to relocate to another area of Ukraine. During FGDs in Kharkiv Oblast, participants reported that they have no desire to move to another location but stated that people would leave in the case of conflict escalation. Participants voiced that they do not have sufficient resources to move and feel bound to their houses as they rely on their support networks and farming fields and do not opt to leave due to fear of looting during their absence.



Intentions per displacement status

IDP

Return to the place of habitual residence	487	66.3%
Integrate into the local community of current place of residence	203	27.7%
Relocate to another area in Ukraine	25	3.4%
Relocate to a country outside of Ukraine	19	2.6%

Returnee

Stay in place of habitual residence	64	95.5%
Relocate to another area in Ukraine	2	3.0%
Relocate to a country outside of Ukraine	1	1.5%

Non-displaced

Stay in place of habitual residence	455	97.8%
Relocate to another area in Ukraine	7	1.5%
Relocate to a country outside of Ukraine	3	0.6%

Graph 7: Intentions by displacement status

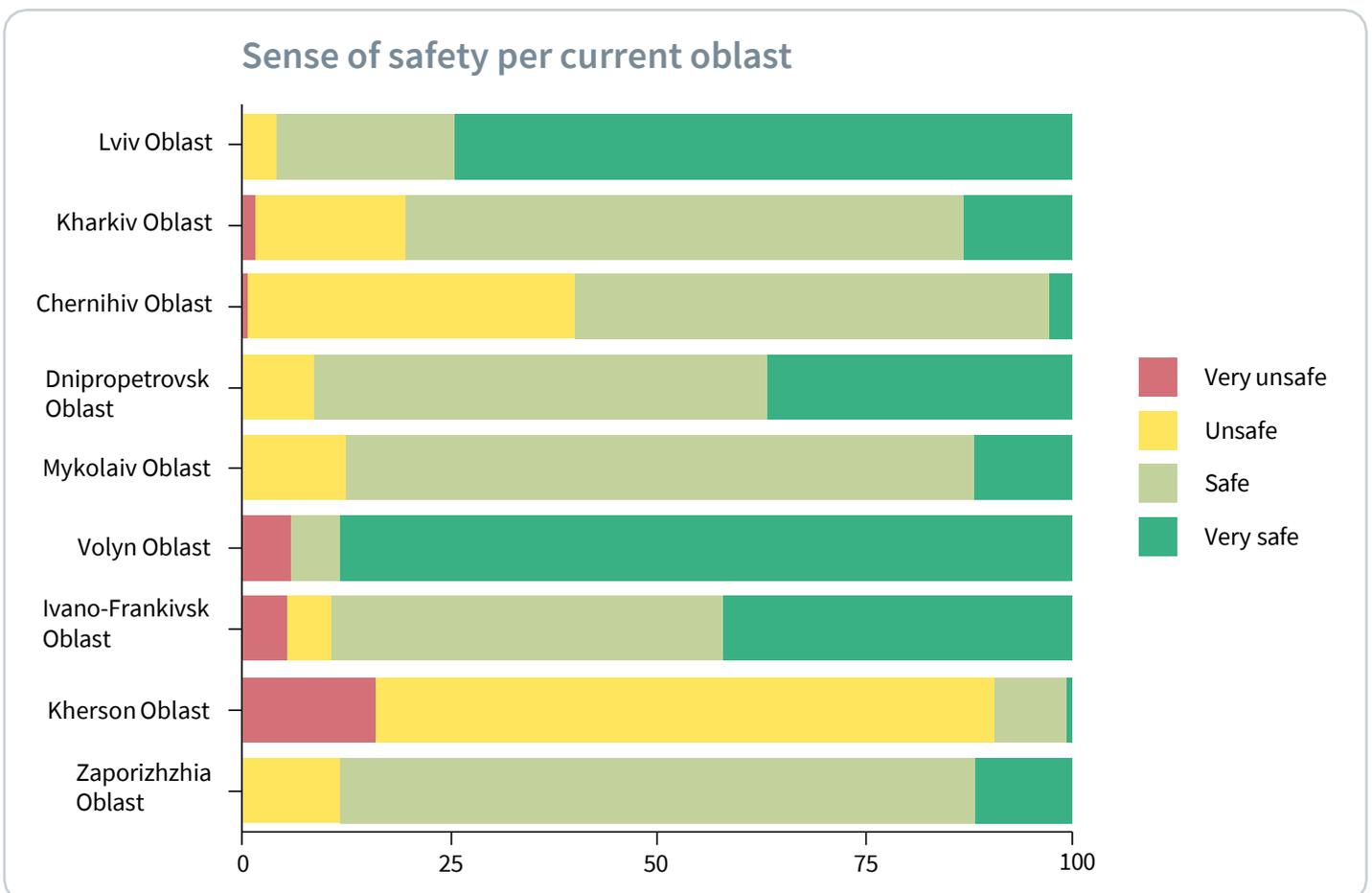


Main protection risks and needs

Life, safety, and security

Sense of safety

Overall, 21% of respondents (320) across surveyed oblasts reported a poor sense of safety (feeling unsafe or very unsafe), mainly due to shelling or threats of shelling (93%, 299 respondents), however this figure is affected by a high number of respondents from areas such as Lviv and Chernihiv. Perceptions vary significantly depending on the surveyed area, as evidenced by areas such as Kherson Oblast where 91% of respondents (99) reported feeling unsafe. In addition, poor sense of safety is higher in rural areas (26%) than in urban areas (19%). Residents of hromadas and settlements close to the frontline expressed fear for their lives and physical insecurity due to constant exposure to shelling and fears of possible renewed occupation. In Chernihiv Oblast, 40% (114) of respondents reported feeling unsafe. This poor sense of safety can be explained by the fact that DRC teams conduct protection monitoring in remote rural border areas that have witnessed an increased number of displaced populations due to the intensification of shelling during the monitoring period, and where a significant number of villages do not have bomb shelters and where there is insufficient time for the air raid alert to go off in cases of artillery and mortar shelling, as well as missile attacks.



