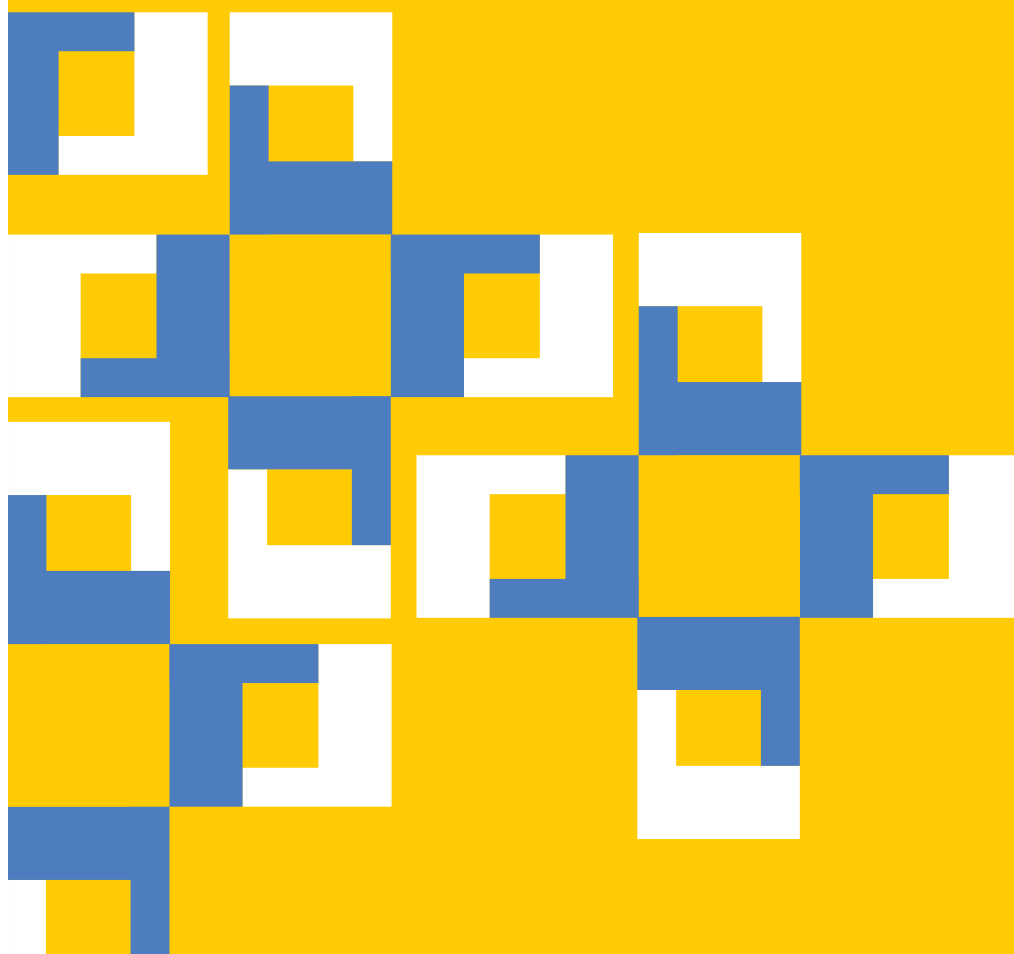


# RESILIENCE AND COHESION OF UKRAINIAN SOCIETY DURING THE WAR

Periodic report based on  
monitoring materials from  
selected regions of Ukraine

2024



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KYIV – 2025

**RESILIENCE AND COHESION OF UKRAINIAN SOCIETY DURING THE WAR.** Periodic report based on monitoring materials from selected regions of Ukraine. **ISSUE No.13. OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2024** / Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research. Kyiv. March 2025. 41 p.

This report was drafted by the team of the Ukrainian Independent Center for Political Research (UCIPR) as part of the activities of the National Platform for Resilience and Social Cohesion (National Platform). This civic initiative was launched in February 2018 (formerly known as the National Platform “Dialogue on Peace and Secure Reintegration”).

The National Platform’s activities are geared towards strengthening the national resilience of Ukraine. This could be done through establishing dialogue practices in society, providing the authorities with proposals for developing relevant policies, particularly those on resilience and social cohesion, as well as ensuring public awareness of these processes. The initiative has been implemented with the financial support of the European Union as part of “Sustaining the Resilience of Ukraine towards the Emerging Risks and Consequences of the War” project.

The report is based on data on events in 11 oblasts of Ukraine which are important for shaping a policy of national resilience. The project target oblasts were selected based on analysis of changes in cohesion of local populations due to the outbreak of military operations and include Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, Lviv, and Zakarpattia oblasts. For data collection, we distinguish between the temporarily occupied areas, frontline and deoccupied areas, and relatively rear areas.

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The product content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

The text of the report is available for download on the websites of the National Platform for Resilience and Social Cohesion [www.national-platform.org](http://www.national-platform.org) and UCIPR [www.ucipr.org.ua](http://www.ucipr.org.ua).

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFU	Armed Forces of Ukraine
ASC	Administrative Services Centre
CMA	City Military Administration
EW	Electronic Warfare
GAB	Guided Aerial Bomb
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IO	Influence Operation
NPP	Nuclear Power Plant
OCU	Orthodox Church of Ukraine
OMA	Oblast Military Administration
RF	Russian Federation
ROC	Russian Orthodox Church
SESU	State Emergency Service of Ukraine
TOA	Temporarily Occupied Area
TPP	Thermal Power Plant
TRSSC	Territorial Recruitment and Social Support Centre
UGCC	Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church
UN	United Nations Organization
UOC (MP)	Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate

# SUMMARY

## The situation at the front line

The security situation in Donetsk oblast remained extremely difficult, as the invaders launched offensives in several areas. The situation was tense in the Kurakhove sector where, in late December, Ukrainian troops only [held](#) the area of Kurakhove TPP seriously damaged by shelling. Meanwhile, the enemy was capturing new territories to the south of the town in an attempt to push closer to the administrative border between Donetsk and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts.

The enemy's offensives towards Toretsk and Chasiv Yar continued. The advance of the occupiers in the above areas was however at much slower pace because of the dense urban environment offering opportunities for the Ukrainian troops to mount an effective defence. Despite that, the enemy gradually advanced in both towns.

Along Pokrovsk axis, the main efforts of the occupiers were focused on capturing Selydove, since it was impossible to launch an offensive towards Pokrovsk and Myrnohrad without control of this population centre. Russian troops entered the city in mid-October; and on 29 October, the Russian Defence Ministry announced its complete capture. The next day, this [was confirmed](#) by influential monitoring resources, but the General Staff of the AFU had not made any statement on this occasion by the end of the year.

The quality of defence fortifications around most cities in Donetsk oblast was heavily discussed. On the one hand, since the outbreak of the full-scale invasion, the oblast authorities regularly claimed they had built these fortifications along the key axes. Specifically, in September, they [announced](#) they had built at least five defence lines around Pokrovsk. On the other hand, MPs [emphasised](#), on multiple occasions, the absence of fortifications or their low quality. However, due to military secrecy and a lack of access to the front line, it is impossible to prove these allegations.

The occupiers continued their offensives towards Vovchansk, Kupiansk, and Lyptsi. Specifically, the situation along Kupiansk axis remained particularly difficult. The situation along Dvorichna axis deteriorated substantially; the enemy actually controlled the left bank of the Oskil river from where it attempted to break through the Ukrainian defences. Forced evacuation was announced in local communities. However, there were many people who refused to leave, which complicated military operations.

The situation in Luhansk oblast remained extremely difficult. Ukrainian troops only controlled a few ruined villages where fierce fighting was going on. Step by step, the enemy [narrowed](#) the foothold to the east of Borova. Specifically, the enemy captured an area of several square kilometres between Stelmakhivka and Lozova, having moved beyond the borders of Luhansk oblast.

Fighting of varying intensity [took place](#) along Zaporizhzhia axis, with the enemy actively deploying ground-attack aircraft, bombers, and UAVs of various types, in combination with artillery and mortar barrages. Along Orikhiv and Huliaipole axes, Russian troops [continued](#) force rotation, reconnaissance, and brought in reinforcements and ammunition.

On 20 December, Russian units [attempted](#) to cross the Dnipro to establish a new bridgehead. The enemy shelled areas along the river, and Kherson, from tube artillery and MLRSs. During the shelling, a subversive reconnaissance unit attempted the crossing of Antonivka Road Bridge towards the city. The enemy was detected and destroyed in the midstream by prompt action of the Defence Forces. Despite that, similar units continued their attempts to cross the river in other sectors.

Since 11 November 2022, the AFU had to deoccupy only three population centres on Kinburn Spit, Mykolaiv oblast, which actually turned into a 'grey zone'. Meanwhile, Russia [continued to step up](#) its military presence in the area.

## Temporarily occupied areas

The strategy of occupation was based on systematic measures geared towards consolidating control and integrating these areas into Russia's political, legal, and economic space and included the following constant factors.

*A policy of intimidation and terror.* The Russian occupiers used repression, kidnapping, torture and public punishment on a consistent basis to suppress resistance and intimidate the locals.

*Deprivation of the possibility of returning.* The occupying authorities created conditions that made it impossible for those who left to return, in particular, by nationalising their private property (housing, property, businesses, etc.).

*Coercion to loyalty through passporting.* The locals were forced to receive Russian passports, and those who refused were restricted in their rights, deprived of social benefits, and actually turned into foreigners in their homeland.

*Brainwashing of residents by propaganda.* The occupiers aggressively disseminated their own picture of events through the media they controlled, education and administrative mechanisms. A particular emphasis was placed on the youths who were subjected to ideological manipulation through the education system, including the so-called military-patriotic education.

*Establishment of occupying administrations.* Russia extensively integrated its state structures through attracting specialists from the RF. The first 'generation' of collaborators, who initially headed newly established administrative authorities, was gradually replaced with professional Russian officials. Some collaborators were brought to justice for corruption.

*Financial 'bribery' of residents.* The invaders used massive social benefits and other financial incentives to make the locals dependent on the new rules and strengthen their loyalty.

Meanwhile, residents of the occupied areas did not receive what some of them expected from 'joining Russia': their Russian passports are not comparable to those of RF citizens; a customs office with a very high level of control remains between the 'annexed' areas and Russia's main part; large state-owned transportation companies, banking institutions, and communications service providers do not operate in the occupied areas; standards of living, incomes, and pensions in the occupied areas are significantly lower than those in the Russian regions; destroyed infrastructure facilities are not rehabilitated.

The Kremlin's actions were targeted at changing the demographic structure of the occupied areas through decreasing the share of local residents. This was done through the massive arrival of labour force and managers from the RF and the programme for preferential mortgage loans in which the locals could not participate because of their difficult financial situation. Right now, it can be said that there are significant changes in the national and demographic composition of the population in the occupied areas.

The Russians continued their practice of repression: those attempting to return were subjected to filtration measures at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport and could be sentenced to a lifelong ban on entry.

The invaders continued to violate the rights of children by using them for military purposes. They installed whistleblower's boxes in schools, engaged school children in the production of medical supplies, and coerced them into military training which violates international law.

The occupiers exported coal, grain, and scrap metal from TOAs to a number of countries, circumventing sanctions. A large shipment volume indicates the poor effectiveness of sanctions mechanisms and the need for international monitoring to prevent the use of stolen resources.

The economy of the occupied areas of Luhansk oblast remained completely dependent on RF's subsidies which made up 2/3 of the budget of the breakaway LPR. The mechanism of 'chief regions' was used for hyping up Russian regional leaders, with Moscow-controlled financial flows.

Residents of the occupied areas faced a shortage of basic services such as water, electricity, and health care.

