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DRC Quarterly Protection Monitoring Report Ukraine

October – December 2024





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Introduction

This report summarises the findings of DRC protection monitoring conducted in Ukraine in Chernihiv and Sumy Oblasts in the North, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kharkiv and Donetsk Oblasts in the East, Mykolaiv and Kherson Oblasts in the South between October and December 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:

- The proportion of internally displaced persons (IDPs) intending to integrate into the local community has risen significantly, from 45% in the last reporting period to 63%. IDPs from Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Sumy Oblasts were most likely to express intentions to integrate. The trend may be influenced by ongoing hostilities, territorial shifts, and diminishing prospects for return to areas of origin.
- Evacuations from frontline areas in Kherson, Sumy, Donetsk, Kharkiv, and Zaporizhzhia Oblasts continue but remain highly fragmented, with significant disparities in organization and support. Vulnerable populations, including older persons, individuals with disabilities, and those with mental health conditions, face severe challenges due to mobility constraints, financial insecurity, and inadequate shelter options.
- Reluctance to evacuate persists, driven by security risks, attachment to homes, and uncertainty about conditions in displacement locations, underscoring the urgent need for improved coordination, access to information in areas under evacuation and at reception points, and targeted assistance.
- Power outages have increased risks of gender-based violence (GBV) for women and girls, particularly in Chernihiv and Sumy Oblasts, where unlit streets and limited communication heighten their vulnerability.
- Despite legal advancements strengthening accountability for domestic violence and sexual harassment, GBV remains underreported due to stigma and normalization, leaving many survivors without adequate support.
- Power outages have exacerbated emotional distress, amplifying fears of violence, isolation, and uncertainty, especially among vulnerable groups such as mothers with young children, the elderly, and displaced persons.

- Limited access to mental health services, social isolation, and the absence of male family members due to military service contribute to worsening psychological well-being, underscoring the significant need for expanded psychosocial support, community-based mental health initiatives, and specialized training for social workers.
- Pre-existing discrimination against the Roma community has been exacerbated by the escalation of the conflict, particularly in access to safe accommodation and employment. IDPs from the Roma community face specific barriers, including being denied housing due to discriminatory stereotypes and prejudices.
- While DRC data indicates there has been a slight reduction in the percentage of respondents lacking housing, land, and property (HLP) documentation, the issue remains a significant barrier to accessing housing compensation, particularly in Mykolaiv, Kherson, and Sumy Oblasts.

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 IDP, returnees and non-displaced people directly exposed to and affected by the current armed conflict in both rural and urban areas.

Figure 1. Household respondents per displacement group

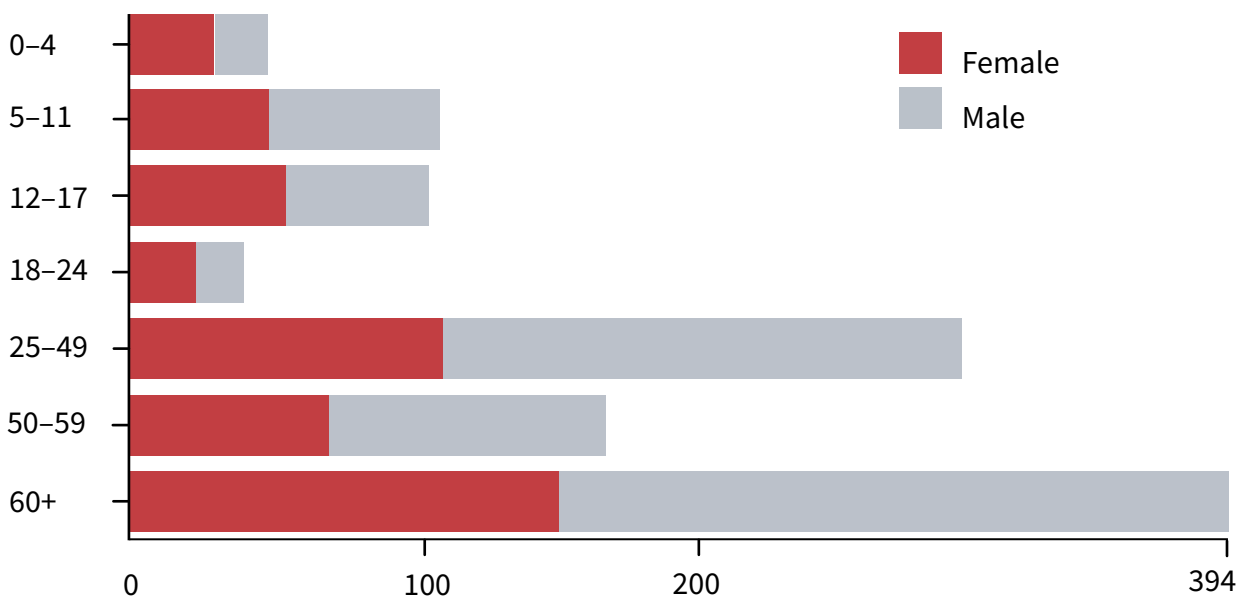
Non-displaced member	252	55.6%
IDP	142	31.3%
Returnee	58	12.8%
Unable/Unwilling to answer	1	0.2%

Between the 1st of October and the 31st of December 2024, DRC protection teams surveyed 453 households corresponding to 1,155 individuals. Most of the surveyed households were affected non-displaced (57%—252 respondents). Of those surveyed 31% (142 respondents) were IDPs and 13% (58 respondents) were returnees and one person was unable/unwilling to answer.

A total of 99% of the surveyed individuals were Ukrainian citizens, 58% were females, while the average age of surveyed individuals was 42 years old.

In addition, to complement the quantitative data collection, a further 71 key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted (including 45 National Protection Cluster KIIs). The KIIs targeted representatives of local authorities, community group representatives and community leaders, collective/transit sites' staff, social workers and humanitarian workers. DRC also conducted 39 focus group discussions (FGDs) reaching 386 participants from the wider community.

Figure 2: Surveyed households per age and gender groups



Context Update

The continued escalation of hostilities and targeted attacks on civilian infrastructure between September and December 2024 exacerbated displacement, damage to civilian infrastructure, and humanitarian needs. From September to December 2024, there has been an intensification of the conflict in the form of increasing numbers of violent incidents, as registered by INSO. Airstrikes, missile and drone attacks have regularly targeted civilian objectives, with a particular focus on energy and heating infrastructure with the stated objective of "freezing Ukraine into surrender". In the case of Chernihiv and Sumy Oblasts, there has been a significant intensification of air attacks following the Ukrainian offensive in Kursk. Chernihiv Oblast recorded an average of 100 incidents per week during this period¹, underscoring the continued safety risks faced by residents in border areas.

¹ INSO Ukraine Biweekly Report, issues 61–66

Frequent bomb threats targeting public, governmental, and commercial institutions in Chernihiv Oblasts further disrupted daily operations, diverting emergency responders and exacerbating stressors. Similarly, in Zaporizhzhia, Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk Oblasts, this intensification of air attacks has also been felt as a consequence of the continuous offensive operations and advances of the Russian Federation forces. The security situation in Donetsk Oblast, particularly around Pokrovsk, worsened significantly due to intensified military operations by Russian Federation forces. This prompted waves of evacuations to safer areas in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast.

Between October–December 2024, 453 civilians were killed, with the highest casualty rates in October and 2,304 were injured². People residing in the areas close to the frontlines, are constantly under attack by artillery and FPV drones. Such weapon systems are used in an indiscriminate manner and often deliberately target individuals, private or public vehicles and civilian buildings and infrastructure, posing; forcing civilians to leave or live under constant risk of death. This also affects local volunteer organizations and NGOs, which are regularly targeted when operating within range of such weapon systems, including a deliberate attack on an ICRC humanitarian aid distribution in Donetsk Oblast in September 2024, that killed 3 humanitarian workers and destroyed several vehicles and materials, despite clear visibility being displayed³.

Between October to December 2024, there were also significant legislative changes which have positively impacted access to essential services. Notably, the process for obtaining disability status for those injured as a result of war was simplified, allowing applications to be submitted online or through administrative service centres without requiring extensive medical documentation. The requirement for primary medical records was removed, and the decisions on status can now also be appealed through an administrative process rather than solely through the court. Access to prosthetic care was also improved, allowing quicker replacements for war-affected individuals without requiring additional medical approvals. The new changes simplify the procedures for obtaining the disability status and includes injuries occurred as a result of war in government controlled areas within the scope of this status and its benefits, even though the injury is not occurred in the areas listed as active combat zone.

A rental subsidy program was launched to assist internally displaced persons (IDPs), providing financial support for rent payments while offering tax compensation to landlords who require to pay income tax under formal rental agreements. Initially available in nine regions, the program was later expanded nationwide. The affordable mortgage program was also revised, allowing IDPs and residents of heavily affected areas to obtain loans for property, increasing the number of regions where previously it was ineligible. New automated system was introduced to enforce employment quotas for persons with disabilities, ensuring that the companies failing to meet these quotas face direct penalties, with funds consisting of paid fines are directed to disability support programs. Changes were also made to streamline the application process for state social assistance, allowing for automatic data verification and digital applications. Vulnerable groups abroad, including IDPs, are now able to submit applications remotely.

