Protection Cluster
Ukraine


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Protection Analysis Update

Mounting Civilian Casualties and the Cumulative Impact of the War in Ukraine

October 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Entering the fifth year of the full-scale war, Ukraine's civilian population continues to experience the cumulative effects of prolonged and increasingly technology-driven warfare, characterized by persistent insecurity, repeated displacement, and widespread damage to civilian infrastructure. With no clear end to the war in sight, the war is deepening protection risks, entrenching vulnerabilities and exacerbating people's humanitarian needs, even for those who have been displaced to relative safety. The Protection Cluster notes with concern the increasing lethality of attacks, particularly along the frontlines and in large urban centers, due to the type and quantity of weapons used and the increased range of drones. This is driving a trend of steadily rising civilian casualties, including the staff of partner organizations. Since the start of 2026, Russian armed forces have intensified attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, including in major cities like Kyiv. Across Ukraine there are daily attacks, continuous air raid alerts, and growing damage to critical infrastructure and energy facilities.[i] Civilian casualties in 2026 have been higher than during the same period in any year after 2022.[ii] In July 2026 there were 437 verified cases of civilians killed and 2,610 injured, including 183 casualties among children (killed and injured), the highest number since May 2022 [iii] In the most exposed areas of Donetska and Zaporizka oblasts, intensifying attacks are increasingly pushing aspects of civilian life into basements, shelters and other protected underground spaces, replicating patterns already observed in Kherson city (more in Annex 1). During the winter 2025-26, the attacks on civilian infrastructure, particularly energy supplies and transport infrastructure, desperately exposed people to the brutal cold and isolation. Given the protracted nature of the conflict, the Government of Ukraine strengthened its legislative and policy framework to strengthen coordination and response to IDPs, issuing a National Strategy on Internal Displacement and the updating of the national evacuation framework.

This report is the fourth Ukraine Protection Analysis Update (PAU), covering the period September 2025 - September 2026. The Protection Cluster emphasises the increasingly complex protection impact and strain of the five key risks highlighted in the report, while their severity, geographic reach and cumulative impact have intensified in several areas. The PAU highlights the effects of the war on the cross-section of Ukrainian society, including women, men, children and minority communities including the LGBTIQ+ and Roma community. Protection actors continue to advocate for a people-centered approach to humanitarian action. This approach supports affected people to address the protection risks they face where they are, based on their individual circumstances rather than rigid criteria, prioritizing service provision, and reducing barriers to access durable solutions from the outset of humanitarian response. The Protection risks requiring immediate attention in the period covered by this analysis are:

1. **Attacks on Civilians and Civilian Objects.**
2. **Forced Displacement, Restrictions to Freedom of Movement and Returns in Adverse Conditions.**
3. **Gender-Based Violence.**
4. **Impediments and Restrictions to Access to Legal Identity, Remedies and Justice, including Housing Land and Property Rights.**
5. **Presence of Explosive Ordnance.**

URGENT ACTION NEEDED

Urgent action is needed to stop violations against civilians and mitigate the impact of the war. It is imperative that those responsible for violations of International Law, are held to account. With this view, it is of utmost importance to:

1. Ensure the Protection of Civilians. This includes ending grave violations against children and conflict-related sexual violence. Attacks affecting civilians, including humanitarian workers, and civilian infrastructure must cease, and the use of explosive weapons in populated areas must be avoided at all costs.
2. Support the Government in the implementation of its Strategy on Internal Displacement and the Operational Action Plan by mirroring the "money follows people" approach in the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2027 and strengthen linkages with the IDP Durable Solutions Framework.
3. Ensure a robust people-centered approach in the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2027, and other humanitarian preparedness and planning frameworks such as Winter Response Plans, by embedding centrality of protection across all Strategic Priorities and adequate funding for protection services and assistance, including child protection and Gender-based Violence (GBV) response, prevention and risk mitigation.

CONTEXT

CIVILIAN CASUALTIES	CIVILIANS KILLED	IDPS[iv]	PEOPLE LIVING IN FRONTLINE AREAS (0-50 KM)	NUMBER OF PEOPLE EVACUATED IN 2026 [ORGANISED]
70,950	17,257	3,45M	6,2M	120,242

CONFLICT, CIVILIAN CASUALTIES AND THE THREAT OF WINTER

War is the principal driver of humanitarian needs, and the continuation of the conflict strains civilian's protection capacities. Between January and August 2026, 2,222 civilians have been killed and 13,058 have been injured,[v] with the monthly number of children killed reaching a four year high.[vi] Over 1 in 3 of those killed in 2026 are over the age of 60 (780 people in total), with the majority killed near the frontlines. Civilian casualties in 2026 to date are higher than during the same period in any year after 2022. In July 2026 there were 437 verified cases of civilians killed and 2,610 injured, including 183 children (killed and injured), the highest number since May 2022 .[vii] The situation in Donetska and Zaporizka oblasts has deteriorated to the extent that protection experts warned of '*the Khersonification*' of these areas, driving life underground to survive lethal attacks (more in Annex 1). While the overall protection of civilian situation in 2026 is deteriorating, the Protection Cluster emphasizes the increasingly complex protection impact of the war, and the strain that it is placing on the civilian population. The civilian population of Ukraine braces itself for the impending winter of 2026/2027. During the winter 2025-26, the attacks on civilian infrastructure, particularly energy supplies and transport infrastructure, have desperately exposed people to the brutal cold and isolation. The attacks - including 641 attacks on schools and hospitals in 2025 – have not only destroyed important infrastructure but caused a deterioration in people's physical safety. The United Nations has verified more than 1,800 attacks on schools and education facilities in Ukraine since 2022. Approximately 1 in 3 children are unable to attend classes in-person full-time due to the combination of the security situation and lack of bomb shelters in some schools. Attacks on civilian infrastructure and expanding weapons use are weakening protective environments and affecting safe access to services and evacuation, with intensified attacks on energy, warehouses, gas stations, telecommunications masts, railway and logistical and port infrastructure in 2026.[viii] In the first six months of 2026, 35 per cent of verified grave violations involved the denial of humanitarian access, demonstrating how hostilities affect children both directly and through disruption of essential assistance and services. These attacks also limit the ability of responders to support people near frontlines.



Protection risk severity in Ukraine: Protection Risk Assessment for the Global Protection Update 2026 (September 2026)

War is the primary driver of displacement. Between August 2025 and August 2026, there has been a significant increase in displacement, with an additional 101,351 registered IDPs, bringing the total registered displaced population in Ukraine to over 3.4 million people. More than 66,300 people were displaced from frontline settlements between April-June 2026, representing a 50 per cent increase compared to the first quarter of 2026.[ix] Over 111,000 IDPs were evacuated through the transit centers from January-August 2026 (compared to 80,000 in the whole of 2025). More than 1/3 of Ukrainian children are displaced inside and outside Ukraine.[x] The number of IDP returns has also fallen to its lowest number since December 2024.[xi]

The impact of the war on the labour market, state finances and state services is reshaping protection risks in war-affected areas. Insecurity and declining municipal revenues in frontline and rural oblasts are reducing the ability of local authorities to sustain essential public services, including social support services. As local institutions lose the fiscal and human resources

required to sustain basic service provision, communities become increasingly dependent on humanitarian assistance to meet essential needs. At the same time, humanitarian actors face growing operational, safety and security challenges in reaching geographically isolated frontline areas, raising the prospect of widening protection gaps should humanitarian access or funding decline. Some emerging concerns around social cohesion have been observed, linked to the pressures of protracted war, resource constraints, and differences in how people and communities experience the war.[xii] Although most IDPs and returnees express that they feel welcome in areas of displacement and return, (re)integration challenges are linked to socio-cultural factors and access to housing and services.[xiii]

Under a Sky Full of Drones – Civilian life in Kherson[xiv]

Kherson – once a thriving port city with over 300,000 residents– is now home to just over 62,000 people. Only 126,000 people remain across the de-occupied areas of Khersonska oblast. Less than 1 in 11 people are under 15 years old, with under 4,000 children remaining in the city. Almost half of the population is of pension age and 3 in 5 people are women. 61% of homes have been destroyed or damaged. This extensive damage to housing has constrained accommodation options, with some remaining residents relying on collective sites and other forms of emergency accommodation. The population of Kherson is being terrorised by a sharp escalation in drone attacks, with their frequency reportedly rising by 60% in 2026. In April 2026 alone, there were 118 reported UAV attacks.[xv] Across the city, the physical environment and everyday movement have had to adapt to the drone threat. To protect themselves from these attacks, life has been driven underground. Children attend school classes online. Small shops, services and organisations are now located in basements, although there are few remaining basement properties to rent. Protection partners operating in Kherson describe a situation where people cannot walk in the city due to the risk posed by drones. People use a limited supply of buses and social taxis. They describe a city that is forced to close at 4pm, meaning people have less access to necessities. One person reflected that the "harassment" by drones means it is impossible to speak on the phone, or even think, due to level of noise created by the perpetual presence of drones. Human Rights Watch has documented civilians being individually hunted by drones, a practice that some residents have described as a "human safari.'' Access to emergency assistance is constrained by the drone threat and ambulances have been repeatedly attacked when responding to calls. Anti-drone nets now cover sections of roads and streets, transport providers use drone detectors, and additional electronic warfare and physical protection measures are being tested or considered by the authorities.

Conditions are particularly severe in Ostriv/Korabelnyi district. In August 2025, Russian airstrikes damaged the bridge connecting the district to the city, severely disrupting movement and essential services and triggering large-scale evacuation. In late August 2026, the Kherson Heat and Power Plant sustained critical damage after being struck by aerial bombs. As this plant will not be able to provide reliable heating during the approaching winter, regional authorities have publicly urged residents to consider leaving Kherson for safer areas. The M-14 highway, a critical route connecting Kherson with Mykolaivska oblast, is exposed to FPV-drone attacks, limiting safe movement into and out of the city. Protection partners operating in Kherson have lost friends and family, with people forced to leave the city to seek safety or the all-too-common experience of family, friends and colleagues killed.[xvi] Protection partners, including evacuation specialists, are forced to adapt to a situation where warfare and technology are moving faster than their ability to provide appropriate support and care to their teams. Drastic change in the security situation has meant it is more difficult to send appropriately sized teams to respond to community's needs. One partner described his organization's motivations, stating "when nothing is possible, we find another way," as the remaining population requires this vital lifeline of humanitarian service provision.

INTERSECTORAL RISKS AND VULNERABILITIES IN UKRAINE

Displacement has a multiplying effect on any person's vulnerabilities. There are significant unmet needs for accommodation, access to livelihoods, healthcare, disability and in particular mental health support and disability related support, alongside greater reliance on negative coping strategies. IDPs need to resort to negative financial coping strategies as 75% of IDPs had exhausted their savings and 53% have reduced essential health expenditures including medicines.[xvii] For displaced women and girls, economic hardship, loss of support networks and a lack of privacy in shared accommodation heighten the risks of intimate partner violence and sexual exploitation.[xviii]These overlapping factors can contribute to unequal access to services, employment and social protection, as well as reduced participation and sense of belonging within communities, affecting both the individuals as well as their family members. Humanitarian actors increasingly report caregiver fatigue and burnout as an emerging protection concern. Women are assuming long-term caregiving responsibilities for children, older people, people with disabilities and injured veterans, often alongside employment and household management responsibilities. Caregiver exhaustion is contributing to psychosocial distress, reduced participation in economic activities, social isolation and growing

vulnerability to negative coping mechanisms. IDP children, children with disabilities and children living near frontlines are frequently perceived as being ''left behind'', with displacement significantly associated with cumulative deprivation.[xix] For marginalized and minority communities such as Roma or LGBTIQ+, stigma, reduced access to state and humanitarian services and risk of violence can drive further their exclusion. A 2026 study on GBV against lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LBT) women in Ukraine found that the war has intensified existing inequalities and created new risks. Displacement, economic instability and disrupted support networks have increased dependence on family and partners, narrowing options to leave violent situations. At the same time, overstretched health, social and legal services have become harder to access. Participants also reported rising aggression and polarization in society, including concerns about violence linked to war-related trauma. The deprioritization of equality issues during wartime has further entrenched their invisibility, and fear of outing, and stigma.[xx]

IMPACT OF THE WAR ON OLDER PEOPLE AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

In Ukraine, overlapping identities affect the way people and communities are exposed to risk, and the resources they have to address them. Humanitarian needs are not only determined by *when* people are displaced, *where* they are displaced to or vulnerability criteria applied to them. Protection partners have raised specific concerns about older people, who have heightened intersecting protection risks, particularly when older age is combined with disability, chronic illness, living alone, displacement, limited social support and compounding the risk of institutionalization.[xxi] These vulnerabilities are particularly pronounced in frontline areas and during displacement, where older people may have greater difficulty seeking safety, accessing essential services and maintaining independent living. Older women in frontline areas, who make up a large share of those remaining, face heightened risks of GBV, including intimate partner violence, neglect and emotional abuse.[xxii] Due to the many challenges associated with mobility, attachment to home and uncertainty about conditions and support options available in safer areas, older people frequently remain close to the frontline or in occupied territory.[xxiii]UNHCR's latest Protection Survey confirms that older people, particularly those living alone or with specific needs, remain among those most at risk of being left behind during evacuations. Institutionalization of evacuated people with disabilities and older people has been documented, while the response to provide safe and dignified evacuations and post-evacuation accommodation and services to older people and people with disabilities from frontline areas, including those residing in institutions, has been stifled.[xxiv] Beyond immediate safety concerns, prolonged disruption to electricity, heating, transport and health and social services can further erode older people's ability to live independently and access their rights. Inflicted psychosocial distress is also significant. People with disabilities face systemic barriers to exercise their rights and access essential services, particularly in frontline areas where local social service capacity is limited or suspended due to security. These barriers persist at all stages of the displacement journey. As a result, older people and people with disabilities may depend on family members, caregivers or specialized services that are themselves disrupted or often unavailable. The sustainability of informal care networks is an increasing concern. Family members, particularly women, frequently provide long-term unpaid support to older people and people with disabilities while facing their own economic and psychosocial pressures. Disruptions to health and social services place additional strain on caregivers and may undermine the ability of affected households to sustain independent living arrangements. Administrative, documentation and digital barriers can compound these risks, particularly as an increasing number of public and social protection services require people to use digital access platforms, creating situations in which specialized services may formally exist but remain practically inaccessible.