Even under occupation, TOA locals offered strong resistance to the invaders, including through acts of sabotage against important infrastructure facilities such as railways and transport. Car bomb attacks on Russian commanders in Berdiansk and Melitopol, coupled with successful bomb attacks on enemy's depots and transport routes, demonstrated a high level of resilience of Ukrainian forces and support from the locals.

In December, the UN General Assembly [adopted](#) an updated resolution on the situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied areas of Ukraine. This is the first UN resolution calling Russia's aggression against Ukraine the "*war of aggression against Ukraine by the Russian Federation*". The document condemns arbitrary detentions, torture and ill-treatment of TOA residents, and focuses on the protection and return of deported children.

## Frontline and deoccupied areas

Within the monitoring period, Russian troops continued to shell frontline communities daily. According to Kherson OMA, a total of 210,000 shells were fired at Kherson oblast over the year. Since October, the situation has been complicated by a new threat, [remote mining](#) of Kherson streets. Russian drones dropped mines on streets, public gardens, and parks, having created deadly traps for civilians.

The occupiers continued to pursue a policy of terror in Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, and Donetsk oblasts, using GABs, missiles, and FPV drones to increase the number of attacks. These airstrikes, resulting in fatalities, injuries, and significant destruction, created an atmosphere of danger, psychological pressure on the locals, and deprived them of a normal life. The issue of using air defence systems for repelling attacks on Kharkiv remains unresolved. More and more people consciously chose to leave Kharkiv oblast for the sake of their children.

In such difficult conditions, passenger transport, health care facilities, banking institutions, post offices, and shops continued to operate in cities of these areas. Public utility companies performed their duties, helping civilians cope with the consequences of the destruction by having successfully provided most households with heating throughout the heating season. Civil society organisations and volunteers actively supported frontline and deoccupied communities which strengthened their resilience.

Experience of the frontline areas, e.g. Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia oblasts, showed that in order to increase energy sustainability, it is necessary to have backup power systems in place, invest in the protection of critical infrastructure facilities, increase the autonomy of energy supply at the local level, and strengthen coordination with international partners to promptly respond to the consequences of attacks.

Local authorities continued to cooperate with international partners to attract resources for reconstruction, provision of humanitarian aid, and implementation of investment projects.

The identification of individuals acting, in concert with Russian authorities, against Ukrainian society, as well as court judgements demonstrated Ukraine's determination to counter threats.

However, corruption during the reconstruction and repairs of destroyed facilities was a serious destabilising factor that undermined trust. Each case of abuse of that kind received much publicity in the media and on social networks, having fuelled public outcry.

Sentiments of the locals were adversely affected by a chaotic nature of mobilisation and actions of 'recruiters' going beyond the limits of the law. In Donetsk oblast, mobilisation was heatedly discussed on pro-Russian Telegram channels, with regularly published videos of TRSSC officers taking people away from the streets for mobilisation. A lack of official information about shelling made people use other sources of information which not only promptly informed them about important processes but also disseminated information about the location of checkpoints and TRSSC officers, using anti-Ukrainian and pro-Russian narratives. All the above factors weakened resilience and cohesion of Ukrainians.

The launch of preparations for the electoral process amid constant threats and security challenges could trigger tensions in many communities and become a destabilising factor.



The news about the return of people to their locations of origin in the occupied areas sparked a wide response. The Office of the President of Ukraine refuted statements by individual politicians on mass returns due to allegedly insufficient government support. The problem of return of IDPs remains unresolved and requires a consistent approach that should meet at least people's basic housing needs, facilitate employment, and provide for various social support measures.

## Relatively rear areas controlled by the Ukrainian government

Missile attacks on critical infrastructure facilities in the rear areas seriously affected the lives of the locals, having created additional challenges for maintaining the stability and life of cities and areas. Specifically, on 17 November, Russia's attack on Odesa [caused](#) power outages, a lack of heating and water, suspension of schools and electric transport. On 13 December, the enemy attacked Ukraine's energy infrastructure facilities with cruise missiles and drones. Prykarpattia [suffered](#) the most massive attack on critical infrastructure facilities since the outbreak of the full-scale war. As a result of a strike in Burshtyn, Ivano-Frankivsk oblast, a heat-generating company was damaged which led to a heat outage. Six energy infrastructure facilities [were damaged](#) in Lviv oblast. Hundreds of population centres were left without electricity until the local power grid was restored. No casualties were reported.

Within the last three months of 2024, local authorities of Ivano-Frankivsk, Zakarpattia, Lviv, Chernivtsi, and Odesa oblasts focused on maintaining the livelihoods of communities, assisting the AFU, eliminating and preventing the consequences of missile attacks in the oblasts, and ensuring uninterrupted heat and electricity supplies. Despite the efforts of authorities, social fatigue was growing. If earlier people perceived the absence of electricity, heat, and water as a consequence of the enemy's actions, now their anger was focused on authorities.

Notwithstanding regular attacks on port infrastructure facilities, Odesa ports remained critically important for the export of agricultural products, ensuring global food security. Export companies continued operating.


A quite active infrastructure development was recorded in the rear areas. New industrial parks were established, border crossing points were upgraded, and construction of new bridges was scheduled to improve connections with neighbouring countries. Along with that, conflicts arose when the implementation of infrastructure projects affected nature conservation areas.

Business development and activities of public utility companies were hampered by labour shortages. Efforts were made to put the system of vocational education and training back on track and encourage more women into the workforce. Meanwhile, tax evasion remained widespread, especially in the service sector.

Volunteering became an important part of civic identity of Ukrainians, with many of them being actively engaged. Various international organisations, public associations, and charitable foundations continued to provide aid to various target groups. However, there was significantly less information about their activities in the media, probably because of a change in focus or a decreased level of coverage of volunteer initiatives.

It is also important to note that the level of cooperation between different social groups, including volunteers, militaries, educators, and youths, was quite high and in general. People quite quickly responded to various initiatives, including gatherings and joint action for the sake of victory.

Various projects geared towards providing different population groups with social and psychological aid were implemented in the rear areas by civil society organisations and public authorities. The project activities covered different target audiences. Increased attention was given to the needs of veterans of the Russia-Ukraine war and their families. The creation of veteran hubs and specialised structures to support war veterans marked an important step towards their integration into communities.



Despite a campaign of recruitment to new brigades, the mobilisation situation remained tense because of a set of problems, including high losses on the battlefield, evasion of military service, and corruption scandals in the mobilisation system surrounding medical and social expertise commissions and recruitment centres.

# I. TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED AREAS

## 1. Changes in the system of governance

The trends of the previous months aimed at the rapid integration of TOAs into the system of the RF were preserved. To this end, various methods were used, including terror, propaganda, the imposition of Russian values and paternalistic social policies.

A distinctive feature of Donetsk oblast was active involvement of its representatives in the highest echelons of the Russian government. Specifically, the so-called Head of the parliament of the breakaway DPR, Artem Zhoga, [was appointed](#) as presidential plenipotentiary envoy to Russia's Ural Federal District and [included](#) in the Security Council of Russia, an advisory body at the RF President. The leader of the self-proclaimed DPR, Denis Pushilin, was elected to the Supreme Council of the United Russia party, the most influential body of the ruling party, membership in which is meant to be the highest party office for a Russian official.

### 1.1. Decisions of occupying authorities

[According to](#) the National Resistance Center, Russia-installed administrations in Ukraine's TOAs experienced an acute shortage of staff. To address the problem, the Kremlin decided to pay an additional bonus of RUB 30,000 to their employees until the end of the so-called special operation to attract more public servants from Russia and to encourage local collaborators who remain undecided.

#### >> FORCED PASSPORTING

Russian citizenship became mandatory for TOA residents. According to [decisions](#) of the occupying authorities, from 1 January 2025 onwards, a Russian passport is the only identity document. Although there is no formal direct requirement for obtaining Russian citizenship, those without it are deprived of the opportunity to exercise their rights; they cannot purchase real estate, receive health care and public services.

Moreover, without Russian citizenship, people automatically lose the right to receive pension payments. However, an exception [was made](#) for locals of Donetsk oblast's population centres occupied after September 2024. They have the right to temporarily receive the so-called social pensions worth RUB 10,000 to be paid within three months. Within this timeframe, pensioners are required to obtain Russian citizenship, otherwise they will lose the right to further payments. Starting 1 December, the so-called DPR passports [were terminated](#).

Russian law does not require renunciation of citizenship of another state when obtaining a Russian passport. This allows most residents of the occupied areas to retain Ukrainian citizenship and passports which they use for travelling to Ukraine or European countries.

As Ukrainian law does not recognise forced passporting of residents of the occupied areas, they remain citizens of Ukraine if they have not renounced their Ukrainian citizenship. However, the government's official position regarding those who have been forced to obtain Russian passports is unclear so far, which raises concerns among residents of the occupied areas about possible persecution in the event of reinstatement of Ukraine's control of TOAs. Despite a [statement](#) by the Prosecutor General that obtaining Russian passports may be a matter of survival and that Russian passport holders will be held liable only for particular crimes, the problem remains unresolved and has the potential to create conflicts.

**>> ZAPORIZHZHIA NPP**

Ukraine's Energy Minister, Herman Halushchenko, [stated](#) at a meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors in Vienna that the situation at Zaporizhzhia NPP was becoming increasingly dangerous due to frequent interruptions in external power supplies. He noted that since the occupation on 4 March 2022, the plant has faced almost monthly disconnections from the main power lines due to Russian attacks and was on the verge of a complete blackout for the second time in November.

In December, an official vehicle of the IAEA [was targeted](#) by a Russian FPV drone in Zaporizhzhia oblast. Fortunately, no casualties or injuries were reported. The President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyi, said that this attack shows Russia's attitude to international law and security and that the Russians could not have been unaware of their target and acted deliberately.

**>> BUDGET**

[According to](#) Luhansk OMA, revenues of the draft budget of the self-proclaimed LPR amount to RUB 144.8 billion, or approximately EUR 1.5 billion, of which almost 2/3 are Russia's subsidies, in particular, inter-budgetary transfers worth RUB 92.6 billion. As for own revenues of the so-called new region of the RF, *"proceeds from personal income tax make up the largest share of 83.4%. No investors can improve the situation so far,"* Luhansk OMA said in a statement.

On 20 December, the Russian government [allocated](#) over RUB 4 billion, or approximately EUR 42 million, for Kherson oblast under the [programme](#) entitled "Recovery and social development of the DPR, the LPR, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson oblasts". Vladimir Saldo, Russia-installed Governor of Kherson oblast, [promised](#) to pay off all salary arrears to public employees within ten days as a "Christmas gift", saying that arrears were due to the efforts to *"establish the system of governance in the oblast and the mistakes of heads of particular institutions and organisations"*.

**>> UNLAWFUL TAKEOVER OF UKRAINIAN BUSINESSES / RESOURCES**

In the TOAs of Kherson oblast, Russia-installed authorities [adopted](#) a so-called law to regulate centralised accounting and management of property. The property register should be maintained in digital and paper format. All information on properties, including their technical conditions and value, will be brought together into a unified database of the occupiers.

Pursuant to the 'law', property not included in the register cannot be used or disposed of; and registration includes the following types of property: real estate (land, buildings, structures, unfinished objects, vessels), movable property if its value exceeds RUB 100,000, or approximately EUR 1,000 (securities, transport, equipment), natural resources, museum funds, and other assets.

According to Luhansk OMA, the Ministry of Agriculture of the LPR warned that farmers of the so-called LPR are [required](#) to re-register their agricultural machinery in compliance with Russian law until 1 January 2026. Russian passports and documents of ownership of the machinery or its assignment to a legal entity following the so-called nationalisation are needed for the re-registration.