Graph 8: Feelings of safety by surveyed oblast



In Kharkiv Oblast, FGD participants stated that the greatest threat is the resumption of hostilities and shelling. Most of them stated they are afraid to travel far from the settlement as they feel unsafe being far from home if shelling resumes.

“We don’t know at what time and where a rocket may arrive, so we are afraid to even go to the store, but we have no other way out. We are not going to leave our homes.”

FGD participant in Kharkiv Oblast

Overall, affected communities use public or private basements as shelter. Some FGD respondents stated that they feel relatively safe at home where they can hide in the basement in case of danger. However, an incident of a basement being shelled in Schevchenkove hromada leading to the killing of the sheltered family has discouraged community members from seeking refuge in basements, according to a KI. Other FGD participants expressed concerns about the lack of shelters and indicated that current local shelters are posing additional risks for older people as they are not adapted for persons with reduced mobility. Cases were identified of elderly people falling or being injured going into the shelters due to steep stairs, no light, etc.

Across the surveyed oblasts, the presence of armed or security actors was reported as an influencing factor by 14% of the respondents (45) indicating feeling unsafe or very unsafe. The ratio is higher in Kharkiv Oblast, where 36% of respondents of household surveys indicated feeling unsafe or very unsafe due to the presence of armed or security actors. FGD participants expressed a divided opinion about the presence of the military as some reported it as a positive sign, while others expressed concerns over their settlements being potentially targeted due to this military presence. Similar concerns were shared by FGD participants in Chernihiv Oblast.

Sense of safety: Influencing factors

Language difference	14	48.3%
Tension over access to humanitarian assistance	13	44.8%
Tension over access to services and/or employment opportunities	5	17.2%
Tension over conscription procedures	4	13.8%
Other	2	6.9%

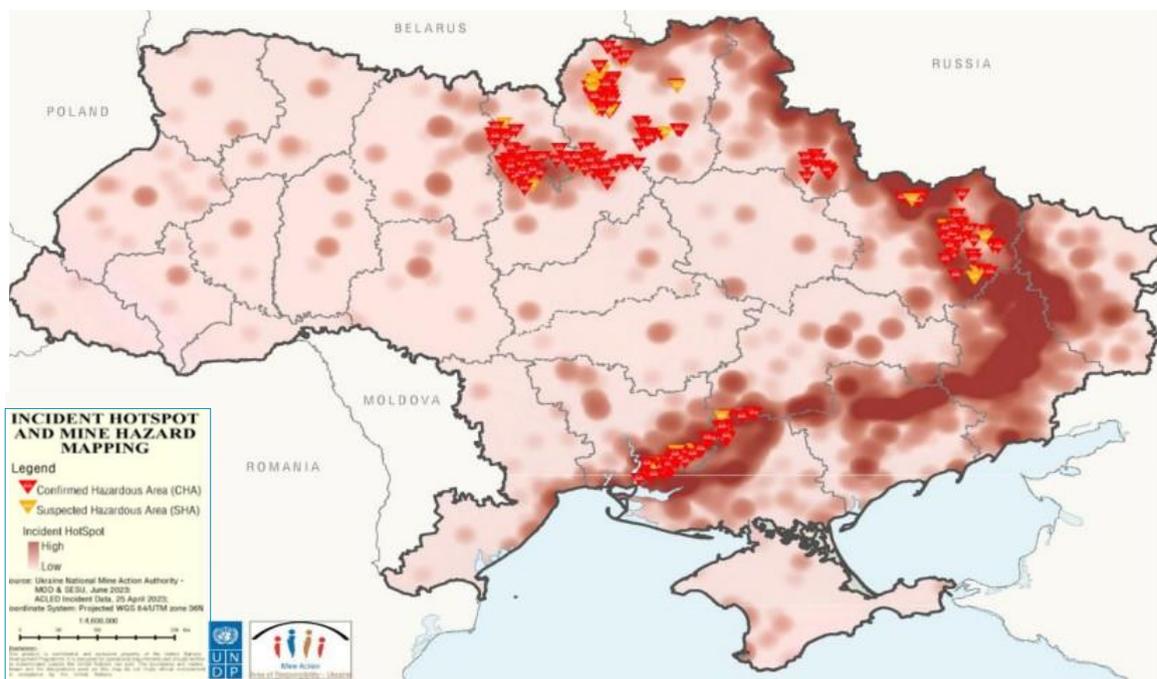
Graph 9: Factors influencing feelings of safety



Mine contamination

Ukraine is one of the most mine-contaminated countries globally, and the situation has worsened dramatically since the escalation in conflict in February 2022. According to the Mine Action Area of Responsibility, 160,000 square kilometres of land in Ukraine have been exposed to conflict since 2014, placing 21.3 million people at risk of exposure to mines and unexploded ordnances (UXO). Areas of Chernihiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Luhansk, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Sumy and Zaporizhzhia Oblasts are reported to be the most contaminated, with Kharkiv, Luhansk, Mykolaiv, and Sumy containing raions with the most catastrophic severity levels of contamination, which is evident in both rural and urban areas¹⁰. From 24 February 2022 to 15 May 2023, OHCHR reported 280 civilian fatalities and 561 injuries as a result of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and mine-related incidents¹¹. Persons living in communities along the border with the Russian Federation and in areas beyond the control of the Government of Ukraine are at severe risk. The flooding resulting from Nova Kakhova dam destruction has affected an area close to the frontline in Kherson which is highly contaminated with landmines and other Explosive Ordnance (EO). Mine and unexploded ordinance shifted by the floodwaters pose a significant danger to local population during evacuation as well as in the later stages when people will visit their homes to assess conditions and clear debris as the water subsides.