² OHCHR, Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict—October 2024, available [here](#)
OHCHR, Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict—November 2024, available [here](#)
OHCHR, Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict—December 2024, available [here](#)

³ OCHA (2024) Ukraine Humanitarian Impact of Hostilities in Donetsk, Kharkiv and Sumy Oblasts, available [here](#)

Energy support measures were introduced to assist households with heating costs. Eligible families, particularly in frontline and high-risk areas, received lump-sum payments for solid fuel purchases to ensure adequate heating during winter. This measure complements broader housing assistance programs targeting war-affected regions.

The Ukrainian Parliament has extended martial law and the conscription period, which will remain in effect from November 10, 2024, to February 7, 2025⁴. Within the reporting period the mobilization efforts have intensified significantly, affecting human resources of humanitarian sector.

Main protection risks and needs

Liberty and freedom of movement

Forced displacement

According to IOM DTM, Ukraine is hosting an estimated defacto 3,665,000 IDPs⁵, with Kharkiv (447,000) and Dnipropetrovsk (520,000) Oblasts hosting the largest numbers of displaced populations⁶. Dnipropetrovsk Oblast has seen an increase in the number of IDPs in comparison to the previous reporting period, this growth in the displaced population was primarily driven by evacuations from Donetsk Oblast due to the deteriorating security situation. Similarly, Sumy Oblast has experienced an escalation in the conflict which has also resulted in an increase in the number of people forcibly displaced, with more than 38,500 people forced to leave the homes by the end of October⁷. FGD and KIIs noted that the evacuees from the North and East largely constitute mothers with children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities and/or chronic illness, highlighting the vulnerability of evacuating populations and the need for adequate and tailored support to ensure specific needs are met. In the East, it was reported that some men of military age remain behind in the area of origin due to fears of conscription or avoid registering at new locations for the same reason. Shelling, attacks on civilians, damage or destruction to housing land and property, and lack of access to essential services continue to be key drivers of displacement. The lack of essential services has been exacerbated by the impact of power outages on the civilian population (see below section on power outages for more information).

DRCs protection monitoring data indicates that civilian populations continue to be exposed to protection violations during displacement. A total of 51% of households surveyed reported experiencing protection violations during displacement. While this was a reduction of 10% in comparison to the previous reporting periods, a total of 86% of respondents who reported protection violations during displacement were affected by shelling or missile attacks representing a risk of injury or death. A further 20% of those surveyed experienced movement restrictions during displacement.

⁴ On January 15, a law was enacted extending martial law for a further 90 days starting February 8, 2025, available [here](#)

⁵ This includes people who have been displaced due to the full-scale invasion in February 2022, regardless of whether they hold registered IDP status

⁶ IOM, Ukraine Internal Displacement Report—January 2025, available [here](#)

⁷ ACAPS, Sumy Oblast: anticipating developments and impacts through May 2025, available [here](#)

Figure 3: Factors influencing displacement

Shelling, attacks on civilians	135	95.7%
Destruction or damage of housing, land and/or property due to conflict	64	45.4%
Infrastructure damage/destruction	23	16.3%
Lack of access to essential services (health, water, education, civil documentation, etc.)	22	15.6%
Lack of access to safe and dignified shelter	16	11.3%
Lack of access to livelihoods, employment and economic opportunities	15	10.6%
Exposure to UXOs/landmines	11	7.8%
Occupation of property	9	6.4%
Other	2	1.4%
Seeking family reunification	1	0.7%

In comparison with the previous reporting period, there has been a significant reduction in the proportion of IDPs who were surveyed who expressed a desire to return to their area of origin, reducing from 52% to 33% in this reporting period. Factors influencing intentions to return include an improved security (72%), cessation of hostilities (64%), repaired/restored infrastructure (15%), and repaired housing/compensation for destroyed or damaged property (15%). Displaced respondents from Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, and Kher-son were most likely to state their intention to return to their area of origin. As per the IOM's general population survey conducted in January 2025⁸, Kharkiv Oblast has the third largest estimated population of returnees, following by Kyiv and Kyiv Oblast, with an estimated 679,000 returnees in Kharkiv Oblast. FGD and KII participants engaged in protection monitoring in Kharkiv Oblast shared that if they are forced to leave their homes, they prefer to move to locations nearby, so they have easier access to their homes to facilitate returns if the situation improves in their area of origin. Similarly, some participants advised that if they are forced to leave their homes, they plan to return to return in a shorter period of time. For IDPs that do express a desire to return home, many also identify barriers which hinder this process. A partici- pant from the East remarked, *"Do we even have a place to go back to?"*

⁸ Ukraine—Returns Report—General Population Survey Round 19 (January 2025), available [here](#)

This reflects the widespread destruction of homes and infrastructure, which remains a critical obstacle to returns. Additionally, proximity to active conflict and the presence of explosive remnants of war influences willingness to return to areas of origin.

Linked with a reduction in willingness to return, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of IDPs stating their intention to integrate into the local community, increasing from 45% in the last reporting period to 63%. Factors influencing the decision to integrate include access to livelihoods, employment and economic opportunities (54%), access to essential services such as health, education, civil documentation etc. (49%), and access to safe and dignified shelter (39%). Displaced respondents from Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Sumy Oblasts were most likely to state their intentions to integrate into the local community. One potential reason for the shift in intentions among IDPs in these oblasts could be the continuance of strikes and territorial shifts by the Russian Federation in these areas and/or the potential loss of hope that things will improve in their areas of origin.

The vast majority of non-displaced individuals indicated that they do not intend to leave their homes. Focus group discussions (FGDs) provided further insights into local perspectives.

Figure 4. Intentions per displacement status

IDPs

Integrate into the local community	81	63.3%
Return to the place of habitual residence	42	32.8%
Relocate to another area in Ukraine	4	3.1%
Relocate to a country outside of Ukraine	1	0.8%

Non-displaced

Stay in place of habitual residence	245	97.6%
Relocate to another area in Ukraine	4	1.6%
Relocate to a country outside of Ukraine	2	0.8%

Refugees and returnees

Stay in place of habitual residence	56	98.2%
Relocate to another area in Ukraine	1	1.8%

In Dnipropetrovsk and Zaphorizhzhia Oblasts, participants reported no intentions to relocate and highlighted that those who had planned to move have already displaced. The remaining population includes individuals with no viable relocation options and the elderly people. Similarly in Kharkiv and Donetsk Oblast, FGD participants who are elderly advised they do not want to leave their home, and they are also fearful to integrate into new locations. This finding highlights the vulnerability of individuals who remain in their areas of origin as many seem to remain due to a lack of alternate options and support. DRCs protection monitoring has also identified challenges in lack of information on the availability of support for IDPs and challenges in the evacuation process (see evacuations section for more information) which may further contribute to a reluctance among isolated elderly people to leave frontline communities.

“ Those who wanted to leave have already left. I can’t say if I will move out—I have a home and a farm. We’re uncertain about how things will unfold on the front line, and Huliaipole isn’t far from us.

FGD participant, Zaphorizhzhia Oblast **”**

“ Those who were extremely frightened by the events in the spring of 2022 left for safer cities right away, but such families were few. Nearly all locals stayed in their homes and do not plan to relocate.

KII, Zaphorizhzhia Oblast **”**

Evacuations

This reporting period saw continued mandatory and voluntary evacuations in Kherson, Sumy, Donetsk, Kharkiv and Zaphorizhzhia Oblasts from frontline communities to safer areas. The evacuation process across different oblasts in Ukraine exhibits notable variations, influenced by local infrastructure, security conditions, and the availability of resources. In Kharkiv and Donetsk Oblasts, evacuations largely depend on NGOs, volunteers, and local networks, with official structures playing a more limited role. The situation in Kupiansk raion, Kharkiv Oblast, exemplifies the severe transportation challenges that hinder evacuation efforts, as most vehicles were looted during the occupation, leaving residents with few mobility options. Similarly, in Iziom, the absence of local authorities has exacerbated logistical difficulties, forcing evacuees to rely on informal coordination mechanisms. By contrast, in Pokrovsk raion, Donetsk Oblast, a more structured system exists, where residents can register for transport through the local administration, demonstrating a level of organization absent in other areas. However, even in more organized settings, assessment participants identified that delays in decision-making by residents and a lack of clear information contribute to inconsistencies in the evacuation process. Specific examples around unclear information in the evacuation process include some evacuees reporting being promised proper living conditions by volunteers, only to find themselves in overcrowded rooms with limited amenities upon arrival. Vulnerable populations, including individuals with limited mobility, face severe challenges, as demonstrated by cases where evacuees were placed in inadequate accommodations upon arrival in safer areas due to lack of appropriate accommodation such as placing people on upper floors without elevator access. While structured evacuations exist in certain areas in Kharkiv and Donetsk, the overall system remains fragmented and dependent on volunteer-driven initiatives.