Living with dementia during conflict

An estimated 609,756 people with dementia are recorded in Ukraine. In conflict-affected settings, people living with dementia may face heightened risks of neglect, abandonment, exploitation, and violence, as well as barriers to accessing humanitarian assistance due to memory loss, communication difficulties, and the loss or separation of caregivers. The ***Guidance on Dementia Inclusion in Humanitarian Action*** (2026) provides, for the first time, dedicated guidance on addressing the specific needs and protection risks faced by people living with dementia in humanitarian settings. It aims to support more dignified and inclusive assistance and to reduce their exclusion from existing humanitarian response mechanisms.

THE CONTINUING IMPACT OF THE WAR ON CHILDREN IN UKRAINE

Children face recurring and compounding protection risks, with psychosocial distress, repeated displacement and socioeconomic pressures continuing to erode children's and caregivers' coping capacities. At the same time, the direct physical impact of war on children has intensified. The growing use of missiles, drones and other explosive weapons in populated areas,



combined with attacks on schools, hospitals and civilian infrastructure, exposes children to increasing harm and weakens protective environments. The direct physical impact of war on children has intensified. The growing use of missiles, drones and other explosive weapons in populated areas, combined with attacks on schools, hospitals and civilian infrastructure, exposes children to increasing harm and weaken protective environments. In 2025, the United Nations verified 1,899 grave violations against 781 children in Ukraine, with killing and maiming (40 per cent), attacks on schools and hospitals (34 per cent) and denial of humanitarian access (25 per cent) accounting for most violations.[xxv] Protection actors report that while the nature of threats remains broadly consistent in 2026, their scale and severity have increased due to the wider geographic reach of attacks and the intensified use of drones and long-range weapons. Against this backdrop, the Government of Ukraine and the United Nations revised and extended the Joint Prevention Plan to end and prevent grave violations against children for an additional year in September 2026. First adopted in 2023, the voluntary Plan demonstrates the Government's proactive commitment to strengthening the protection of children.

Recruitment and use of children by Russian armed forces in armed conflict remain a serious conflict-related concern. The latest Annual Report of the UN Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict[xxvi] verified the use of children, including as informants tasked with providing information on military movements or locations, obtaining images of infrastructure or military equipment, making explosives or committing arson against railway infrastructure and vehicles. Thirty-five children were also verified as having been detained for alleged association with parties to the conflict or on related national security grounds. In most cases, recruitment of children begins on messaging platforms highlighting the role of technology in exploitation. The tasks given to children have become significantly more violent, escalating to the manufacturing, transporting and/or planting of improvised explosive devices (IED).[xxvii] Children have been injured and killed carrying out such activities.[xxviii] There is a need for any activities to address this, including justice mechanisms, to be approached primarily through child protection and victim-centered lens.

Prolonged conflict-related pressures are affecting children through caregiver distress, reduced coping capacity and violence within caregiving environments. Repeated security incidents, displacement and disruptions to electricity and communications also affect the continuity of child protection services, including safe spaces, case management and referral pathways, increasing the risk that children with emerging protection concerns are identified late or lose access to ongoing support.

War places considerable strain on children's homes, education and social environments. A 2026 assessment found approximately four in five surveyed households experience moderate-to-severe psychosocial distress, with a statistically significant relationship between caregiver and child distress. 67% of households experiencing high distress received no support.[xxix] This reinforces the need for responses that address children and caregivers together, rather than treating children's protection and psychosocial needs in isolation from the caregiving environment. Violence within caregiving environments is an important protection concern. In a 2026 survey, 41 per cent of children aged 1–14 experienced violent discipline during the preceding month[xxx] with child protection specialists highlighting continued underreporting and normalization of domestic and emotional violence. This underreporting may be particularly pronounced among boys, as findings from CARE's Rapid Gender Analysis suggest that girls are generally more likely to seek professional help or, at the very least, talk openly about their emotional experiences, while boys are more likely to suppress their emotions due to fears of being perceived as weak. For children separated from caregivers – during displacement, evacuation (including forced evacuation), or due to death of family members - family separation, evacuation and reintegration are creating increasingly complex protection needs. It is not only occurrence of separation, reunification and return that creates child protection issues, but there are severe protection and psychosocial consequences of prolonged disruption to caregiving arrangements as well as reintegration needs post-return.

Repeated security incidents, displacement and disruptions to electricity and communications also affect the continuity of child protection services, including safe spaces, case management and referral pathways, increasing the risk that children with

emerging protection concerns are identified late or lose access to ongoing support. Children's access to protective environments and services remains geographically unequal and is particularly constrained for children with disabilities. Children with disabilities in frontline areas have lower access to safe spaces and there are strong differences in geographical educational modality, for example 68% in Kharkivska were learning online, compared with 5% in Khmelnytska.[xxxi] Affordability, transportation, damaged infrastructure and administrative complexity are important access barriers, alongside workforce shortages and increased caseloads within local social services. In this context, the protection concern is increasingly not simply whether a service exists, but whether vulnerable children can be identified early, safely access services, including family-based alternative care, move through functioning referral pathways and receive timely specialized support, particularly in frontline and displacement-affected areas. Displacement, school disruption, caregiver stress and declining opportunities for youth engagement are increasing reliance on social media and informal information sources, creating risks of misinformation and delaying access to professional support. Child labour is an increasing protection concern in the context of the ongoing war and socio-economic pressures on families. Children in Ukraine continue to be subjected to the worst forms of child labour, including commercial sexual exploitation, production of pornography, and forced begging. The report further notes that restrictions on routine labour inspections under martial law may leave child labour violations undetected, increasing the risk of exploitation

CHANGING GENDER ROLES AND EXACERBATING INEQUALITIES IN UKRAINE

Women led organization's highlight the linkage between economic vulnerability and GBV risks. Unemployment, loss of income and financial dependence are linked to increased exposure to intimate partner violence and domestic violence, sexual exploitation and survival sex. Economic hardship limits a woman's ability to prioritize their own safety, seek specialized support and make decisions on issues such as displacement. This burden is compounded by the increasing demands of unpaid care, with women entrepreneurs reporting an average of 56 hours per week spent on childcare, compared with 49 hours before the full-scale war.[xxxii] This is a specific challenge for women who are required to act as primary or sole caregivers of their children, older family members or other family/community members with care needs. Increasingly this caring role has had to be extended to support men returning from frontlines who have been injured or experienced other trauma. Stigma, lack of awareness of services or an absence of services in their area, including services that are tailored to the specific needs of men, are common issues that affect men's ability to access formal services. Consultations held by Women-Led Organizations found that women frequently assume extensive and often invisible responsibilities during veterans' recovery and reintegration, including coordinating healthcare, rehabilitation, legal and administrative procedures, finances and everyday care while continuing childcare and household responsibilities. Some participants described difficulties maintaining employment alongside prolonged caregiving responsibilities. There is also a concern that women can be viewed only as caregivers supporting veterans, while many identified their own psychosocial, economic and sexual and reproductive health needs, which include access to psychological and peer support, flexible livelihood opportunities, and counselling related to intimacy, fertility and sexual health following conflict-related injury or disability[xxxiii] The CARE Rapid Gender Analysis 2026 finds that often the increased responsibility has not consistently translated into greater decision-making power or control over resources. In the case of households with men avoiding conscription, this burden is multiplied. These shifting gender roles can heighten household tensions, particularly where men's loss of income or war-related trauma coincide with women's growing economic and caregiving responsibilities, increasing the risk of intimate partner violence and economic and psychological abuse, while women's heavy care burden and limited control over resources leave them fewer opportunities to seek support. While wartime labour shortages have expanded opportunities for women in traditionally male-dominated occupations, structural barriers remain significant.

CRITICAL UPDATES TO LAW AND POLICIES RELATING TO IDPS

The Government of Ukraine has introduced significant changes to the policy and legislative framework governing internal displacement and the protection of internally displaced persons. The adoption of the State Policy Strategy on Internal Displacement for the period until 2030 in June 2026 marked an important step towards a more coherent, rights-based approach to displacement governance, aligned with the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions. It is structured around four strategic goals: strengthening the State support system, improving evacuation processes, supporting social adaptation and integration, and creating conditions for safe, voluntary and informed return. Implementation is supported by a 2026–2028 Action Plan combining systems-strengthening and direct-delivery measures, with significant responsibilities assigned to the Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity, the Ministry for Development of Communities and Territories,[xxxiv] oblast authorities and communities.[xxxv] The Law on Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons (entering into force on 22 October 2026), adopted by Parliament in July 2026,

replaces the existing 2014 IDP Law, modernized the legal framework to better reflect the realities of large-scale displacement, including through a stronger needs-based approach, updated coordination mechanisms, and the incorporation of key provisions previously regulated only through by-laws. It also strengthened safeguards against discrimination based on displacement status and introduced clearer concepts related to adaptation, integration, collective sites, arbitrary displacement and reintegration upon return. A series of legislative and policy measures adopted in late 2025 and 2026 strengthened action along different stages of the displacement response, including evacuation and reception, care arrangements for persons with specific needs, housing, collective-site governance and IDP participation in decision-making.

LEGISTLATIVE AND POLICY MEASURES ADOPTED (LATE 2025-2026)

Evacuation and reception: Resolution No. 841, which establishes the general evacuation procedure, was further amended by Resolution No. 1307 and Resolution No. 724, including to clarify institutional roles and formalize arrangements for transit centers and multidisciplinary teams supporting evacuees. Law on evacuations No. 4779-IX, and Resolution No. 953/2026 introduced additional provisions on mandatory evacuation, including procedures for the compulsory evacuation of children in specified circumstances. Further analysis of these measures is included under Risk 2 on Forced Displacement, Restrictions to Freedom of Movement and Returns in Adverse Conditions.

Care and support for IDPs with specific needs: Further measures sought to address gaps in care and accommodation for displaced people requiring higher levels of support, particularly older people, people with disabilities and people with limited mobility. Resolution No. 1169, adopted in September 2025, introduced experimental mechanisms for the provision of long-term nursing care in healthcare facilities to displaced people and the social service "shelter" (*prytulok*) for displaced people with limited mobility. Resolution No. 966, adopted in July 2026, extended the experimental project for the provision of residential care and assistive living social services to older IDPs and IDPs with disabilities.

Housing and temporary accommodation: The Government introduced measures aimed at expanding housing options for IDPs and strengthening standards and safeguards in temporary accommodation places. More details in the section under Risk 4: Impediments and/or Restrictions to Access to Legal Identity, Remedies and Justice, including HLP Rights.

Participation and local displacement governance: Resolution No. 701, amending Resolution No. 812, strengthened the role and functioning of IDP Councils, including their participation in the development and monitoring of IDP support programmes, assessment of IDP needs, and engagement in local decision-making.

Social protection and income support: The Government adopted Resolution No. 390, amending the procedure governing the IDP subsistence allowance under Resolution No. 332. The amendments primarily revised eligibility criteria and the rules governing continuation and duration of payments, including automatic extensions for certain categories of recipients.[xxxvi]

Taken together, these measures represent a significant evolution of Ukraine's displacement policy and legal framework, although their protection implications vary across different areas. Their overall impact will depend on secondary legislation, adequate resources and sustained institutional follow-through. Persistent insecurity, repeated displacement, uneven implementation capacities across oblasts and hromadas, and resource constraints continue to affect access to rights and assistance and leave significant protection gaps for populations residing in or fleeing areas affected by active hostilities.

PROTECTION RISKS

RISK 1 Attacks on Civilians and Civilian Objects

Occupation and Civilian Harm

In 2014, Russia occupied and illegally annexed the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. From 2014-2022, 3,106 conflict-related deaths and 7,000 injuries were documented, and some 850,000 people were forcibly displaced.[xxxvii] In February 2022, the Russian Armed Forces launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, occupying additional territories in Donetska and Luhanska oblasts, parts of which had already been outside the control of the Government of Ukraine since 2014, as well as territories in Kharkivska, Khersonska, Mykolaivska, Sumska, and Zaporizka oblasts, and other parts of the country retaken by Ukrainian Armed Forces later in 2022. The Russian authorities carried out a series of illegal referenda across occupied territory as part of their illegal annexation of these territories. The UN General Assembly has called this act a "violation of the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine,"[xxxviii] noting that any attempt at annexation of a State's territory by another

State by threat or use of force is a violation of the principles of the UN Charter and International Law. As of August 2026, almost 20% of Ukraine's territory (approximately 117,000 km²), remains under Russian occupation.