Incident hotspot and mine hazard mapping



Map 4: Map of incidents and mine hazards in Ukraine

¹⁰ Protection Analysis Update, Ukraine, June 2023, Protection Cluster Ukraine, available [here](#)

¹¹ OHCHR Ukraine: Civilian Casualty Update 5 June 2023



Social tensions and discrimination

The influx of displaced populations in key areas has put increased strain on public services, the availability of goods, housing, and the labour market, as well as on the distribution of humanitarian aid and social protection systems, increasing the potential of tensions between various population groups and suggesting the needs for projects and initiatives fostering social cohesion and mediation to address disputes between communities. Countrywide, social tensions are the highest in the West. This was reported through community-level protection monitoring, and raised in coordination forums from partners operating in the West. However, reports of poor intercommunity relationships through household-level protection monitoring remain low. Across all surveyed oblasts, 2% of households (31 respondents) reported bad or very bad relationships between communities, while for western oblasts (Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Volyn Oblasts) it amounts to 5% (18 respondents). Overall, 48% of the households reporting bad or very bad intercommunal relationships (14) indicated language differences as the main influencing factor, while tensions over access to humanitarian assistance and tensions over access to services and livelihood opportunities were reported by 45% (13) and 17% (5) of respondents respectively.

IDPs reported instances where they or their family members faced discrimination or unfair treatment due to language differences in the western oblasts of Ukraine. FGD participants in the West reported that IDPs were reprimanded when using the Russian language, while discriminating written notices were displayed in some shops indicating that only Ukrainian-speaking customers would be served. One female participant reported that a doctor refused to provide her with a medical consultation because she could hardly speak Ukrainian. Female caregivers shared concerns about discriminatory behaviours towards IDP children due to linguistic differences. Cases of were identified amongst IDPs of discrimination and stigmatization of Russian-speaking children at schools leading to multiple displacements.

Tensions over access to employment opportunities were reported both in the western and eastern oblasts of Ukraine. In Terniivka mining town, IDPs were reportedly blamed by host communities for stealing jobs and subsequent acts of vandalism on IDP vehicles were reported as reprisals, although this was not reported to the police. In Lviv Oblast, one single mother indicated that she was denied jobs due to her lack of proficiency in Ukrainian. Two other female FGD participants indicated that employers in Lviv reduce wages or simply stated that they do not recruit IDPs due to the large number of IDPs searching for work and reluctance to invest in capacity-building of hires that may then leave their work to return home. On 18 April 2023, the Cabinet introduced Decree №338 adopting compensation mechanisms to employers and small businesses creating new jobs¹².

“I work in the beauty industry, I used to have my own beauty cabinet. Here I sent out my resume to everyone, wrote in direct mail (on social media), but no one responded. I finally found a job, I had been working there unofficially since September, but I will be leaving soon. There is not enough money for clothes and rent. I am currently undergoing a training on the topic of how to write grant applications to start my own business.”

FGD participant, Lviv Oblast

¹² DRC Legal Alert: Issue 93, 16 April – 30 April 2023, DRC, available [here](#)



Tensions between community groups over access to and targeting criteria of humanitarian assistance, especially multipurpose cash assistance, were also reported, including in Kharkiv and Lviv Oblasts. According to IOM Conditions of Return Assessment, up to 48% of returnees in assessed locations reside in areas where residents are somewhat or very concerned about tensions within their community, most often deriving from the allocation of humanitarian aid, social assistance or compensation schemes (651,000 returnees in 31 locations)¹³. Host community members interviewed in Slavski hromada, Lviv Oblast, pointed out that humanitarian aid is only targeting IDP communities while host communities, feeling themselves deeply affected by hostilities (including when having family members enlisted in the army), are expected to support IDP communities. There is a widespread feeling among host communities that only IDP needs are considered at the expense of their own needs which exacerbates social tensions. Concerns were also raised about the different criteria applied by cash assistance providers.

Liberty and freedom of movement

Fear of conscription

Across surveyed oblasts, 23% of households with adult male members of conscription age who reported limited freedom of movement indicated fear of conscription as their main barriers. 13% of male IDP individuals of conscription age not formally registered. Among the 35% of respondents (494) reporting family separation, 9% indicated military service as the reason for separation.

In Mykolaiv Oblast, a high presence of military personnel in the streets requesting men to show personal identification documents was reported. In Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, security services conducted visits in collective sites to enlist men. It was reported that following those visits, some men joined the army, while others left the collective sites to avoid conscription. In Kharkiv Oblast, FGD participants reported that some men avoid public places at checkpoints and metro stations due to fear of conscription. In Chernihiv Oblast, key informants indicated that subpoenas were delivered to men crossing checkpoints. According to the head of the military subscription centre in Chernihiv oblast, as of June 2023, the police have received 20 thousand reports of men hiding after receiving subpoenas, which roughly corresponds to the total number of men mobilized into the armed forces of Ukraine since the escalation of the conflict¹⁴. Men are rejected in collective centres if they do not register with the local conscription office. In Lviv, DRC protection monitoring team identified a non-registered IDP man, with an unregistered disability who had been denied accommodation by volunteers operating at the Lviv railway station.

Lack of (specialized) transportation

Barriers to freedom of movement include lack of available and accessible public transport, including in rural conflict-affected communities. FGD participants in Schevchenkove hromada, Kharkiv Oblast, reported that the fare to Kharkiv with the public bus had doubled, making it challenging for many – mostly currently unemployed – to purchase.

¹³ Conditions of Return Assessment, Round 2 Factsheet, April 2023, IOM, available [here](#)

¹⁴ До поліції Чернігівщини надійшло понад 20 тисяч заяв про розшук ухиянтів (suspilne.media)



Similarly, in Chernihiv Oblast, where a significant number of villages do not have available public transportation, FGD participants indicated that community members often have to pay between 8 to 20 USD to reach the nearest city where they can access services.

