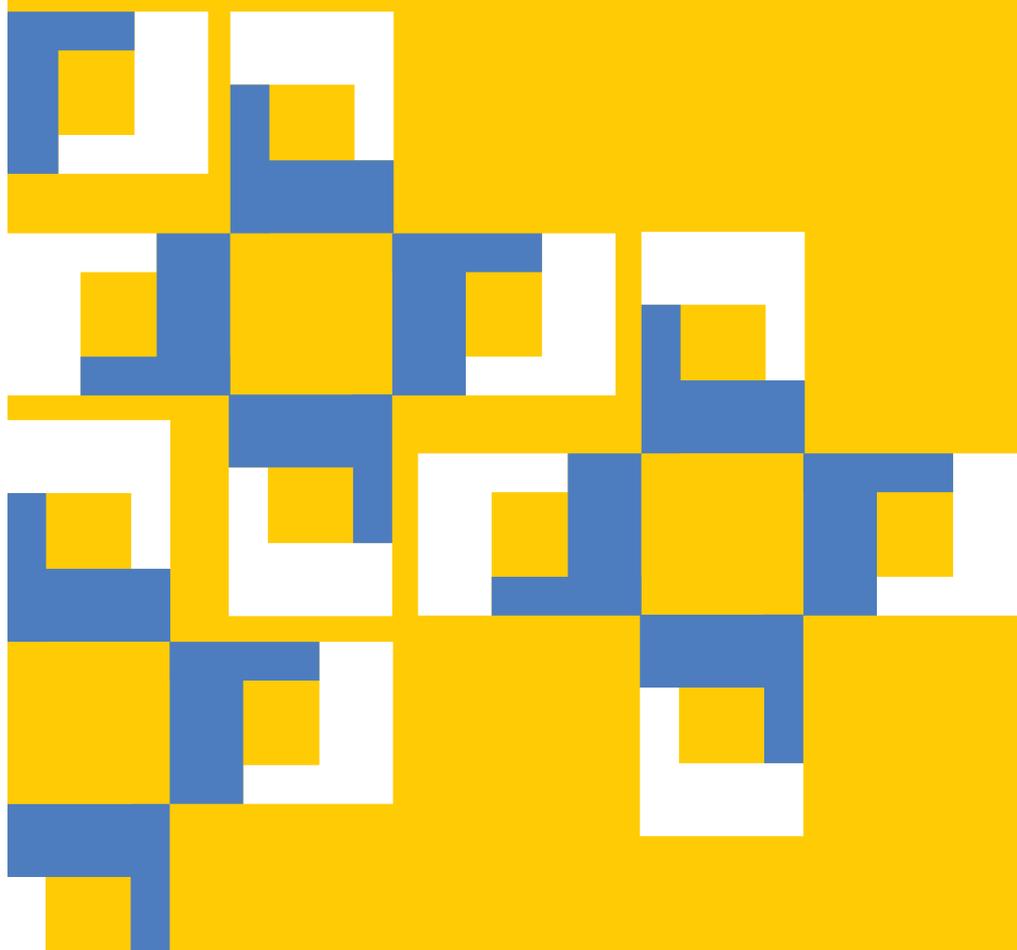


RESILIENCE AND COHESION OF UKRAINIAN SOCIETY DURING THE WAR

Periodic report based on
monitoring materials from
selected regions of Ukraine

2026



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

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The report was drafted by Svitlana Horobchyshyna (text), Svitlana Kononchuk (general editor).

Translating by Svitlana Krylova
Copy editing by Aiuna Byvaltseva
Design by Valerii Buravchenko
Layout by Oleksandr Hlynenko

The project is coordinated by Ivan Vartovnyk, Oksana Ivasiv, Anna Ishchuk, and Valeriia Skvortsova

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

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFU	Armed Forces of Ukraine
ASC	Administrative Services Centre
CMA	City Military Administration
DPR	Donetsk People's Republic
EW	Electronic Warfare
GAB	Guided Aerial Bomb
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IO	Influence Operation
LPR	Luhansk People's Republic
NABU	National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine
NPP	Nuclear Power Plant
OCU	Orthodox Church of Ukraine
OMA	Oblast Military Administration
RF	Russian Federation
ROC	Russian Orthodox Church
SAPO	Specialised Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office
SESU	State Emergency Service of Ukraine
SMO	Special Military Operation
TOA	Temporarily Occupied Area
TPP	Thermal Power Plant
TRSSC	Territorial Recruitment and Social Support Centre
UGCC	Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church
UN	United Nations Organization
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UOC (MP)	Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate

SUMMARY

The situation at the front line

In 2025, the front line crossed into Dnipropetrovsk oblast for the first time. By the end of December, 11 population centres [were](#) under Russian occupation, with roughly the same number located in the grey zone.

The situation in Donetsk oblast remained highly volatile. Hostilities intensified throughout the monitoring period, and on 23 December the capture of [Siversk](#) was reported. Heavy fighting continued around Pokrovsk and Myrnohrad. Russian forces also made gains along the Kostiantynivka and Lyman axes, signalling a gradual shift of combat operations toward the Kramatorsk–Sloviansk agglomeration.

In northern Kharkiv oblast, Russian forces attempted to expand the area of active hostilities, though with no significant results. In autumn 2025, they [sought](#) to infiltrate Kupiansk, including through underground infrastructure networks. In December, Ukrainian units contained enemy groups and disrupted their supply lines. Active fighting also persisted in the areas of Vovchansk, Prylipka, Dvorichanske, Izbytske, Vilcha, and Obukhivka.

Tensions remained elevated in Zaporizhzhia oblast, with the most intense attacks recorded along the Huliaipole axis. Russian forces attempted to advance near Zatyshshia, Nove Zaporizhzhia, Zelenyi Hai, and Huliaipole itself.

In Kherson oblast, Russian forces continued attempts to conduct offensive operations in the area of the Antonivka Road Bridge (Antonivskiy Bridge) and on the islands in the Dnipro estuary, sustaining the risk of localised escalation.