In the occupied territory Russian authorities continued to strengthen coercive administrative, legal, and social control over the civilian population. Humanitarian access to occupied territory remained severely constrained. During 2025 and early 2026, the occupying authorities intensified pressure on residents to acquire Russian citizenship, linking access to essential services such (e.g. healthcare or pensions) and property rights to Russian passports, expanded conscription-related procedures, and further restricted Ukrainian expression and education. From 1 January 2026, the Russian Federation replaced fixed annual conscription campaigns with year-round administrative conscription procedures. A Ministry of Education order (December 2025) removed Ukrainian-language instruction from the list of authorized educational programmes and introduced mandatory use of the Russian digital platform for school administration and communication, raising concerns regarding surveillance and personal data protection.

Families continue to leave to avoid forced conscription or the imposed Russian education system, reunite with families and access basic services. People perceived as pro-Ukrainian face arbitrary detention and prosecution.[xxxix] Leaving occupied territory remains difficult and risky and can have personal and family consequences. People have limited transport options, and face severe security procedures when attempting to cross into government-controlled territory. The single point of entry for such travels is the Mokrany-Domanove border crossing point between Belarus and Ukraine, making the route over 2000 km long and lasting 48-72 hours. For those who have already left, return is increasingly constrained by security-related requirements, denial of entry and long-term entry bans, as well as the confiscation and reallocation of displaced people's homes. These measures undermine people's ability to return to their areas of origin, maintain links with their communities and exercise property rights, increasing the risk that displacement becomes protracted or permanent.

Oleshky: civilians trapped by hostilities and collapsing basic services

Around 1,700 people, including 47 children, are understood to remain in Oleshky (occupied areas of Khersonska obast), where civilians have no electricity, running water or gas. Access to food, medicines and healthcare is severely constrained. Extremely limited food supplies have been able to reach the city since May 2026,[xl] as Russian armed forces block assistance reaching the city. The hospital faces shortages of fuel and food and is unable to safely transfer patients. Conditions were already extremely difficult last winter, when residents reportedly had little or no heating and relied on wood and other available materials for warmth. Some avoided heating their homes out of concern that smoke could expose their location to drone attacks, and there were reports of residents dying from exposure to cold. UN OHCHR has documented the severe restrictions on civilian movement caused by drone attacks and extensive mine contamination and the extreme danger of roads leading out of the town, described by residents as "roads of death." Geography limits evacuation. While Oleshky lies directly across the Dnipro River from Ukrainian-controlled Kherson, the river, destroyed crossings and active frontline effectively prevent direct civilian evacuation. Those attempting to leave must travel through the occupied territory, passing checkpoints and using roads exposed to drones and mines. At the time of writing, Oleshky is the most acute example of a trapped civilian population, but it is not an isolated case. Hola Prystan is also in desperate need.[xli] Humanitarian conditions are also reported to be deteriorating across other occupied areas of southern Ukraine: in Khersonska oblast and in occupied Zaporizka oblast.

Attacks on Civilians Across Ukraine

War-related violence has killed 3,337 and injured 18,018 between 1 August 2025 – 31 August 2026, with the highest number of civilian casualties since April 2022 reported in July. Since February 2022, a total number of 70,950 civilian casualties have been recorded, including 17,257 killed and 53,693 injured. Of these, 4,082 are children. Men are more likely to be killed or injured, accounting for 33,601 of civilian casualties (9,066 of civilian deaths). It is thought that the actual numbers of those killed and injured are higher. In August 2026, long-range weapons (missiles and drones) were the leading cause of civilian casualties (accounting for 47%). In this period, the highest numbers of civilians killed and injured were documented in Kyiv, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Kryvyi Rih and Sumy.[xlii] Child casualties have also increased substantially. In the first half of 2026, killing and maiming of children accounted for 41 per cent of verified grave violations. By August 2026, the number of children verified as killed or injured had already exceeded all of 2025. July alone saw 17 children killed and 166 injured – the worst month for child casualties since April 2022. Child casualties have also increased substantially. In the first half of 2026, killing and maiming of children accounted for 41 per cent of verified grave violations. By August 2026, the number of children verified as killed or injured had already exceeded all of 2025. July alone saw 17 children killed and 166 injured – the worst month for child casualties since April 2022.

In the 5 years since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia, millions of Ukrainians have been displaced. In addition to the almost 5,69 million Ukrainian refugees worldwide, 3,45 million people are currently displaced within Ukraine. Across Ukraine, the security situation is worsening: 59% of respondents in UNHCR's Protection Survey (July 2026) reported that they felt unsafe or somewhat unsafe, an increase of 12% compared to 2025. Of those, 90% indicated that the security situation has a negative impact on their day-to-day life. Protection Cluster Protection Monitoring findings for August corroborate the deteriorating security environment, with security incidents reported by 69.8% of key informants. Donetska (95.0%) and Zaporizka (90.4%) recorded the highest prevalence of reported security incidents, and Sumska recorded the highest prevalence of reported violence (91.6%), followed by Khersonska (76.9%).

Attacks on schools and hospitals remained a persistent feature of the war during the first half of 2026, representing 23% of verified grave violations against children. While eastern and southern regions remained the most affected, attacks were documented across a wider geographic area than in the earlier stages of the conflict, including in central and western regions of the country. This reflects the growing reach of long-range strikes and suggests that educational and health facilities throughout Ukraine are increasingly exposed to conflict-related harm regardless of their proximity to active frontline hostilities. Airstrikes and the persistent presence of drones overhead have evolved into a continuous source of psychological harm, eroding civilians' sense of safety, disrupting daily routines and sleep, contributing to chronic stress and depleting individual and community-level resilience.[xliii] There are an estimated of 10 million people in need of mental health and psychosocial support in Ukraine.[xliv]



War and Winter

During the fourth full winter since the start of the full-scale invasion, Russian Armed Forces systematically targeted energy facilities and centralized heating infrastructure across Ukraine. With temperatures dropping as low as -20°C, these attacks impacted the heating and hot water supply for hundreds of thousands of people across Ukraine.[xlv] Between October 2025 and March 2026, Russian armed forces carried out 423 strikes targeting electricity generation, transmission, and distribution facilities, causing widespread disruption and prolonged power outages across major urban centers. 17 of 27 regions have experienced damage and destruction to key elements of their power grid – which resulted in prolonged outages of electricity, heat, and water.[xlvi] This specific winter has been the coldest winter Ukraine has experienced in over a decade, and the attacks on energy infrastructure resulted in the disruption of heating affecting private houses, schools, health facilities, as there were rolling blackouts and emergency measures placed on the energy sector. Over 200,000 school age children were impacted by heating service disruption, which is on top of other issues that disrupt their education such as air alarms and other power outages.[xlvii] Older people, people with disabilities, single-headed households, and economically poorer households were often less able to adapt and find alternative heating solutions and therefore were at high risk during the freezing conditions, with overstretched state response capacities. IDPs are more likely to experience heating disruption.[xlviii] In one protection survey, 49% of respondents reported a deterioration in levels of access to energy and a concern that with the upcoming winter season. Utilities and heating costs can absorb 1/5 of a person's income.[xlix] Any reduction in the purchasing power of low-income households can increase reliance on borrowing money, reducing food consumption, delaying medical treatment, or accumulating utility debts. For communities already affected by the war, these pressures reinforced one another, heightening displacement risks, narrowing coping options, and leaving the most vulnerable increasingly exposed, particularly through the winter months. Energy disruptions directly affect women's safety, health and housework: 41.9% of women reported feeling less safe due to electricity or heating disruptions and 38.5% of women said the disruptions had negatively affected their physical health, compared with 22.8 per cent of men.[l]

The February 2026 Protection Cluster capacity mapping (including GBV and Child Protection capacity) of 205 mobile protection teams across 110 raions in 24 oblasts, found that 78 per cent of respondents operated in facilities affected by power outages, with disruptions particularly affecting community centers and child-friendly spaces. 86 per cent identified a need for alternative energy sources (generators and portable power stations) to maintain protection services during the 2026/27

winter. These findings mirrored government preparedness assessment of 127 Resilience Centers,[li] which identified significant gaps in facilities expected to support communities during prolonged winter disruptions. 57% had no autonomous heating source, 32% could not maintain internet access during a prolonged outage and 35% lacked adequate first aid/PSS supplies.

Upcoming winter conditions may drive further displacement and evacuations, for example families with children and other vulnerable groups such as older people in Kherson are being encouraged to relocate, while authorities are preparing for the potential temporary evacuation of children and older people in institutional care from highly affected areas to western Ukraine. Such movements may heighten risks of separation, violence, abuse and neglect, particularly for children without parental care. Experience from the 2025–2026 winter demonstrated that prolonged outages affect not only basic living conditions and critical infrastructure, but also the continuity of protection, healthcare and social services, safe spaces, referral pathways and general health conditions while potentially undermining families' ability to remain safely in their communities.

From extreme winter to extreme summer heat, Ukraine's energy infrastructure remains severely compromised due to ongoing attacks, with less than half of the electricity generation capacity it had before the full-scale invasion.[lii] Systematic attacks on infrastructure have raised concern of large-scale water system failure in Odeska and Donetska oblasts.[liii] Many Ukrainians will be left bracing themselves for the bitter realities of a harsh fifth winter, expecting a renewed wave of coordinated attacks by Russian armed forces. While addressing the impact of attacks on energy infrastructure lies beyond humanitarian scope, it is critical that humanitarian actors, including protection partners, respond to urgent needs of the most vulnerable people affected by severe winter conditions and power outages. Winter preparedness is part of maintaining the protective environment particularly for the most vulnerable groups and protection activities need to be integrated into a winter response. More information on the protection impact of winter can be found in the Ukraine Winter Response Plan 2026.

RISK 2 Forced Displacement, Restrictions to Freedom of Movement and Returns in Adverse Conditions

3,45M people are displaced within Ukraine, with the overall number of registered IDPs increasing by 101,351 between August 2025 and 2026. There are 2.59 million children displaced internally and outside Ukraine. More than 791,000 children are internally displaced. Between August 2025 and August 2026, an estimated 243,000 people have been displaced from frontline oblasts, primarily from Donetska (126,000) and Dnipropetrovska (29,000). Most people (approximately 197,000) were displaced from communities located within 20 km of the frontline, with a 50% increase between April -June compared to the first three months of the year.[liv] Protection Clluster Protection Monitoring findings for August corroborate the scale of displacement-related protection concerns, with displacement reported by 39.2% of key informants nationally. Khersonska (84.6%) and Donetska (75%) recorded the highest prevalence of reported displacement. With persistent hostilities, displacement is driven by the cumulative weight of insecurity, economic pressure, damage to housing and service degradation' as people experience repeated disruption to their livelihoods, schooling and services[lv]. Many people have been displaced more than once. One in three displaced adolescents have moved at least twice.

Repeated displacement disrupts education, access to social services, peer relationships and psychosocial wellbeing. One in three displaced adolescents have moved at least twice. Although only 3% of households surveyed by Terre des Hommes (TdH) in 2026 reported a child living separately from their primary caregiver, 65% of reported separations had lasted more than one year. There are cumulative consequences of repeated displacement and prolonged disruption of caregiving arrangements, services and support. Children returning after a long separation may also require sustained reintegration and continuity of care.

Displacement from frontline areas and the experience of evacuation

More than 70% of those who are displaced do so by their own means.[lvi] UNHCR Protection Survey 2026 data found that 70-75% of those considering whether to displace are able to do it with their own means or with support of family members or neighbors. [lvii] At the same time, there has been an increased need for evacuation support in some areas, in particular in Khersonska or Donetska oblasts in 2026. As illustrated in Annex 2, from January to mid-September 2026, 120,242 IDPs (75% of them originating from Donetska and Dnipropetrovska oblasts) received evacuation support and multi-sectoral assistance in transit centers, over 68,000 people more than in the same period of 2025.[lviii] Given the strained capacities of local authorities, humanitarian organizations play a critical role in these evacuations. It is estimated that humanitarian organizations have assisted almost two thirds of those who require organized evacuations,[lix] complementing the efforts of State Emergency Services and White Angels police units. The complexity of evacuations as a protective measure goes beyond logistical challenges: it requires additional staff and resources to prepare evacuation-related information, transport and assistance,

particularly for people unable to leave independently. Older people, people with disabilities, people with limited mobility (such as someone who is bedridden) or serious health conditions that require continuous medical support, families with children, often require accessible transport, accompaniment, continuity of care or suitable reception arrangements. The effort to organize this can lead to delays, and any evacuation delay makes evacuation more dangerous and reduces the time available to identify and arrange appropriate support, with an increase in risk for those that are supporting them to evacuate.