The situation in Ukraine has been described as the ‘oldest’ humanitarian crisis in the world, with 8.9 million people, 24 per cent of the population, over age 60¹⁵. Elderly people with low mobility, and persons with disability face disproportionate barriers to accessing essential items and support due to a lack of specialized transportation and a lack of financial resources. This limitation in movement can be particularly detrimental in areas such as Schevchenkove hromada in Kharkiv Oblast, which was heavily impacted by infrastructure destruction (including healthcare facilities and public transportation) as well as rural areas where available services are limited, such as Zolochiv hromada, Lviv Oblast, where residents have to walk up to 3 km to reach the nearest bus station. In Kharkiv Oblast, KIs reported that due to reduced mobility, many elderly-headed households have remained. Integration of older persons evacuated from conflict-affected areas into their displacement community, especially in rural areas, has proven to be challenging as they require additional care and support, including for access to documentation, accommodation and healthcare, while there is an insufficient number of social workers (with sometimes only one social worker covering several villages and hromadas).

Legal documentation

Lack of civil documentation

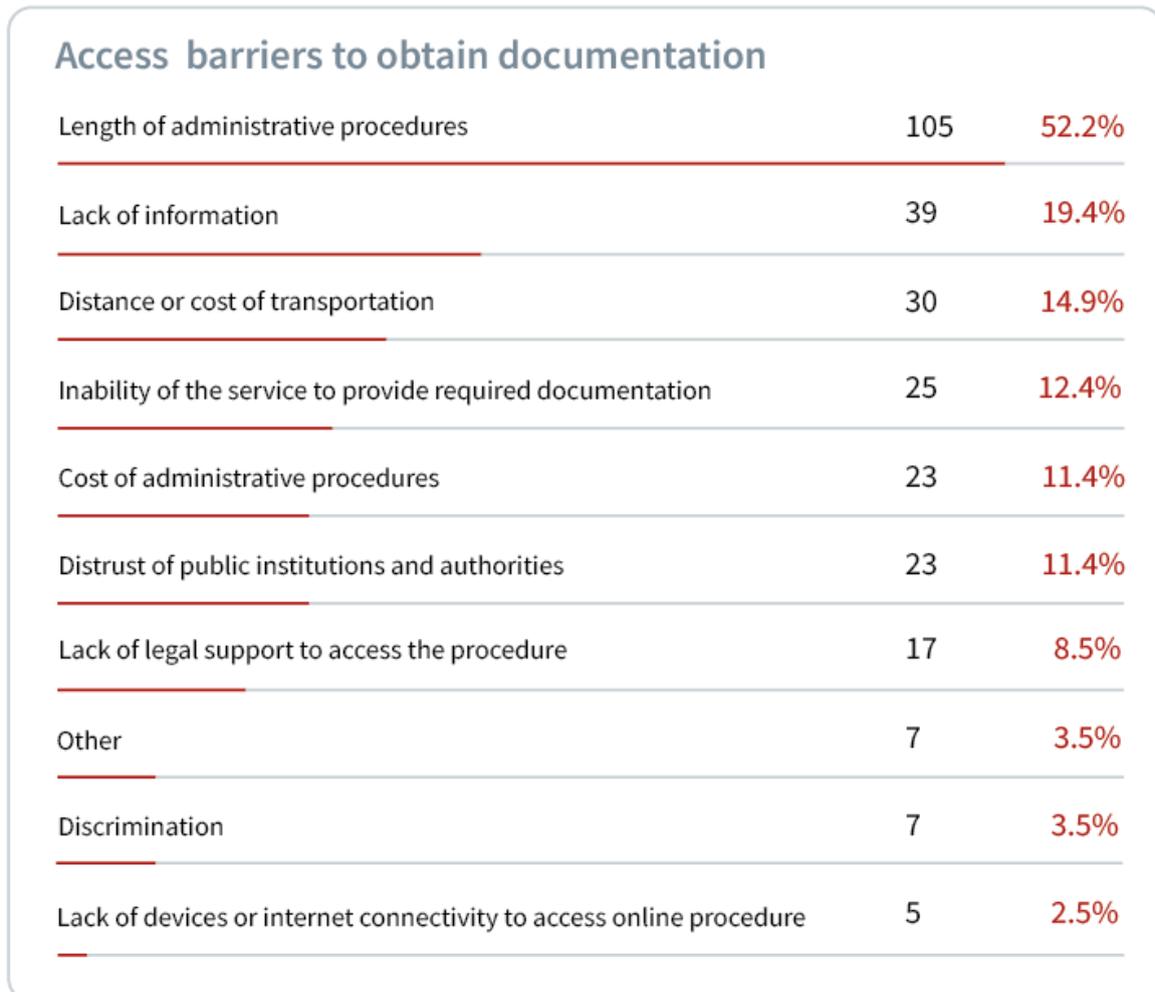
Across surveyed oblasts, 18% (540) of individuals surveyed reported lacking personal documentation. Of concern, 36% of individuals surveyed in Kharkiv Oblast, 39% in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast and 49% in Zaporizhzhia Oblast lack personal documentation and face subsequent challenges in accessing services (including healthcare, education, registration services and property) as well as limitations to their freedom of movement. Under Martial Law, individuals without documentation are at risk of arrest and detention and cannot access employment, healthcare (except emergency medical care), or governmental support/social welfare programs.

KIs in Kharkiv Oblast reported that in some areas near the front line and areas where the Government of Ukraine recently regained control, stateless individuals who have never been issued new documents are currently facing considerable challenges accessing services. In Lviv Oblast, Roma IDPs accommodated in a collective centre reported not possessing any form of documentation, including due to the length of the restoration process. Overall, 14% (201) of respondents in surveyed oblasts reported access barriers to obtain documentation due to the length of administrative procedures (52%), lack of information (19%), and distance or cost of transportation (15%). In Mykolaiv Oblast, authorities have arranged an online space dedicated for information on accessing documentation and registration services in the main library of the oblast. Fees can also challenge access to documentation, for example, costs for obtaining a Ukrainian passport amount to 450 UAH (820 UAH for an expedited procedure), while an international passport amounts to 856 UAH (1496 for an expedited procedure).