Dnipropetrovsk Oblast has become a major transit hub for evacuees, primarily from Donetsk Oblast, with centres such as those in Pavlohrad and Dnipro city handling fluctuating numbers of arrivals. The evacuation of individuals with mental health disorders was identified by participants as a significant protection concern, as people experiencing extreme breakdowns was noted in some situations to pose safety risks for themselves and others. Despite efforts to improve conditions for evacuees in transit areas and areas of displacement, significant gaps remain, including inadequate facilities for persons with disabilities, insufficient bomb shelters, and a lack of confidential spaces for psychosocial support. It was reported that absence of a unified database about available services has further complicated assistance efforts. Coordination initiatives, such as the development of a 4W document and informational flyers for IDPs aim to streamline humanitarian support. However, challenges persist in ensuring adequate services for self-evacuated individuals in remote areas. The situation in Zaporizhzhia Oblast contrasts sharply with Dnipropetrovsk, as mass evacuations remain limited despite ongoing shelling. While some residents have sought temporary relocation, most remain in their homes, citing concerns over displacement, reluctance to register as IDPs, and fears of not being welcomed in other communities. In high risk areas authorities actively encourage evacuations, but resistance remains strong, particularly among elderly residents who express a deep attachment to their homes and self-reliance. The daily free evacuation train from Zaporizhzhia to Western Ukraine offers a potential opportunity for people to safely evacuate, but uptake remains low, reflecting broader hesitation toward permanent displacement. In Kherson and Mykolaiv Oblasts, similar patterns of reluctance to evacuate emerge, particularly among the elderly, persons with disabilities, and those with limited financial means.

“ How do we evacuate elderly relatives with limited mobility who don’t want to leave their home? ”

KII, Kherson Oblast

“ For almost two years we lived under constant threat of shelling, and our house was repeatedly damaged. There was no electricity, no gas, no water, no mobile phone service in the village. Despite all these circumstances, the decision to leave was extremely difficult for us.”

FGD participant, Kherson Oblast

In Sumy Oblast, over 38,000 civilians have been evacuated from border communities, yet FGD and KII noted that many rural residents in frontline communities remain hesitant due to their dependence on livestock and the lack of alternative housing options. In Kherson Oblast many residents are refusing to leave despite the continued shelling and deteriorating living conditions. FGD and KII participants noted that financial insecurity plays a significant role in this reluctance, as many who remain rely on humanitarian aid and fear they will be unable to sustain themselves elsewhere. Personal accounts highlight the difficulties families face in evacuating individuals with disabilities, particularly when specialized transportation and medical support are unavailable. Meanwhile, active hostilities in Kherson and Mykolaiv Oblasts further complicate evacuations, as FPV drone attacks directly target emergency responders, increasing the risks for both evacuees and rescue personnel. FGD and KII respondents noted that the lack of adequate shelters for civilians further exacerbates the dangers. Information from FGD and KII participants indicates that unlike in other regions, evacuations from these areas often take place without significant governmental assistance, forcing residents to organize transport and housing independently.

The combined impact of financial barriers, security risks, and inadequate infrastructure underscores the urgent need for improved coordination and targeted support for vulnerable populations living in frontline communities across affected oblasts.

Self-imposed confinement and restrictions of movement

The recent changes in mobilization laws have had significant consequences across different regions of Ukraine for men of conscription age. In Chernihiv Oblast, according to FGD and KIIs, these changes have led to a widespread perception that personal freedoms among some men of conscription age, especially freedom of movement, are being severely restricted. The increased presence of checkpoints and the requirement for men to regularly update their military registration with the Territorial Recruitment Centres (TRC) have contributed to a sense of fear among some male participants. It was noted that some men are engaging in self-imposed movement restrictions due to concerns regarding mobilisation, including by quitting formal employment, working unofficially, avoiding routine tasks like grocery shopping, or remaining indoors to minimize the risk of being stopped and forcibly mobilized. In Kharkiv Oblast some male FDG participants refused to sign the attendance list for the focus group, fearing that the information might reach the military enlistment office.

“ **I cannot leave the collective centre because I’m afraid of being mobilized**

FGD participant, Kharkiv Oblast ”

Similar patterns are observed in Kherson and Mykolaiv Oblasts, where reports indicate that TRC representatives are actively conducting raids in public spaces and workplaces to enforce mobilization. DRC received reports from FGD and KII participants of men allegedly being physically coerced into military service, as described by key informants from Mykolaiv Oblast who reportedly witnessed individuals being forcibly taken from streets and villages.

The social and economic impact of mobilization extends beyond the men directly affected, leading to significant disruptions in family structures and increasing burdens on women. In Kharkiv and Donetsk Oblasts, it was reported that the mobilization of men has left many women as the sole heads of households, responsible for both economic survival and caregiving.

“ **My husband is at the front, and now everything falls on me, from managing the children to securing our basic needs.**

FGD participant, Kharkiv Oblast ”

Similar challenges are evident in Mykolaiv Oblast, where key informants reported that families face growing tension between those who support military service and those are avoiding mobilisation. Women whose husbands serve in the military experience stress and fear for their loved ones, while those whose partners avoid mobilization often struggle with financial insecurity and societal stigma. The resulting polarization within communities, where military personnel may resent those do not serve in the armed forces and vice versa, further deepens divisions and adds to the psychological stress on families.

Beyond family disruptions, the psychological toll of mobilization is particularly severe for both conscripted and demobilized individuals. Reports from Mykolaiv and Kherson Oblasts indicate that returning soldiers often struggle with reintegration into civilian life, experiencing emotional detachment, survivor's guilt, and, in some cases, substance abuse. Men who avoid mobilisation also endure constant psychological stress, living in fear of being discovered, detained, or judged by society. It was reported by respondents that this state of anxiety prevents them from engaging in public life, securing stable employment, or even performing basic household tasks. The lack of clear information on rights and obligations has further compounded these issues, with individuals unable to effectively challenge unfair medical assessments or claim legal deferments. Across all surveyed regions, mobilization policies have not only altered daily life but have also intensified social divisions, reshaped family dynamics, and placed immense emotional and economic strain on affected individuals and communities.

Life, safety and security

Sense of security

Across the surveyed locations, 27% of respondents described experience a poor sense of safety. Despite the deterioration of the security situation in Eastern oblasts, this was a reduction of 8.4% in comparison to the last reporting quarter. Respondents in Kherson (64%), Mykolaiv (59%) and Donetsk (50%) reported feeling the most insecure. Non-displaced respondents (44%) reported feeling less safe in comparison to IDP respondents (27%), this difference is likely because IDPs surveyed have moved to what they perceive as safer areas. Communities that reported a general sense of safety were those at a relative distance from active frontlines and in locations where local governance and institutions are functioning. One participant in Kharkiv Oblast noted, *"We feel much safer here, especially compared to the places we were evacuated from,"* reflecting relief in certain areas. Whereas communities in closer proximity to hostilities reported a loss of the initial perception of danger due to prolonged exposure, with explosions and shelling becoming normalized. A participant from Donetsk Oblast mentioned, *"We hear explosions regularly, but we've become used to it, losing the feeling of danger,"* indicating adaptation to ongoing threats.

In Sumy Oblast, there was an intensification of shelling during the reporting period, with 137 civilian fatalities recorded in Sumy in September 2024. This represents the highest monthly toll in the oblast since the full-scale Russian invasion began in 2022⁹. Similarly, in Zaporizhzhia city attacks have become more intense. While shelling, missile and artillery attacks have become less frequent, there has been an increase in civilian casualties per attack. The frequency of air and drone attacks have also increased¹⁰. During the General Coordination Meeting (GCM) in December, the Zaporizhzhia Regional State Administration, reported an increase in attacks using guided aerial bombs, with 49 incidents recorded. Between September 23 and November 11, 2024, a total of 187 individuals, including 11 children, were injured, and 19 people lost their lives due to these attacks.

⁹ ACAPS Thematic Report: Ukraine—Sumy Oblast: anticipating developments and impacts through May 2025, 05 December 2024, available [here](#)

¹⁰ ACAPS Thematic Report: Ukraine—Humanitarian implications of armed conflict escalation in Zaporizhzhia Oblast, December 2024, available [here](#)

Damage to infrastructure has been significant, with 268 apartment buildings (including 170 multi-storey buildings), 884 private homes, and 40 non-residential structures—comprising three dormitories, one educational institution, one kindergarten, and one hospital—damaged or destroyed within the last three months.

In Mykolaiv Oblast, FDG respondents shared feeling anxious about the security situation, citing concerns about potential shifting frontlines. This fear is also exacerbated by the consequences of the previous occupation, when local residents were subjected to repression, filtration measures and violence. In Kherson Oblast, in particular in settlements along the Dnipro River, such as Beryslavskiy district, the most serious threat to civilians is the intensive attacks of drones with explosives, as well as the use of FPV drones to damage both residential buildings and emergency vehicles, including ambulances, police and rescue workers.