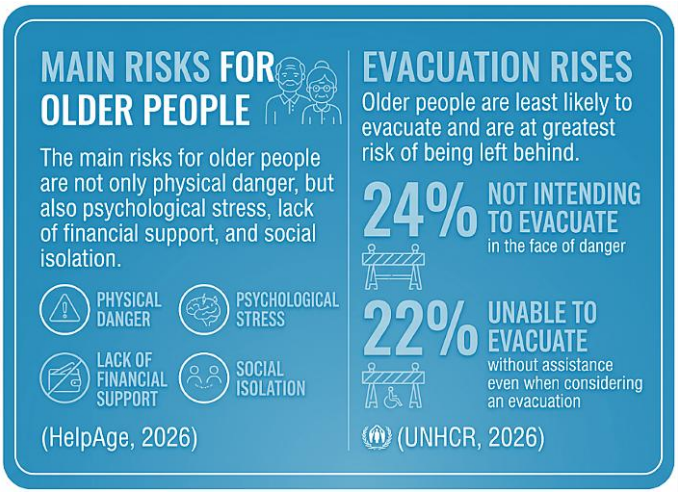
While most people leave frontline areas independently, self-organized displacement should not be equated with lower vulnerability. Decisions are often made at short notice as security deteriorates, leaving limited time to plan routes, secure transport or arrange accommodation. Financial constraints, limited information, health conditions and mobility barriers can further complicate or even prevent departure. People rely on private or rented vehicles, family and friends, NGOs, volunteers, local authorities and online information to organize their journey. Some travel independently because they perceive it as safer than organized evacuation, although both private vehicles and evacuation movements remain exposed to attacks. Social support networks often determine whether people can leave and where they ultimately relocate. Many IDPs who left by their own means still require support during or after the journey. Some of them approach NGOs or transit centers, while others bypass these mechanisms and may miss access to rights, services and protective measures they require. For families with children, particularly those displaced at short notice, bypassing formal reception mechanisms may also delay identification of child protection concerns and access to case management, MHPSS and other specialized services. Timely information on safe routes, available assistance and reception options, together with community-based mechanisms to identify vulnerable IDPs after arrival, therefore remain essential.[lx]

The Complex Decision whether to be Displaced or Remain

While the most significant frontline shifts occurred between 2022-2023, there have been continued territorial changes of control between August 2025 and August 2026. The most notable changes occurred in Donetska oblast, alongside smaller and fluctuating territorial changes in eastern Dnipropetrovska and Zaporizka oblasts, as well as continued localized advances and offensive operations in Kharkivska and Sumska oblasts.[lxi] Despite relatively limited territorial changes, the intensified hostilities, shelling and localized advances drive humanitarian needs and displacement along the frontline.[lxii] The security situation has deteriorated substantially between August 2025 – August 2026. This can be attributed to the expanded use of short-range drones by Russian Armed Forces, increasing risks to civilians, rendered evacuations and humanitarian access more complex, and contributing to the growing isolation of frontline communities. An estimated 2,4M people remain in communities located within 20 km of the frontline, facing sustained and 'slow-burning pressure' due to their prolonged proximity to combat.

The household vulnerability of people living in frontline areas is elevated as compared to other parts of the country.[lxiii] This population includes a disproportionate share of older people (more than 50% of frontline population, with half of them living alone), people with disabilities and others facing diverse barriers, many of whom may require tailored evacuation support to seek safety as the security situation deteriorates. There are reports of families deliberately avoiding orders of forced evacuation of children, ''hiding" their children to avoid the evacuation, rendering an unknown number of children in heavily affected frontline areas highly vulnerable often invisible in official data. 37% of frontline households have a disabled household member, and 60% have a chronically ill household member.[lxiv]

There is no universal reason why a person decides to displace or what compels an individual to stay. Repeated attacks make it increasingly difficult for civilians to remain in frontline settlements, given damage to homes, disrupt electricity, water, healthcare, social support and other essential services. Others may hesitate to leave due to attachment to homes, fear of losing or looting of property, and uncertainty about housing and livelihoods after displacement. This is particularly true for older people. Others stay to preserve an income, as they see few opportunities elsewhere, particularly agricultural households and other people with rural livelihoods. Evacuation travel is particularly challenging for people with limited mobility or serious health conditions, while some men (23-60) were reluctant to move if they have been self-confining to avoid conscription. One persistent challenge is that despite the considerable efforts of the government and humanitarian actors, awareness of



evacuation options and access to accommodation and services in receiving areas remain limited for those displacing. In most cases, people leave only after persistent insecurity and loss of basic services. Late evacuation (when staying is no longer viable) is more likely to lead to an unprepared movement in adverse conditions, resulting in increased support needs after arrival. 9% of people living along frontline areas decide to leave too late and are no longer able to evacuate even though they want to.[lxv] Delayed evacuation can increase exposure to harm, heightens the risks of family separation and service disruption, and reduces people's ability to make a safe and voluntary decision to leave. At the same time, the expanding use of combat drones and contamination by mines and other explosive ordnance have made access to frontline communities increasingly dangerous.

Legislative Developments for Evacuations

The Government of Ukraine has adopted two main legislative revisions that have updated the framework governing evacuations. The Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 1307 (October 2025) brought the regulatory framework closer to operational practice by formalizing the full "evacuation chain" and introducing standards for transit and reception. Law No. 4779-IX (effective March 2026) strengthened the State's role and expanded its powers in organizing civilian evacuations, including mandatory evacuation measures. These changes establish a more structured framework for evacuation and assistance, while also raising important operational and protection questions related to implementation capacity, human rights safeguards, family unity, best interest of the child and tailored support for people with specific needs.

Resolution No. 1307 introduces a full evacuation process, including assembly points, transit centers and reception points, formally recognizing for the first time the role of transit centers in the national legislation, providing a basis for a more structured and standardized approach, clearer roles and responsibilities, and stronger attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of people on the move such as barrier-free access for people with limited mobility, access to civil protection shelters, dedicated spaces for children, essential services and conditions for overnight stays. It introduces multidisciplinary teams appointed by local social protection departments and comprising social workers, medical staff, lawyers, psychologists and other specialists. Implementation to date has shown that while these are effective where operational, local authorities may face capacity gaps and need complementary humanitarian support.

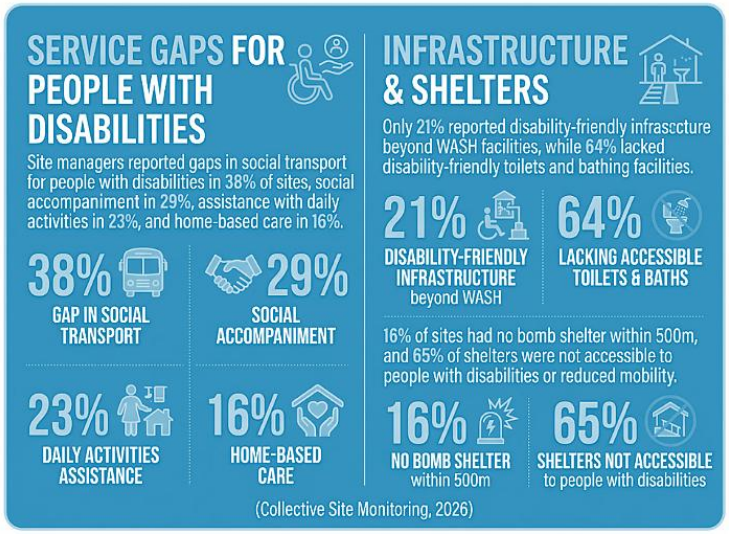
Law No. 4779-IX (March 2026) further strengthens the role of the State in the implementation of civilian evacuations. While the objective of protecting civilians in high-risk areas is legitimate and necessary, the law raises several legal, protection and operational concerns. The law raised child protection concerns, including heightened risks of family separation, institutionalization, and disruption to continuity of care, which have been partially addressed in the subsequent by-laws introduced by the Ministry of Social Policy in consultation with child protection organizations. The law provides only limited guidance concerning older people, people with disabilities and others requiring specific care and support. The protection concerns and implementation gaps are analyzed in greater detail by UNHCR and the Protection Cluster,[lxvi] who have also provided complementary operational guidance and specific recommendations for evacuations of children.[lxvii] This guidance translates the legal analysis into practical guidance for humanitarian partners.

Resolution No 953, adopted in July 2026, and regulates mandatory evacuation of children without accompaniment, providing more detailed normative framework for the procedure, documentation, notification, and record-keeping for the evacuation mechanism. The resolution addresses essential areas concerning the mandatory evacuation of children without accompaniment. There are several outstanding issues that remain unaddressed linked to safeguards, reunification and the opportunity for children to be heard in the process

Collective Sites: Protracted Displacement, Overlapping Vulnerabilities and Continued New Arrivals

There are more than 1,500 recorded collective sites, hosting approximately 70,500 internally displaced people (out of 3,45M registered IDPs). Collective sites remain an essential part of Ukraine's humanitarian evacuation and reception system. Newly evacuated people often have little meaningful choice over where they are accommodated. Placement in a particular collective site is generally determined by evacuation routes and where space could be found, rather than by the suitability of the building proximity to services or the residents' individual needs. Continued arrivals are intersected with a large population already in protracted displacement, creating two related but different challenges: immediate services and appropriate placement for newly evacuated people, and sustained care and solutions for residents whose displacement has become prolonged. One reason for being unable to access a collective site is a lack of space. According to the Collective Site Monitoring, 63% of sites reported that they have no more available room, and 18% of sites reported that they had to turn away newly arrived IDPs because they had no space or no accessible space for a person with disabilities.[lxviii] Kharkivska and Dnipropetrovska oblasts are key reception areas for newly evacuated people, while people living in collective sites in central and western oblasts increasingly require sustained protection, care, community engagement and accessibility support. While collective sites are

intended as a last-resort, temporary accommodation option, the most vulnerable displaced people often remain there for extended periods.[lxix] 69% of collective-site respondents lived in a site for at least one year. 29% have spent more than three years living in collective sites that are often poorly adapted to their needs, indicating that prolonged residence is increasingly shaped by the absence of viable alternatives rather than a preference for collective accommodation.



Older people aged 60 and above account for 42% of collective-site residents.[lxx]Among adults, 20% have a formally recognized disability and 16% report functional difficulties, while 80% needed medicines in the previous three months. Care responsibilities are also significant: 25% care for children, and among caregivers, 54% are single parents. Women residing in collective sites often have caregiving responsibilities alongside challenges of prolonged displacement, uncertain housing prospects and reduced livelihood opportunities. Caregiver burden, psychosocial distress and a lack of community-based support mechanisms may increase risks of social isolation and economic dependency. These vulnerabilities often overlap, limiting residents' ability to work, secure alternative housing or live independently without support. The collective site population demonstrate heightened needs for social support services, including case management, accessible healthcare, psychosocial support, and legal assistance. In many sites, continuity of care is a central protection concern rather than an additional service consideration. Children account for around 16% of collective site residents. Although most sites report that there are school places available in nearby schools and kindergartens, conditions for learning, play and psychosocial well-being remain uneven. Only 36% of sites had an outdoor child-friendly space and 25% an indoor space, while some sites reported barriers to remote learning linked to a lack of equipment, separate study space or reliable internet. Prolonged residence in shared accommodation, limited privacy and the absence of appropriate spaces can increase stress within households and heighten child protection and GBV risks, as well as negative coping mechanisms in dealing with psychosocial distress (such as substance abuse). Children, caregivers, women at risk and survivors of violence require confidential and accessible services, safe referral pathways and site-level risk mitigation integrated into the wider collective-site response.

Given the vulnerability profile of the residents, there is no straightforward solution for people living in collective sites. Unemployment stands at 24% and reliance on social assistance was 79%. Site residents describe documentation problems, interruptions to social payments and barriers to compensation, which can intensify their vulnerability and leave residents without the resources needed to meet basic needs independently. The implication is that assistance cannot remain organized exclusively around short emergency cycles. When combined with the reality that people evacuating after prolonged exposure to hostilities may already have exhausted household resources and experienced disruption to health and social services, it can be anticipated that many new arrivals into collective sites will be highly vulnerable and require sustained assistance.

Understanding a people-centered approach in collective sites: Vulnerable IDPs in collective sites need protection-centered responses going beyond accommodation support, instead focused on community-based mechanisms and access to services. It requires regular protection monitoring; accessible information and counselling; individual case management; legal assistance, including support with documentation and social payments; mental health and psychosocial support; GBV and child protection risk mitigation, services and referral; social transport and accompaniment; and enabling healthcare, administrative and state social services. Referral pathways (and case management) must be functional in practice, with clear responsibility for follow-up and continuity of support when residents move between transit centers, collective sites, communities or other accommodation. Sustained and engaged coordination is required for continuity of needs identification and response.

Restrictions to Freedom of Movement

Freedom of movement in frontline areas has become increasingly constrained by short-range drones, shelling, explosive ordnance and damage to roads and other critical infrastructure. These conditions hinder not only evacuations but also routine movement within and between frontline communities, including travel to access healthcare, markets, education,

administrative services and humanitarian assistance. Reduced or suspended public transport due to insecurity is a further limiting factor. Sumska and Khersonska recorded particularly high prevalence of reported movement restrictions, at 92.3% each. There are instances in which people choose to limit their own movement, such as men attempting to avoid conscription. The August 2026 Protection Cluster Protection Monitoring identified the following barriers to freedom of movement nationally: the absence of public transportation (25.4%), lack of financial resources (23.6%), high transportation costs (20.4%) and fear of shelling or drone attacks (18.1%). The impact is particularly severe for older people, people with disabilities and others without access to private or adapted transport, while insecurity and damaged infrastructure also limit services and goods from reaching people. Participants in Protection Risk Monitoring in the "crescent" oblasts discussed how transport providers are increasingly unwilling to maintain routes to rural and frontline communities because the limited profitability no longer offsets operational costs.