¹⁵ “I’ve lost the life I knew”, Older people’s experiences of the Ukraine war and their inclusion in the humanitarian response, HelpAge International, 2023



These access barriers are compounded by challenges faced by persons with specific needs (including older persons and persons with disabilities) in accessing online services due to lack of digital literacy and lack of access to internet and devices. In rural areas of Chernihiv Oblast, elderly individuals who have lost their identity documents are facing substantial challenges in restoring them as they may never have been entered in any electronic registers.



Graph 10: Barriers in access to documentation



Lack of Housing, Land & Property (HLP) documentation

22% (295) of household respondents across surveyed oblasts reported lacking HLP documentation, including property ownership for housing (14%) and land (6%). This suggests that a significant number of households do not possess the legal documentation establishing their ownership of land or property. This lack of property documentation is particularly significant in rural areas where residents would traditionally sell/purchase houses or lands without necessarily providing ownership documents and reporting changes into the national registry. Formalizing ownership and providing property ownership documentation are, however, required to apply for compensation for damaged/destroyed property, with an estimated cost of notary services at 5,000 UAH. The application for compensation can be submitted in the absence of title documents, or in the case of lost documents, however, the submission of the title documents is still required at a later stage of the application process.

Across surveyed oblasts, 64% (161) of respondents residing in rental accommodation reported not possessing any formal lease agreement. This information was corroborated through FGDs. This suggests that a significant number of households are facing risks related to security of tenure, including the risk of eviction. For instance, in Chernihiv Oblast, IDPs are provided with temporary housing by hromada local authorities and volunteers, while the status of property as abandoned is not always formalized, and abandoned houses often offer poor living conditions and lack access to utilities.

The significant proportion of households lacking HLP documentation highlights the challenges individuals face in establishing and protecting their HLP rights. The lack of proper documentation may hinder individuals from accessing compensation, resolving property disputes (which may pose the long-term threat of eviction for IDPs), or exercising their rights in relation to their land or property.



Basic economic and social rights

Adequate standard of living

Across surveyed oblasts, 37% (521) of respondents reported concerns regarding their accommodation. The main concerns reported were the accommodation’s condition (38%) and risk of eviction (27%).

Concern’s related to accommodation		
Accommodation’s condition	187	38.2%
Risk of eviction	133	27.2%
Lack of functioning utilities	89	18.2%
Lack of support for damaged housing	52	10.6%
Overcrowded/Lack of privacy	42	8.6%
Security and safety risks	29	5.9%
Not disability inclusive	24	4.9%
Lack of connectivity	18	3.7%
Lack or loss of ownership documentation	7	1.4%

Graph 11: Concerns around accommodation

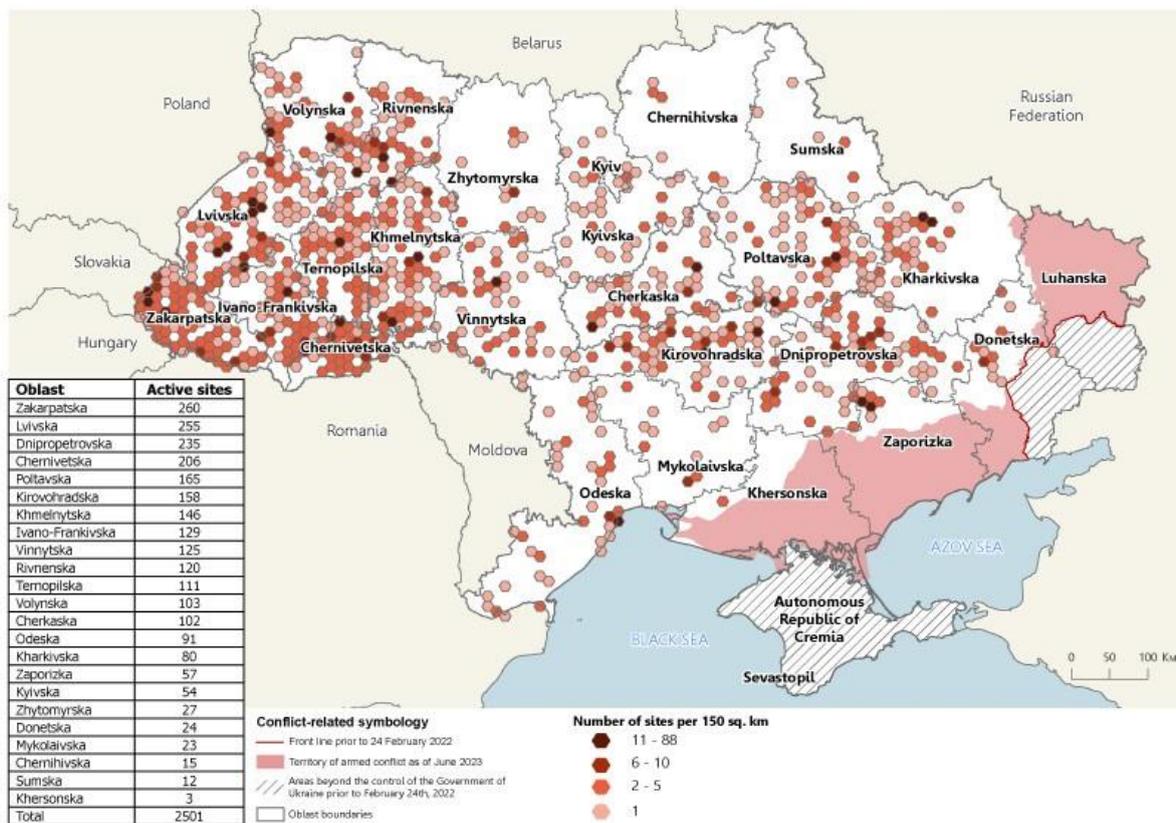
32% of respondents reported partial damage to their accommodation, 11% reported severe damage, and 4% reported destroyed accommodation. In Schevchenkove hromada, Kharkiv Oblast, some private houses were heavily damaged while others needed light repair such as new windows. Some households reported having received new windows, however, they were reluctant to install them due to ongoing shelling attacks. FGD respondents expressed concerns about house repair works, as humanitarian service providers cannot operate there for the time being due to safety and security risks. In Chernihiv Oblast, where shelter has by far been identified as the first priority need (42% of respondents), FGD participants and KIs reported that some people were not able to receive shelter assistance, including for light and medium repairs, or received low quality shelter assistance.