Figure 5: Factors influencing the sense of safety

Bombardment/shelling or threat of shelling	175	93.1%
Landmines or UXOs contamination	24	12.8%
Presence of armed or security actors	16	8.5%
Other	4	2.1%
Intercommunity tensions	2	1.1%
Fighting between armed or security actors	1	0.5%
Risks of eviction	1	0.5%

Gender Based Violence

Power outages have significantly affected the protective environment for women and girls, increasing their vulnerability to gender-based violence (GBV). In Chernihiv and Sumy Oblasts, female respondents reported heightened risks due to the lack of street lighting, making them feel unsafe when walking alone at night. Women in Chernihiv Oblast noted the dangers of relying on passing transport to reach their destinations, while participants in Sumy Oblast described increased anxiety caused by limited access to communication during blackouts. The absence of male family members or security personnel in some areas has further exacerbated the risks, with women and girls in frontline communities reporting greater exposure to harassment, assault, and robbery.

The dangers extend beyond GBV, as Mykolaiv Oblast participants highlighted the physical hazards posed by unlit streets, such as road debris, unmined areas, and infrastructure damage, which particularly impact the elderly, children, and people with disabilities.

New amendments introduced during the reporting period have increased administrative liability for domestic violence and sexual harassment, ensuring perpetrators are held accountable and preventing reconciliation from dismissing cases, particularly in situations involving pregnancy or recent childbirth. Additionally, child-friendly justice centres based on the 'Barnahus' model have been introduced to provide legal, psychological, and social support for children affected by violence. However, despite these legal advancements, in Chernihiv Oblast KIs and FGD participants reported that intimate partner violence continues to be normalised in some households and communities, leading to underreporting and inadequate support for survivors. Adolescent girls in Chernihiv shared experiences of physical punishment and exposure to intimate partner violence and described experiences of emotional instability, withdrawal, and increased aggression linked to their experiences of abuse. These findings highlight the need for continued awareness raising to address stigma around GBV and also provide support for survivors.

Beyond physical safety, adolescent girls in Chernihiv Oblast also face risks of technology facilitated GBV and other forms of violence. FGDs with adolescent girls revealed concerns about harassment, cyberbullying, and distressing content, including war-related imagery that contributes to anxiety and fear. While many girls prefer turning to friends, parents, and teachers for support, experiences with adult communication are mixed—some find it easy to discuss their concerns, while others struggle to be heard. In addition to online threats, adolescent girls in Chernihiv Oblast expressed safety concerns related to men with substance abuse issues in the community, and stray dogs, further limiting their sense of security in public spaces. To cope, some carry pepper spray or rely on parents for transportation. These varied experiences across regions underscore the importance of strengthening community-based protection strategies, expanding safe spaces for women and girls, and enhancing both online and offline support systems to ensure their safety and well-being.

Psychological Distress

The conflict continues to have a widespread emotional toll, with high levels of anxiety, stress and emotional exhaustion affecting both children and adults, particularly IDPs, families of military personnel, and conflict affected communities. A total of 52% of those surveyed cited worries about the future as their main stressor, followed by 52% who noted fears about being killed or injured as a major stressor, an increase of 4% since the last reporting period. The percentage of those who report concerns of being killed or injured due to the conflict are highest in Mykolaiv (81%) followed by Kherson (74%), and Sumy (59%) Oblasts. Both Mykolaiv and Sumy Oblasts have experienced a significant increase in the percentage of respondents identifying fear of being killed or injured by armed violence as a major stressor, increasing by 24% in Mykolaiv, and 14% in Sumy Oblasts. The high percentage of people citing concerns of being killed in Kherson and Sumy Oblast is likely due to the proximity of these locations to the frontline and deteriorating security situation in these oblasts during the reporting period. In Mykolaiv Oblast, this significant increase is likely due to the proximity to Kherson Oblast of respondents in this round of monitoring, which was conducted in Shevchenka hromada, as compared with the relative distance of respondents from the previous round, who were based in Voznesensk Raion.



Figure 6: Major stress factors

Worries about the future	226	52.2%
Fear of being killed or injured by armed violence	223	51.5%
Worries about the children	169	39.0%
Fear of property being damaged by armed violence	89	20.6%
Displacement related stress	71	16.4%
Other	25	5.8%
Lack of access to specialized medical services	19	4.4%
Lack of access to basic services	10	2.3%
Lack of access to employment opportunities	9	2.1%
Fear of conscription	4	0.9%
Missing family members	2	0.5%

Frequent power outages across various regions were noted by FGD and KII respondents as a factor that has significantly heightened psychological distress in all oblasts assessed, reportedly amplifying anxiety, irritability, and aggression within households. Mothers with young children face increased stress as they struggle to balance childcare and household responsibilities under difficult conditions. Elderly individuals and internally displaced persons (IDPs) report heightened feelings of isolation, particularly during night-time blackouts when fears of missile attacks and explosions intensify. Respondents shared that the silence of power outages magnifies the sounds of conflict, further escalating anxiety. Disruptions to daily routines due to the lack of electricity, heating, and mobile communication contribute to frustration, depression, and feelings of helplessness.

“ People have become more aggressive. They come to work irritated because if there is no electricity in the morning, they don't have time to do their housework. The laundry hasn't been done, the fridge doesn't work, the heating doesn't work, and they're not in a good mood.

FGD participant, Sumy Oblast

Many respondents highlighted the emotional toll of darkness and cold, emphasizing that shorter daylight hours and unheated homes deepen psychological distress. The inability to contact family members during outages adds another layer of anxiety, particularly for those with loved ones in high-risk areas.

“ When the power is cut off and there is no mobile connection, people are nervous because they can't reach their relatives, parents, or children. The anxiety is growing. For example, yesterday we heard the sounds of explosions from Seredyna-Buda community. It is located 30 kilometres away from us. My relatives live there, and I could not reach them. Until I got through to them in the evening, I was worried for half a day.

KI, Sumy Oblast ”

These findings underscore the need for expanded mental health and psychosocial support services, with a focus on vulnerable groups. Reliable communication networks, stable energy solutions, and accessible mental health interventions are essential in mitigating the escalating psychological toll of ongoing instability.

In Kharkiv and Donetsk Oblasts, ongoing shelling, destruction, and displacement are identified as factors elevating emotional distress. Many individuals feel abandoned and left to cope alone, with some local initiatives attempting to foster resilience through community engagement activities such as art, music, and language classes. However, many residents remain socially withdrawn, hesitant to engage with others, and fearful of judgment. The absence of accessible transportation in remote areas was identified as factor that further deepens isolation, restricting access to essential services and increasing vulnerability to mental health deterioration. Despite these challenges, many residents express hope for a better future, emphasizing the need for expanded psychosocial support, community-based mental health initiatives, and safe, non-judgmental spaces where individuals can seek help without stigma.

In Chernihiv Oblast, the absence of male family members, particularly fathers who are serving in the Ukrainian Armed Forces was identified as a stressor.

FGD and KII participants shared that women are often forced into new roles that may cause stress and burnout. Children's separation from their fathers was also identified as potential stressor contributing to distress.

“ My son is 4 years old, 3 of which he has not seen his father.

FGD participant, Chernihiv Oblast ”

Respondents in Chernihiv Oblast identified that the psychological strain on families—especially mothers, as the emotional and practical burden falls entirely on them—can be overwhelming. The fear of losing a loved one to war, coupled with the increased responsibilities placed on women (often the primary caregivers), creates a risk of family breakdowns and emotional distress.

“ Because of the feeling of constant tension, I started to abuse alcohol

KI in Chernihiv Oblast ”

Social workers are increasingly tasked with providing mental health support, although many lacks specialized training. The rising number of displaced individuals with PTSD and cognitive impairments was identified as a challenge in the South-East. A social worker from oblast, expressed, "*We face situations where we must help people experiencing trauma, but we don't have the training to handle it properly.*" This lack of training is contributing to emotional burnout, which affects both the workers and the quality of services provided.

To address these challenges, prioritizing stress management and trauma-informed care training for social workers is essential. Collaboration with humanitarian organizations and mental health professionals can help equip workers with the necessary skills and resources, including trauma management handbooks and referral networks for severe cases.

Non-discrimination and equality

Older people

During this monitoring period, DRC explored discrimination for older persons which is leading to marginalization by systematically depriving older persons of their rights, creating barriers to opportunities, and reinforcing their social exclusion. Over the past three months, the provision of social services for elderly individuals and people with disabilities in Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Sumy, and Chernihiv Oblasts has faced significant challenges, exposing systemic gaps in non-discrimination and equality. Elderly individuals, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), those living alone, as well as individuals with disabilities, encounter multiple barriers in accessing essential services and information. Financial limitations, health concerns, and the absence of family support contribute to social isolation, negatively impacting their mental well-being.