Premature Returns to Unsafe Areas

In 2026, there are two parallel return trends. The first trend is the declining return intentions and increasingly protracted displacement among IDPs. Protection partners have observed that return dynamics are closely linked to security, housing, and economic stability. Among IDPs, return intentions remain limited: only 5% planned to return, while 81% did not.[lxxi] Declining return intentions reinforce the need to support local integration, while some returns continue to be driven by unaffordable living costs and inadequate accommodation rather than improved conditions at origin. This is alongside the second trend of fragile returns of those who have gone back. Among recent returnees, 15% intended to move again, compared with 9% of earlier returnees, indicating that return does not necessarily constitute a durable solution. For many people from occupied, inaccessible or heavily damaged areas, return remains impossible. The changes introduced by Resolution No. 1307 established a framework for organized and voluntary return once security, infrastructure and essential services are assessed as adequate, with priority support for people with disabilities and other people with specific needs.[lxxii] The mechanism is not yet operational, and further clarification is needed on safety assessments, information and consultation, tailored assistance for vulnerable groups, spontaneous returns and post-return monitoring. Those that do return potentially return under adverse conditions. Some people return after evacuation because they are unable to secure adequate housing or livelihoods in areas they are displaced to, while others undertake temporary or repeated movements back to unsafe areas to access services to maintain property or reunite with family members. Some returns or repeated movements may also be linked to unresolved legal and property issues, including the need to protect property interests, restore documentation, pursue compensation or address inheritance and registration problems. Family reunification was the most frequently cited reason for return within 30 km of the frontline (40%), followed by economic considerations and accommodation difficulties in displacement.

RISK 3 Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence risks in Ukraine grow with each year of the conflict. Many women face the task of being the sole family caregiver while also facing barriers to employment. Women (and family members) report the increase in intimate partner violence as the strain of the war continues. 41% of children aged 1–14 experienced violent discipline in the preceding month indication increased strain in the household.[lxxiii] Conflict-related sexual violence continues to be reported in residential areas of occupied territory, most survivors are women. Widespread conflict-related sexual violence has also been documented against Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilians in captivity in occupied territory and the Russian Federation, most survivors are men. Shifts in foreign aid are undermining both the quality and accessibility of safe services for survivors of violence. The 2025/2026 winter energy crisis is an example of how the continuation of the conflict has increased pressure on women's safety and security. Extended power outages degrade safety in both public spaces and households, and the loss of street lighting is particularly consequential for GBV risk: unlit streets, courtyards, stairwells, and transport stops create conditions in which women and girls face heightened exposure to harassment and assault when moving after dark. Women and girls react to this decrease in their personal safety by restricting movement, curtailing evening travel, forgoing work, services, and social contact, which ultimately compounds their isolation.[lxxiv] Technology-facilitated GBV is emerging as an additional protection concern for women, girls and vulnerable populations in Ukraine. This includes cyber harassment, forced geolocation tracking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images, online blackmail, and sexual exploitation through digital platforms. These risks extend GBV exposure beyond physical space and can create additional barriers to safety, privacy and help-seeking.

GBV Risks at Frontline Areas

Women and girls living in frontline oblasts are exposed to layered and mutually reinforcing GBV risks. Prolonged insecurity, repeated displacement, and deepening economic hardship have intensified emotional exhaustion, anxiety, and social isolation,

eroding the individual and collective coping mechanisms that women rely on to manage risk. Where sustained stress, loss, and household power imbalances converge with limited access to services, this erosion translates directly into heightened vulnerability to violence, including intimate partner violence, economic abuse, and exploitation in exchange for assistance or shelter[lxxv]. There are also heightened GBV risks during evacuation from frontlines or occupied territory and movement into collective sites. Insecurity and limited protection measures may expose women and girls to sexual violence, harassment, exploitation and trafficking. IDP women and girls experiencing repeated displacement were identified as particularly at risk as collective accommodation lacks privacy and adequate gender-sensitive infrastructure. Many people who experience GBV face social isolation. Displacement severs the informal networks through which women would ordinarily disclose harm and access support, while entrenched social norms in these communities normalize violence and suppress disclosure, particularly among older women. Formal GBV services and hotlines operate across frontline oblasts; however, confidence in these services varies, and some women and girls remain reluctant to reach out. The result is a persistent gap between availability and use: survivors' default to informal coping strategies, delay or avoid help-seeking, and remain exposed to harm over prolonged periods. Psychosocial support needs are correspondingly acute. Structured, in-person services, which are tailored based on gender, age, and other intersecting factors, rather than remote or hotline-based provision, are essential to building the trust on which disclosure and referral depend, and to restoring the sense of safety that enables women to act on risk.

Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV)

Between the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine to 31 July 2026,, UN OHCHR has documented how CRSV has impacted women, men, girls, boys, and people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identities. This documentation includes (but is not limited to) 96 cases of CRSV committed against civilians living under occupation (with women comprising the majority of survivors (73 women, 14 girls, 8 men, and 1 boy), 572 prisoners of war (545 men and 27 women) and 224 cases against civilians (172 men, 51 women, and 1 boy) in detention in occupied territory and the Russian Federation. Many of these survivors were subjected to multiple forms and instances of CRSV. A further 112 cases of CRSV have been documented against Russian and third country national prisoners of war and civilians detained on conflict-related charges in Government-controlled territory. A 2026 report highlights the strong interconnectedness and substantial overlap between CRSV, arbitrary detention, and torture, demonstrating that survivors frequently experience these violations simultaneously.[lxxvi] CRSV remains significantly underreported, with survivors detained in the Russian Federation and occupied territory or residing in residential areas of occupied territory in most cases only able to report what they endured once they reach Government controlled territory. Even in such cases, survivors who decide to disclose their experiences often do not do so until months or even years after the violation took place. Disclosure frequently occurs only after sustained engagement with psychosocial, legal or case management services, rather than at the first point of contact. Stigma, shame, confidentiality concerns and fear of retraumatization remain major barriers to help-seeking.[lxxvii] Male survivors may initially seek support for detention-related injuries, PTSD or other mental health concerns before disclosing sexual violence. Despite the existence of support services, significant gaps persist in the provision of integrated, long-term medical, psychological, social and legal support that is responsive to the distinct needs of women, men, girls, boys, and people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, and their family members, across age groups, that is available country wide. In 2026, Ukraine made significant regulatory advances in operationalizing Law No. 4067-IX. Once operational this will provide support to people affected by CRSV perpetrated by Russian Armed Forces. Further steps towards a broader reparations' framework remain partially operationalized, requiring sustained financial support, a reduction of the fragmentation of support to survivors of CRSV, arbitrary detention, and torture.

Intimate partner Violence and Barriers to Seeking Services

Intimate Partner Violence and Domestic Violence are the most commonly identified forms of GBV in Ukraine, with reported increases due to the strain of the prolonged crisis. In a series of consultations in late 2025/early 2026, GBV actors have noted this violence within the home is linked to displacement, war-related trauma, economic stress, loss of livelihoods and changing household dynamics and gender roles. It can affect women's household decision making power over key decisions such as evacuations. Experts also highlighted concerns related to the return of military personnel and veterans to households, as trauma, substance use and sexual and reproductive health issues they have experienced may contribute to heightened household tensions.[lxxviii] GBV actors share concerns that survivors may face social pressure to minimize or endure violence when the perpetrator is associated with military service or perceived as a defender of the country. Respondents described this as a barrier to reporting, protection and accountability, alongside broader concerns around stigma, confidentiality and lack of trust in formal institutions. Consultations also highlight the psychosocial impact of veteran reintegration on spouses and family members. Women frequently assume responsibility for healthcare coordination, rehabilitation support, psychosocial care and

household management. The cumulative impact of these responsibilities may increase caregiver exhaustion and reduce women's ability to seek support for their own health, wellbeing and protection needs.

Human Trafficking Risks Driven by the War

Trafficking risks in Ukraine are rising and becoming more complex. As of 1 September 2026, the National Social Service of Ukraine had granted official survivor status to 664 people, up from 485 in all of 2025 and 182 in 2024. The caseload is overwhelmingly male (627 men, 18 women, 15 girls, 4 boys), reflecting growth in labour and conflict-related exploitation. About 90% (601 cases) involved mixed forms of exploitation, and most survivors were exploited in the Russian Federation (429) or within Ukraine (226). Poverty, disrupted livelihoods, informal employment and labour demand for reconstruction create openings for deceptive recruitment, while online platforms increasingly facilitate recruitment and exploitation across borders, with risks for children and adolescents. In September 2026, the Government adopted the State Targeted Social Programme on Combating Trafficking in Persons for 2026–2030, covering prevention, protection, prosecution and coordination and providing a basis for strengthening the National Referral Mechanism. However, formal frameworks alone are insufficient: frontline actors need greater capacity to identify less visible forms of trafficking, especially in frontline and border areas, displacement-hosting communities, and among people in precarious work and children. Survivor assistance also tends to cover short-term needs without addressing root causes, which is a significant challenge given that a third of the population lives in poverty. Sustained collaboration among government, civil society and international partners is needed to strengthen prevention, early identification, survivor-centered assistance and reintegration.

Social Services Gap and the impact on GBV and Gender-Specific Services

In 2026, 2.9 million people, predominantly women and girls, are estimated to need GBV services and assistance. Institutional capacity to prevent and respond to GBV remains constrained, with shortfalls concentrated in the sectors on which survivors most depend. Communities face acute shortages of qualified specialists, as substantial numbers of social workers, psychologists, and other social sector professionals have left Ukraine. Those who remain working with large caseloads, work under significant emotional strain and have poor salaries. This has led to continued turnover, eroding the continuity of care that survivor-centered practice requires. In rural areas, dedicated state-funded staff for GBV are largely absent. Existing training initiatives fall short of bridging these capacity gaps: training for key stakeholders such as police officers, social workers, and school staff on survivor-centered GBV identification and response remains insufficient and irregular, leaving frontline professionals without the sustained, systematic grounding their roles demand. Where services are provided, quality can be undermined by stereotypes, bias, and stigma among service providers. This manifests in dismissive and degrading attitudes towards survivors and reinforces the low trust in formal mechanisms documented above[lxxix].

Women's Rights Organizations highlight that they remain highly dependent on international financing and face significant barriers to accessing direct, flexible and sustainable funding. The funding reductions that began in 2025 have translated into reduced staffing and operational capacity, increased workload and burnout, difficulty retaining specialized personnel, and restrictions on service availability. 68% of consulted organizations introduced waiting lists or refusing beneficiaries because of insufficient resources, while almost half reported having no alternative long-term funding source one year after the cuts. Short-term funding cycles are particularly problematic as survivor-centered case management depends on continuity, trust and long-term engagement. Service withdrawal due to funding gaps can disrupt trusted relationships with case workers, contribute to survivor disengagement and retraumatization, and create repeated cycles of withdrawal and re-entry of services.[lxxx]

RISK 4 Impediments and/or Restrictions to Access to Legal Identity, Remedies and Justice, including Housing Land and Property Rights

Access to legal identity and civil documentation, as well as property documentation and registration remains significant issue for people in Ukraine, including the 3,45M IDPs in Ukraine and people living in/arriving from the occupied territory. An estimated 14% of Ukraine's housing had been damaged or destroyed by the end of 2025, affecting an additional 500,000 people compared to the previous large-scale assessment carried out at the end of 2024.[lxxxi] For people living in or displaced from occupied territory, frontline and hard-to-access areas, conflict-related loss of documents and destruction or inaccessibility of official archives can make restoration or verification of civil documents difficult. Protection monitoring has identified ongoing difficulties restoring or confirming civil documents required for social benefits, healthcare and administrative services, alongside barriers related to insecurity, transport, lengthy procedures and reduced access to administrative institutions.[lxxxii] Loss of personal documents can also affect IDP registration, and access to the IDP allowance and other social benefits and access to accommodation, particularly following recent or secondary displacement. Very

vulnerable individuals such as older people, or those with stronger care needs such as people with disabilities, are at risk of institutionalization due to a lack of suitable accommodation options. There are strong efforts to support de-institutionalization of older people and children, to ensure they are in accommodation adapted to their needs and receive care services.

The Administrative Isolation in the Occupied Territory

The Russian Federation continues to impose its own political, legal, administrative, law enforcement and judicial systems in the territories of Ukraine it temporarily occupies, in breach of the international humanitarian law. Russian legal, administrative and law-enforcement systems were imposed across occupied territory from the early stages of the occupation. In March 2025, Russian authorities reported that approximately 3.5 million Russian passports had been issued in Ukrainian territory occupied since February 2022. Over the course of the occupation, access to essential rights and services, including healthcare, social protection, education and freedom of movement, has been increasingly conditioned on Russian citizenship and compliance with Russian administrative requirements, with many people obtaining Russian passports under coercive conditions. Those without Russian passports face heightened protection risks, including harassment and restrictions on essential rights and services, while increased scrutiny at checkpoints has in some cases resulted in detention, torture and ill-treatment. Russian authorities have continued to reshape the education system, following the replacement of the Ukrainian curriculum with the Russian curriculum and the subsequent removal of Ukrainian-language instruction. For children who later move to Government-controlled territory, differences in curricula and difficulties obtaining recognition of educational attainment may create barriers to continuing education and, later, accessing employment.[lxxxiii] Forced conscription in occupied territory has become increasingly systematized through administrative, legal and digital control mechanisms. Schools reportedly cooperate with military commissariats by providing information on students reaching military-registration age and facilitating their appearance for registration, while schools and colleges have also promoted enlistment into the Russian armed forces.[lxxxiv] Men arriving in Government-controlled territory have cited the threat of conscription as a factor in their decision to leave.