Overall, the need for restoration of properties is reported to be a primary need, especially among conflict-affected non-displaced communities, along with the need for legal interventions to address questions concerning damaged properties and registration. Information sharing about access to the state compensation mechanism is also acutely needed. On 21 April 2023, the Government of Ukraine adopted Resolution #381 outlining the procedure for compensating housing damaged due to the hostilities. The Resolution is one of the bylaws adopted on implementation of the Law on Compensation and specifies eligibility criteria. The coverage of the law is, however, limited in scope as it applies only to residential properties damaged or destroyed after 24 February 2022, and only in areas under Government of Ukraine control at the time. In addition, the applicant should be the owner of the damaged object (whose ownership has been confirmed and information about the property is entered in the State Register of Property Rights on the Immobile Property), and no restoration or repair work should have been done on the object¹⁶. Of particular concern is the law’s exclusion of persons who have undertaken restoration work with their own resources and/or with humanitarian assistance.

The risk of eviction is of particularly high concern in Dnipropetrovsk and Lviv Oblasts, which are two of the main oblasts accommodating collective sites (CSs). Most of the 2501 active collective sites are currently located in the West, where Zakarpattia (260), Lviv (255), Chernivtsi (206), Ivano-Frankivsk (129), and Volyn (103) Oblasts account for 38% of the total number of collective sites across Ukraine¹⁷. Dnipropetrovsk Oblast ranks third with 235 active collective sites.

Mapping of the active collective sites (Ukraine, June 2023)



Map 5: CCCM Cluster/REACH mapping of the active collective sites (Ukraine, June 2023)



With many of the collective sites being educational facilities, some collective sites have already been vacated due to the approaching new school year. In Kryvyi Rih for instance, IDPs were relocated from schools to new collective sites. Schools without bomb shelters will, however, remain open to host IDPs. According to reports, IDPs are feeling stressed and agitated and are dissatisfied with the living conditions in new collective sites due to the lack of basic amenities such as refrigerators and washing machines.

Alongside authorities' communications around the need to vacate educational facilities, the number of private collective sites where IDPs either pay rent or cover the costs of utilities is increasing, including in Lviv Oblast. While this is positive for men of conscription age as proof of registration with the military conscription office is not required at private collective sites, there are concerns about the conditions of the sites, and possible risks as CCCM services are not on site and humanitarian actors do not have access.

Most of the collective centres visited by DRC protection monitoring teams during the reporting period are not adequately equipped to accommodate persons with reduced mobility (lacking operational lifts, ramps, and accessible WASH facilities). This leads to substantial limitations of movement, challenging access to services, and isolation for persons with reduced mobility accommodated in collective centres, with some reporting being unable to leave their room or floor or requiring assistance to meet their hygienic needs. A case was reported of a woman head of household being to move with her family from a rented house to a collective site due to lack of financial resources, and subsequently having to return her elderly mother with mobility issues back to Kherson Oblast due to accessibility issues within the collective site. Women and girls living in CSs face unique risks given the communal living environment, including lack of privacy in sleeping spaces that are not partitioned, degrading and insecure WASH facilities that are not gender segregated and lack of adequate lighting.

While recognizing that a significant number of IDPs in CSs will not be able to return to their places of origin due to ongoing conflict or damaged and/or destroyed property, CSs are only intended to serve as temporary accommodation and longer-term, affordable housing alternatives must be identified.

Access to healthcare

Health continues to be the first priority for the vast majority of households surveyed, cited by a total of 48% (680) of respondents as a priority need. 24% of household-level respondents indicated facing barriers to accessing healthcare, including due to a lack of specialized healthcare services (46%), lack of available health facilities (34%), as well as the distance and lack of transportation means to access existing facilities (27%) and the cost of the services provided (20%). Lack of information on medicines available under the affordable medicines program run by the Ukrainian authorities, including among local doctors, is still reported as a challenge by households surveyed in Dnipropetrovsk oblast, as well as the lack of available appointments with overburdened general practitioners (an average of 7 to 10 waiting days in Dnipropetrovsk oblast). The ratio of households reporting barriers to access healthcare is exponentially higher in rural areas— 45% of respondents (207) living in rural areas compared to 14% (130) of those living in urban areas.

¹⁶ Legislative Update, Ukraine, April 2023, UNHCR, available [here](#); DRC Legal Alert: Issue 93, 16 April – 30 April 2023, DRC, available [here](#)

¹⁷ Mapping of the active collective sites (Ukraine, June 2023), CCCM Cluster, available [here](#)



Barriers to access healthcare		
Lack of specialized health care services	155	46.4%
Lack of available health facility	116	34.7%
Distance - lack of transportation means to access facilities	91	27.2%
Cost of the services provided/medication	68	20.4%
Cost associated with transportation to facilities	49	14.7%
Lack/shortage of medication	29	8.7%
Not accessible for persons with disabilities	13	3.9%
Long waiting time	12	3.6%
Discrimination/restriction of access	12	3.6%
Other	7	2.1%
Requirement for civil documentation	5	1.5%
Safety risks associated with access to/presence at health facility	3	0.9%
Language barriers	2	0.6%

Graph 12: Barriers in access to healthcare

The elderly, persons with chronic illnesses, and persons with disabilities are facing additional challenges accessing healthcare services due to inability to travel long distances on their own, the costs of the services needed, and inability to access online registration processes (including booking appointments) due to limited digital literacy and lack of devices. In some hromadas and settlements with limited access to healthcare services and transportation, local activists as well community-based and national organisations provide support where they can. For instance, in Schevchenkove hromada, Kharkiv Oblast, where only one public bus is travelling once a week from Schevchenkove hromada to the raion centre, a national NGO provides an additional bus once a week, and a mobile primary health team is visiting the communities of the hromada once a week.