Despite the sanctions, the Russian invaders continued to illegally export coal, various equipment, and vehicles from Ukraine's TOAs to a number of countries. [According to](#) the East Human Rights Group, coal was exported under forged documents, making it possible to disguise the true origin of the product. Last year, coal mined in Ukraine's TOAs and [exported](#) to Turkey alone was worth at least USD 14.3 million.

350,000 tons of cargo [were shipped](#) in 2024 through Mariupol commercial port, one of the few large businesses that continues operating in the occupied city. According to the locals, the port is primarily used for shipping grain stolen from agricultural companies of the occupied areas. The newly installed authorities do not officially disclose details about the structure and geography of shipments.

Another commodity actively exported through Mariupol commercial port was represented by hundreds of thousands of tons of scrap metal, i.e. equipment dismantled from destroyed Ukrainian enterprises, in particular, two iron and steel works of the city.

## >> INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION

The occupying authorities of Mariupol reported that a total of 4,789 apartments were received from developers in 2024 and transferred to the city locals as compensation for destroyed housing. However, only 600–700 apartments are scheduled to be built for compensation purposes next year, with the main emphasis on the construction of housing for mortgage lending.

## >> HOUSING CERTIFICATES

The occupying authorities of Kherson oblast claimed they issued over 17,000 housing certificates to residents of the left-bank areas in 2024. They provide a particular category of people with the opportunity to get housing in the RF or in Russia-occupied areas at the expense of the Russian budget. However, from time to time, social media published posts about difficulties with the exchange of housing certificates, when people were often offered housing in Russia's declining or depressed regions.

## >> 'NATIONALISATION' OF PRIVATE HOUSING

The occupiers [posted](#) warnings of possible 'nationalisation' of property on fences of private homes in the coastal area of Kakhovka raion, Kherson oblast. The warnings said that houses whose owners fail to contact the occupying administration by 30 December 2024 and to provide property documents along with Russian passports would be 'nationalised'. It has to be mentioned that in April 2024, the occupying authorities of Kherson oblast made a list of real estate considered to be 'ownerless' and subject to the entry into the books of the occupying administration. There were over 1,000 real estate properties on the list as of late summer.

# 2. Humanitarian situation

The situation of drinking water supply remained critical in Russia-controlled parts of Donetsk oblast, with Donetsk suffering the most. [According to](#) the occupiers, the city received only 120,000 cbm of water daily, half the volume before 2022; and it [was rationed](#) to ensure five-hour supply every two days.

The occupiers no longer promised to ensure water supply on a 24/7 basis in the near term, [saying](#) this would be possible only following a "complete deoccupation" of the oblast. Even then, large-scale works will be needed, especially in the areas where hostilities were ongoing, to restore the severely damaged Siverskyi Donets–Donbas canal.

The issue of water supply is also acute for Luhansk oblast, especially for Russia-occupied Lysychansk, where it was partly restored only in 2.5 years following the occupation. [According to](#) Luhansk OMA, water was supplied on an hourly basis in the mornings and evenings and only if there was sufficient pressure in the pipeline network.

Access to medications in Luhansk oblast's TOAs of TOT was critical. [According to](#) Luhansk OMA, it was impossible to buy medications in 77% of population centres of the so-called LPR, or in 714 out of 920. To get medications, residents had to travel dozens of kilometres to the nearest pharmacies.

Furthermore, in 88 villages of the oblast, medications were provided only through paramedic and obstetric stations operating with reduced hours. The range of medical supplies there was extremely limited. In large cities such as Rubizhne or Siverskodonetsk, one pharmacy served an average of 10,000 people, without regard to visitors from neighbouring villages and cities.

The situation was even worse in more than 400 population centres where there were no paramedic and obstetric stations, which deprived residents of the opportunity to get doctor's advice.

A significant shortage of health care workers was recorded in the TOAs of Zaporizhzhia oblast, since most local doctors refused to collaborate with the occupying authorities. At its meeting, the occupying administration acknowledged the problem and noted that even the provision of Russian citizens in the TOAs with housing of Ukrainians who had fled would not help the situation in any way. The former are still unwilling to move in, the National Resistance Center [said](#) in a message.

The so-called Deputy Chairman of the breakaway government of Kherson oblast, Sergei Cherevko, [said](#) in an occupiers-controlled media outlet interview that in the left-bank TOAs of Kherson oblast, health care facilities were only 33% staffed with qualified personnel. According to him, despite expectations for healthcare workers to be attracted from the RF and Crimea under a relevant programme, only a few dozen of them arrived in the left-bank communities.

## 2.1. Filtration measures of occupying authorities

Ukrainians who failed to receive Russian passports can return to the occupied areas, primarily for sorting out property-related problems, only through Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport following the mandatory filtration procedure. [According to](#) human rights activists, Russia tightened filtration measures for Ukrainians, often banning them from entering the TOAs either for an indefinite term or until the completion of the so-called special military operation. If earlier bans were mostly not accompanied by marks in passports, today ban marks have become much more common.

Waiting and filtration measures for Ukrainians at Sheremetyevo [last](#) from 4 to 24 hours. People first need to fill out a questionnaire and a consent form for filtration measures. After that, border guards call them in turn to check up gadgets, take fingerprints and photos.

Eyewitnesses report that FSB officers demand that people give them passwords to have access to mobile phones and apps, check contacts and correspondence on Facebook, Telegram, WhatsApp and Viber. Empty or new devices often raise suspicions and become grounds for entry bans.

As reported by Russian sources, from October 2023 to October 2024, 107,000 Ukrainian citizens arrived at Sheremetyevo, of whom 83,000 were allowed into the RF. This [was told](#) by an official representative of the FSB Border Guard Service, but the reliability of the data is questionable.

## 2.2. Actions of occupying authorities regarding recruitment into armed formations

Russian President Vladimir Putin [signed](#) a decree for the conscription of 133,000 new servicemen in Russia's autumn draft that starts 1 October and goes until the end of the year. Vladimir Tsimlyansky, Deputy Chief of the Main Organisational and Mobilisation Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, [claimed](#) the autumn conscription cycle would take place "in all entities of the Russian Federation," including in occupied territories in Ukraine. Tsimlyansky said that conscripts would not be called up to participate in the special military operation in Ukraine and that the term of conscription remains unchanged at 12 months, Washington-based Institute for the Study of War (ISW) [reported](#).

The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry [lodged](#) a strong protest over forced mobilisation of TOA residents into the Russian army, stressing that this is a gross violation of Russia's international legal obligations, in particular, the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

## 3. Work on identity

### 3.1. Changes in education standards

[According to](#) pro-Russian Telegram channels, the occupying authorities promised to increase, starting January 2025, one-time payments under Zemsky Teacher programme to RUB 2 million for teachers who agree to move from the RF and work in occupied villages of Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Luhansk, and Donetsk oblast. Zemsky Teacher programme has been implemented in Russia since 2020. Payments are provided to teachers who have moved to work in rural population centres, industrial townships, urban-type settlements or cities with a population of up to 50,000 people.

In the TOAs of Luhansk oblast, the invaders installed anonymous whistleblower's boxes in some schools, urging students to report classmates and parents who are 'disloyal' to the occupying authorities, the National Resistance Center [reported](#). This was done under the guise of countering 'extremism'. School administrations are obliged to forward these reports to FSB officers. However, even without these reports, schools drew up lists of disloyal students which were then handed over to relevant departments of the occupying administrations.

### 3.2. Language politics

In the temporarily occupied left-bank areas of Kherson oblast, the occupying administration planned to set up centres for popularising the Russian language and literature. According to propaganda sources, Vladimir Putin proposed to establish such centres at libraries in the occupied areas of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson oblasts. The first centre has already been opened in Henichesk, Kherson oblast.


### 3.3. Politics of memory: place names, museum work, holidays and their celebration

In temporarily occupied Chaplynka, Kherson oblast, a bust of a Russian revolutionary and Soviet communist functionary, Valerian Kuibyshev, [was erected](#) near a lyceum on Dekabrystiv Street (Heroiv Maidanu Street, as renamed by Ukrainian authorities in March 2024). The occupying administration presented the installation of the bust as its restoration, since it had been formerly located near the same lyceum and dismantled as part of a decommunisation campaign prior to Russia's full-scale invasion.

The occupying administration of Zaporizhzhia oblast [sent](#) a letter to educational institutions demanding that they replace Ukrainian carols and shchedrivkas with the Russian anthem and songs about the Russian Tsar and the so-called special military operation in their New Year's performances.

### 3.4. Freedom of religion

Back in July 2023, the Russian Orthodox Church [excluded](#) Donetsk and Gorlovka Dioceses from the UOC (MP), registered them under Russian law, and made them directly subordinate to the ROC. Donetsk Diocese was still led by Metropolitan Hilarion who had been pursuing an open pro-Russian policy since 2000. In October 2024, he [was removed](#) from office and sent into ceremonial exile to Crimea. The formal reason for the removal was the Metropolitan's health condition. However, those close to him say that his physical condition was stable. Metropolitan Vladimir, a Russian native who formerly led Vladivostok Diocese and is a typical representative of the new generation of ROC functionaries, [became](#) the new head of the Diocese.



Former Archimandrite of Kherson Diocese of the UOC (MP) Siluan (Pasenko), who had formerly worked as vice-rector of Tavria Theological Seminary, joined Crimean Diocese of the ROC and serves as a full-time priest in the Church of the Three Saints in temporarily occupied Simferopol, as [reported](#) by the head of the OCU's Kherson Diocese.



## II. FRONTLINE AND DEOCCUPIED AREAS

### 1. Changes in the system of governance

From October through December, the political landscape and the system of governance remained stable in the frontline and deoccupied areas, with military administrations facing, amid Russia's unprecedented attacks on civilians, such urgent challenges as launching centralised heating, providing the population with heating materials, taking precautions against possible hours-long power outages, working on the most urgent infrastructure repairs, carrying out mobilisation, strengthening security and social protection measures.

#### 1.1. Decisions of authorities that affected cohesion

##### >> CONSTRUCTION OF DEFENCE FORTIFICATIONS

In December, the Ukrainian government allocated UAH 6 billion, or approximately EUR 138 million, for the construction of defence fortifications in [Kharkiv oblast](#), with some 800 pivot posts already equipped. The construction of 358 pivot posts and hundreds of kilometres of defensive lines worth a total of UAH 1.9 billion, or approximately EUR 45 million, was completed in [Zaporizhzhia](#).

##### >> 2024/2025 HEATING SEASON

Despite the approaching front lines, most communities of Donetsk oblast located far from the zone of active hostilities were provided with centralised heating, including those of Kramatorsk, Sloviansk, Druzhkivka, Oleksandrivka, Dobropillia, and partly Kostiantynivka and Pokrovsk in the areas where military operations were not ongoing. [Overall](#), heat was supplied to 2,868 apartment buildings and social facilities, including 49 health care institutions. 173 boiler houses were operating in the oblast, with the heating system decentralised and alternative power sources provided to boiler houses.

Centralised heating could not be launched in eight communities of Kharkiv oblast, including six in Kupiansk, one in Chuhuiv, and one in Kharkiv raions, due to hostilities and difficult security situation.

Notwithstanding a several-week [delay](#) and ongoing shelling, the heating season was launched in Kherson, with 65% of residential buildings, 85% of social facilities, and all health care facilities connected to heat as of 18 November.

##### >> DEMINING

A satellite survey and a cartographic analysis of the territories of three Ukraine's oblasts [were carried out](#) in Kharkiv oblast with the assistance of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme, and the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD). A humanitarian demining programme is targeted at supporting rural households and farmers with plots of up to 300 hectares.

In Kharkiv oblast, 11,277.6 sq. km of agricultural land were analysed, including 1,623 sq. km of uncultivated land, with 420,829 craters from explosive ordnance found. In Mykolaiv oblast, 9,804.4 sq. km were analysed, including 2,133 sq. km of uncultivated land, with 306,584 craters found. In Kherson oblast, 4,747 sq. km were analysed, including 719 sq. km of uncultivated land, with 311,666 craters found.