Luhansk oblast, with the exception of small areas, remained occupied.

I. TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED AREAS

Occupation policy in the temporarily occupied areas was characterised by a strategy of entrenchment and combined three interrelated lines of action: repressive control, the institutional integration of these areas into the legal and administrative framework of the Russian Federation, and the socio-ideological reorientation of the population.

Property-related mechanisms were used as instruments of coercion and asset redistribution. The practice of designating housing as 'ownerless', maintaining registries of 'public property', formalising housing ownership in the name of de facto residents, and linking the preservation of property rights or access to compensation to an individual's return to the occupied territory and acquisition of Russian citizenship increased the risk of housing loss for Ukrainian owners. In parallel to this, the above mechanisms incentivised the forced legalisation of everyday life under the rules imposed by the occupying administrations.

Repression and the criminalisation of perceived disloyalty remained the key tools of control, undermining social trust and weakening horizontal ties within communities.

A distinct line of pressure was exerted through the system of education and children. Persecution related to participation in Ukrainian remote learning and the militarisation of the school environment created long-term risks for identity formation and future reintegration. The transformation of public space and politics of memory, including practices of memorialisation and renaming, as well as broader symbolic alterations of the environment, was aimed at displacing Ukrainian presence and normalising the occupying regime.

Practices that reshape the socio-demographic and administrative profile of the territories were intensifying. This included population replacement, the exclusion of local residents from governance, and the

appointment of personnel from the Russian Federation. 'Development projects' and the 'investment map' were used to attract Russian business and consolidate control over resources, thereby creating the appearance of a long-term occupation. Shortages of basic goods and services further deepened the population's dependence on the occupying administrations. The integration into Russian administrative and digital systems strengthened control and complicated the future restoration of Ukrainian institutions.

II. FRONTLINE AND DEOCCUPIED AREAS

The security situation remained persistently exhausting in nature, characterised by regular shelling punctuated only by brief lulls, with no sustained periods of stable calm. Strikes targeting residential neighbourhoods, public transport, markets, health care services, municipal workers, and volunteers systematically disrupted civilian life and eroded the psychological resilience of the population.

Sustained attacks on energy facilities and infrastructure networks were transforming military risks into a broader life-support crisis, particularly during the winter months. Prolonged power outages, disruptions to water and heating supply, restrictions on public transport operations, and the need for backup power solutions created cascading effects for the population. Strikes carried out during restoration works further complicated repair efforts and increased risks for emergency and utility response services.

Evacuation efforts took place under the constant threat of shelling. Priority was given to the evacuation of children and vulnerable groups, relying on transit centres and volunteer networks to facilitate safe relocation.

The education system continued to operate under wartime conditions. Face-to-face learning was possible only where shelters and designated safe spaces were available, while blended learning remained predominant across the affected areas.

Additional factors of vulnerability included entrenched corruption practices, the weakening of local self-government, and a trust imbalance, with higher levels of trust placed in emergency services and volunteer groups, and lower levels directed towards government authorities and the police. This imbalance complicated coordination around unpopular but necessary decisions, including evacuation measures, budgetary prioritisation, and the enforcement of safety regulations.

At the same time, functioning mechanisms that support resilience remained in place. These included mutual aid initiatives, Points of Invincibility, targeted assistance programmes, transit centres, networks of community hubs, and veteran spaces. Their effectiveness depends on the availability of resources, the security of logistics, and the capacity to operate amid ongoing security threats.

III. RELATIVELY REAR AREAS CONTROLLED BY THE UKRAINIAN GOVERNMENT (*Vinnitsia, Zakarpattia, Lviv, Odesa, and Chernivtsi oblasts*)

The rear areas were increasingly affected by strikes and logistical disruptions. Attacks targeting energy facilities, transport hubs, and border infrastructure, including a strike on the bridge over the Dniester River near Maiaky in Odesa oblast, which forms part of the international M-15 highway, and disruptions to traffic along the Odesa–Reni route, demonstrated that even oblasts distant from the front line must be capable of rapidly activating crisis response mechanisms.

Large-scale strikes on energy infrastructure facilities have resulted in blackouts and emergency power outages, accompanied by secondary disruptions to water and heating supply. Uneven restoration of services has heightened public sensitivity to the perceived fairness of access to essential life support services. Although overall administrative control remained in place, prolonged disruptions to municipal infrastructure reduced social endurance and contributed to increased tensions in everyday life.

Public trust in institutions was closely linked to the quality of crisis services and communication. Transparent rules, predictability of decisions, accountability in the use of resources, and clear public information reduced the risk of distrust during periods of crisis.



Supporting groups whose needs and vulnerability have increased as a result of the war has become a key priority. Veterans, IDPs, families of those killed or missing, and other vulnerable categories placed sustained pressure on social services. In parallel, elements of more structured interaction between social groups were emerging, including IDP councils, veteran programmes, and international partnerships. At the same time, significant disparities persisted in access to rehabilitation, employment, and basic services, particularly for residents of smaller and more remote population centres.

Economic activity continued, but its resilience largely depended on the stability of power supply, workforce capacity, and the reliability of logistics. More broadly, the resilience of the rear oblasts was shaped not only by security conditions but also by the effectiveness of day-to-day governance: the reliable functioning of municipal services and critical infrastructure, the timeliness of restoration works and transparency of compensation mechanisms, accountability in the use of resources, and the ability of institutions to sustain public trust.

I. TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED AREAS

(DONETSK, ZAPORIZHZHIA, AND KHERSON OBLASTS)

1. Changes in the system of governance

In November–December 2025, the trend towards the full integration of governance structures in the temporarily occupied areas of Ukraine into the Russian vertical of power persisted. One manifestation of this process was the systematic removal of local residents from administrative roles and the replacement of leadership positions with appointees from regions of the RF.

In the occupied areas of Donetsk oblast, only the so-called Head of the DPR, Denis Pushilin, is of local origin, while all other key positions are held by appointees from Russia. More broadly, the displacement of local personnel from leadership roles across the occupied areas was observed at all administrative levels.