In many hromadas in Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhia Oblasts, social services remain inadequate or inaccessible. In Hrechano-Podivska and Myrivska hromadas, social services are either unavailable or provided by institutions in neighbouring hromadas through co-financing arrangements. The co-funding/co-financing approach in social services provision at the hromada level enables multiple hromadas to jointly finance social institutions or staff allocation, ensuring service provision across all participating communities. This model is particularly relevant when individual hromadas lack sufficient local budgets for fully covering social service expenses. By pooling resources, hromadas can sustain essential services, optimize financial efficiency, and expand service accessibility for residents. In Sofiiivska and Tomakivska hromadas, social workers deliver services but are severely constrained by staff shortages and unreliable transportation, often delaying service delivery and reducing its quality. Social workers who are typically responsible for 10–14 individuals in non-war time, face increasing workloads, making it difficult to meet the needs of all beneficiaries. In NovoMykolaiv hromada, key informants report that demographic shifts—driven by an influx of IDPs and the outmigration of local residents—are straining already limited resources. Local budgets cannot support the additional personnel required to meet rising demands.

Persons with disabilities

Access to social care is further hindered by the limitations of the current score-based assessment system, which determines eligibility for support based on 10 criteria related to self-care and mobility. This rigid framework fails to consider conditions like Parkinson's disease, which can severely impact independence despite relatively intact mobility. As a result, many individuals receive insufficient scores, leaving caregivers without compensation and further jeopardizing the financial stability of affected families. In Myrivska hromada, budgetary constraints mean that no individuals receive compensation for non-professional caregiving, exacerbating concerns about potential exploitation, where caregivers may seek state benefits without providing adequate care.

Power outages present additional risks, particularly in Chernihiv Oblast, where individuals relying on assistive technologies, mobility aids, and essential medical equipment face significant disruptions. The absence of functioning elevators in high-rise buildings creates severe mobility challenges for elderly residents, people with chronic illnesses, and families with small children.

“ **Elevators do not work in high-rise buildings, which makes life difficult for the elderly, people with heart or other diseases, and families with small children.**

KI, Chernihiv Oblast ”

This highlights how these outages disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, limiting their ability to move freely and access essential services. Moreover, individuals working in small businesses, agriculture, or the informal economy experience significant economic hardship when power disruptions shut down their means of production and income generation.

Transportation barriers further exacerbate these challenges across all four oblasts, disproportionately affecting elderly individuals, people with disabilities, and low-income populations. A lack of accessible vehicles and social taxi services limits mobility, excluding these groups from essential services, social participation, and economic opportunities. Children from low-income families also struggle to engage in extracurricular activities such as sports and arts due to transportation costs and a lack of parental support for travel. For those living in remote villages, high transportation costs make it difficult to access healthcare, education, markets, and employment, reinforcing cycles of poverty.

These transportation gaps also impact humanitarian aid distribution. Without affordable and accessible transport, individuals in rural or poorly connected areas face difficulties in obtaining food, medicine, and other social support services. Those with limited mobility are particularly vulnerable to exclusion, as aid distribution systems often fail to accommodate their needs, resulting in delays or insufficient support.

Roma community

Another population group noted to be experiencing discrimination which is impacting access to social services and increasing vulnerability to protection violations is the Roma community. In Mykolaiv and Kher-son Oblast, DRC carried out community level protection monitoring focused on the Roma communities' experience of discrimination during the monitoring period.

Discrimination experienced by members of the Roma community existed pre-full scale invasion, however this has been exacerbated by the impact of the escalation of the conflict. IDPs from the Roma community noted experiencing specific barriers in accessing safe and secure accommodation, with examples of members of the Roma being denied access to accommodation due discriminatory stereotypes and prejudices faced by members of the Roma community. It was reported that members of the Roma community experience barriers in accessing employment due to discrimination, escalating economic vulnerability.

A lack of access to civil documentation as a result of institutional discrimination was noted as a specific protection risk for members of the Roma community. Roma community members reported being less likely to have birth certificates and passports, which increases their risk of statelessness, as well as serves as a barrier to accessing services. A lack of civil documentation serves as a barrier in accessing government social protection mechanisms, as well as health and education services, including challenges for Roma children to register in the educational institution impacting their access to education. While legal assistance is available to remedy their access to civil documentation, it was noted that many of the affected Roma community members lack the resources to pay associated costs for civil documentation.

“ Roma communities are facing even greater difficulties in accessing important resources. The war is increasing the social isolation of Roma, who are often unable to receive support due to prejudices and stereotypes that exist against this population group.

KI, Mykolaiv Oblast ”

Social isolation and marginalization as a result of discrimination was reported by FGD and KII participants. Roma communities remain socially isolated; a situation influenced by both their distrust of other hroma-da members and the persistent prejudices they face from the broader community. This social isolation was reported to impact members of the Roma community access to information, including information about the available services and distribution of humanitarian assistance.

Women from the Roma community were observed to be particularly vulnerable to discrimination, facing discrimination due to their ethnicity but also as a result of their gender. Women in the Roma community were reported to impacted by harmful social and cultural norms regarding the role of women within the household and community from their families and wider community members. Support to women from the Roma community requires targeted interventions to support them fulfil their rights and reduce their barriers in accessing services.

“ To overcome discrimination, it is necessary to conduct educational activities, including sessions and trainings that inform women about their rights, the possibilities of protection in case of their violation, as well as the problem of gender-based violence. It is important to raise awareness of Roma women, help them defend their rights. In addition, to promote women's economic independence, it is necessary to create vocational training courses, social enterprises and initiatives to support their employment. This will help women strengthen their self-esteem, gain financial independence, feel more confident and free in society.

KI, Kherson Oblast ”

Social cohesion

During the reporting period, concerns regarding social cohesion were highlighted by focus group discussion (FGD) and key informant interview (KII) participants in Kherson and Mykolaiv Oblasts. Kherson Oblast was occupied by the armed forces of the Russian Federation from March to November 2022, and tensions between those who were displaced during the temporary occupation and those who remained continue to be a challenge according to DRCs protection monitoring data. Individuals who remained in the hromada during the occupation were reported to be at risk of stigmatization, which may contribute to discrimination, as FGD and KII participants in Kherson Oblast observed that some returnees suspect those who remained in the hromada of having collaborated with the Russian-installed authorities. However, the decision to remain during the occupation was described as complex and nuanced, with many community members unable to leave due to financial constraints, health conditions, or caregiving responsibilities. Conversely, some individuals who remained in the hromada reportedly expressed resentment toward those who evacuated, perceiving that they had access to relatively safer conditions and received financial or humanitarian assistance. Some residents who remained emphasized the hardships they endured, including exposure to shelling and resource shortages. Others perceived that returnees had access to financial assistance and humanitarian aid, leading to feelings of inequity in resource distribution within frontline hromada's. These differing perspectives can contribute to social tensions and hinder community reintegration.

Following the return of the territory to Ukrainian government control, it was reported that some residents who did not support the Russian-installed authorities sought to share information about individuals allegedly involved in collaboration, with the perceived intention of limiting their access to assistance; however, no known cases of denial of services were recorded. FGD and KII participants did note that individuals suspected of collaboration experience social exclusion and verbal harassment from other community members. Similarly in Mykolaiv Oblast, key informants indicated that when individuals perceived to have been affiliated with the Russian-installed authorities seek medical or state services, they generally receive the necessary assistance. There are no known cases of formal denial of services. However, FGD and KII participants reported that these individuals often face social stigma, including verbal harassment and exclusion within their communities. In isolated cases, it was reported that community leaders informally excluded certain individuals from humanitarian aid distributions based on personal grievances.

Individuals whose involvement in collaborative activities has been officially confirmed face legal restrictions on employment within government structures (including city councils and local government bodies), leading them to seek work in the private sector. In smaller hromada's, information about individuals' past affiliations can spread quickly, creating additional challenges in securing employment.

Impact of power cuts on the protective environment

Ukraine has experienced large scale Russian aerial attacks targeting energy infrastructure. It is estimated that Ukraine has lost more than 60% of its energy generation capacity¹¹. During the reporting period, rolling blackouts were observed across affected oblasts, directly impacting civilians' sense of safety and security. FGDs and KIIs conducted across the surveyed oblasts noted that the power disruptions have impacted communities' sense of safety and security increasing exposure to risks and reducing access to essential services.

Respondents reported that the absence of street lighting due to power outages has increased feelings of insecurity, with heightened concerns around crime, including theft and assault. Women and girls, in particular, expressed concerns over walking outside in darkened streets, exacerbating risks of gender-based violence (GBV). Additionally, power disruptions have impacted access to communication channels that are critical for reporting violations, including GBV cases. Limited access to hotlines and online reporting platforms has created additional barriers to seeking assistance and accessing protection services.

“ **It seems to me that the level of security has decreased for everyone. It's easier to commit a crime in the dark.**

KI, Chernihiv Oblast

Elderly persons and individuals with disabilities were identified as particularly vulnerable to the effects of power outages due to mobility limitations, reliance on caregivers, and safety risks associated with heating alternatives. Many older persons depend on social workers or family members for daily support, but blackouts restrict the availability of these essential services. Those reliant on open-flame heating and lighting solutions, such as candles and makeshift oil lamps, face increased fire hazards, particularly individuals with memory impairments or limited mobility. Financial constraints further limit access to safer alternatives like power banks and generators. The financial burden of purchasing alternative power sources has further exacerbated vulnerabilities, particularly among internally displaced persons (IDPs) and low-income households.