According to Kharkiv OMA, 34 pyrotechnic teams, 181 sappers, and 75 special equipment pieces of the SESU's consolidated unit, including 6 mechanised demining machines, [operated](#) in the oblast. Since the outbreak of the full-scale invasion, pyrotechnicians have surveyed 10,300 ha of the oblast's territory, including 3,900 ha of agricultural land, 4,300 km of power lines, 67 facilities, and 4,820 households. A total of 107,320 explosive devices were detected and defused.

To step up demining efforts, four Ukrainian manufacturing companies of Kharkiv oblast [tested](#) new specialised drones that detect not only metal shells but also plastic mines from a height, while artificial intelligence creates maps of mining.

UAH 1 billion, or approximately EUR 23 million, are to be earmarked from the state for mine action in 2025. In parallel with that, the Ukrainian government in December [cut](#) funding for the programme on compensating costs for humanitarian demining of agricultural land by UAH 81.67 million, for which UAH 3 billion, or approximately EUR 69 million, was initially allocated. These funds were channelled for the National Cashback and Winter e-Support programmes.

## >> EVACUATION

Kharkiv OMA stepped up evacuation measures in the front-line communities of Kupiansk and Boro-va raions due to the coming cold weather and expanded the number of temporary accommodation places in Kharkiv hostels. Most people who [remained](#) on the left-bank part of Kupiansk were pensioners reluctant to relocate. To make residents aware of evacuation possibilities, 29 boards were installed in the city, and 12,000 leaflets providing details were handed out.

No massive evacuation of people was recorded in Zaporizhzhia oblast; those who fled were primarily residents of front-line population centres. Due to intensified attacks along Orikhiv axis, a decision [was made](#) to forcibly evacuate the locals of Mala Tokmachka village located on the line of contact in Polohy raion. The police evacuated 22 people, and another seven left on their own. However, 16 locals remained in the village.

Within the monitoring period, an almost complete cessation of evacuation was reported in Donetsk oblast. This was accompanied by a new trend: IDPs started to return to the oblast, but not to their location of origin, but to safer communities where they settled with relatives or rented housing. Moreover, many people relocated from frontline cities not to other oblasts of the country, but to Kramatorsk or Sloviansk.

The above trend is dangerous in a way. First, there is an additional burden on the social and utility infrastructure of these cities already operating in difficult conditions. Second, an increase in the population in these cities may complicate evacuation in the event of an attack on Kramatorsk-Sloviansk agglomeration. Third, a threat of occupation may trigger a crisis relating to accommodation of IDPs inside the country. There are 300,000 to 500,000 people in these cities, and a sharp movement of this large number of people may cause logistical problems since evacuation will be possible only by one railway line and highways towards Kharkiv. Now, southern parts of the oblast are connected with the Dnipro by access roads not designed for heavy traffic.

Furthermore, there are no more housing reserves and places in temporary accommodation centres in many other oblasts of the country. No volunteering boom, as the one recorded in the beginning of the full-scale invasion, should be expected given the population's great fatigue. Most people who currently live in Donetsk oblast will postpone evacuation until the last minute, since they have lost fears of war and spent all their savings during the first evacuation wave. Hence, the deterioration of the security situation may spark serious problems for local and central authorities.

**>> REHABILITATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES**

In Kharkiv oblast, traffic [resumed](#) on the M-03 highway's bridge blown up by the Russians during the 2022 deoccupation operation, where a new 98-metre-long structure erected after the reconstruction.

In Snihurivka community, Mykolaiv oblast, a bridge crossing over the Inhulets River [was repaired](#) due to joint efforts of Ukraine's State Special Transport Service, the Oblast Military Administration, and international partners.

**>> MITIGATING THE CONSEQUENCES OF ATTACKS**

On the night of 21 December, the occupiers [launched](#) an airstrike on an oncology centre in Kherson with two GABs. Patients and medical staff were not injured, but the building suffered significant damage. Following the attack, rumours began to swirl on social networks about an alleged increase in the radiation background in the city due to damaged equipment. The OMA said these rumours were sparked by the Russians who used the airstrike for the IO. The Defence Council developed a set of measures for a safe removal of debris from the oncology centre, and the media [regularly](#) reported on the [radiation situation](#) in the city.

**>> INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

[According to](#) Kharkiv OMA, at the 19th meeting of the UNESCO Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, it was decided to dispatch a damage assessment mission to Derzhprom (State Industry Building) in Kharkiv to record damage sustained and plan the building's reconstruction. For the first time in history, the Committee urgently initiated the Ad Hoc Monitoring of Derzhprom damaged by Russia's shelling. The mission will record in detail war-related damage to the building and coordinate measures for its reconstruction. Moreover, the results of the mission's activity will become important evidence for further bringing Russian war criminals to justice.

Delegations of Kharkiv OMA and Kharkiv Oblast Council [signed](#) a memorandum of cooperation with the state of Ohio, the U.S., building on a longstanding relationship that promotes mutual progress in energy, digital technologies, bioeconomy, agricultural innovations, infrastructure development, and agricultural engineering.

In 2024, Mykolaiv [received](#) financial aid from international partners worth UAH 3.6 billion, or approximately EUR 85 million, including UAH 2.3 billion in international technical aid and UAH 475.7 million in humanitarian aid. Great support was provided by the Kingdom of Denmark which spent 60% of its aid to Ukraine for Mykolaiv. Besides, the city received a UAH 771.2 million loan from the European Investment Bank for the implementation of two projects, Development of the Water Supply and Wastewater System in the City of Mykolaiv with funding of UAH 356.7 million and Modernisation of the Trolleybus Fleet in the City of Mykolaiv with funding of UAH 414.4 million.

**>> INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION**

The Mayors of Kharkiv and Lviv [signed](#) a [memorandum of cooperation](#) under a nation-wide project, [Shoulder to Shoulder: Cohesive Communities](#). The document provides for the implementation of joint projects aimed at strengthening the socio-economic stability of both cities. Special attention is paid to attracting grants and partner support which will help accelerate the recovery of Kharkiv.

**>> eRECOVERY PROGRAMME**

The government [updated](#) the [eRecovery](#) programme, having simplified the procedure for applying for compensation for damaged or destroyed housing. From now onwards, Ukrainians can submit applications via Diia digital portal or any ASC regardless of the location of the destroyed housing, which significantly simplifies access to compensation.

The eRecovery programme is expected to [be extended](#) in 2025. In the words of Olena Shuliak, Chair of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on the Organization of State Power, Local Self-Government, Regional Development and Urban Planning, UAH 4 billion are to be earmarked for its implementation, including UAH 3 billion for housing certificates for those who lost their homes and UAH 1 billion for the compensation for damaged or destroyed housing. However, according to Shuliak, this amount is at least half of what is needed for the programme's complete implementation. She said Ukraine continued negotiating additional funding with international partners.

**>> INVESTIGATION OF WAR CRIMES**

Sweden [allocated](#) EUR 2.4 million to Ukraine to investigate war crimes committed by the Russian occupiers. According to the European Union Advisory Mission (EUAM) Ukraine, these funds will be used to upgrade the digital infrastructure of Ukraine's law enforcement and judicial systems which will significantly enhance the country's capacity to investigate and prosecute war crimes and other international crimes. One of the key initiatives will be the expansion of capabilities of SMEREKA electronic case management system to share documents between law enforcement agencies and prosecutorial bodies.

As of November, some 15,000 offenses committed by the occupiers in Luhansk oblast were entered into the Unified Register of Pre-Trial Investigations. Most of these crimes, 4,500, were registered under Article 438 "Violation of the Laws and Customs of War" of the Criminal Code of Ukraine. Another 771 recorded crimes were against the foundations of the national security of Ukraine, including 214 collaboration offences.

**>> ARSON ATTACKS ON MILITARY VEHICLES**

Throughout 2024, law enforcement officers of Kharkiv oblast [recorded](#) over 40 criminal offences of arson to 37 vehicles belonging to the AFU or used by military personnel. It was established that arson attacks were committed by unemployed young locals of Kharkiv and Kharkiv oblast who committed crimes on orders of Russian special services through anonymous Telegram channels. Most of the perpetrators were driven by a selfish motive, a lure of easy money. At the request of the 'customers', arson attacks on vehicles were video-recorded.

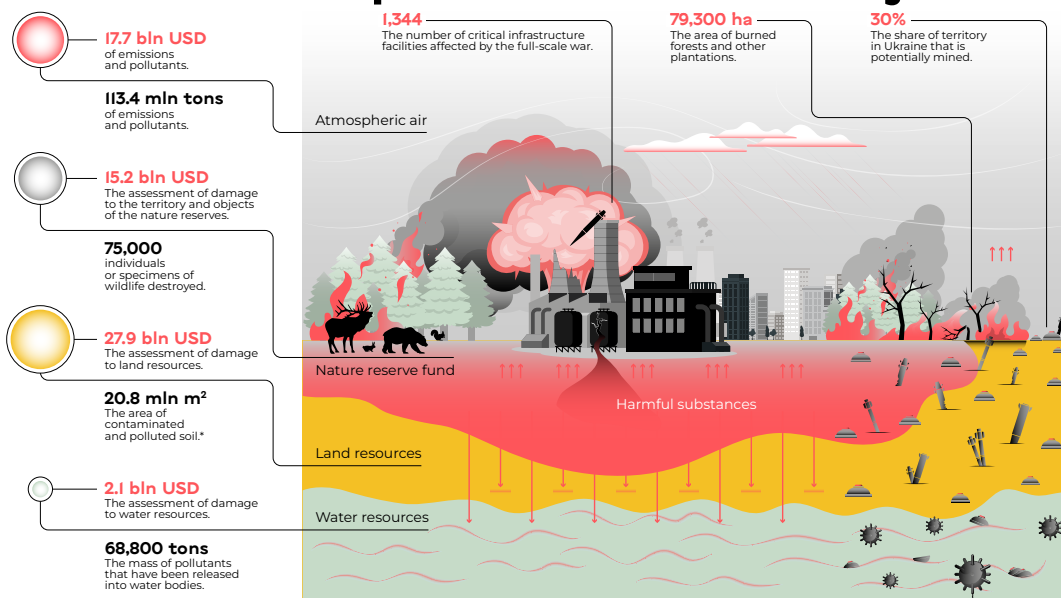
The Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, Dmytro Lubinets, [proposed](#) amendments to the Criminal Code of Ukraine to strengthen the protection against arson attacks on vehicles of military personnel and their families. According to him, law enforcement officers recorded 266 cases of arson attacks on vehicles of the militaries and volunteers in 2024.

**>> ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTERS**

Top Lead visual communications agency carried out a [study](#) of the damage caused to the Ukrainian environment by Russia's aggression. According to the estimates of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine acting as a general analytical partner of the study, the total environmental damage exceeded USD 62.9 billion as of 13 September. The following Ukraine's eastern oblasts suffered the most: Donetsk (over USD 17.7 billion), Luhansk (over USD 13.4 billion), and Kharkiv (USD 11.6 billion).

The major reasons for such significant damage were war-related fires, destruction of industrial facilities, and pollution of land and water bodies.

## The war's impact: the summary



Source: Russia-Ukraine War: Environmental Impact [study](#)

Along with explosive residues, an increase in the content of heavy metals, such as arsenic, lead, copper and zinc, in soil of the deoccupied areas of Mykolaiv oblast [was reported](#). Most of the contamination was coming from Russia's chaotic missile and artillery strikes at enterprises and warehouses storing plant protection products, agrochemicals, and fuel. Some areas suffered severe damage to soil cover and therefore the deterioration of its natural state. Significant resources and ongoing reclamation efforts will be needed to remediate these lands.