In the areas of Kherson oblast temporarily controlled by Russia, the [programme](#) ‘Heroi Khersonshchyny: usi SVOi’ (‘Heroes of Kherson Oblast: We All Are SVOi’) has been launched. The title relies on a wordplay in which the abbreviation SVO (denoting ‘special military operation’) is visually embedded in the Russian word *svoi* (friend). The programme is aimed at staffing the occupying authorities with participants in the Russian–Ukrainian war. It provides for a multi-stage selection process, followed by the assignment of curators drawn from among officials of the occupying administration. The launch of the programme points to staffing shortages within the occupying authorities and further militarisation of civilian governance, mirroring practices already applied in the so-called DPR and LPR.

1.1. Decisions of occupying authorities

>> ‘NATIONALISATION’ OF HOUSING

A key development in November–December 2025 was the [adoption](#) in Russia of legislation that legalised a mechanism for the forced seizure of housing owned by Ukrainian citizens in the TOAs under the pretext of ‘signs of ownerlessness’. Under the new provisions, apartments, houses, and individual rooms deemed to exhibit such signs are declared the property of the occupied oblasts. The criteria for determining ‘ownerlessness’, as well as the procedures for identifying and registering such housing, are to be defined by the local occupying authorities. Registration of property rights in favour of occupying structures is declared to be completed by 31 January 2030.

Subsequently, confiscated housing may be transferred into the ownership or use of citizens of the RF, including individuals who have lost housing as a result of hostilities, employees of the occupying administrations, and workers of enterprises. The law also permits the submission of compensation claims after property has been seized; however, this right is granted exclusively to citizens of the RF, and the amount and procedures for payment are to be determined by the occupying authorities. The adopted amendments thus lay down legal grounds for the confiscation of real estate belonging to Ukrainian citizens in the TOAs, followed by its redistribution. [According to](#) the occupying authorities, the TOAs of Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk, and Luhansk oblasts contained approximately 5.5 million real estate properties, of which up to 550,000 may be designated as ‘ownerless’ and transferred into ‘state ownership’.

>> ZAPORIZHZHIA NPP

In November–December 2025, the situation surrounding Russia-controlled Zaporizhzhia NPP remained a source of heightened risks to nuclear and energy safety. Since the onset of the full-scale invasion, the plant has experienced multiple blackouts caused by the disconnection of external power lines and shelling, including the eleventh complete blackout during the night of 6 December, when the facility operated on emergency diesel generators for nearly nine hours. Technical specialists, with the support of the IAEA, restored backup power lines and partially stabilised the plant's operations. The facility currently remains in cold shutdown mode.

Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs [claimed](#) that the RF deliberately damages external power lines while testing the possibility of connecting the plant to its own power grid, thereby sustaining ongoing risks to nuclear safety.

The issue of management of Zaporizhzhia NPP has been discussed at the international level between Ukraine and the United States, as well as between the United States and the RF. The Ukrainian side [has proposed](#) a joint operation model in a 50/50 format between Ukraine and the United States, with half of the electricity remaining in Ukraine and the other half allocated to the United States. [According to](#) the President of Russia Putin, the RF is allegedly discussing joint management of the plant with the United States without Ukraine's participation.

>> ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

The occupying authorities were actively implementing measures aimed at integrating the temporarily occupied areas into the Russian economic system by attracting Russian companies and introducing Russian regulatory standards. In early December, the Unified Institute for Spatial Planning of the Russian Federation [presented](#) to the occupying authorities of Kherson oblast a so-called master plan for Chaplynka raion. The plan provided for the restoration of food processing enterprises, the establishment of an industrial park near the village of Nadiivka, and the construction of an asphalt concrete plant in Chaplynka.

Plans were also announced to expand the agricultural sector, including greenhouse complexes, livestock enterprises, and grain and vegetable storage facilities, and to develop transport infrastructure (construction and/or reconstruction of roads, including the Chaplynka–Novotroitske–Rykove route; restoration of a bridge; and construction of a road overpass).

In the TOAs of Kherson oblast, the occupying authorities also [announced](#) the launch of an investment map of the oblast, comprising more than 70 land plots designated for Russian investors within a free economic zone or through large-scale investment projects. At the same time, the absence of confirmed results from previously announced initiatives, including those related to residential complexes and infrastructure development in the left-bank areas of Kherson oblast, suggests that a number of these projects may be largely declarative in nature and/or may carry elevated risks of misappropriation of resources.

>> RESTRICTIONS ON MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS

In the temporarily occupied areas of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson oblasts, the Russia-installed administrations have restricted the operation of SIM cards linked to Ukrainian passports. During the final weeks of November, disruptions and limitations in the functioning of such numbers were recorded, and the occupying authorities announced their intention to fully block them by the end of 2025.

2. Humanitarian situation

The critical condition of the water supply system, particularly in Donetsk and Makiivka, remained one of the key factors contributing to the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the temporarily occupied areas of Donetsk oblast. [According to available information](#), water supply was irregular, with interruptions lasting several days and delivery provided only for short periods of time. Reports also indicated a decline in water quality, which may fail to meet basic sanitary standards, inclusive of instances of atypical water discolouration, pointing to technical failures in water treatment and/or distribution systems. The occupying administration attributed the disruptions to ongoing repair works; however, no confirmed evidence of systematic infrastructure

restoration has been recorded. At the same time, alternative sources of water supply were diminishing: reservoirs and natural water bodies were becoming shallower, and the Siverskyi Donets canal, through which water had been supplied to Donetsk oblast for decades, has been destroyed as a result of hostilities.

The situation with food supply also remained problematic. On 30 November, the Russia-appointed governor of the occupied part of the Kherson oblast, Volodymyr Saldo, [publicly acknowledged](#) that in the settlement of Chaplynka, Kakhovka raion, so-called social bread was supplied to only 9 out of 33 retail outlets. Along with that, problems with the production and distribution of social bread on the left-bank areas of Kherson oblast have been systemic in nature and have been documented since at least early 2024, when its production and sale were completely suspended in 6 out of 14 communities.