“ **Not everyone can afford to buy a power bank because it costs more than 1,000 UAH. For IDPs or the elderly, it is almost impossible. You have to save for three months to buy one.**

FGD participant, Sumy Oblast

¹¹ Ukraine: UNHCR Ukraine 2024–2025 Winterization Plan, September 2024, available [here](#)

While humanitarian aid has provided some relief through flashlights and emergency supplies, the demand far exceeds available assistance. Communities have adapted to prolonged outages using traditional heating methods, but these are often inadequate, particularly in urban settings reliant on centralized heating systems. In both rural and urban areas, reliance on humanitarian assistance or government support for fuel, firewood, and cash assistance has reportedly increased. The establishment of “Invincibility Points” (Unbreakable Points), equipped with generators and water filtration systems, has provided temporary relief. However, unequal access to these resources persists, with significant disparities in generator ownership. In Kramatorskyi raion it was reported that most households have received generators through NGO support, whereas communities such as Barvinkivska remain without similar assistance.

“**We want to stay here, but it is very difficult. Shops don't work, there are no communications, everything is destroyed. There is never any light or comfort around. We are like scorched earth.**

Resident, Kramatorskyi Raion, Donetsk Oblast”

The impact of power outages extends beyond daily life and security concerns to essential services such as water supply and infrastructure. In Mykolaiv Oblast, communities reliant on electric-powered water pumps face significant disruptions. Key informants and FGD participants emphasized that power cuts leave entire settlements without water, and decreased water pressure has further exacerbated access issues. To mitigate these challenges, residents in Novohryhorivka, Shevchenkivska hromada, have submitted a grant application for solar panel installations to ensure autonomous water supply. Plans are also underway to construct a water tower to enhance water access for the community. However, in areas such as Novokyivka, Shevchenkivska hromada, residents face additional challenges due to utility debt. In some cases, water supply services have been discontinued earlier than agreed, leaving entire villages without access to clean water. Temporary solutions, such as connecting generators to water towers, have been implemented, but limited capacity prevents full water provision for all residents. Additionally, the outdated water supply infrastructure requires urgent modernization, a challenge exacerbated by the oblast’s proximity to active conflict zones.

In areas where electricity has been absent for extended periods, residents report a growing sense of abandonment due to limited access to communication networks, shops, and public services. While local authorities attempt to share outage updates through online group chats (e.g., Viber, Telegram), communities report frustration over unannounced and prolonged blackouts. ***“It is particularly challenging when power outages happen without any warning for a long period of time.”***—Resident, Donetsk Oblast

In Bohorodychne, Kramatorskyi raion, all communication networks were destroyed due to shelling, leaving the village’s remaining 34 residents without reliable information channels. In low-population areas, restoring electricity and communications is often deprioritized due to limited resources, further isolating affected communities and restricting access to humanitarian support.

The ongoing energy crisis, driven by attacks on critical infrastructure, has far-reaching humanitarian consequences, impacting civilian safety, access to essential services, and overall well-being. Vulnerable populations, including older persons, persons with disabilities, women, and IDPs, face disproportionate risks due to power outages and their cascading effects on security, health, and livelihoods.

Civil status, access to remedies and justice

Barriers to accessing documentation

In the surveyed oblasts and in line with the previous reporting period, 23% of households' respondents experienced barriers in accessing documentation. In contrast to the previous reporting period, non-displaced people were more likely than IDPs to report barriers in accessing documentation. This divergence in comparison to previous reporting periods is potentially linked to the locations that were monitored including some which are closer to the frontline where access to services is disrupted. The profile of IDPs surveyed may also influence the results as IDPs in the locations surveyed may have arrived earlier and already had their issues addressed. The cost of administrative procedures (36%), lack of information (30%), distance to services and cost of transportation (28%), and length of administrative procedures (20%) were reported as the main barriers in access to documentation. The conflict's disruption of transportation has been a recurring theme in DRCs protection monitoring across the targeted oblasts, limiting residents' ability to access legal and administrative services issuing needed documentation for services that require in-person applications¹². These barriers disproportionately affect individuals in rural or conflict-affected areas, where government administrative services are less accessible.

Challenges in accessing documentation has been compounded by the inflow of IDPs which has increased the strain on social services in the South-East. Access to social and administrative services in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast remains inconsistent, influenced by the availability of local budgets and resources. Functional TsNAPs (Administrative Service Centres) and Departments of Social Protection in hromada centres, supported by two administrators stationed in remote villages, have eased some of the workload. However, the influx of IDPs has significantly increased demands. Some assessment participants reported significant delays in social benefit payments to vulnerable groups such as IDPs, large families, low-income households, and single mothers. Families often experience waiting periods of 3–6 months post-application to receive continued payments. The KI emphasized: *"This severely impacts families' ability to meet their needs, as many are dependent on these payments, and there's no way to expedite the process."*—KII, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast.

“ With the arrival of IDPs and the increase in applications for social services and benefits, the workload for local authorities has risen significantly. There is also a need for additional staff positions.

KII, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast ”

Electricity outages have further compounded these challenges in the North, South and South-East. One FGD participant highlighted the logistical and administrative challenges of accessing documentation:

¹² Examples of services that require in-person application and presence include unemployment benefits, certificate of property ownership, certificate of disability as a result of the war, state of a child affected by war, urgent restraining orders, death/birth certificates in Occupied Territories, issuance and updating of technical passports.

“ To get any documents, we have to go to Lebedyn. The bus comes twice a day, leaving the village at 8:30 and returning at 11:30. We only have about two hours to solve our issues, but we often don't have enough time because there are queues everywhere. If there's no power or air raid alert, services aren't provided at all. Sometimes, we come in vain.

FGD participant, Sumy Oblast ”

These logistical and systemic challenges in accessing administration services and documentation are exacerbating existing vulnerabilities of residents in these hromadas.

Access to housing, land, and property documentation and compensation

There has been a slight reduction in the percentage of respondents who reported lacking housing, land, and property (HLP) documentation in household protection, with 16% of respondents reporting this a challenge. According to data from DRCs household level protection monitoring the percentage of IDPs reporting challenges with HLP documentation significantly reduced from 28% in the last reporting period to 18% in the current reporting period, however qualitative data collection indicates that displaced populations continue to experience challenges with HLP documentation. A lack of property ownership documents for apartment/housing noted as the key challenge (72%), followed by property ownership certificates for land (21%). A lack of HLP documentation, which is a prerequisite for receiving compensation for damaged or destroyed housing, remains a problematic issue for assessed participants in the South and North. Some citizens did not have time to register their ownership rights before the start of the full-scale invasion, while others lost their documents during shelling or evacuation. Without confirmation of ownership rights, people cannot take advantage of the state compensation program, which makes it impossible to receive housing certificates to purchase new housing or compensation payments for housing reconstruction or repair. The lack of title documents makes it impossible to receive compensation for destroyed housing. Many people who have lost their homes are forced to either stay in damaged or destroyed houses, or look for temporary accommodation options, which often represents a significant financial burden or barrier. Due to bureaucratic barriers, the process of receiving compensation or humanitarian assistance for housing reconstruction or repair can be delayed indefinitely, leaving victims without a real opportunity to rebuild their homes.

The inability to access housing compensation due to missing or destroyed property documents was noted as a significant challenge for residents across Mykolaiv, Kherson, and Sumy Oblasts. It was reported that many individuals had not registered their property rights before the full-scale invasion, while others lost essential documents during shelling or evacuation. Without legal proof of ownership, they cannot apply for financial assistance for reconstruction, sell their homes, or receive compensation for destroyed or damaged property. As a result, many are forced to live in unsafe, partially destroyed structures, or seek costly temporary housing. In Kherson Oblast, ongoing hostilities make it very challenging for residents to obtain an act of destruction, a crucial document for filing compensation claims.

Similarly, in Sumy Oblast, residents who inherited homes informally or had incomplete property records before the war now struggle to prove ownership, complicating their access to aid. Assessment participants identified bureaucratic inefficiencies, inconsistent inspections, administrative backlogs, and difficulty in conducting damage assessments in frontline locations as factors that further delay the compensation process, leaving displaced individuals in prolonged uncertainty.

“ **It is now impossible to receive compensation for damaged or destroyed housing because active hostilities in Ivanivka (Kherson Oblast) make it impossible to create an act of destruction.**

KII, Sumy Oblast ”

A lack of clear information and accessibility issues further compound the problem, particularly in Sumy Oblast, where residents report widespread confusion about how to apply for compensation. Many rely on word-of-mouth, local authorities, or sporadic social media updates, which often fail to provide clear guidance. Vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, rural populations, and those without access to digital services, are disproportionately affected. Displaced individuals also face logistical and financial barriers, as compensation applications must often be submitted in person. The cost of travel to administrative centres was identified as barrier, especially in remote areas with little or no public transport. Digital tools like the Diia platform, designed to simplify application processes, remain inaccessible for many due to poor internet connectivity and low digital literacy. These systemic obstacles create an environment where those most in need struggle to access available aid.