### >> CHALLENGES

Kherson sociologists [presented](#) in December new approval ratings among Kherson locals. Traditionally, Kherson OMA and CMA were in the last two places. 7% of respondents completely trusted the oblast authorities, while 35% somewhat trusted them. 3% of those surveyed completely trusted the city authorities, while 31% somewhat trusted them. The level of distrust in authorities does exceed that of trust. The highest level of trust was assigned to Ukraine's militaries stationed in Kherson, SESU employees, and volunteers.

On 30 December, Kherson OMA [approved](#) an action plan for the first quarter of 2025, including two items dedicated to preparations for the upcoming election. The first one was on collecting information about the operation of the bodies maintaining the State Register of Voters of Kherson oblast. The second item was devoted to collecting information on the condition of premises for voting and premises of precinct election commissions. Information must be accumulated by the 30th of each month. It has to be mentioned that the above items were also included in the OMA's action plan for 2023 and are purely formal.

Along with that, some political forces launched preparations for the opening of election headquarters. According to journalistic investigations published in the media, officials and representatives of charitable foundations close to the government were engaged in self-advertisement through distributing international charitable aid. Journalists consider these actions as preparations for the election.

## 2. Work on identity

The two-year [study](#) by Kherson sociologists revealed the phenomenon of unity of Kherson urban community manifested in the interactions of community members and displaced persons in a common information space, shared views on key issues, and the readiness to return to the city under conditions of security. A brand-new narrative of Ukraine's invincible Kherson contributes to shaping an identity that combines local and national patriotism. Sociologists emphasised the trends of switching to the Ukrainian language in everyday communication, choosing Ukrainian-language sources of information, and the growing interest in Ukrainian culture. Meanwhile, a decrease in the return motivation of some IDPs due to their successful adaptation in new places was recorded, which poses a challenge for the city's recovery and requires new ways of involving Kherson locals in community life.

### 2.1. Changes in education standards

Offline learning in the frontline areas remained dangerous due to ongoing shelling and air alerts and therefore took place in civil defence facilities. The construction of eight shelters in secondary educational institutions [was under way](#) in Kharkiv oblast. Over 10,000 school children of the oblast studied in the available defence facilities in the mixed format (partly offline and partly online). Along with that, it was planned to complete renovations and equip another 104 shelters in schools and kindergartens of the oblast. According to Kharkiv OMA, 23 shelters will be equipped at the expense of the government in 19 territorial communities of Kharkiv oblast which will help provide offline learning for almost 15,000 children.

The construction of underground educational institutions [continued](#) in Kharkiv: three schools should have been built by the end of 2024 to be followed by another three. The first underground school for some 1,000 students operated in the Industrial District in two shifts, and six underground stations were used as underground schools.

The first underground school in Zaporizhzhia [started](#) operating in December. The school designed for 500 students per shift will operate in a normal mode starting 1 January.

The construction of an underground school in [Komyshevakh](#) located 20 km from the front line was [put on hold](#), with plans to return to this issue in January 2025. The Head of Zaporizhzhia OMA, Ivan Fedorov, said the pause was due to information pressure regarding a possible offensive on Zaporizhzhia which affects public sentiments. He added that such forecasts are nothing but IO elements.

The construction of underground schools in Zaporizhzhia was accompanied by scandals surrounding cases of alleged abuse. [According to](#) Zaporizhzhia Investigation Center, procurement prices for construction materials appeared to be inflated.

Despite Russia's heavy shelling, local protests, and several-year online learning, the construction of two underground schools was under way in Kherson. The city authorities actively defended the need for implementing the above construction projects worth a total of UAH 185 million, or approximately EUR 4.25 million. However, an investigation by [Bihus.Info](#) revealed ties between construction contractors and representatives of the local administration, leading to questions about the transparency of these projects.

Although the underground schools are supposed to serve as shelter facilities, a lack of open discussion, doubts about the transparency of the projects, and disregard for the protests of Kherson community members sparked conflicts between the community and the authorities. This demonstrates that a lack of proper civic engagement could turn even useful initiatives into a source of distrust and protests, adding more challenges to an already difficult situation.

## 2.2. Politics of memory: place names, museum work, holidays and their celebration

On 15 November, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine [renamed](#) Sievierodonetsk Raion State Administration, Luhansk oblast, as Siverskodonetsk Raion State Administration. The city was renamed as Siverskodonetsk in September 2024.

In Zaporizhzhia, a street [was renamed](#) in honour of the Heroes of the 65th Separate Mechanised Brigade of the AFU. This unit has been defending the Zaporizhzhia axis for two years; its militaries participated in the deoccupation of Robotyne.

On 28 November, following a two-year red-tape, Kharkiv Oblast Council [named](#) the former Pushkin Theatre after a Ukrainian writer Hryhorii Kvitka-Osnovianenko.

## 3. Joint action

### 3.1. Cooperation at the community–authorities level. Trust in decisions of authorities. Response to the needs, business and civic initiatives

#### >> NEEDS OF WAR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

In Zaporizhzhia oblast, 63 war veterans and families of the deceased [received](#) cash housing certificates worth a total of over UAH 125 million, or approximately EUR 2.87 million. Each certificate is worth UAH 1.8 million to UAH 2.3 million, or approximately EUR 40,000 to EUR 53,000, depending on family composition and other factors. War veterans and families of the deceased can purchase housing on the primary and secondary markets in any oblast of Ukraine.

In Kharkiv, war veterans and their family members [can receive](#) grants under the eRobota programme. Since the beginning of the year, funding of a total of over UAH 12 million has been approved for 24 applicants.

A new information platform for military personnel, war veterans, their families, families of prisoners of war and the deceased [was presented](#) in Mykolaiv. The platform offers services for physical rehabilitation, legal and psychological support, financial aid, entertainment, as well as discounts from companies. The resource runs in test mode, with some 100 service providers already registered.

A Mykolaiv-based company, Nibulon, [expanded](#) its veteran employment programme through engaging not only war veterans mobilised into the AFU from the company, but also all those returning from military service. The company offers Russia-Ukraine war veterans an opportunity to master a particular profession online.

#### >> PROVIDING AID AFTER ATTACKS

A rapid response bus, designed to provide aid to victims of shelling, [was put into service](#) in Kharkiv. It operates as a heating point and temporary shelter for people in need of support after enemy attacks. The first trip took place on the evening of December when the enemy attacked the city's Saltivka district with a drone.



## 4. Changes in the social structure

### 4.1. Challenges related to the situation of women and children, people with disabilities

Kharkiv OMA [signed](#) a memorandum of cooperation with a separate unit of Action against Hunger (Action contre la Faim) in Ukraine. It provides for the support to 15 family-type orphanages, in particular, preparation of housing for the 2025/2026 autumn-winter period, including repairs of individual premises, insulation, replacement of windows and roofs, improvement of heating systems, provision of alternative power sources, etc.

On 27 December, 50 electric bicycles were handed over to 11 communities of Zaporizhzhia oblast as part of [Proliska](#) humanitarian mission. This initiative, implemented with the support of the Humanitarian Fund for Ukraine and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, will enable specialists to more rapidly provide aid to vulnerable groups of the population, especially in frontline areas.

### 4.2. Needs of displaced persons. Response

Some 100,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), the majority of whom were residents of Kherson oblast, lived in Mykolaiv oblast as of December 2024. Most IDPs were waiting for the opportunity to return home and lived with relatives or in rented homes rather than in specially equipped accommodation centres.

[Vovchansk](#) and [Kurylivka](#) humanitarian hubs were opened in Kharkiv oblast to provide evacuees with legal counselling, psychological support, humanitarian and hygiene kits, and consultations on compensation under the eRecovery programme. According to Kharkiv OMA, a network of such humanitarian hubs will be expanded, and more services will be provided. Specifically, it is planned to open Kupiansk humanitarian hub.

Luhansk Oblast Recovery and Development Office opened in Dnipro in October 2023 [has remained](#) inaccessible due to a lack of public information about its address and opening hours, according to [Bahmut.in.ua](#) media portal. Despite the allocation of over UAH 1.1 million by international partners to create a modern office for supporting those in need, it is used only by a narrow circle of people. The office does not have a staff list, with its staff consisting of 57 employees of Luhansk Oblast Administration and oblast institutions who continue to perform their duties in their assigned office. Notwithstanding high expectations for this centre, its activities are limited to formal functions, including consultations and collection of war damage data.

In November, a focus of public attention was on a [statement](#) by Petro Andriushchenko, advisor to the Mayor of Mariupol, who said some 30% of locals had returned to the temporarily occupied city because of insufficient assistance from Ukrainian authorities in addressing the problem of housing for IDPs. The statement was later [supported](#) by MP Maksym Tkachenko claiming that 150,000 Ukrainians had returned to the occupied areas, including 70,000 to Mariupol. He explained that the main reason for the return was the inability of IDPs to establish a new life in new locations due to a lack of government support in housing and social security issues. Furthermore, a significant share of IDPs could not find jobs due to biased attitude of employers and low-paid job offers. If IDPs get jobs, they are deprived of the right to government aid to compensate the cost of rented housing equalling around UAH 2,000 per person, or approximately EUR 45, and UAH 3,000, or approximately EUR 70, per child or disabled person. The MP also underscored that the number of free accommodation locations with acceptable living conditions is very limited.

After a while, Tkachenko said these figures were his assumption. In his turn, Andriushchenko explained that only 40,000 Ukrainians had returned to Mariupol to re-register their housing ownership rights, of whom 60% left for Ukraine again. The Mayor of Mariupol, Vadym Boichenko, dismissed his advisor.

Iryna Vereshchuk, Deputy Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine and Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories in 2021–2024, said in a commentary that there are currently no confirmed statistics: *“The government does everything it has promised by law. Perhaps this is*



*not enough, but we are at war, and public resources are limited. However, this is not a reason for going to the enemy occupation. I will never believe that thousands of Ukrainians are going to Russia's occupation because of a lack of UAH 2–3,000 per month in government aid."* She claimed the government cannot give an apartment to every IDP, emphasising the availability of temporary housing provided if needed. [According to her](#), within six months of 2024, 250,000 Ukrainians were removed from the IDP register, and it is unknown whether they fled the country or revoked their status. Overall, spending for aid to IDPs in Ukraine, as the Deputy Head reported, has been the second largest expenditure item of the state budget since 2022, amounting to UAH 150 billion, or approximately EUR 3.5 billion.

### 4.3. Needs of volunteers of Territorial Defence Forces. Response. Mobilisation. Exemption from military service

New rules for exempting employees from military service [came into effect](#) on 1 December 2024. To be granted the military exemption status, businesses should meet the following criteria: pay EUR 1.5 million in taxes and fees per year or more; receive foreign exchange earnings of at least EUR 32 million per year; be strategically important for the economy of the country and communities in Ukraine; timely pay social security contributions and have no arrears; have the status of Diia City resident; and be provided with communications and Internet services on an uninterrupted basis. Private companies can receive the above status if the average salary of their employees for the last quarter is at least UAH 20,000 and they have no tax arrears. These requirements apply to all businesses without exception.

According to the monitoring data on Donetsk oblast, the major problem was the abolition of "oblast criticality criteria" for businesses, which made it difficult to grant this status to local enterprises such as public utilities, health care facilities, and food companies. Pursuant to the [resolution](#) of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Donetsk OMA was supposed to approve the new criteria until 10 December, but many companies could not get the military exemption status due to bureaucratic delays. Moreover, when the website of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine was hit by Russia's hacker attack, a total of more than 60 registers became inaccessible and companies could not extend their criticality status in December.

In early October, a court ruling in the bribery case of Kherson TRSSC [was reported](#) by Kherson media. A corrupt scheme for evading mobilisation for money was used through entering fake information into military records and the Unified State Register of Conscripts, Persons Liable for Military Service and Reservists to remove particular individuals from military records.