2.1. Actions of occupying authorities regarding recruitment into armed formations

The Russia-installed authorities continued measures aimed at institutionalising and expanding mobilisation practices in the TOAs. The State Duma of the RF [has adopted](#) a law permitting conscription throughout the entire year, from 1 January to 31 December. Formally, its provisions extend to the occupied areas of Ukraine, despite Russia's earlier statements claiming that local residents would be allegedly exempt from military service.

According to the [National Resistance Center](#), the occupying military commissariats have received instructions to compile lists of men aged 18 to 50 deemed fit for service. In Melitopol, Zaporizhzhia oblast, door-to-door visits for the purpose of verifying personal data have reportedly resumed since mid-October.

In parallel, according to activists of the [Yellow Ribbon](#) resistance movement, the occupying administration in Melitopol was employing financial incentives for health care personnel in exchange for providing information on patients of conscription and mobilisation age. Specifically, reports refer to offers of payments ranging from RUB 20,000 to 30,000 for the transfer of patients' personal data to the office of the military commandant.

3. Work on identity

Russia has intensified the institutionalisation of identity policy in the TOAs through the approval of an [updated](#) Strategy of State National Policy extending to 2036. A separate block of objectives within the updated strategy is addressed to the so-called reunified or 'historical regions', including Crimea, Donbas, and Novorossiia, explicitly linking their integration to the formation of an 'all-Russian civic identity' and the promotion of 'traditional values'.

In public discourse, the strategy legitimises the occupation through narratives of the 'protection of Russian speakers' and the 'fight against neo-Nazism'. Its practical instruments include strengthening the role of Russian as the state language, eliminating the effects of what is described as anti-Russian propaganda, involving children and youths from the TOAs in nationwide projects, scaling up educational and cultural initiatives, and establishing or reinforcing agencies and councils on interethnic relations to manage integration processes.

The RF has declared target indicators to be achieved by 2036 (a level of civic identity of no less than 95%; more than 2.5 million participants in nationwide events from the 'historical entities'), indicating long-term planning for the systemic integration of the populations of the TOAs into the Russian political and cultural space. According to the occupying sources, 43 large-scale regional events were held in the TOAs of Donetsk oblast in 2025 as part of the Year of the Defender of the Fatherland, with further waves of regional and municipal events announced.



On 10 December, the Russian State Duma [adopted](#) a law lowering the mandatory age for taking the oath upon acquisition of Russian citizenship from 18 to 14. Following the adoption of the amendments, the oath becomes mandatory throughout the territory of the RF and in the temporarily occupied areas of Ukraine; if it is not taken within one year, the decision granting citizenship is deemed invalid.

Human rights activists emphasised that the application of this law in the occupied areas constituted a further violation of international humanitarian law. [Onysia Syniuk](#), an analyst at ZMINA Human Rights Center, underscores that the RF is deliberately creating conditions under which it is impossible to live a normal life or access education in the TOAs without Russian citizenship, and that the involvement of children in the oath procedure is manipulative and propagandistic in nature. According to her, this serves as a tool for consolidating ties with Russia and gradually erasing Ukrainian identity because children have no genuine possibility to refuse the imposed citizenship.

3.1. Changes in education standards

In the TOAs of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson oblasts, school and extracurricular education was increasingly subordinated to propaganda, with curricular and extracurricular activities systematically incorporating patriotic instruction in Russia's interpretation.

In the left-bank areas of Kherson oblast, the occupying authorities [have mandated](#) general, vocational, and higher educational institutions, during the period from September 2025 to June 2026, to organise training for young people in the fundamentals of defence and military service. This is accompanied by the retraining of teaching staff and the organisation of military-patriotic events under the slogan 'There is this profession – to defend the Motherland!', involving Russian veterans, Yunarmiya, as well as cadet/Cossack classes.

In Kakhovka raion, the occupying authorities [reported](#) identifying more than 190 children who are not attending Russian schools. The so-called self-proclaimed Mayor of Russia-occupied Kakhovka, Pavlo Filipchuk, stated that lists of families had been transferred to the police and 'social services', which are reportedly processing these cases *in a systemic manner*, including those involving children studying remotely in Ukrainian schools. The occupying authorities also claim to have recorded 31 cases of alleged violations of the right to education under Russian legislation; administrative protocols were reportedly drawn up against parents, fines imposed, and warnings issued regarding further consequences.

3.2. Politics of memory: place names, museum affairs, holidays and their celebration

From November through December 2025, the occupying authorities in the TOAs continued a policy of recoding public space and imposing Russian historical narratives, including through the memorialisation of the Second World War and the glorification of participants in the so-called SVO.

Specifically, in Kalanchak, located in the TOAs of Kherson oblast, [work begun](#) on installing Russian address plates, with plans announced to install more than 10,000 additional ones. At the same time, Russian-style cultural and youth formats were actively promoted, including the [organisation](#) in Skadovsk of a junior league championship of the Club of the Funny and Inventive people which is – a Russian comedic competition format – and the [establishment](#) of a regional branch of the Leninist Komsomol.

Similar practices were documented in other TOAs. In Mariupol, a museum called Battlefield. Mariupol [was opened](#) in November. In its official description, it is presented as being 'dedicated to the Great Patriotic War and the SVO', thereby directly linking historical memory of the Second World War with the legitimisation of the current aggression. In parallel, even civilian initiatives are marked by military symbolism; for example, a newly created public square in Makiivka [was reportedly named](#) Victory Alley.

II. FRONTLINE AND DEOCCUPIED AREAS

(DNIPROPETROVSK, DONETSK, ZAPORIZHZHIA, MYKOLAIV, KHARKIV, KHERSON, AND CHERNIHIV OBLASTS)

1. Changes in the system of governance

In December 2025, governance in the frontline areas was characterised by continuous responses to winter-related security and humanitarian challenges and by an increasing workload for public authorities. The model of a strengthened vertical chain of command, based on oblast and city military administrations, remained in place. This model ensured operational decision-making under crisis conditions but further centralised authority and limited accountability.