Housing, land and property rights remain a major area of concern. UN OHCHR documented extensive confiscation of private property belonging to people displaced from occupied territory, as well as restrictions and bans on entry into the Russian Federation that impede their ability to return and exercise property rights.[lxxxv] The Russian Federation required owners to register Ukrainian property rights in the Russian unified state registry of real estate (EGRN), including through procedures requiring physical presence, with the initial deadline of 1 July 2026 later extended to 1 January 2027.[lxxxvi] Occupation authorities have used the absence of EGRN registration to identify property as potentially "ownerless," with more than 56,400 private properties designated as potentially "ownerless,'' approximately half were located in occupied Donetska region.[lxxxvii] These restrictions continue to affect people after displacement. IDPs arriving from occupied territory face disadvantages arising from gaps in civil documentation, non-recognition of education credentials or employment history, and difficulties accessing housing compensation as procedures do not adequately reflect the realities of occupation. Compensation and documentation mechanisms in Government-controlled territory are not always adapted to these circumstances, leaving displaced people facing barriers on both sides: limited ability to access, protect or exercise rights over property in occupied territory, alongside difficulties obtaining compensation or other remedies needed to secure a durable solution in displacement.[lxxxviii]

Housing Damage Drives Protracted Displacement

IDPs reported substantially higher levels of destruction and inaccessibility of their homes than returnees and non-displaced war-affected respondents.[lxxxix] This destruction reduces the feasibility of return and contributes to protracted displacement. At the same time, displacement increases reliance on alternative housing arrangements: 56% of surveyed IDPs lived in rented accommodation, compared with 7% of returnees and other war-affected respondents.[xc] Collective sites are an example of prolonged displacement with an absence of sustainable tenure. Out of approximately 70,500 IDPs living in some 1,500 collective sites, 69% stayed for at least one year and 29% for more than three years. 58% of people report that the main barrier to leaving was inability to afford alternative accommodation.[xci] In a protection survey of IDPs, among people living in rented, hosted or collective accommodation, 16% report uncertain or precarious tenure, the highest level recorded.[xcii] 58% relied only on an oral tenure agreement, compared with 36% with a written contract.[xciii] Financial sustainability presents an additional dimension of housing insecurity. In another 2026 survey, one in five displaced households had moved to lower-quality housing as a coping strategy and 17% had fallen behind on rent. 87% of displaced households have adopted at least one negative coping measure.[xciv] Protection monitoring indicates that informal rental arrangements, high rental costs and limited housing availability increase the eviction risks. Lack of affordable alternatives can also affect a person's decisions to delay displacement, remain in high-risk locations or return to their area of origin prematurely.[xcv] One assessment among returnees in eastern Ukraine provides further evidence of these dynamics: 48% identified high housing and rental costs in displacement as a factor pushing their return.[xcvi]

Addressing the Link between Housing and Displacement

In February 2026 the Law "On the Fundamentals of Housing Policy" No. 4751-IX entered into force. The law establishes a new overarching framework for housing policy, including affordable and social housing, state support, rental relations and protection of tenant and landlord rights, and strategic housing planning. The reform creates an opportunity to move from fragmented housing interventions to more coherent and need-based housing solutions. IDPs will require this framework to prioritize them as the people with the greatest housing vulnerability, strenthen tenure security in rental arrangements and develop alternatives for people unable to leave collective sites. To ensure proper implementation of this framework law, the government works on elaboration of the Housing Strategy and Action Plan to it, as well as different legal pieces, such as the Law on Social Housing. As a step towards greater inclusion, the Resolution No. 301, adopted in March 2026, established a state subvention to local authorities for the creation and improvement of temporary and assisted living housing for IDPs, requiring that at least 20% of the housing stock and adjacent areas be accessible to people with disabilities and limited mobility. Resolution No. 751, adopted in June 2026, established an experimental mechanism for providing IDPs with temporary housing in rural areas through the purchase of housing by local authorities. Resolution No. 728, adopted in June 2026, introduced substantial amendments to Resolution No. 930 on collective sites, strengthening minimum standards and monitoring, clarifying admission, residence and eviction procedures, extending safeguards for people without documentation, and introducing stronger protections for residents in case of relocation or closure of collective sites.

E-Recovery remains the principal state mechanism for compensation for damaged and destroyed housing. As of 10 July 2026, 231,681 families had received compensation amounting to UAH 119.1 billion.[xcvii] Despite this substantial reach, access remains uneven. Among Protection Survey respondents with damaged or destroyed property, only 11% reported receiving full or partial compensation, while 28% had applied but had not yet received payment. Half had not accessed compensation because they lacked required documentation or did not know how to proceed. The disparity was particularly pronounced among IDPs: only 5% had received compensation, compared with 34% of returnees and 39% of non-displaced war-affected respondents; 56% of IDPs reported documentation or information barriers and 30% had applied but remained awaiting the payment. The existence of a compensation mechanism does not in itself ensure effective access to remedy. For people displaced from frontline or occupied areas, requirements relating to documentation, registration of rights, inheritance, technical assessments and property inspection can create additional barriers precisely for those whose displacement or conflict-related loss makes such requirements hardest to meet. Continued legal assistance is therefore essential to translate formal entitlements into effective access to compensation and remedy.

Displacement can create additional practical barriers to accessing compensation, particularly where owners face difficulties arranging or participating in required inspections of their property. In frontline areas, insecurity may delay or constrain inspections, although remote assessment mechanisms have expanded access for destroyed housing with frontline commissions also facing constraints in engaging qualified specialists with construction expertise and conducting inspections.[xcviii] This places households with property in frontline, occupied or otherwise inaccessible locations at a particular disadvantage: continued lack of access to the property may prevent them from completing the procedures required to obtain an effective housing remedy. Access to compensation does not necessarily translate into restoration of safe and adequate housing. The effectiveness of a remedy should be assessed not only by whether compensation was awarded, but also by whether affected households are ultimately able to restore safe and adequate housing. Lack of relevant documentation is also reported as a barrier to accessing compensation, as is a lack of awareness of the compensation procedure. Overall, the available evidence points less to the absence of legal, housing and compensation mechanisms than to unequal ability to access, navigate and convert them into effective remedies and durable housing outcomes.[xcix]

RISK 5 Presence of Explosive Ordnance

Five years into the full-scale invasion, explosive ordnance (EO) contamination remains one of the defining features of Ukraine's protection environment, posing persistent risks to civilians while limiting freedom of movement, access to livelihoods, and prospects for safe recovery and reconstruction. As of July 2026, 105,837 km² of land was available for humanitarian demining activities, of which 64,482 km² had undergone non-technical survey (NTS) by certified mine action operators. Of the 1,078.5 km² identified as contaminated or suspected to be contaminated, 365.3 km², or approximately 33 per cent, had been released or excluded, including 174.7 km² excluded through repeated NTS. These figures demonstrate continued progress in assessing and releasing affected land while underscoring the substantial scale of EO contamination that continues to affect communities across Ukraine. According to the Fifth Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA5), total damage to the explosive hazards

sector is estimated at US$10.6 million, while economic losses are estimated at US$26.7 billion.[c] The highest impacts are concentrated in Kharkivska, Donetska, Luhanska, Khersonska, Zaporizka, Chernihivska and Mykolaivska oblasts, accounting for approximately 69 per cent of the total assessed damage. From February 2022 to September 2026, 1,238 mine and explosive ordnance-related incidents were recorded in Ukraine, resulting in 1,230 injuries and 502 fatalities, according to the Secretariat of the National Mine Action Authority of Ukraine. Continued progress in survey and land release has reduced the estimated extent of contamination; however, ongoing hostilities continue to generate new EO, sustaining protection risks for war-affected communities and complicating efforts to restore safe civilian access to land and essential infrastructure.

The Evolving Nature of Explosive Ordnance Contamination

The nature of EO contamination in Ukraine continues to evolve alongside the conflict, creating new operational and protection challenges beyond conventional contamination patterns. The expanded use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), including first person-view (FPV) drones, has contributed to repeated contamination of previously surveyed or released areas, reducing the predictability of contamination and increasing uncertainty for civilians returning to affected communities. The proliferation of drones has also reduced operational predictability, limiting humanitarian presence even in areas where the frontline has remained relatively stable.[ci] Unlike earlier stages of the war, contamination can no longer be regarded as static, as new explosive hazards continue to emerge alongside ongoing hostilities. Mine action operators and national authorities report an increasing presence of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and other unconventional forms of EO, further increasing the complexity of survey and clearance operations. In parallel, the growing use of fibre-optic-guided FPV drones has introduced an emerging operational challenge, with fibre-optic cables remaining across agricultural land and other civilian areas following hostilities. While operational approaches continue to evolve, these developments require further adaptation of technical guidance, operational procedures, land release methodologies as well as more sophisticated victim assistance packages tailored to specific risks and needs. Children remain particularly vulnerable to explosive ordnance due to their developmental stage, curiosity and regular interaction with contaminated environments. Explosive ordnance continues to cause child casualties, disrupt access to education, recreation and community life, and contributes to long-term physical and psychosocial harm. Children injured by explosive ordnance often require sustained multidisciplinary support, including emergency medical care, rehabilitation, psychosocial support, disability-inclusive services and social reintegration assistance.

Operational Challenges, Governance and Sector Resilience

The increasingly volatile security environment continues to constrain mine action operations, particularly in areas close to the frontline, where deteriorating security conditions have significantly reduced opportunities to conduct survey and clearance safely. According to OCHA's Humanitarian Access Severity Overview, the presence of EO remains one of the three principal drivers of humanitarian access constraints in war-affected frontline and border hromadas, alongside active hostilities and violence affecting humanitarian personnel. As a result, operators are increasingly required to reassess hazardous areas, suspend activities due to changing security conditions, and continuously adapt operational planning to rapidly evolving threats. The deterioration of the security environment has also led to fatal incidents involving humanitarian demining personnel during the reporting period, prompting the temporary suspension of operations in affected areas. These incidents underscore the growing risks faced by operators conducting survey and clearance activities. Such constraints not only affect the safety of mine action personnel but also slow the pace of returning land to civilian use, delaying the restoration of safe access to agricultural land, critical infrastructure, and essential services for war-affected communities.

Ukraine's mine action sector continues to evolve in response to an increasingly complex operational and institutional environment, effective governance, coordination and evidence-based prioritization remain critical challenges. As of the beginning of 2026, the humanitarian coordination mechanism for mine action was phased out, initiating a gradual transition towards Government-led coordination mechanisms. This transition remains ongoing as the relevant institutional and coordination arrangements continue to evolve. Ongoing institutional changes within the Government, together with the increasing number of stakeholders and evolving operational realities, continue to shape the governance of the mine action sector, reinforcing the importance of clear coordination mechanisms, institutional continuity and effective decision-making. Against the backdrop of declining donor funding, transparent prioritisation, strong coordination and the need for measurable results have become increasingly important to ensure that limited resources are directed towards interventions delivering the greatest humanitarian and recovery impact. The sector is also adapting to Ukraine's changing social context. As the number of veterans continues to grow, dedicated programmes have emerged to support their training and integration into mine action, supporting their professional reintegration, while strengthening national mine action capacity. At the same time, continued efforts are being made to strengthen the participation of women across mine action, contributing to a more diverse and inclusive workforce while supporting longer-term recovery and resilience.

RESPONSE

As of September 2026, the Protection Cluster partners have reached 1,149,277 people in Ukraine. This figure includes 255,229 people reached by child protection responders and 225,233 reached by GBV responders. 12% of the population reached by the Protection Cluster have at least one form of disability. 26% of those reached are children and 32% older people. 68% of people reached are women and girls. The Protection Cluster in Ukraine is composed of an incredibly diverse range of responders and technical services. Of the total of 280 reporting and implementing partners of the Protection Cluster, 186 implement child protection services and 109 implement GBV services. In 2026, protection partners continue responding under all four Strategic Priorities of the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan: 1) Frontline response, 2) Evacuations, 3) Airstrike response, and 4) Protection oriented-support to vulnerable IDPs in protracted displacement and other vulnerable groups, providing people-centered and needs-based services and assistance IDPs and non-displaced most at-risk, ensuring flexibility and community engagement beyond strict geographic or timeframe-related criteria. In August 2026, Protection Cluster conducted the analysis of so called "out-of-scope" reporting under HNRP 2026 to seek advice based on partners' field experience in view of the 2027 HNRP cycle. The survey revealed that some partners provide humanitarian protection services not strictly matching the Strategic Priority criteria, while – based on the needs assessment – they continue to demonstrate humanitarian value-added. These relate in particular to 1) protection activities aimed at assisting IDPs and involving hosting communities to promote social cohesion and ensure conflict-sensitivity lens (such as community-based protection or PSS), 2) activities addressing the war-related protection risks of the vulnerable non-displaced identified by the partners outside of frontline areas (including women and girls at risk of gender-based violence or children at risk). Outcomes of this survey are being used by the Protection Cluster to contribute to the review of the scope of Strategic Priorities in HNRP 2027. Accountability to Affected Populations has been among key priorities leveraging protection partners' community feedback mechanisms to inform humanitarian leadership's guidance on improved inter-agency programming for the remaining part of 2026 and planning for 2027 response, including recommendations to tackle digital exclusion, reach out to "invisible groups" and community engagement across all sectors, including the IDP Councils. Through its Age and Disability and LGBTIQ+ Technical Working Groups, the Cluster also continued to keep close two-way communication with the Organizations of People with Disabilities, Older People's Associations, LGBTIQ+ organizations and other community-based organizations, further promoting localization and community-based character of protection response in Ukraine.