Even for those who successfully navigate the application process, compensation is often insufficient to cover the true cost of reconstruction. Respondents across all oblasts criticized delays in processing claims and the limited financial support available. In Sumy Oblast, some households received as little as UAH 3,000 for significant structural damage, far below the amount needed for repairs. In other cases, residents who were granted UAH 200,000 found that it was insufficient, especially given inflated prices under the E-vidnovlennia program. Many were only able to make partial repairs, such as installing windows or patching walls, while larger structural issues, including roofs and foundations, remained unaddressed. These financial constraints, combined with unclear application processes and administrative hurdles, significantly hinder the ability of displaced and affected populations to rebuild their lives. A more transparent, streamlined, and adequately funded compensation mechanism is urgently needed to ensure timely and equitable support for those impacted by war-related destruction.

Basic economic and social rights

Right to housing

Across the surveyed oblasts, 36% of respondents reported concerns related to their accommodation, with conditions of the accommodation highlighted as the primary challenge followed, by safety and security risks associated with their accommodation. The majority of respondents surveyed (95%) were living in a house/apartment.

A total of 24% of respondents reported residing in accommodation that was partially damaged and 2% are residing in accommodation that is severely damaged.

Figure 6: Concerns about the current place of residence

Accommodation's condition	91	57.2%
Security and safety risks	24	15.1%
Risk of eviction	24	15.1%
Lack of support for damaged housing	22	13.8%
Lack of functioning utilities	13	8.2%
Lack or loss of ownership documentation	8	5.0%
Lack of connectivity	6	3.8%
Not disability inclusive	2	1.3%
Overcrowded/lack of privacy	1	0.6%

A key concern identified during the reporting period is 98% of those surveyed lack a formal lease agreement, with 94% of respondents having a verbal agreement for their accommodation. A lack of formal lease agreement increases the risk of eviction and reduces the legal protection for households when faced with eviction. In addition, a lack of formal lease agreements can increase the risk of disagreements over rent, maintenance responsibilities or lease duration.

In Kharkiv and Donetsk Oblasts, FGDs and key informant interviews (KIIs) reveal that many residents are reluctant to evacuate due to the fear of lacking proper accommodation in new locations. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) also face significant barriers, with many unable to afford high rents, leading them to reside in damaged vacant houses with only basic amenities. These shelters often exacerbate vulnerability, lacking adequate insulation or security. The housing crisis has been further aggravated this quarter by power outages, leaving many homes without heating during harsh weather conditions. While some private houses have adapted to stove heating, urban apartments relying on centralized heating are disproportionately affected, as power blackouts disrupt these systems, deepening the challenges.

One respondent described the compounding challenges of housing loss and inadequate relocation options:

“ Losing your home is terrible. We have already left Bilopillia once this summer. As soon as it became quieter at home, we returned. How can you live without a home? And now that the house is damaged, we have nowhere to go back to. The houses offered in other communities are not always in good state. You have to invest money there. And where to get it if you don't have a job?

KI, Sumy Oblast **”**

These findings underscore the urgent need for effective housing support, including streamlined compensation mechanisms, targeted assistance for vulnerable populations, and improved access to safe and affordable housing options.

Right to education

The ongoing conflict has severely impacted education, with numerous schools damaged or completely destroyed due to rocket strikes and shelling. The slow restoration process, caused by resource shortages, has forced many students to continue learning in blended or remote formats. In Mykolaiv and Kherson Oblasts, in-person education is only possible when schools have nearby shelters, otherwise, students must study online, which complicates access to quality education. In Kharkiv and Donetsk Oblasts, all children are continuing their education online. Frequent power outages further disrupt online learning, causing internet instability that leads to class cancellations and schedule changes. These disruptions hinder students' ability to concentrate and absorb material, while limited access to electronic devices and charging opportunities exacerbates difficulties in completing homework. Many families cannot afford multiple devices, forcing children to share, which makes simultaneous learning impossible.

Children with disabilities face additional barriers due to the lack of accessible infrastructure, such as ramps, elevators, and adapted shelters. The absence of inclusive education support, including teacher assistants, psychologists, and specialized learning materials like Braille books and sound amplifiers, prevents children with special needs from receiving an education on equal terms. Psychological distress from military operations, displacement, and social isolation further affects students' ability to learn and engage. The absence of face-to-face interaction deprives children of social development opportunities, leading to increased isolation. In rural and remote areas, inadequate transport infrastructure limits access to schools, particularly for students with disabilities. Safety concerns during power outages, especially for girls and children with disabilities add another layer of vulnerability, further widening educational gaps. The combined impact of these challenges disrupts learning continuity, lowers motivation, and contributes to long-term educational setbacks for affected communities.

The key challenges include inadequate shelters, limited access to digital devices for remote learning, and insufficient power solutions for schools. For instance, while 317 schools in Zaphorizhzhia Oblast received low-power generators, these solutions are not sufficient for stable learning. The need for safe learning environments is critical, as demonstrated by the ongoing construction of underground schools to protect students from ongoing hostilities.

Addressing these challenges requires urgent investment in safe infrastructure, educational resources, and support for displaced students. For example, the construction of underground schools is a proactive solution, but it hinges on timely funding and implementation. Additionally, providing digital devices and reliable power sources will be crucial to maintain educational continuity, particularly for displaced or remote students. Coordinated efforts from local authorities and humanitarian organizations are necessary to mitigate the impact of the conflict on education.

Right to health

Access to health remains a significant challenge for households across the surveyed oblasts, with 57% of those surveyed reported experiencing barriers in accessing health services. This is an increase of 18% respondents reporting experiencing challenges in comparison to the previous reporting period. The most common challenges reported include lack of specialised health care services (71%), cost of the services provided/medication (29%), and costs associated with transportation to facilities (26%). The challenges associated with transportation to health facilities was identified as a particular challenge for individuals living in rural communities.

Access to palliative care and rehabilitative services remains severely limited in Zaporizhzhia and Dnipropetrovsk Oblasts, particularly for individuals with mobility impairments, chronic illnesses, or musculoskeletal disorders. A key informant from Nikopolskyi raion, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast) noted that home-based palliative care is unavailable, leaving many without adequate support. Conflict-related disruptions have led to the closure or repurposing of medical facilities, further restricting access to essential rehabilitative services. During a Protection Cluster East Hub meeting in Zaporizhzhia, participants emphasized that geriatric centres remain largely inaccessible, particularly as Zaporizhzhia city is located just 100 km from active conflict zones. These gaps in healthcare services disproportionately affect older persons and individuals with disabilities, increasing their risk of untreated medical conditions and deteriorating health.

In Kharkiv and Donetsk Oblasts, access to primary healthcare remains available through local clinics and humanitarian organizations, including Doctors Without Borders, which primarily supports individuals with hypertension and diabetes. However, secondary and specialized healthcare services are concentrated in larger cities, requiring residents in remote areas to travel long distances. Safety concerns, poor road conditions, and the lack of reliable transportation further hinder access to essential medical care. Emergency response services are particularly inadequate, with ambulances often taking 30–45 minutes or longer to reach rural villages, leading to preventable fatalities and worsened health outcomes. Community members expressed concerns over outdated emergency vehicles, emphasizing that prolonged delays in medical response pose life-threatening risks. A resident of Kramatorskyi raion, Donetsk Oblast highlighted these challenges, stating: *“By the time you reach the hospital after a heart attack, you might suffer a second one on the way.”*

Vulnerable groups, including older persons and individuals with disabilities, face heightened barriers in accessing healthcare. In Borivska hromada (Iziumskyi Raion, Kharkiv Oblast), some elderly residents are considering relocation to safer regions to access rehabilitation centres and specialized medical services.

Figure 8: Barriers to access healthcare services

Lack of specialized health care services	180	71.1%
Cost of the services provided/medication	72	28.5%
Cost associated with transportation to facilities	65	25.7%
Distance—lack of transportation means to access facilities	62	24.5%
Lack of available health facility	52	20.6%
Lack/shortage of medication	22	8.7%
Safety risks linked with access to/presence at facilities	10	4.0%
Other	5	2.0%
Not accessible for persons with disabilities	5	2.0%
Long waiting time	1	0.4%
Discrimination/restriction of access	1	0.4%

Additionally, many healthcare facilities remain physically inaccessible to persons with disabilities. In Kharkivskiy Raion (Kharkiv Oblast), for example, the continued use of squat toilets presents significant challenges for individuals with mobility impairments. Meanwhile, in Sumy and Kherson Oblasts, the lack of available dental care in rural areas was frequently reported, with community members requesting the introduction of mobile dental services to address gaps in care for underserved populations.

Right to work

Challenges in accessing employment were reported across all monitored oblasts during the reporting period, with key barriers including a lack of available job opportunities (63%), household and caregiving responsibilities (18%), and physical impairments or chronic illnesses (13%). The destruction of businesses, agricultural disruptions, and infrastructure damage further impede livelihood recovery, particularly in rural areas. Farmers face significant challenges due to damaged land and infrastructure, landmine contamination, rising fuel costs, and restricted market access, limiting their ability to sustain agricultural activities.