At the cross-oblast level, the Association of Frontline Cities and Communities [was established](#) as a coordination platform and a mechanism for joint representation of territories operating under heightened security and humanitarian risks. The Association was headed by Ihor Terekhov, Mayor of Kharkiv. Its activities are expected to strengthen horizontal cooperation between communities, facilitate the exchange of crisis governance practices, and support the development of a consolidated position in dialogue with central authorities.

In Dnipropetrovsk oblast, governance processes were accompanied by [leadership rotations](#) within the OMA. In October–November 2025, OMA acting Head Vladyslav Haivanenko was appointed in place of the previous Head, Serhii Lysak, who headed Odesa City Military Administration. Further personnel decisions regarding the OMA leadership were also discussed in the information space, including candidates with management experience in frontline areas.

In Donetsk oblast, changes linked to the recently occupied areas were recorded in the composition of community military administrations. Following the resignation of Vitalii Barabash on 6 December, Avdiivka City Military Administration remained without a head. On 16 December, Vadym Boichenko, the Mayor of Mariupol, [was appointed](#) as Head of the Mariupol City Military Administration. This was considered one of the most anticipated personnel decisions. Mariupol city territorial community had effectively remained the last among communities of the newly occupied areas of the oblast where a military administration had been established but no head had been appointed for an extended period. In public assessments, the delay was linked to political and economic factors, as well as to reluctance to strengthen the influence of certain business groups in oblast-level decision-making. Further postponement of the appointment complicated the launch of projects critical for supporting Mariupol residents, particularly housing construction initiatives for IDPs, which required proper management of community resources and the unblocking of budgetary instruments. The priority of this direction was also [indicated](#) in statements by Vadym Boichenko, who listed the implementation of the 'My Home. Ukraine' initiative among his key tasks. The initiative provides for the construction of a residential quarter of 1,000 apartments for Mariupol residents. Overall, such administrations operate outside the occupied areas and are regarded as a mechanism for interaction with citizens who were forced to leave.

In Chernihiv, disputes [continued](#) between elected community representatives and centrally appointed officials. The interaction between acting Mayor Oleksandr Lomako and Dmytro Bryzhynskyi, Head of Chernihiv CMA, remained at the centre of attention, as both exercise practical influence over the budget, social programmes, and strategic decisions. Despite the conflict, the City Council continued to adopt decisions necessary to maintain core administrative functions, while political tensions in the city remained high.

1.1. Decisions of authorities that affected cohesion

>> BUDGET

In December 2025, budgetary decisions in the frontline areas followed a wartime logic: allocations prioritised support for the Defence Forces; reserves were directed towards responding to the consequences of attacks, maintaining the resilience of critical infrastructure, and providing social protection to the population, including IDPs, war veterans, families of combatants, as well as military personnel.

At the same time, risks of tension between levels of government increased, both regarding the redistribution of resources between the centre and communities and in terms of accountability and transparency of local budget priorities. Specifically, the Mayor of Dnipro, Borys Filatov, [criticised](#) national budget policy, stating that significant funds had been withdrawn from the city budget, undermining fiscal decentralisation and complicating reconstruction. In public statements, he referred to around UAH 10 billion (approximately EUR 200 million) from the planned 2026 city budget of UAH 28 billion (approximately EUR 560 million). He also referred to the absence of systematic dialogue with central authorities.

The Association of Ukrainian Cities expressed its opinion that it is necessary to support the budgets of communities that have lost revenue due to the war.

>> ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

Power supply in Donetsk oblast remained dependent on the intensity of shelling targeting energy infrastructure. In November–December, large-scale blackouts were recorded, resulting in significant disruptions to daily life: electric transport was suspended and replaced with bus routes; lifts stopped operating; boiler houses and pumping stations were switched to generators. To mitigate the impact, Points of Invincibility were deployed, providing heating, backup power supply, and internet access.

According to Kharkivoblenergo JSC, the energy system of Kharkiv oblast [operated](#) under increased load in December. As of 18 December, 195 population centres (over 60,000 consumers) remained without electricity, primarily in frontline and border communities. The restoration of power supply to critical infrastructure facilities, including hospitals, water and heat supply systems, and communications, was defined as a priority. Additionally, Kharkiv city authorities [announced](#) plans to develop a project for an energy hub aimed at transitioning to alternative energy sources, referring to the experience of Strasbourg.

In Zaporizhzhia, social tensions related to power outage schedules were recorded in November–December. Residents publicly pointed to an uneven distribution of load and called for a revision of the schedules and open dialogue with Zaporizhzhiaoblenergo and Ukrenergo. In December, hourly outages lasted up to 15 hours per day. Due to water supply accidents, some residents temporarily remained without tap water; however, repair teams restored services. On 11 December, the network of Points of Invincibility was [reportedly](#) expanded, with some prepared for 24-hour operation.

The energy situation in Kherson oblast demonstrated a high degree of inter-oblast interdependence. Specifically, the large-scale blackout on 13 December was linked to strikes on energy infrastructure in Odesa, which left a significant number of population centres in Kherson oblast without electricity. In Kherson, this disrupted centralised water supply and resulted in the suspension of trolleybus services.

Due to systematic shelling of heat generation facilities, Kherson TPP ceased operations on [4 December](#). As a result, 470 buildings (over 40,500 consumers) were left without centralised heating; it was later reported that approximately half of the city remained without heat. Further strikes and risks of renewed disruptions were recorded throughout December. In response, 25 Points of Invincibility in Kherson began operating on a 24-hour basis from 13 December, additional points were deployed, and targeted assistance was provided, including hot meals and the [distribution](#) of heaters to vulnerable population groups. In parallel, Kherson OMA conducted negotiations with state and international partners to strengthen the protection of critical infrastructure and to launch cogeneration units to ensure the stable operation of boiler houses.