Due to the intensity of the violence people have been exposed to and its consequences, including family separation and disruption of support networks, high levels of psychological distress have been observed in the population, including children. In Kharkiv Oblast, FGD participants reported that children have become sensitive to loud sounds and appear to show speech difficulties. Some reported children suffering from panic attacks. Overall behavioural changes among children were reported by caregivers, who expressed concerns over the mental wellbeing of their children and requested psychological support. Among adults, alcohol is increasingly used as a coping mechanism for psychological distress. Shelling, missile attacks and damaged properties were reported among the main factors contributing to psychological distress during FGDs. However, access to specialized health services is still reported as a challenge, while awareness about and existence of facilities for people with mental health challenges or with available psychological services remains limited.



Graph 13: Factors contributing to psychological distress



Access to education

Children attending school		
Yes, all of them	352	81.1%
No, none of them	58	13.4%
Yes, some of them	24	5.5%

Graph 14: The number of children attending school

Online education modalities were reported by 68% of respondents with school-aged children while 25% reported in-school education and 7% reported both modalities being used. Online schooling provides children with limited opportunities to play and socialize with their peers. In addition, large and low-income families cannot necessarily afford devices for children to attend online education. In some oblasts, including Lviv Oblast, some IDP caregivers clearly expressed their preference for the online education modality for various reasons including cultural and religious differences between their children and host community children, language barriers and risks of harassment and bullying at school, as well as the willingness to show solidarity with teachers from their areas of origin who would otherwise lose their jobs.

“There were problems because of the language barrier. There was even bullying, they called him “Russian”

FGD participant in Lviv Oblast

Online education, coupled with the lack of safe spaces and areas to play may have long-term negative impact on children’s social development. The limited social interaction and reduced opportunities for face-to-face communication with peers and teachers can negatively impact children’s emotional and social growth, including essential skills such as communication, empathy, and conflict resolution, as well as children’s ability to effectively navigate social situations and develop strong interpersonal skills. Furthermore, the lack of accessible safe spaces for play, such as playgrounds, parks, and recreational areas, limit opportunities for physical activity, social interaction, and creative play.



Livelihoods and coping mechanisms

According to ILO estimates, employment decreased by 15% (equivalent to 2.4 million jobs being lost) in Ukraine in 2022 in comparison to 2021 employment data¹⁸. Limited livelihood opportunities were widely reported by household respondents. The percentage of individuals surveyed out of work and seeking employment remains quite high (21%), reaching 33% in Dnipro and 27% in Lviv. Primary factors contributing to unemployment were reported as lack of available jobs (56%), followed by physical impairments/limitations (13%). Housework/caring for children was reported by 9% of the total number of respondents (by 12% of the female respondents). The lack of kindergartens was widely reported as impacting the ability of single female caregivers to access employment. The process to access kindergartens requires caregivers to present a certificate of employment, while single caregivers need to have access to kindergartens in order to be able to find jobs, presenting a catch 22 situation for employment seekers requiring childcare services. Discrimination based on age was reported by 6% of the respondents. Adults aged between 50 and 60 years old who are not yet eligible for retirement pensions are reportedly facing subsequent challenges in finding employment. This age discrimination may be linked with biases against older individuals perceived as less adaptable, the rapidly changing job market, and older job seekers perceived as lacking updated skills or knowledge in technologies or having health-related issues or physical limitations.

Unemployment factors		
Lack of available jobs	173	56.0%
Physical impairment/limitations (chronic illness, disability)	41	13.3%
Other	38	12.3%
Skills do not match demand	35	11.3%
Housework / caring for children	29	9.4%
Lack of information about job market	22	7.1%
Discrimination based on age	17	5.5%
Low or off season (agriculture)	12	3.9%
Lack of experience	10	3.2%
Mine containment	1	0.3%

Graph 15: Factors affecting employment



With agriculture as the main income-generating activity for a high number of rural settlements in the East prior to the conflict, EO and ERW contamination of farming fields and loss of livestock have severely impacted livelihood opportunities including casual labour, and contribute to increased frustration. In the South, agriculture and non-agriculture livelihoods have been severely impacted in Kherson Oblast following the dam incident in June, and long-term ecological and environmental consequences are expected. According to OCHA, the Khakovka Reservoir serves as a source of drinking water for 700,000 people across southern Ukraine. Water supply disruptions have impacted Dnipropetrovsk Oblast as well, especially the cities of Kryvyi Rih and Nikopol raion as they depend on the Kakhova reservoir (up to 70% of the city's water supply for Kryvyi Rih). The interconnected irrigation channels from the reservoir had transformed the flat lands of Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, and the north of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea into highly fertile areas, making them vital for the country's agricultural productivity. The destruction of the Kakhovka reservoir is expected to have profound and lasting impacts on Ukrainian agriculture and water supply systems.

As a result of limited livelihood and economic opportunities, a considerable portion of the Ukrainian population is currently dependent on social protection schemes and humanitarian assistance. Overall, across surveyed oblasts, 75% (1,040) of respondents reported relying on social protection payments as their main source of income. The ratio increases up to 81% for IDP respondents. Only 23% (318 respondents) indicated salary from formal employment as a source of income within their household.

¹⁸ Article available [here](#)



Main sources of income per displacement status

Social protection payments (pensions, allowances, etc.)