# III. RELATIVELY REAR AREAS CONTROLLED BY THE UKRAINIAN GOVERNMENT

## 1. Changes in the system of governance

On 8 November, President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyi, [appointed](#) Myroslav Biletskyi as Head of Zakarpattia OMA. Biletskyi formerly served as Acting Head and Deputy to the Head of Zakarpattia OMA Viktor Mykyta, incumbent Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine.

### 1.1. Decisions of authorities that affected cohesion

#### >> ENERGY FACILITIES

The United Nations Development Programme in Ukraine [delivered](#) gas-piston cogeneration units under its Green Energy Recovery Programme to help Odesa meet its critical energy needs. The equipment was supplied thanks to the support of the governments of Norway, Sweden, and Japan. The added capacity is expected to benefit approximately 450,000 residents and cover 45% of Odesa's energy needs for water, heating, and sewage services (excluding water intake).

Solar panels handed over by international partners [were installed](#) in Odesa's four health care facilities. They will help cover the city's energy needs during power outages and save money.

Residents of another three condominiums in Lviv [took care](#) of their comfort and safety during possible power outages through installing backup power systems for their high-rise buildings. They can receive compensation of up to 50% of the cost of the purchased backup power equipment by joining the city's partial compensation programme. The City Council called on other condominiums to take advantage of this opportunity and make their buildings more energy efficient.

Swedish musicians [donated](#) SEK 75,000 to increase the energy sustainability of Lviv National Philharmonic named after Myroslav Skoryk. The Philharmonic could purchase additional heating and lighting equipment thanks to this financial effort of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music.

#### >> INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The Consulate General of the Republic of Poland [was inaugurated](#) in Odesa on 10 November. As part of the event, visitors could see an exhibition dedicated to Poles and Polish organisations supporting Ukraine during the war.

A new border crossing point (BCP), Nyzhankovychi – Malhowice (Staryi Sambir raion, Lviv oblast, bordering Przemyśl, Podkarpackie Voivodeship), [was opened](#) on the Polish-Ukrainian border with the throughput capacity of up to 7,000 people and 4,000 vehicles daily. Poland fully funded the construction of the border crossing point, while Ukraine built access infrastructure. The newly built facility will ease the burden on Medyka – Shehyni and Korczowa – Krakovets BCPs and increase logistic opportunities for humanitarian aid and business.

International auditors from Ukraine and Romania highly appreciated the [implementation](#) of a project on rehabilitating Chernivtsi – Vashkivtsi – Putyla – Ruska BCP highway, part of Romania-Ukraine Joint Operational Programme 2014–2020. The rehabilitation works were financed by the EU and Ukraine, with the total grant

amount of approximately EUR 2.2 million. The project marked an important step towards restoring international transport connections through Shepit – Izvoarele – Sucevei BCP closed for 14 years following Romania's accession to the Schengen area.

On 10 December, the Ukrainian government [ratified](#) an agreement with Romania on the construction of a bridge across the Tisza River. The bridge will connect Zakarpattia's Bila Tserkva and Romania's Sighetu Marmației. A border crossing point between these population centres is to be built in the future.

A Virtual Administrator of Lviv Administrative Services Centre project [was launched](#) in Germany's Würzburg to help Ukrainians abroad receive administrative services. The initiative is implemented as part of exchange of administrative experience and will contribute to strengthening international cooperation between partner cities. The Virtual Administrator project has been successfully operating in Gdansk, Poland, and Brno, Czech Republic. Over 300 people have already used this service.

## >> INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION

On 20 December, Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast Council [earmarked](#) UAH 10 million for the protection of defence fortifications in Donetsk oblast. The decision was made in accordance with the programme for mobilisation training and defence activities in Ivano-Frankivsk oblast for 2023–2027.

Perechyn City Council, Zakarpattia oblast, joined a nation-wide project, [Shoulder to Shoulder: Cohesive Communities](#), targeted at consolidating efforts of communities of Ukraine's central and western parts, as well as those of border and frontline communities where a significant part of infrastructure facilities was damaged and destroyed. The Council will help Kramatorsk and Bilozirka communities relocate social facilities to Zakarpattia oblast and provide community members with humanitarian aid. Together, they will hold cultural, educational, and sports events for active leisure of children from the two oblasts. Chernivtsi and Khotyn will cooperate with communities of Zaporizhzhia oblast. Chernivtsi will help Zaporizhzhia, while Khotyn will provide support to Vasylivtsi. *"This will mark the continuation of cooperation at the level of military administrations of Chernivtsi and Zaporizhzhia oblasts within the framework of which our oblast hosted internally displaced persons. Specifically, 12 Zaporizhzhia children returned from abroad to educational institutions of our oblast, another 20 orphans were enrolled in vocational training institutions. Three houses will be built for family-type orphanages relocated from Zaporizhzhia to our oblast,"* said Ruslan Zaparaniuk, Head of Chernivtsi OMA.

On 11 November, a public gathering [was held](#) in Odesa to celebrate [Kherson](#) Liberation Day. Some 60 residents of Kherson and Kherson oblast took part in the action. According to the Head of Skadovsk CMA, Serhii Kukhta, who participated in the gathering, the locals of temporarily occupied Skadovsk faced more violence from the Russian militaries, waiting for liberation against all the odds.

## >> OPERATION OF PORTS

Ukrainian ports [reported](#) a growth in cargo turnover in 2024. According to the Ukrainian Sea Ports Authority SE, a volume of cargo traffic amounted to 80 million tons as of 25 October, 29% up from 2023. Grain was the leading commodity in cargo turnover (almost 62%), with transshipment volume of 49.5 million tons.

Meanwhile, the situation in seaports remained difficult due to an intensification of Russian attacks on their infrastructure facilities. Several missile strikes on the ports of Greater Odesa have been recorded since early October, with civilians killed and injured. Trading vessels, grain warehouses, cargo cranes, and other port infrastructure facilities were damaged.

In response to the increased risks, Ukraine's Ministry for Communities and Territories Development announced the imposition of additional security measures for port workers through arranging mobile shelters and strengthening air defence. It was also announced that more funds will be allocated for rehabilitating Odesa port infrastructure.

Six seaports are currently operating, including the ports of Greater Odesa (Pivdennyi, Chornomorsk, Odesa) and the ports of the Danube cluster (Izmail, Reni, Ust-Dunaiysk) which prompted a 4.5% growth in the Ukrainian economy within the initial nine months of 2024.

## >> COMPENSATION FOR DAMAGED HOUSING

On 4 December, members of Odesa City Council adopted a decision to increase financial aid for owners of housing damaged due to Russia's armed aggression. It will amount to UAH 438,000, or approximately EUR 10,000, which is much higher compared to the previous 40 subsistence minimums, or around UAH 100,000. Financial aid will be provided from the city budget.

Also, Odesa locals whose homes were damaged due to Russia's armed aggression [will be provided](#) with targeted financial aid. A relevant decision was approved as part of the city target programme for 2024–2026, [Unbreakable Odesa](#). Aid [will be provided](#) to those who have no other housing in Odesa for a term of up to 12 months to cover rental costs.

The Executive Committee of Lviv City Council [adopted](#) a decision to pay compensation to the city locals whose homes [were damaged](#) due to air strikes on 4 September. Compensation will be provided for the replacement of windows, doors, and roofs damaged by the enemy attack. The amount of compensation to the victims is estimated at UAH 1.658 million thousand.

## >> BACKUP POWER FOR TRAFFIC LIGHTS

In Lviv, 90% of traffic lights [are connected](#) to backup power sources. This means that most traffic lights can work even during power outages, which increases road safety.

The [connection](#) of traffic lights to backup power sources was also ongoing in Chernivtsi. 23% of traffic lights ensure traffic safety in the city under all circumstances. They are primarily installed at intersections with heavy traffic or in main streets.

# 2. Work on identity

In early November, a large-scale literary project, Meridian Odesa poetry readings, [was launched](#) in Odesa with the participation of leading Ukrainian writers and volunteers. The initiative included 14 events organised with the support of the Ukrainian Book Institute and the German Robert Bosch Foundation. The latest Ukrainian books were presented, including those about volunteer support for the militaries, stories from the deoccupied areas, and reports from the front lines. Following the readings, the organisers, together with Ukrainian writers Yuriy Izdryk, Yaryna Chornohuz, and Iryna Tsilyk, went with poetry readings to Mykolaiv, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia.

## 2.1. Changes in education standards

In January, three centres for studying the “Defence of Ukraine” subject [were to be opened](#) in Chernivtsi at the Philosophical and Legal Lyceum No. 2, the Military Sports Lyceum, and the Higher Vocational School of Radio Electronics. The centres will be attended by tenth and eleventh graders of all lyceums of Chernivtsi community, with lessons for each class to be held once a month throughout the school day. The instruction of this subject is however complicated by a lack of qualified teaching staff.

A contest of rotor drone operators organised by Kruty Heroes Lyceum [was held](#) among school children in Lviv. This was the second round of the tournament launched last year. Such contests mark an important step not only for training future specialists on security and defence, but also for developing technical thinking among students. This year, 14 teams from Lviv schools took part in the competition. The organisers noted significant progress of participants compared to the previous year.

Donbas National Academy of Civil Engineering and Architecture, which operated in Makiivka before the war, will soon [be attached](#) to Ivano-Frankivsk National Technical University of Oil and Gas. To this end, a separate faculty of civil engineering and architecture will be created.

In Rakhiv, Zakarpattia oblast, a system of fines [was launched](#) for parents whose children skip classes, smoke, drink alcohol, steal, or commit acts of hooliganism. According to the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offences, parents will pay UAH 850 to 1,700 for the first offence and UAH 1,700 to 5,100 for a repeated offence within a year.

## 2.2. Language politics

On 16 October 2024, the State Language Protection Commissioner, Taras Kremen, [said](#) that since the beginning of 2024, his secretariat received 75 reports of violation of language rights in Odesa oblast regarding publicly available information. A total of 235 violation reports were received, with Odesa oblast ranking second, preceded by Kyiv (89 violation reports) and followed by Kharkiv oblast (18 violation reports). Taras Kremen issued 20 warnings and imposed 18 fines for violations of Article 28 of the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring the Functioning of Ukrainian as the State Language” as of 15 October.

In [Odesa oblast](#), an administrative protocol was drawn up against several deputies for using a non-state language at meetings. Among them was the Head of Odesa Oblast Council, [Hryhorii Didenko](#), Yaroslava Vitko-Prysiazhniuk, a representative of the State Language Protection Commissioner in southern Ukraine, [reported](#).

The idea of the Mayor of Ivano-Frankivsk, Ruslan Martsinkiv, to introduce the institution of language inspectors was continued (see Issue No. 12. July–September 2024). However, language inspectors ‘turned’ into [language volunteers](#) and should perform educational rather than controlling functions. In Ivano-Frankivsk, language volunteers started working on 28 October together with over 40 people of different ages who joined them. They will cooperate with the city inspectorate and, where appropriate, contact law enforcement agencies regarding violations of language legislation, in particular, the use of Russian on labels and in the service sector.

## 2.3. Politics of memory: place names, museum work, holidays and their celebration

Increasing attention was being paid to the creation of symbolic spaces, commemoration and perpetuation of the memory of those killed in the Russia-Ukraine war. In [Kelmentsi](#) and [Lukavtsi](#) of Bukovyna’s Berehomet community, alleys of memory of the fallen heroes of the war were opened. In [Stryi community](#), Lviv oblast, four memorial plaques were installed in honour of the fallen defenders on the facade of the gymnasium where they studied. In Stryi [Lyceum No. 6](#), six memorial plaques were unveiled to commemorate the soldiers who studied there. The events were attended by relatives of the deceased, representatives of authorities, clergy, educational institutions, and community members.