In Mykolaiv oblast, the local authorities regularly communicated data on restoration progress, including work related to 1,259 facilities of Mykolaivoblenergo. This supported public trust but also generated high expectations regarding the speed of stabilisation. An illustrative example of vertical coordination between the city and oblast levels was a [subvention](#) allocated by Mykolaiv City Council for the installation of foundations for

modular boiler houses, demonstrating the use of transfers between levels of government for rapid infrastructure solutions.

>> EVACUATION

In November–December 2025, evacuation from the frontline areas was largely carried out under constant security risk. The focus remained on children and vulnerable groups; key mechanisms included the mandatory evacuation of families with children, the operation of transit centres, and coordination between military administrations, the SESU, the police, and volunteer networks.

In Donetsk oblast, the list of communities, from which the mandatory evacuation of children with their parents had been announced, expanded, while the area of active hostilities also widened. In Kupiansk raion, [Kharkiv](#) oblast, the forced evacuation of families with children continued. At the same time, [according to](#) Rose on Hand NGO, the pace of departures declined, and some residents more frequently refused evacuation following reports of progress by the Defence Forces in the area. Support was provided through a transit point in Lozova.

Dnipropetrovsk oblast continued to serve as one of the key transit hubs for IDPs. 8 transit centres operated there, including in Pavlohrad, Dnipro, and the settlements of Stepove and Voloske, as part of the nationwide network. The centres provided comprehensive assistance – humanitarian, medical, psychological, legal, and social – and supported the restoration of documents and the processing of payments, after which individuals were referred to relatively safer areas. Evacuation [was carried out](#) jointly by public authorities, including the SESU, the National Police and its specialised Phoenix and White Angel units equipped with armoured vehicles and medical equipment for persons with limited mobility, and border guard units, as well as by [volunteer initiatives](#), including the Proliska humanitarian mission and the East SOS Charitable Foundation.

In Zaporizhzhia oblast, according to the OMA Head, [Ivan Fedorov](#), there was no large-scale evacuation: departures were organised from individual communities in the event of escalation of hostilities, generally involving dozens of people. The mandatory evacuation of families with children from frontline communities was largely completed, although the process was complicated by refusals from some parents, requiring continued dialogue.

In Kherson oblast, institutional capacity for evacuation was strengthened in December. In Kherson community, two transit centres [became operational](#) (with stays of up to three days), and temporary accommodation facilities hosted 415 persons during the [month](#). At the same time, in the coastal areas under constant shelling, the remaining residents were predominantly elderly, which deepened the social vulnerability of these territories and complicated the work of services required to support the population under dangerous conditions. However, there is currently no mechanism for the forced relocation of the adult population.

In December, the Defence Council of Chernihiv oblast [adopted](#) a decision on the mandatory evacuation of residents from 14 border villages in Chernihiv oblast (within Novhorod-Siverskyi, Semenivka, Snovsk, and Horodnia communities) due to daily shelling and a high level of threat to the civilian population. Despite the security risks, approximately 300 persons remain in these population centres, while more than 1,400 residents left over the past year.

Following evacuation, the shortage of accessible housing for long-term accommodation remains a key challenge. Some IDPs are forced to stay with relatives or pay for temporary accommodation (hotels or rented housing), while options for free resettlement remain limited. Transit centres provide initial support; however, the transition to stable living arrangements is often delayed due to the limited housing stock and constrained resources of host communities.

The war also demonstrates severe psychological and social consequences of evacuation: some families, fully aware of the associated difficulties, [have exhumed](#) the graves of deceased relatives in order to rebury them in relatively safer locations.

>> INFRASTRUCTURE RECOVERY

The authorities of Mykolaiv oblast continued the restoration of critical infrastructure, primarily roads and water supply systems. Water supply remained one of the most complex and costly challenges for the oblast. Short-term measures, including water distribution and purification points and water delivery, needed to

be complemented by longer-term infrastructure projects. In December, the government [reported](#) that the first stage of water treatment in Mykolaiv was scheduled to begin in January 2026, following the completion of the main construction works at the treatment facilities. At the same time, municipal water supply and wastewater networks operated with regular local accidents and repairs, resulting in temporary service disruptions.

>> TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY OF FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES

In November 2025, transport connectivity of communities in northern Donetsk oblast and other parts of Ukraine deteriorated due to worsening security conditions. On 5 November, Ukrzaliznytsia [suspended](#) train services to Kramatorsk station. The decision was linked to increased risks to passenger transport amid attempts to target civilian trains. In late October, for example, an explosive-laden drone [detonated](#) near the Lviv–Kramatorsk train on the section between Sloviansk and Kramatorsk. Long-distance trains have since operated only to Barvinkove station, with onward connections to Sloviansk and Kramatorsk provided by bus routes coordinated with train arrival and departure times. Passenger [costs](#) increased: bus travel to Kramatorsk was approximately UAH 300, to Druzhkivka approximately UAH 600, while taxi fares on Kramatorsk–Barvinkove route ranged between UAH 1,500 and 2,000. An additional factor was reduced predictability of rail services due to strikes on energy and railway infrastructure, which resulted in delays and extended travel times.

Road connectivity also deteriorated. Following the escalation of hostilities around Pokrovsk, the key highway linking Kramatorsk–Dobropillia–Pokrovsk–Pavlohrad–Dnipro became inaccessible. Since September 2025, Sloviansk–Izium route near Sloviansk has also been considered unsafe; due to repeated attacks on civilian vehicles, traffic on certain sections was effectively suspended. As a result, the logistics of the agglomeration largely shifted to two alternative road routes, resulting in longer travel times and higher costs. Indirectly, this also strengthened the motivation of some residents to consider relocation to relatively safer areas.

>> INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

As part of international cooperation in [preparation](#) for the 2025/2026 heating season, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved a mechanism for providing financial assistance to residents of frontline areas. The assistance is to be disbursed by international organisations, including UNHCR in Ukraine, in the amount of UAH 19,400 (approximately EUR 360–370) per household as a one-off seasonal payment for families residing in housing heated by solid fuel stoves. In 2025, the programme covered households in, inter alia, Kharkiv, Kherson, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, and Chernihiv oblasts.