IDP	687	78.8%
Returnees	36	53.7%
Non-displaced	313	66.7%

Salary – Formal Employment

IDP	138	15.8%
Returnees	22	32.8%
Non-displaced	155	33.0%

Humanitarian Assistance (Cash or In Kind)

IDP	230	26.4%
Returnees	18	26.9%
Non-displaced	146	31.1%

Casual (Temporary) Labour

IDP	58	6.7%
Returnees	5	7.5%
Non-displaced	44	9.4%

Graph 16: Sources of income by displacement status

49% of respondents indicated gaps in the basic needs of their households being met. To cope with these gaps, 39% of them reported reducing consumption of food, 27% reported reducing consumption of essential medicines or healthcare services, 22% reported spending their savings and 18% reported depending on support from family/external assistance. 20% reported not having any coping strategy.



Coping mechanisms		
Reducing consumption of food	257	38.5%
Reducing consumption of essential medicines or healthcare services	183	27.4%
Spending savings	144	21.6%
No coping strategy	134	20.1%
Depending on support from family/external assistance	121	18.1%
Borrowing money (from a formal lender/bank)	24	3.6%
Choosing less suitable accommodation (cheaper/less safe/etc)	17	2.5%
Other	13	1.9%
Harmful coping strategies	9	1.3%

Graph 17: Coping mechanisms used for basic needs gaps

The lack of independent access to livelihoods was a trigger for displacement, driving affected individuals to search for better and safer prospects in other areas of Ukraine or outside of Ukraine, subsequently increasing protection risks, including GBV risks for women, men, boys and girls. It suggests a need for more durable solutions' initiatives to be implemented simultaneously with the provision of emergency assistance in the most severely affected areas to address the immediate needs of conflict-affected communities. On 7 April 2023, the Government of Ukraine adopted a State Strategy on Internal Displacement (2023-2025) and accompanying Operational Plan. The new Strategy aims to develop a state policy that responds effectively to the new challenges presented by mass displacement resulting from the Russian Federation military offensive and addresses the needs of persons impacted by the war in Ukraine. Facilitating the integration of IDPs by creating conditions for the development and strengthening of the capacity of host communities and supporting safe returns to home communities and reintegration of returnees are two of the five main strategic goals¹⁹.

¹⁹ Legislative Update, Ukraine, April 2023, UNHCR, available [here](#)



Recommendations

a. To the authorities

- Upscale the delivery of social services, focusing on the quality of assistance delivery.
- Upscale the delivery of secondary healthcare services in rural areas while addressing the need to cover medication costs for persons living with a chronic health condition and mental health issues.
- Increase the delivery of structured PSS support to adults, children, and caregivers, while simultaneously setting up a plan to address barriers created due to stigma.
- Facilitate access to the registration procedures for allowances for people with disabilities and smoothen the processes according to acute needs that are coming up due to the crisis.
- Provide specialized and free transportation for people with disabilities and severe medical conditions, including areas outside the scope of the cities.
- Increase clear information provision towards affected communities concerning the restoration of properties and infrastructure rehabilitation.
- Improve the conditions of collective centres, ensuring they are better equipped with operational lifts, ramps, and WASH facilities that are well-equipped for people with mobility impairment.
- Facilitate access to legal procedures including through simplifying procedures, widely disseminating information in multiple languages and formats, and providing direct support.
- Develop policies and implement measures that address discrimination and foster equal access to employment opportunities, education, housing healthcare. Conduct public awareness campaigns, implement educational programs in schools to foster inclusivity. Establish accessible reporting mechanisms for individuals who experience discrimination.
- Support access to job opportunities for single caregivers and address barriers in access to employment for job seekers.
- Increase number of public transportation means and routes to link underserved villages and communities with basic services.
- Ensure information, including on available services, ways to access them and eligibility criteria, is available in multiple diversified formats, adequately channelled using different communication methods, taking needs of less tech-savvy population groups and marginalized communities into consideration, and ensuring physical reach of hard-to-reach communities.

b. To the humanitarian community

- Increase the delivery of structured PSS support to adults, children and caregivers while simultaneously supporting efforts in addressing barriers created due to stigma.



- Improve accountability to affected populations and facilitate information sessions to ensure awareness about the risks of exploitation and abuse in a humanitarian context.
- Continue advocacy efforts on accessibility challenges for persons with mobility impairment at the sub-national and national levels in the relevant clusters.
- Deliver legal support to settlements or villages located outside the larger cities.
- Increase the provision of assistive devices until the state system functions and enhance the referral pathway to improve coordination.
- Improve information provision concerning registering and delivering cash assistance and using delivery modalities accessible for all groups while strengthening the referral pathway between the protection cluster and the cash and voucher cluster to address the needs of individuals facing heightened risks and not accessing cash assistance.
- Assess the possibility of providing livelihood interventions focusing on engaging groups experiencing isolation.
- Improve information provision and direct community engagement to ensure accountability and verify that all affected people in need are served, especially for MPCA interventions to defuse any tension within the community.
- Improve assistance provision for persons with reduced mobility, including through delivering the assistance in collective sites and private accommodations, for individuals residing in remote and hard-to-reach areas and for marginalized groups.
- Ensure information, including on available services, ways to access them and eligibility criteria, is available in multiple diversified formats, adequately channelled using different communication methods, taking needs of less tech-savvy population groups and marginalized communities into consideration, and ensuring physical reach of hard-to-reach communities.
- As part of the durable solutions initiative, coordinate with local authorities and support livelihood programming tailored to local needs for IDPs, returnees and host communities.
- Foster coordination and collaboration among humanitarian actors, public services, government agencies and local organisations to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure a holistic response.
- Support the establishment of community-led initiatives that encourage participation, foster resilience and strengthen social cohesion within communities; facilitate IDP participation in community life and decision-making.
- Use a vulnerability targeting approach in order to identify and support the most vulnerable and to allocate resources efficiently.
- Provide capacity-building and PSS support to governmental social workers and local authorities, including in rural areas.

Disclaimer:

This report was created by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and funded by the USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or BHA. Neither the European Union nor the BHA can be responsible for them.