On 12 December, Odesa Oblast Council [approved](#) a new visual identity of the oblast, developed by a team of volunteers. [According to](#) Odesa OMA, it does not replace the official coat of arms of Odesa oblast which has been official since 2002 but aims to increase the oblast’s visibility, promote the development of tourist attractions, and raise investment.

On 4 December, Odesa City Council [adopted](#) a decision to channel UAH 200,000 for a project on dismantling 13 monuments bearing Russian imperial symbols. The list includes monuments to a cybernetics scientist Viktor Glushko, Russia’s Emperor Alexander II (1855–1881), Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, a bust of a Soviet military leader Marshal Rodion Malinovsky, two monuments to poet Alexander Pushkin, etc. These memorials are to be taken to other places.

Cultural figures who oppose the dismantling of monuments and the renaming of streets in Odesa [appealed](#) to UNESCO to postpone any decisions until after the war. The [appeal](#) to the UNESCO Director-General, Audrey Azoulay, says the decision was made without public consultations and thereby may threaten the historical heritage of the city. The document was signed by 118 people, including the conductor of the Odessa Philharmonic Orchestra Hobart Earle, the head of the scientific department of Odessa Art Museum Kyrylo Lipatov, Isaac Babel’s daughter Lidia and the writer’s grandson Andrii Maliaev-Babel, the journalist and public figure Leonid Shtekel, and the artist Mykhailo Reva. The authors noted that hasty application of decolonisation legislation may harm the historical downtown of Odesa and its cosmopolitan spirit.

## 2.4. Freedom of religion

Lviv oblast became the first in Ukraine where there were no longer a single registered religious community associated with the ROC, the Head of Lviv OMA, Maksym Kozytzky, [said](#). Until 2014, there were 66 religious communities in the oblast, and 54 as of 24 February 2022. Following the outbreak of the full-scale invasion, 27 communities converted to the OCU and another 27 ceased activities on their own initiative.

In Odesa, a rector of a church of the UOC (MP) [was served](#) with two notices of suspicion for inciting religious hatred and justifying Russia's war against Ukraine, the Security Service of Ukraine in Odesa oblast reported on 18 December. According to investigators, the rector praised Vladimir Putin during his sermons, glorified the Russian militaries, and incited religious hatred among parishioners. Forensic linguistic analysis confirmed that he had carried out propaganda and subversive activities in favour of the RF. The rector was sentenced to a fine or imprisonment up to two years.

On 20 November, a procession of supporters of the UOC (MP) [was held](#) on the border of Chernivtsi and Ternopil oblasts. It started on 19 November in Chernivtsi. Some 1,000 people participated in the event, media said. In accordance with applicable legislation, administrative protocols were drawn up against the organisers of the procession for "violating the procedure for holding assemblies, rallies, street marches and demonstrations" temporarily prohibited for the duration of martial law.

On 13–15 November, the 18th All-Ukrainian Conference of Military Chaplains of the UGCC, organised by the Department of Military Chaplaincy of the Patriarchal Curia of the UGCC, [was held](#) in Zakarpattia oblast. The meeting [was supported](#) by Mukachevo Greek Catholic Diocese.

## 2.5. National minorities

According to Zakarpattia OMA, the number of ethnic Hungarians in the oblast [has decreased](#) from 150,000 to 70–80,000 since the onset of the war, as many of them fled abroad. "We officially use the pre-war figure of 150,000 recorded in the last census. However, there is also the register of believers of Zakarpattia Reformed Church, as the vast majority of Zakarpattia Hungarians are reformists, which gives a figure of 58,000 as of early 2023. Off the record, we believe that it is worth talking about 70–80,000 Hungarians who live in Zakarpattia," the OVA's Department of Nationalities and Religions reported. Migration trends earlier observed among the Hungarian community due to economic factors have now intensified because of security threats. Also, in the third year of the full-scale war, there was an upward trend of people leaving villages where members of national minorities live traditionally and in large numbers.

A survey entitled "The State of Bullying of Roma Children in Schools" [showed](#) that 34% of bullied children lose their desire to study, and 44% believe they can be protected against bullying only with the help of adults. Only half of those surveyed know how to avoid violence and where to get help. The survey was carried out among 500 participants in Zakarpattia, Zaporizhzhia, and Odesa oblasts by experts of Blago CF, the REYN-Ukraine network with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, and the international human rights organisation, Minority Rights Group. According to the survey results, Roma children are most often bullied because of their ethnicity, behavioural characteristics, language barrier, cultural differences, and socio-economic class.

On 1 December, Chernivtsi [celebrated](#) the National Day of Romania during which Romanian diplomats, led by the Ambassador of Romania to Ukraine, Alexandru Victor Micula, and representatives of the Consulate General of Romania in Chernivtsi, met with members of the Romanian community of Chernivtsi oblast.



## 3. Joint action

### 3.1. Cooperation at the community–authorities level. Trust in decisions of authorities. Response to the needs, business and civic initiatives

#### >> NEEDS OF WAR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

In Ivano-Frankivsk, 181 war veterans and their family members [received](#) housing certificates. This was made possible through the allocation of UAH 370 million by the government for the purchase of housing for the Carpathian defenders. Housing certificates were granted to war veterans with disabilities of groups I and II, relatives of the deceased, and participants in military operations from among IDPs. Veterans independently choose commissioned housing in the secondary or primary market.

A total of around UAH 104 million [was allocated](#) from the state budget for Bukovyna to purchase housing for 48 war veterans and their family members.

An up-to-date rehabilitation department [was opened](#) for war veterans in Morshyn, Lviv oblast. During the opening ceremony, a memorandum of cooperation was signed between Morshyn City Hospital and [Superhuman Center](#). Hence, various services for motor function recovery will be available to patients. Medical aid will be provided by specialists trained at Superhuman Center.

In November, a rehabilitation centre for war veterans, [4.5.0. Prykarpattia](#), was opened in Kalush, Ivano-Frankivsk oblast. The centre was established through the support of philanthropists and the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation which provided partial funding for the facility's construction. The centre is in a 280-square-meter building rented for a symbolic amount from the local authorities. It receives 10–15 patients per day and provides ongoing medical aid to those who need to restore motor functions. The centre's goal is to help war veterans return home and continue rehabilitation in comfortable conditions, because their after-war recovery may take long.

An innovative rehabilitation centre for Ukraine's defenders wounded in the war of RECOVERY nationwide network [opened its doors](#) in Chernivtsi with the financial support of Victor Pinchuk Foundation. The facility's inpatient unit can accommodate 60 patients at a time. It also provides for individual and group psychotherapy, classes with speech and language therapists. Conditions have been created for psychologists to work with military families.

The first in Ukraine veteran leadership training programme [was launched](#) at the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU). As part of the programme, initiated by the CHESNO Movement in cooperation with the UCU School of Public Administration, 25 war veterans will study the fundamentals of politics and leadership for four months. Participants were selected from about 100 candidates.

411 specialists for the support of war veterans started working in Ukraine's communities. They will provide veterans and their families with information and support, guidance on obtaining statuses, benefits, and services, as well as assistance with rehabilitation, employment, starting a business, and more.

14 specialists in supporting veterans [worked](#) in communities in Chernivtsi oblast.

In Ivano-Frankivsk oblast, 85 people [registered](#) applications to become specialists who assist veterans. The government allocated UAH 6 million for the implementation of a relevant project in the oblast.

**>> CREATION OF INDUSTRIAL PARKS**

Industrial parks have become an important element of economic recovery through providing opportunities for sustainable development and creating new jobs in communities. One of the largest projects, Kalush Production Industrial Park, [is going](#) to create over 2,000 jobs in Kalush.

This park will be the third to operate in Kalush community, along with the private Kalush Industrial HUB and the municipal Galicia. New production facilities are expected to produce a wide range of products, including chemicals, furniture, metal products, paper and rubber products.

The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine [included](#) Zakarpattia oblast's Muzhay Industrial Park in the Register of Industrial Parks. The project is expected to create up to 427 new jobs and attract UAH 763 million in investment.

The government also [included](#) Chernivtsi Industrial Park in the Register. Its construction is scheduled to be completed until 2025. The park will operate for 30 years specialising in the processing industry, scientific and technical as well as transport and logistics sectors, with around 750 jobs to be created.

**>> INVESTMENT PROJECTS**

The first gypsum mixture production plant of the Saint-Gobain group [was opened](#) in Ukraine's Obertyn community, Ivano-Frankivsk oblast. The Saint-Gobain group invested more than EUR 11 million in the construction of the plant launched in September 2023. The plant will produce innovative products to meet the needs of the domestic market, in particular, gypsum mixtures under the Rigips brand. The annual production capacity of the plant is 60,000 tons. It is planned to employ some 50 people at the plant.

## 3.2. Cooperation at the level of society. Initiatives. Trust between groups

In October, a public discussion entitled "Lviv Oblast in the Time of War: Challenges and Sources of Resilience" [took place](#) in Lviv. The event organised by the National Platform for Resilience and Social Cohesion brought together representatives of oblast and city authorities, the public, activists and, most importantly, many local community leaders and representatives. The discussion was of great importance for sharing experience and strategies for resilience and cohesion in the time of war.

**>> AID FOR THE AFU**

There is a strong core of people all over Ukraine who have dedicated themselves to volunteering in addition to their full-time jobs.

The key areas of volunteering in wartime include the following:

*Aid for the militaries:* fundraising for necessary military equipment / vehicles and so forth which civilians can purchase on their own, clothing, food, medical supplies, and more. An example of this activity type is the production of [remote mine-laying systems](#) in Chernivtsi. Charity fairs are being held on an ongoing basis to raise funds for the AFU (over UAH 320,000 was raised for the 24th Separate Mechanised Brigade named after King Danylo at the traditional Winter Concert [held](#) by Lvivska Khvylya radio station; over UAH 160,000 [was raised](#) for the repair of electronic warfare equipment and vehicles for Ukraine's defenders at a film screening in Prykarpattia's Vorokhta,

- *Aid for IDPs: financial, socio-psychological, etc.* On the eve of St. Nicholas Day, a number of organisations started raising funds for gifts, various events, and so forth (e.g. an action from Youth Residence, [Share Your Dream with Us](#)),
- *Aid for those living in the frontline and deoccupied areas* ([Christmas gift drive](#) for children of Kharkiv, Sumy, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, and Kherson oblasts),



- *Cultural diplomacy*: representatives of various professions and social groups spread information in different parts of the world about resistance of the Ukrainian people to the Russian aggression. (At the largest film festival for children, Kineko, in Tokyo, a young girl from Chernivtsi, Kira Melnychuk, [presented](#) a Broken Childhood film created by the students of AIDA media studio at the onset of the full-scale war).

## >> MASS RALLIES

Every Sunday at 3 p.m., the central square of Chernivtsi [hosts](#) a rally under the motto “Don’t be silent! Captivity kills!” in support of prisoners of war, missing persons, and their families.

A Christmas rally, “Shchedryk for those we are waiting for”, in support of prisoners of war [was held](#) in Chernivtsi on 23 December. Chairs were placed on the central square, with military jackets hanging and candles lit. More than a hundred people joined the action.



*“Shchedryk for those we are waiting for” Christmas rally in support of prisoners of war*

Source: [Bukinfo](#).

## 4. Changes in the social structure

### 4.1. Challenges related to the situation of women and children, people with disabilities

The Volunteer Psychological Support Centre [was opened](#) in Odesa by World Mental Health Day. An international charitable foundation, Your City, gathered a team of highly qualified specialists, including psychologists, psychotherapists, and educators who provide a comprehensive approach to restoring mental health. The Centre offers free psychological support to all population groups: IDPs, children from four years old upwards, adolescents, their parents, people of retirement age, and those who have experienced psychological difficulties caused by war.