In parallel, international cooperation has increasingly shifted towards practical inter-oblast and municipal-level diplomacy and sectoral projects. [According to](#) Kherson OMA, in 2025 the oblast increased the amount of international assistance (reported at UAH 2.5 billion), concluded 23 new partnerships (bringing the total to 305 international partners), and implemented 17 projects in the areas of reconstruction, education, humanitarian support, security, and social cohesion. Particular attention was given to the role of Sweden, which assumed patronage over Kherson oblast. According to Kherson OMA, this strengthened aid coordination and support for institutional capacity.

On 7 November, a partnership agreement [was signed](#) between Kharkiv City Council and the Eurometropolis of Strasbourg, as well as the municipalities of Strasbourg (France) and Kehl (Baden-Württemberg, Germany). Zaporizhzhia oblast, together with the Finnish region of Päijät-Häme, [agreed on](#) areas of cooperation, including civil protection, education, and healthcare, and was preparing an action plan for the following year. Examples of practical infrastructure and social measures included Latvia's support for Chernihiv oblast ([renovation](#) of the paediatric department of a central district hospital and the [opening](#) of a human rights protection centre), sectoral projects such as a memorandum with Enabel on the repair and thermal modernisation of a blood centre, and the [transfer](#) of vehicles to communities under the French RELEVE project implemented by Expertise France for daily service provision and evacuation needs.

On 5 November, Angelina Jolie, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, [visited](#) Kherson, including several health care facilities, and met with children. For a frontline city, such visits increase international attention, make the situation in Kherson more visible to external audiences, and may contribute to social resilience amid ongoing shelling and fatigue.

>> INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION

According to the monitoring data, by the end of 2025 interregional cooperation among frontline communities was implemented primarily within the framework of a nationwide initiative, [Shoulder to Shoulder: Cohesive Communities](#), both through operational mutual assistance to address the consequences of shelling and through the formalisation of partnerships and joint planning for 2026.

As part of the initiative's rapid response component, transfers of materials for recovery works were recorded. Specifically, Vinnytsia [transferred](#) 1,000 OSB boards to Balakliia in Kharkiv oblast to address damage to apartment buildings caused by shelling. In parallel, on 23 December, Kamianske and Nikopol, Dnipropetrovsk oblast, [signed](#) a memorandum of partnership, defining areas of mutual support, including humanitarian assistance, support for evacuation efforts, and work with internally displaced persons.

In Zaporizhzhia oblast, within the framework of the partnership, Pavlivka community [established cooperation](#) with Shramkivka community, Cherkasy oblast, which gave a 3D printer to a local school and co-organised planned joint educational, cultural, and sports initiatives. Separately, the frontline communities of Vasylivka, Preobrazhenka, and Dniprorudne [held](#) an online meeting with Bar community, Vinnytsia oblast, agreeing on cooperation priorities for 2026, including support for veterans, the development of social programmes, and recreational initiatives for children.

>> COLLABORATION AND HIGH TREASON

Throughout 2025, law enforcement agencies continued systematic efforts to identify, document, and provide procedural oversight of cases of collaboration and related offences. [According to](#) the Prosecutor General's Office, Kharkiv oblast was among the five oblasts with the highest number of registered proceedings under Article 111-1 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (collaborative activity). From January through November 2025, 111 criminal offences under this article were recorded in the oblast (for comparison: Donetsk oblast – 481, Luhansk oblast – 463, Kherson oblast – 297, Crimea – 131).

>> PREPARATIONS FOR ELECTIONS

Despite intensified nationwide discussions regarding potential elections or referendums within possible peace scenarios, no signs of actual pre-election mobilisation were recorded in the frontline areas, including Donetsk oblast. In the context of high-intensity hostilities, a deteriorating security environment, and continued uncertainty regarding future developments, the baseline scenario remains the de facto impossibility of organising elections in Donetsk oblast.

Examples from deoccupied and frontline communities in Kharkiv oblast indicate that, even if elections were legally permitted, security and infrastructure factors would remain key barriers. According to [OPORA Civic Network](#) the possibility of holding elections for Iziium community was assessed as limited due to the absence of shelters near potential polling stations, the destruction or damage of polling premises, and the low level of political activity.

>> RISKS OF SOCIETAL POLARISATION IN THE CONTEXT OF POSSIBLE PEACE ARRANGEMENTS

Discussions regarding the potential parameters of a future peace agreement may pose a significant challenge to resilience and social cohesion, particularly in the frontline areas. One potential line of division concerns the acceptability of territorial concessions as a possible price for ending the war. What may be perceived by part of the population in other oblasts as an abstract compromise could, for residents of Donetsk oblast, imply the direct loss of homes and property. A second potential division may emerge within the oblast. Some individuals may prioritise the pragmatic preservation of property and express readiness to remain under any conditions, while others may regard occupation as unacceptable and opt for forced relocation, even at the cost of complete loss of property.

>> CORRUPTION CASES

Several corruption cases related to the use of budget funds in the frontline areas gained prominence in the public domain, increasing risks to public trust in the authorities.

On 26 November, the NABU and the SAPO [reported](#) the exposure of a group of five individuals suspected of misappropriating funds allocated for the restoration of critical infrastructure facilities in frontline communities in Donetsk oblast. According to the investigation, the scheme involved forged documentation and the supply of allegedly defective equipment, resulting in estimated losses of approximately UAH 140 million in projects related to water supply and heating in Selydove, Vuhledar, and Sviatohirsk. The equipment reportedly never became operational; subsequently, some of the cities were destroyed or came under occupation. Investigators indicated that the group was led by a former Head of the Department of Housing and Utilities of Donetsk Oblast State Administration. During project implementation, public statements [emphasised](#) the 'personal oversight' of the then OSA Head. The incumbent OSA Head, who previously served as deputy to his predecessor, stated after the arrests that he was not involved and announced personnel changes in the relevant department.