ACCESS-RELATED CHALLENGES AND ACTIONS

In 2026, there has been a further contraction of humanitarian access in frontline areas and increasing risks to humanitarian personnel. Frontline shifts in Donetska oblast and advances towards Dnipropetrovska oblast have reduced access to vulnerable populations. Access to territories occupied by the Russian Federation remains the most severe and structurally constrained part of the humanitarian operating environment, requiring continued high-level advocacy. The expanding reach and use of short-range drones mean that roads and settlements previously considered relatively accessible have become increasingly unsafe, affecting humanitarian deliveries, evacuations and other frontline operations. For protection actors operating in the most affected areas, access is increasingly irregular rather than fully cut off, with operations often dependent on short and unpredictable windows when movement is considered possible. This has increased reliance on last-mile delivery arrangements for in-kind assistance, locally based responders such as volunteer- or community-based organizations and adapted operational modalities, including remote delivery where appropriate. During the reporting period, some organizations have reduced or temporarily suspended activities where direct access is assessed as too dangerous. Humanitarian Access Overview from July 2026[cii], 251 of 521 assessed hromadas were classified as having high or extremely high access difficulties, up from 242 in October 2025. Areas with the most severe access restrictions have expanded: hromadas classified as having extremely high access constraints or no access increased from 196 to 211. In 15 hromadas that deteriorated to the most severe access category, reported direct reach fell from around 92,000 people in January–May 2025 to 8,500 in January–May 2026, a decline of more than 90 per cent. Risks faced directly by humanitarian personnel, including protection partners, have increased. From January to August 2026, 8 humanitarian workers were killed while on duty and 47 were injured. In the first half of 2026, repeated attacks on civilian infrastructure - including offices and warehouses used by humanitarians, gas stations and telecommunication masts - and growing disruption of essential services significantly increased civilian harm and operational complexity. As drone technologies and tactics evolve, humanitarian organizations face an increasingly difficult balance between maintaining assistance in high-risk areas and accepting higher residual risks to personnel and humanitarian assets. Existing Duty of Care measures remain essential but have important limitations in the current frontline operation environment. Frontline partners stress that current approaches are not keeping pace with context development and are not necessarily fit for purpose. As it evolves, Duty of Care approaches should be regularly reviewed and adapted, including through consideration of additional context-specific protective measures based on operational risk assessment, Do No Harm considerations, and applicable legal framework.

RECOMMENDATIONS

HUMANITARIAN COUNTRY TEAM AND HUMANITARIAN ACTORS IN UKRAINE

- Uphold the Centrality of Protection in the HNRP 2027 by prioritizing risk reduction and ensuring a people-centered, needs-based approach through a focus on service provision, community engagement and strong accountability to affected people mechanisms across all Strategic Priorities of a multi-sectoral humanitarian response.
- Humanitarian actors should support the implementation of Law 4924-IX on Internal Displacement, the Strategy on Internal Displacement (in particular, Goals 2 and 3) and its Action Plan 2026-2028 to gradually advance complementarity with the Government and enable durable solutions. Therefore, humanitarian response for IDPs under Strategic Priority 2 should mirror the Government's approach of "money follows people", with the humanitarian assistance and services provided to IDPs along the entire IDP Journey based on people-centered and needs-based approach (not fixed geographical or timeframe-related criteria), from the frontline to the receiving areas.
- Should Strategic Priority 4 be maintained, ensure it remains people-centered by including the targeted preventive and responsive interventions for people facing severe or compounded protection risks who are not adequately covered under SP1–SP3, with particular attention to specific CP and GBV risks. Prioritization under this Strategic Priority should be based on the severity, immediacy of identified protection risks and individual/household vulnerability, with a clear link to conflict-related humanitarian needs and demonstrated humanitarian added value.
- Provide better balanced support to IDPs across the IDP Journey, not only in evacuation and multi-sectoral assistance in transit centers, but also the provision of post-evacuation support aimed at fostering self-reliance, minimizing the need for prolonged stay in collective sites and other institutionalized settings. This applies to both in the emergency phase following the displacement, as well as in transitional phase, to remove barriers for IDPs from accessing state services in a timely and dignified manner, linking to the IDP Durable Solutions Initiative.
- Ensure legal assistance is part of the humanitarian response throughout displacement, including documentation, housing, compensation and access to remedies to help war-affected people access rights and overcome administrative barriers.
- Adapt the HNRP 2027 response strategy for IDPs to include a very limited number of members of hosting communities who are identified as contributing to the protection or to durable solutions for IDPs on an individual basis, upholding social cohesion and conflict-sensitivity of the response.
- Shift the approach to multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance in transit centers by enabling the Government's leading role (Resolution 841) and providing meaningful support to DoSP-led Multidisciplinary Teams, enhancing complementarity of humanitarian assistance in responding to identified gaps.
- Humanitarian evacuations are first and foremost a protective measure, not just a logistical operation. Humanitarian actors supporting evacuations should support authorities in assessments to inform systematic pre-evacuation planning, provide early information and preparedness support to frontline communities, with focus on older people and people with disabilities and participate in coordination efforts.
- Ensure that evacuation planning and support adequately address the needs of older people, people with disabilities, children at risk and other vulnerable groups through accessible information. Evacuation of people residing in institutional care settings in frontline areas should ensure safety, dignity, and uninterrupted access to necessary care and adequate accommodation. Humanitarian evacuations of children must prioritize their best interest, family unity and child safeguarding measures.
- Advance the localization of GBV response by recognizing women-led and women's rights organizations, who are often first responders, as equal partners, to improve acceptability and accessibility of GBV services. This means ensuring their meaningful participation and leadership in coordination and decision-making, channeling more direct and flexible funding, and supporting their institutional capacity and staff wellbeing.
- Integrate GBV risk mitigation across all sectors of the frontline, evacuation, collective site and winter responses, so that women in low-trust, hard-to-reach areas have safe entry points for disclosure and referral.
- Address emerging technology-facilitated GBV by integrating digital safety into GBV case management, awareness-raising and referral pathways.
- Strengthen linkages between GBV response and cash, livelihoods and early recovery programming.
- Support a diversity of safe entry points for specialized programmes including legal and social support services, GBV, and child protection services, and support for survivors of violence. Increase availability of and access to quality GBV specialized service provision.

- Finalize the updated duty of care framework for frontline staff, including measures corresponding to the evolving technology of warfare and risks faced by humanitarians, while respecting the IHL and ensuring do-no-harm approach.
- Continue advocacy on protection of humanitarian workers.

GOVERNMENT OF UKRAINE

- Implement and ensure the rights and freedoms of internally displaced people (No. 4924-IX) and the State Strategy on Internal Displacement (2026 to 2030) with its accompanying two-year Action Plan, which reflect the government's commitment to transition to a systematic policy on internal displacement and a comprehensive approach to supporting IDPs from evacuation to a durable solution.
- Considering the distinct housing vulnerability of IDPs. Integrate housing solutions for IDPs into the new State Housing Policy, expand access to housing solutions for IDPs, and simplify access to compensation and reparation for damaged and destroyed properties.
- Continue strengthening the evacuation process through early information provision and preparedness of support. The evacuation mechanism must be people-centered and tailored to the needs of those at greatest risk, notably older people with specific needs including those living in institutions in frontline areas, as well as children at risk.
- Review the approach to collective sites, transforming accommodation into a needs-based system, and, where appropriate, take measures to transform them into temporary housing or social services. To reduce risks of protracted displacement in collective sites, employment opportunities for IDPs should be prioritized and the social adaptation service systematically rolled out for the most vulnerable IDPs.
- Strengthen the social service workforce for GBV prevention and response. Institutionalize regular, survivor-centered training for police, social workers, health workers and other key stakeholders to address bias and stigma and improve the identification and response to intimate partner violence, including in households of returning military personnel/veterans.
- Elevate the prevention and response to Gender-Based Violence within Government-led humanitarian planning, national initiatives and policies. Ensure that survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) and their family members have access to survivor-centered medical, psychological, social and legal services tailored to their needs, Advance the operationalization of the Law 4067-IX concerning the provision of support to people affected by the CRSV perpetrated by the Russian Armed Forces, ensuring adequate budget allocation and reducing fragmentation of support to survivors.
- Expand access to tailored GBV services for survivors who face additional barriers, including male survivors, LGBTIQ+ persons, older women and women with disabilities.
- Integrate GBV risk mitigation into energy resilience and winter preparedness planning at oblast and hromada levels. This includes prioritizing backup lighting in public spaces, transport stops and residential areas and ensuring that Resilience Centers and other winter support points are safe and accessible for women and girls.
- Ensure that children who are recruited or used through social media or messaging apps, inc. those who may have committed crimes, are treated primarily as victims of a grave violation of their rights with detention used as a last-resort measure and reviewed regularly.
- Strengthen the coordination and oversight role of the Ministry MOSP to ensure that children who are evacuated from institutions abroad only return safely and voluntarily to family-based care and benefit from reintegration support, in line with their individually assessed best interests.
- Strengthen resilience of communities in frontline areas to provide protection, social services and family-based alternative care when needed for children at risk of violence, abuse and neglect through the Government's care reform.
- Ensure the participation of organizations of people with disabilities, associations of older people and organizations of IDPs in all decision-making processes affecting these community groups.

DONORS AND DEVELOPMENT ACTORS

- Prioritize protection response, including child protection and GBV services and people-centered approaches in humanitarian funding strategies for 2027.
- Increase long-term, direct, and flexible funding to Ukrainian Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), including Women's Rights Organisations (WROs), Organizations of People with Disabilities (OPDs), Older People Associations (OPAs), LGBTIQ+, youth-led initiatives and organizations, and other grassroots groups.

- Support a diversity of modalities for protection responses, including online, mobile and static service provision that allow adapted entry points for children at risk, adolescent girls, older women, women and girls with disabilities, Roma communities, LGBTIQ+ persons, and people at risk of violence and survivors of violence.
- Mitigate fragmentation across multiple partners in Ukraine by prioritizing organizations and consortia that are best placed to deliver required responses to identified needs and avoiding "overconcentration" in specific areas of the response (e.g. transit centers and evacuation movements, while 70% of IDPs do not seek humanitarian aid to evacuate from frontline areas).
- Advance the IDP Durable Solutions Initiative to support the development of a robust government-system enabling displacement solutions and develop operational models enabling IDPs most at risk attain a durable solution, in line with the Government's IDP Strategy. Such dual approach will enable an effective bridge with tailored and prioritized humanitarian activities for most at-risk IDPs in prolonged displacement, utilizing the value-add of humanitarian action.
- Scale up long-term resourcing for human resources capacity in essential social and public services to address the widening gap in the availability of skilled social workers, legal aid providers, foster caregivers and professional carers who are needed to provide inclusive support services for IDP communities.
- Link GBV response with economic empowerment, supporting livelihood and income-generating opportunities for survivors and women at risk, particularly sole caregivers, reducing the risk of intimate partner violence and sexual exploitation
- Increase resourcing and elevate prioritization of GBV prevention and response, including expansion of GBV programming for war-affected and vulnerable people through women and girls' safe spaces, GBV case management, and shelters. Funding should be multi-year and cover core operational costs and staff wellbeing, so that services are not withdrawn and waiting lists do not disrupt trusted relationships with caseworkers.

ON THE SITUATION IN TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED TERRITORY

- UN member states should prioritise high-level engagement with parties to the conflict to explore all ways for humanitarian actors to have sustained and meaningful access to provide aid to affected populations in the occupied territory, while upholding do-no-harm and risk mitigation approaches.
- Negotiate to open the humanitarian crossing points for the safe movement of civilian population across the frontline, to enable evacuation, family reunification and allow people to access their property.
- Provide tailored humanitarian support to IDPs entering Government-controlled areas from the occupied territory, including adults at risk and children being reunified with caregivers in government-controlled territory who need community-based reintegration support following their return. Mitigate barriers faced by people arriving from occupied territory in accessing necessary legal documentation
- Ensure that people arriving in Government-controlled territory from the occupied territory, including those released from detention or captivity, have timely access to confidential, survivor-centered CRSV and GBV services. Recognize that disclosure is often delayed and depends on sustained engagement with psychosocial, legal and case management support.