These obstacles have further reduced employment opportunities in rural communities, where livelihoods often depend on agriculture and small businesses.

Rural communities face severe employment shortages, exacerbated by business closures and limited economic activity. In Sofiivka, Dnipropetrovska Oblast, the closure of local businesses resulted in around 200 individuals losing their jobs, with some commuting to Kryvyi Rih in search of employment. Displaced persons face additional barriers, including loss of personal documentation and restrictions on movement, which further limit their ability to access the labour market. Moreover, local employment centres provide limited job placement services, which fail to meet the growing demand for work opportunities. The lack of employment options contributes to economic insecurity, increased reliance on humanitarian assistance, and heightened risks of exploitation. Addressing these challenges requires expanding access to vocational training and educational opportunities, particularly in rural areas. Mobile education units and online learning platforms could help individuals acquire relevant skills for modern job markets, while improvements in infrastructure, including internet access, would enable residents to connect with broader employment opportunities.

The ongoing mobilization law has further impacted the labour market, as many men have either been drafted or are avoiding formal employment due to concerns about conscription. This is particularly evident in traditionally male dominated industries such as construction, transportation, and manual labour, where men face an increased risk of being conscripted during routine checks at checkpoints or when updating their information with the Territorial Recruitment Centre (TRC). The fear of conscription has led to job insecurity, discouraging men from seeking formal employment and contributing to financial instability for households that rely on their income as the primary or sole source of financial support.

Figure 9: Main source of income

Social protection payments	343	76.6%
Salary—formal employment	134	29.9%
Humanitarian assistance	48	10.7%
Casual (temporary) labour	32	7.1%
Assistance from family/friends	12	2.7%
No resource coming into the household	9	2.0%
Other	8	1.8%
Business/Self Employment	5	1.1%

Social protection payments continue to serve as the main source of income of respondents, representing a slight increase of 5% from the previous reporting period. The percentage of respondents utilizing salaried/formal as their main source of income has decreased by approximately 10% from the previous reporting period. According to IOM the estimated minimum subsistence rate in Ukraine per household is 6,024 UAH¹³ (please see Alert [DRC Legal Alert 112](#) for an overview of minimum subsistence rate per individual) and 47% of respondents reported an average monthly income of less than 6,000 UAH, including 11% of respondents with an average monthly income of 3,000 UAH. A key concern during the reporting period is the increase of respondents experiencing gaps in their basic needs, increasing from 50% to 63% in this reporting period, with this figure rising to 70% for IDP respondents. The increasing percentage of respondents experiencing challenges in meeting with their basic needs highlights the increasing pressure on households' resources as the escalation of conflicts enters into the third year. Spending savings was identified as the main coping mechanism by 28% of respondents. Of key concern is the 21% of respondents who reported they have no coping strategy highlighting; their vulnerabilities as other coping mechanisms have been exhausted.

“ Before the war, I worked abroad to support my family. Now, I'm stuck with no prospects.

FGD participant, Kharkiv Oblast ”

These findings emphasize the need for measures to stabilize livelihoods, including support for vulnerable workers, improved access to employment opportunities, and reliable energy infrastructure to mitigate the impact of power outages on economic activities. The lack of adequate transportation and poor road infrastructure was also identified as a factor impacting individuals access to employment opportunities. If roads are impassable due to poor weather conditions or if there are no reliable transport options, individuals may be unable to commute to work or reach employment centres, particularly for those who are dependent on urban jobs. This significantly reduces people's ability to participate in the labour market, thus limiting their economic opportunities.

Other economic and social rights

In Kherson Oblast, challenges in the operation of post offices in rural areas near the frontline have significantly impacted access to social protection assistance, particularly for older persons and individuals with limited mobility. Due to the suspension of regular postal services, postal workers only visit affected communities twice a week for two hours, limiting access to essential services such as utility payments and pension distribution. The situation is further exacerbated by security concerns, as residents are required to gather in areas close to active hostilities, increasing their protection risks. Additionally, long queues present a significant barrier for individuals with reduced mobility and older persons, who may struggle to stand in line for extended periods and risk being unable to access necessary services.

Older persons also face barriers in accessing digital financial services, as many lack smartphones, are unfamiliar with digital banking platforms, or distrust mobile banking applications.

¹³ IOM, Economic Resilience in Wartime—Income, employment, and social assistance in Ukraine, April 2024, available [here](#)

The absence of bank branches within rural hromada's further limits financial access, requiring individuals to travel to Kherson city—an area that remains dangerous due to ongoing conflict—to withdraw cash or access banking services. Residents of Muzykivska hromada, Kherson Oblast, highlighted these difficulties, emphasizing that the reliance on in-person transactions and the lack of alternative financial infrastructure disproportionately affects older persons and those in hard-to-reach areas.

Rural hromadas near the frontline thus face severe restrictions on access to essential financial services, including postal and banking services. These challenges are particularly acute for older persons and individuals with limited mobility, who struggle with both physical accessibility barriers and digital literacy gaps. The disruption of local service provision and the need to travel long distances to access financial assistance increase the vulnerability of conflict-affected populations, reinforcing the need for alternative mechanisms to ensure safe and inclusive access to pensions and essential financial transactions.

Recommendations

To the authorities

Strengthening HLP rights and access to related benefits

- Expedite the documentation and compensation processes for damaged and destroyed properties, including cases involving multiple co-owners.
- Reduce the bureaucratic burden, including cases involving multiple co-owners, and improve accessibility and functionality of compensation commissions.
- Expand access to administrative service centres (TsNAPs) in underserved rural areas with limited public transportation by deploying mobile units or remote administrative workstations.
Implement rent subsidies for those unable to pay due to loss of employment, income, or property.
- Allocate sufficient funding for compensation schemes, ensuring that the payment amounts and ceilings are updated to reflect market realities, level of damage and financial cost of rehabilitation/reconstruction.
- Enhance digitalization efforts for application and documentation mechanisms related to compensation schemes to increase the accessibility of these services.
- Introduce protective measures and criteria for proving the formation and validity of rental relationships with the lack of formal rental contract to safeguard against forced evictions.

Strengthen social protection systems

- Increase staffing and resources in local social service departments to address rising workloads due to IDPs and vulnerable groups.
- Enhance outreach to marginalized groups, ensuring timely and comprehensive information on rights and support mechanisms.
- Ensure that social protection payments to rights holders are timely, to address the protection gaps arising from delayed response.

Enhance evacuation efforts

- Strengthen emergency alert systems to inform residents about outages and evacuation plans, reinforcing Viber and Telegram channels with consistent updates.
- Increase information dissemination on evacuation routes and shelters, prioritizing vulnerable populations such as families with children and persons with disabilities.
- Conduct community awareness campaigns to encourage early evacuation and provide realistic information about shelter conditions and available services.
- Ensure temporary accommodations meet basic standards for privacy, accessibility, and hygiene, avoiding unsuitable placements for individuals with disabilities or mobility challenges.

To the humanitarian community

Strengthen service delivery and coordination

- Develop and maintain a unified database to improve coordination, prevent duplication of assistance, and ensure efficient service delivery.
- Expand outreach efforts to remote and underserved areas, particularly for self-evacuated individuals and those with limited mobility.

Address the needs of vulnerable populations

- Support the establishment of safe and dignified living spaces for internally displaced persons (IDPs), ensuring access to confidential psychosocial and legal counselling.

- Expand access to gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response programs, particularly for at-risk groups such as women and girls from the Roma community who are more likely to experience barriers in accessing services.
- Provide emergency transport solutions for displaced and marginalized populations to access food distributions, healthcare, and other essential services.

Strengthen local capacity and resources

- Train social workers on trauma-informed care, stress management, and referral pathways for mental health and GBV services.
- Equip local authorities with portable administrative tools to facilitate service delivery for affected populations, including displaced persons.
- Increase staffing and resources for local social service departments to address the growing needs of IDPs and vulnerable groups.

Improve access to legal and administrative support

- Expand free legal aid services to assist with property compensation claims, document restoration, and administrative processes.
- Establish mobile legal aid teams to reach rural communities and provide accurate, timely and relevant information on the available benefits and application procedures, covering legal costs where needed to ensure accessibility.
- Expand transportation services to increase accessibility of legal and administrative services.

Expand mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)

- Increase access to mental health services, particularly in eastern regions, to address trauma among children, the elderly, and women affected by the ongoing conflict.
- Ensure that mental health services are culturally sensitive and accessible, with a focus on engaging men and boys, especially those experiencing stress related to mobilisation.
- Provide targeted psychosocial support for families affected by mobilization to address emotional distress and social strain.



Promote digital accessibility and information sharing

- Offer digital literacy training and technological support to improve access to e-government services through platforms like "Diia."
- Increase targeted information campaigns to rural and vulnerable populations to ensure they are aware of their rights and available assistance.

This report was created by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and funded by the European Union, and the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund (UHF). The views and opinions expressed are those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the the European Union or the UHF. Neither the European Union, nor the UHF bear responsibility for them.