On 8 October, a new service, [Social Taxi](#), providing free services for people with disabilities was presented in Odesa City Council. At the first stage of the service's operation, six cars are to be used. The service will be available for people with disabilities of groups I and II, children with musculoskeletal disorders, and people with visual impairments of groups I and II. They will be able to travel free of charge to local self-government bodies, public executive authorities, courts, as well as health care, therapeutic and prophylactic, recreational and rehabilitation facilities, and banking institutions. They will also be able to visit social, cultural and educational institutions, prosthetic and orthopaedic enterprises, bus and railway stations.

Due to the war, 18 orphans and children deprived of parental care [were evacuated](#) from Zaporizhzhia oblast to Lviv oblast together with their accompanying persons. More than 200 evacuated children temporarily stay in 15 institutions of Lviv oblast.

There were 4 family-type orphanages in the oblast, 4 foster families, and 73 guardian families raising children evacuated from the zone of hostilities. Lviv OMA expressed gratitude to New Horizons for Children Ukraine and Medical and Psychological Assistance volunteer community of Lviv oblast for their support in placing children.

In Hlyboka community, Chernivtsi oblast, a university of the third age [was opened](#) at a social services centre. Its goal is to promote social adaptation, support physical and mental health of the elderly and people with disabilities. Students 60+ have a chance to study for free at the literary and artistic, information, geographical, local history, and self-care faculties.

Naftogaz [provided](#) families of heroes and pensioners in Chernivtsi oblast with uninterrupted power supply for gas boilers. The procurement was made under Zihriy (Warm Up) project implemented in Lviv, Kharkiv, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Kirovohrad oblasts. Socially vulnerable families were aided by Naftogaz of Ukraine NJSC, Energy of Victory of Ukraine CF, and Dobrobat volunteer building division.

## 4.2. Needs of displaced persons. Response

Notwithstanding the [approval](#) of IDP Support and Integration Programme for 2025–2026 by Ivano-Frankivsk City Council, funding for its implementation is not currently provided. At its session, Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast Council also [approved](#) the Comprehensive IDP Support Program for 2025–2027. All measures are to be funded from budget allocations, without defining specific amounts of budget support.

### >> HOUSING FOR IDPs

A [guide](#) to inform IDPs was developed in Ivano-Frankivsk oblast. It contains up-to-date information about temporary accommodation facilities (TAFs), including their addresses, accommodation conditions, the total number of beds, as well as the number of places adapted for persons with disabilities and low-mobility groups. Furthermore, each TAF has photographs to help newly arrived and evacuated IDPs better navigate accommodation options.

In Chernivtsi, preparatory works were completed, and excavation works were carried out as part of the EU-funded NEFCO project to [build](#) three apartment buildings for internally displaced persons. These new buildings will accommodate over 600 IDPs. The EU's grant for Chernivtsi is EUR 10.5 million.

In Vikno village, Chernivtsi oblast, a hospital building [will be renovated](#) to provide housing for IDPs. The estimated cost of the project is over UAH 75 million. Renovations will be carried out within the framework of a grant agreement with the International Finance Corporation.

## >> SUPPORT AND ADAPTATION OF IDPs

A project on socio-psychological support for IDPs, [You Can Do It!](#), was carried out in Chernivtsi. In October, it reached more than 500 people. Participants took an active part in project activities and gained positive experience to put into practice their goals and ideas. The “You Can Do It!” project is carried out by Skill Hub NGO under “Assistance to IDPs in the Western Region through Local Partnerships” programme implemented by Wings of Hope CF with the financial support of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Czech Republic and Assistance on the Spot activity.

On 13 December, IDP women from Luhansk, Kharkiv, Sloviansk, Nikopol, and other cities of Ukraine [completed](#) free training in tailoring in Lviv as part of “More Opportunities for Youth in Ukraine” project, co-funded by Germany’s Schüler Helfen Leben.

50 IDP women from Chernivtsi acquired similar skills at [courses](#) organised by Pobratym Center within the framework of a project entitled “Three Recovery Hubs for IDP Women”. The project implemented throughout 2024 in Chernivtsi, Odesa, and Zaporizhzhia offered online and offline training, psychological and legal counselling.

IDPs were integrated into communities through various projects. Special attention is given to [Kitchen of Understanding](#) initiative, where IDPs from Russia-occupied areas and locals shared traditions of their oblasts.

## 4.3. Needs of volunteers of Territorial Defence Forces. Response. Mobilisation

The procedure for exemption from military service was resumed on 1 December and is currently carried out only via the Diia public services portal. All enterprises that are critical to the functioning of the economy must confirm their status by 28 February 2025. The process was suspended in October to verify the grounds for recognising enterprises, institutions and organisations as critical. According to the verification results, 5% of businesses [lost](#) their status. The reasons range from unjustified wage reductions to abuses relating to the overstated number of those exempt from military service and the inclusion in the list of critical business of those not pertaining to that category.

In Chernivtsi oblast, more than 20 businesses [lost](#) their status of being critical to the functioning of the economy, which exceeds 11% of the total number of enterprises that previously had this status. As of early October, the list of critical businesses included 185 enterprises and organisations of the oblast, of which almost half were public utilities, health care facilities, social assistance institutions, processing as well as housing and utility enterprises. 21 businesses lost their status following an audit by the OMA working group. Another seven failed to submit documents on the extension of their status to the administration but managed to submit them to relevant ministries.

In response to a [decision](#) by the AFU command to set up recruitment centres in operational units, more and more units came to Ivano-Frankivsk oblast for volunteers. Specifically, in November, the 5th Separate Kyiv Assault Brigade [visited](#) eight territorial communities of the oblast to share information about vacant slots.

Ukraine’s first recruitment centre of the 38th Separate Marine Brigade of the 30th Marine Corps of the Ukrainian Naval Forces [was opened](#) in Lviv. Here, those interested can learn more about the service and vacant slots, communicate with the militaries, and get engaged in Ukraine’s defence effort. Although newly formed, the brigade has already earned fame for its heroic participation in battles for Donbas, deoccupation of Kherson oblast, and military service in Pokrovsk area.

A recruitment centre for the newly created 82nd Airborne Assault Brigade [started operating](#) in Chernivtsi. Its soldiers are currently performing tasks in Russia’s Kursk region and Ukraine’s Kharkiv oblast.

A high death toll among the militaries and daily news about military casualties posed a significant mobilisation challenge.

Recruitment to the AFU was attended with numerous difficulties. The media regularly published news on [revealing various schemes](#) for evading service, attempted [illegal border crossings](#), and warned about locations where TRSSC officers were usually spotted.

Since the onset of martial law, a total of over 40 Ukrainians [have died](#) attempting to illegally cross the border in difficult-to-reach mountainous areas or along rivers, in particular the Tisza.

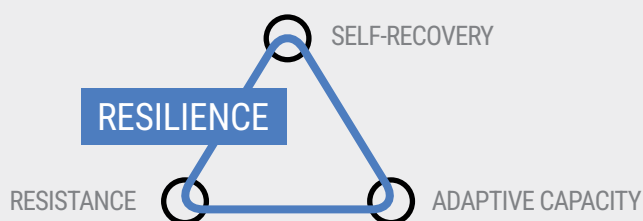
Moreover, social media posts told about incidents involving TRSSC officers, in particular, [beatings](#) during servicing military summonses and cases of [extortion of money](#) for military deferment.

The issue of [declarations of income](#) of local heads of TRSSCs and [MSECs](#) has become one of the most discussed in the media following the corruption scandals [surrounding](#) the Head of Khmelnytskyi Regional Center for Medical and Social Expertise (MSEC), Tetiana Krupa, who issued 'disability' certificated to more than 50 prosecutors of Khmelnytskyi oblast, including the oblast prosecutor.

# DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

## Conceptual framework of the approach of the National Platform for Resilience and Social Cohesion

**RESILIENCE** means a social practice at the national, oblast, and local levels that offers opportunities to overcome challenges and adapt to transformations.



We measure resilience in the following three dimensions:

- **adaptive capacity** of social systems and institutions to crises and sudden environmental changes
- **self-recovery** that means mobilisation of citizens, institutions to jointly solve various humanitarian, social, and security tasks,
- **resistance** means stabilisation of models of cooperation between the government, business community, and civil society which contributes to increasing the level of cross-sectoral trust in the course of transformation.

**SOCIAL COHESION** means the state of relationships in society between social groups (horizontal cohesion) and between society and the authorities (vertical cohesion). It is measured by the levels of trust and norms of reciprocity (development of positive social capital); the strength of civil society; and conflict management institutions being in place (e.g., responsible democracy, independent judiciary, etc.).

**RESILIENCE AND SOCIAL COHESION ARE BASED** on common approaches, shared values, and versatile models of cooperation.

**>> FOCUS:**

on actors, changes in the governance, assessment of vulnerability, adaptive capacity, and transformation as opposed to return to the previous state.

**>> DATA COLLECTION:**

- temporarily occupied and frontline areas – Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, and Kharkiv oblasts
- Ukrainian government-controlled areas where military operations are not taking place – Odesa, Mykolaiv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Zakarpattia, and Chernivtsi oblasts.

**DATA SOURCES:** publications in the media, decisions of authorities, draft decisions of authorities, data of surveys and public opinion polls, data of social networking sites, reports of non-governmental organisations,

and any other publicised information. The data are collected by coordinators of the National Platform for Resilience and Social Cohesion in 11 oblasts, based on data sources, their own understanding of the state of affairs and involvement in local cohesion processes.

## >> PROBLEMS

In the temporarily occupied areas:

- **Dynamics of occupation.** The advance of Russian troops, the situation in occupied population centres; opinions of the population of the oblast / community / political forces regarding Russia's occupation and military actions.
- **Changes in the system of governance.** Decisions and information of the occupying authorities; cases of collaborationism; seizure of property; expropriation of products by the occupying administrations.
- **Humanitarian situation.** Filtration measures of the occupying authorities; forced deportation and its routes; hostage taking; recruitment into armed formations; nature of evacuation; destruction; access to health care services.
- **Work on identity.** The operation of educational facilities; relocation of school children, students, and teachers; forced Russification; Russian state education standards; politics of memory: place names, museum work, holidays and their celebration; activities of religious organisations.
- **Changes in the social structure.** Challenges related to the situation of women, children, and people with disabilities.

In the Ukrainian government-controlled areas where military operations are not taking place:

- **Dynamics of military operations.** Shelling and attacks / weapons used against the civilian population; destruction.
- **Changes in the system of governance.** The organisation of activities of authorities and access of citizens to decision-making at the local level; access to public information; coordination of actions of volunteers and authorities, as well as actions between authorities at a variety of levels, authorities and the militaries, volunteers and the militaries, etc.
- **Humanitarian situation.** The accessibility of drinking water, food, communication, electricity; access to health care services; provision with humanitarian aid at the oblast level.
- **Changes in the social environment.** The attitudes in communities to changes in symbols, calendars (holidays, memorial days); renaming of streets and other public places; operation of educational facilities, relocation of school children, students, and teachers; civil society and business community, labour market.
- **The situation of internally displaced persons.** The availability of housing and employment; integration into the host community; networking.

## >> THE PUBLISHING FREQUENCY OF THE REPORT

The initial monitoring report covers the first four months of the large-scale invasion (from February through June), starting on 24 February 2022; the monitoring reports Nos. 2–9 have a two-month timeframe, and those including and following the monitoring report No. 10 have a three-month timeframe.



## ABOUT UKRAINIAN CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT POLITICAL RESEARCH

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## RESILIENCE AND COHESION OF UKRAINIAN SOCIETY DURING THE WAR

Periodic report based on monitoring materials from selected regions of Ukraine  
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