Endnotes

[i] *Global Center for the Responsibility to Protect, Ukraine -Populations at Risk (as of July 2026)*
[ii] *UN OHCHR, Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict – August 2026*
[iiiiii] *UN OHCHR, Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict – July 2026*
[iv] *IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix – Ukraine*
[v] *UN OHCHR, Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict – August 2026*
[vi] *UNICEF, Children killed and injured in latest attacks across Ukraine as monthly child casualties reach a four year high, August 2026*
[viivii] *UN OHCHR, Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict – July 2026*
[viii] *UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, March 2026; UN OCHA, Ukraine: Humanitarian Needs and Response Review (Mid-Year 2026), September 2026*
[ix] *IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix Ukraine.*
[x] *UNICEF, More than a third of Ukraine's children remain displaced four years into war, February 2026*
[xi] *IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix – Ukraine*
[xii] *Nonviolent Peaceforce, Community Preparedness in Practice: What Local Realities Tell Us About Future Planning for Ukraine, March 2026*
[xiii] *UNHCR, Ukraine Protection Survey #3. A year in review, July 2026*
[xiv] *Consultations were held with Protection partners operating in Kherson on 15 September 2026. The Protection Cluster expresses our gratitude to the following organisations, I Am Kherson, Strong Because Free, and Spravzhni, Welthungerhilfe and UNHCR for participating.*
[xv] *INSO, Ukraine Special Report. The Security Profile of Kherson City and Key Developments, May 2026*
[xvi] *INSO, Ukraine Special Report. The Security Profile of Kherson City and Key Developments, May 2026*
[xvii] *IOM DTM, Ukraine Internal Displacement Report. General Population Survey Round 24, July 2026*
[xviii] *Protection Cluster, GBV Workstream, Women at the Frontline: Safety, Access, and Support Needs in the East of Ukraine, June 2026*
[xix] *Information is provided by Terre des hommes (Tdh) as part of a 2026 Needs Assessment. Report is available directly from the partner.*
[xx] *Call to Action on GBV. Research on Gender-based violence against lesbians in Ukraine, July 2026*
[xxi] *Consultations were held with OPD/OPA and LGBTIQ+ organizations in August 2026 as part of the HNRP 2027 process. The consultations were conducted by the Protection Cluster Age and Disability Technical Working Group and LGBTIQ+ Technical Working Group in August 2026.*
[xxii] *Protection Cluster, GBV Workstream, Women at the Frontline: Safety, Access, and Support Needs in the East of Ukraine, June 2026*
[xxiii] *UNHCR, Ukraine Thematic Brief. Protection of Older People in Times of War and Displacement, April 2026*
[xxiv] *Protection Cluster Ukraine, Protection of older persons, including those with disabilities, in the context of evacuations - Advocacy note for RC/HC, 14 April 2025*
[xxv] *Report of the Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflict A/80/723-S/2026/357, June 2026*
[xxvi] *24 children (22 boys, 2 girl) were verified as used by Russian armed forces (4) and unidentified perpetrators (20) as informants to share information on Ukrainian military locations or movements, images of critical infrastructure or military equipment, or making explosives or committing arson against railway infrastructure and vehicles.*
[xxvii] *The most up to date information on Grave Violations and Ukraine can be found at the website of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict*
[xxviii] *UNICEF, Threefold increase in the number of children killed or injured in Ukraine over the past three months, July 2025*
[xxix] *Information is provided by Terre des hommes (Tdh) as part of a 2026 Needs Assessment. The Tdh 2026 Needs Assessment provides valuable evidence from Dnipropetrovska, Kharkivska, Mykolaivska, Sumska, Zaporizhzhia, Odeska and Khmelnytska oblasts, but it also notes uneven regional coverage, reliance on proxy reporting for younger children and limitations for some smaller subgroups. Report is available directly from the partner.*
[xxx] *UNICEF, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey Ukraine 2025-26 Statistical Snapshots of Key Findings. Preliminary Findings, June 2026.*
[xxxi] *Information is provided by Terre des hommes (Tdh) as part of a 2026 Needs Assessment. Report is available directly from the partner.*
[xxxii] *UNICEF Ukraine – National Study on Access to Early Childhood Education and Care and Women's Economic Empowerment in Ukraine*
[xxxiii] *GBV Workstream, Understanding GBV, Protection and Psychosocial Risks Affecting Veterans and Their Families in Odesa, July 2026*
[xxxiv] *Following institutional changes introduced in July 2026, responsibilities related to internal displacement are being redistributed across central government institutions. While the Strategy assigns coordination, monitoring and reporting functions to the Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity, the newly established Ministry for Communities, Territories and Internally Displaced Persons has also been assigned responsibilities relevant to IDP policy. At the time of writing, the implications of these changes for the implementation arrangements under the Strategy remain to be further clarified.*
[xxxv] *UNHCR Ukraine Policy Brief - State Strategy on Internal Displacement - July 2026*
[xxxvi] *UNHCR, Ukraine Legal Brief - IDP subsistence allowance, April 2026*
[xxxvii] *UN OHCHR, Conflict-related civilian casualties in Ukraine, January 2022*
[xxxviii] *United Nations General Assembly Resolution, Territorial integrity of Ukraine: defending the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, 2022*
[xxxix] *UN OHCHR, Forced displacement from territory of Ukraine occupied by the Russian Federation: forcible transfer and deportation, barriers to return, and the rights of internally displaced persons, 24 February 2022 – 31 December 2025, March 2026*
[xl] *Reuters, Ukrainian drones deliver new batch of food to Russian-occupied Olenshky, 4 October 2026*
[xli] *UN OHCHR, Desperate Situation for Civilians trapped in Frontline Areas, 25 June 2026*
[xlii] *UN OHCHR, Ukraine Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, July 2026*
[xliii] *Center for Civilians in Conflict, From Risk to Resilience: Civilian Protection Readiness in Ukraine, May 2026*
[xliv] *World Health Organisation, Ukraine Health Emergency Appeal, February 2026*
[xlv] *UN OHCHR, Attacks Against Ukraine's Energy Infrastructure and Update on the Human Rights Situation in Ukraine, 1 December 2025-31 May 2026*
[xlvi] *Amnesty International, Ukraine: New testimonies document brutal conditions for civilians amid Russian attacks on energy infrastructure, February 2026*
[xlvii] *Education Cluster Ukraine, Protection Children and Learning Amid Attacks on Energy in Ukraine, February 2026*
[xlviii] *IOM, Ukraine - The Cost of Winter in Ukraine: Household Heating Costs, Utility Disruptions and Compounded Vulnerabilities, May 2026*
[xlix] *IOM, Ukraine - The Cost of Winter in Ukraine: Household Heating Costs, Utility Disruptions and Compounded Vulnerabilities, May 2026*
[l] *UN Women, Gender Dimension of the Energy Crisis in Ukraine: Pathways to Resilience, April 2025*

[li] *Resilience Centers, established under Cabinet Resolution No. 83 as of Jan 2024, are community facilities providing resilience-building social services and access to broader social, legal and employment support*
[lii] *WHO, Ukraine. 2026 Summer Risk Assessment, March 2026*
[liii] *WASH Cluster Ukraine, Northern Donetska Oblast Water Crisis, May 2026*
[liv] *IOM Frontline Flow Monitoring July 2026*
[lv] *ACAPS, Ukraine: Scenarios 2026, March 2026*
[lvi] *REACH Ukraine, Profiles and vulnerabilities of people displacing by their own means (outside of organized evacuation mechanisms), July 2026*
[lvii] *UNHCR, Ukraine Protection Survey #3. A year in review, July 2026*
[lviii] *Protection Cluster Evacuation Tracker as of 16 September 2026.*
[lix] *Further information on the Protection Cluster response – including the support to humanitarian evacuations – can be found at the Protection Cluster Ukraine Humanitarian Needs and Response Dashboard.*
[lx] *REACH Ukraine, Profiles and Vulnerabilities of people displaced by their own means (outside organized evacuation mechanisms), July 2026*
[lxi] *Deep State, Ukraine Live Map, as of July 2026*
[lxii] *The term 'frontline' includes the 'contact point' between Russian Armed Forces and Ukrainian Armed Forces including border line Sumska and Chernihivska oblasts.*
[lxiii] *IOM, Ukraine – Vulnerability and Mobility in Frontline Areas, February 2026*
[lxiv] *IOM, Ukraine – Vulnerability and Mobility in Frontline Areas, February 2026*
[lxv] *Center for Civilians in Conflict, From Risk to Resilience: Civilian Protection Readiness in Ukraine, May 2026*
[lxvi] *UNHCR and Protection Cluster Legal Brief, The Amended Law on Evacuations – Law No. 4779 (March 2026). Available upon request.*
[lxvii] *Protection Cluster Ukraine, Operational Considerations for Humanitarian Organizations on Evacuations in the Context of Law No. 4779-IX, April 2026*
[lxviii] *Between 30 March and 17 April 2026, the 20th round of national Collective Site Monitoring (CSM) assessed 1,337 sites, 96% of which were actively hosting IDPs, with 60,836 residents.*
[lxix] *Danish Refugee Council, Ukraine: Protection needs overview and GBV safety audit findings — collective sites in Kherson Oblast, March 2026*
[lxx] *Between 30 March and 17 April 2026, the 20th round of national Collective Site Monitoring (CSM) assessed 1,337 sites, 96% of which were actively hosting IDPs, with 60,836 residents.*
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[lxxiv] *UN Women, Gender Dimension of the Energy Crisis in Ukraine: Pathways to Resilience, April 2025*
[lxxv] *Protection Cluster GBV Workstream, Women at the Frontline: Safety, Access, and Support Needs in the East of Ukraine, June 2026*
[lxxvi] *UN OHCHR, Sexual Violence in the Context of the Russian Federation Full-Scale Armed Attack against Ukraine | UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine IOM, Final Report on the Consultation Process on Reparations with Ukrainian Survivors of Human Rights Violations, 2025*
[lxxvii] *Protection Cluster GBV Workstream, Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) in the Southern Ukraine Key Findings and Recommendations from Consultations with CRSV Response Actors, May 2026*
[lxxviii] *Protection Cluster GBV Workstream, Understanding GBV, Protection and Psychosocial Risks Affecting Veterans and Their Families in Odesa, July 2026.*
[lxxix] *WCU Network, Monitoring the implementation of women's rights in wartime (2022-2025)*
[lxxx] *Protection Cluster GBV Workstream Ukraine, Centering Women-Led Organizations in GBV Prevention and Response in Ukraine, February-March 2026.*
[lxxxi] *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Ukraine - Fifth Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA5): February 2022 - December 2025, February 2026*
[lxxxii] *Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Quarterly Protection Monitoring Report (January - March 2026), July 2026*
[lxxxiii] *UN OHCHR, Forced displacement from territory of Ukraine occupied by the Russian Federation: forcible transfer and deportation, barriers to return, and the rights of internally displaced persons, 24 February 2022 – 31 December 2025, March 2026*
[lxxxiv] *Report of the UN Secretary-General Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, May 2025*
[lxxxv] *UN OHCHR, Forced displacement from territory of Ukraine occupied by the Russian Federation: forcible transfer and deportation, barriers to return, and the rights of internally displaced persons, 24 February 2022 – 31 December 2025, March 2026*
[lxxxvi] *Report of the UN Secretary-General Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, May 2025*
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[lxxxviii] *UN OHCHR, Forced displacement from territory of Ukraine occupied by the Russian Federation: forcible transfer and deportation, barriers to return, and the rights of internally displaced persons, 24 February 2022 – 31 December 2025, March 2026*
[lxxxix] *UNHCR, Ukraine Protection Survey #3. A year in review, July 2026*
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[xciii] *UNHCR, Ukraine Protection Survey #3. A year in review, July 2026*
[xciv] *IOM, General Population Survey, July 2026*
[xcv] *DRC Ukraine Quarterly Protection Monitoring Report 2026*
[xcvi] *Norwegian Refugee Council, Ukraine's recovery risks leaving millions behind, June 2026*
[xcvii] *More information on eRecovery can be found at the website of the Ministry for Recovery, Infrastructure and Transport for Ukraine.*
[xcviii] *Further information on qualified specialists can be found at Transparency International Ukraine, How Do the Commissions for Compensation for Damaged and Destroyed Housing Work? 2025. Further information on legal access issues can be found at Protection Cluster & UNHCR Legal Aid Bulletin for November-December 2025*
[xcix] *UNHCR Protection Survey #2, January 2026*

[c] *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Ukraine - Fifth Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA5): February 2022 - December 2025, February 2026*
[ci] *UN OCHA Humanitarian Access Working Group, Ukraine – Humanitarian Access Severity Overview (as of May 2026), July 2026*
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Methodology

The protection analysis uses a Protection Analytical Framework approach developed by the Global Protection Cluster. From July-September 2026, Protection Cluster organized a series of consultations with partners across Ukraine to complete protection risk prioritization exercise, involving a wide range of partners. This included sub-national level workshops to review the protection risk severity at regional level. As a result, the Cluster consolidated a Secondary Data Review database, taking into consideration key protection assessments, monitoring reports and surveys, including the findings of the newly launched Protection Cluster's Protection Risk Monitoring System.

The Protection Cluster Ukraine warmly acknowledges and thanks all of those who contributed to the development of this report.

Limitations

Occupied territory have extremely limited access for the humanitarian community. Relevant information and data have been shared where possible, as no large-scale humanitarian assessments are available

The Protection Cluster ensures the provision of quality, up-to-date response data using information reported by partner organizations. This information covers the technical specialised areas of GBV and Child Protection. Information on reach, coverage and activities can be found using the Protection Cluster Dashboard. Up-to-date tools, resources and information can be found at Protection Cluster Ukraine.

Protection Cluster Ukraine

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