In Kherson oblast, the Obiednannia Charitable Foundation [published a report](#) in early December alleging a possible overpayment by the OMA in the procurement of anti-drone nets (estimated at no less than UAH 2.4 million). Kherson OMA publicly [rejected](#) claims of supplier's excessive profit, referring to the applicable regulation of defence procurement in force since July 2023. In 2025, specialists of the State Audit Service [conducted](#) 95 procurement monitoring procedures involving institutions in Kherson oblast, covering contracts worth UAH 4.14 billion (approximately EUR 82.8 million). Violations were identified in 64% of procedures, of which only 7% were fully remedied. Earlier, the State Audit Service reported that several investigations had been initiated following inspections, two individuals had been formally notified of suspicion, and 23 officials had been held accountable.

Overall, these cases highlight vulnerabilities in procurement and recovery projects under wartime conditions. Even where investigations are ongoing and public explanations are provided by the authorities, the resulting information impact contributes to public distrust and underscores the need to strengthen transparency, oversight mechanisms, and communication regarding the justification of expenditures and their outcomes for communities.

2. Work on identity

2.1. Changes in education standards

Ahead of the academic year, Dnipro city authorities [introduced](#) an approach under which, from 1 September, schools were required to operate in person, while students from institutions without their own shelters were transferred to 123 designated base schools equipped with shelters. In practice, this model enabled the majority of students to access in-person or blended learning. Security risks nevertheless remained decisive. Instances of damage to educational institutions required rapid organisational responses, including the redistribution of students, the creation of additional classes, and the provision of psychological support. In higher education, competition for applicants intensified due to the 'proximity to the front line' factor, particularly affecting Kryvyi Rih, Dnipro, and Nikopol.

In Kharkiv oblast, education policy focused on the large-scale construction of protected infrastructure: construction [continued](#) on 43 underground schools. More than 20 projects were planned for completion by the end of the year, with the remainder scheduled for completion in 2026, expanding opportunities for students to return to remote learning.

Frontline communities in other oblasts adopted Kharkiv's experience in constructing underground schools. The city was the first to develop design and cost documentation for this type of educational infrastructure and shared these materials with other communities, including Zaporizhzhia.



In Zaporizhzhia, efforts to expand safer in-person education continued. A shelter [was equipped](#) at Gymnasium No. 47, allowing 119 students to return to in-person learning after an extended period of remote instruction. In parallel, an underground school operating in two shifts [was opened](#) in the city's Khortytskyi district at the premises of Gymnasium No. 106.

At the same time, the legal commissioning of infrastructure remains a systemic issue. As of early December, only 7 out of 22 underground schools (radiation shelters) in Zaporizhzhia and the oblast had been [officially commissioned](#), while the remaining 15 formally retained the status of construction sites, despite being used in practice for educational purposes. The absence of formal commissioning complicates the clear allocation of responsibility for children's safety in underground spaces and the organisation of proper technical maintenance.

In 2025, international support for the education sector in [Chernihiv](#) amounted to nearly UAH 195 million (approximately EUR 4.5 million), representing the highest level of funding since 2022. The funds were directed towards the modernisation of catering facilities, the repair of shelters, and the refurbishment of educational institutions. The organisation of the learning process remained strictly linked to security conditions: in-person instruction was conducted exclusively in institutions with certified shelters; in the 20-kilometre border zone, instruction was provided only remotely; and following large-scale attacks on the energy system, schools shifted to flexible schedules, using generators and energy storage systems in designated base schools.

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

One of the most visible trends was the everyday memorialisation of losses. Communities opened and expanded local spaces of remembrance that both preserve personalised memory of the war and establish sustained public commemorative practices. In Kherson oblast, memorial alleys were opened in [Novoraisk community](#) and in [Petropavlivka](#) village of Novooleksandrivka community, while a Cross of Remembrance dedicated to victims of Russia's war crimes was installed in [Tiahynka community](#). On 12 December, the memorial alley [in Zaporizhzhia](#) was expanded with four additional stands displaying 336 photographs of fallen defenders, including more than one hundred natives of the city.

Donetsk Oblast State Administration [initiated](#) the procedure for the decommunisation of the names of 12 districts in Donetsk, Horlivka, and Makiivka. The process was carried out in accordance with an instruction of the Prime Minister of Ukraine, and proposals for new names were to be collected until 3 January 2026. In Kharkiv, the place names commission [supported](#) the installation of a memorial plaque honouring Petro Bolbochan, a military commander of the Ukrainian People's Republic period. Overall, these decisions reflect a reorientation of symbolic markers in the public space and a reduced presence of Soviet-Russian narratives in local place names.

A separate dimension of the politics of memory concerns the preservation of museum collections, monuments, and cultural heritage in conditions of occupation or proximity to the front line, where speed of decision-making, logistics, and allocation of responsibility for safeguarding assets become critical. The monument to composer Mykola Leontovych [was evacuated](#) from Pokrovsk and temporarily installed in Vinnytsia. On 13 December, a [memorial plaque](#) to Leontovych, removed from the railway station building in Pokrovsk on the initiative of the station director, was ceremonially unveiled at the railway station in Kamianets-Podilskyi. The monument to Taras Shevchenko was also evacuated from Pokrovsk and [installed](#) in Samar, Dnipropetrovsk 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 Dnipropetrovsk oblast, support for war veterans and the families of fallen soldiers remained one of the key priorities of local social policy. In Dnipro, the 'Hero's Family' comprehensive programme, launched in 2014 and extended until 2026, [provided](#) war veterans with financial, psychological, and legal support, including assistance with medications, medical treatment, children's rehabilitation, employment, and housing.

In 2025, veteran policy in the oblast became more formalised. Plans for municipal programmes for 2026–2030 were publicly [discussed](#), veteran spaces were [established](#), and municipal services systematised veterans' requests and translated them into structured service packages. The visibility of veteran-related events in the public space increased, contributing to the consolidation of veteran issues within the public agenda.

Veteran entrepreneurship emerged as a distinct area strengthening economic integration. Veterans and their family members [received](#) grants to start and develop businesses, ranging from vehicle service stations and catering establishments to rehabilitation centres. This practice reduced the risk of marginalisation of war veterans as passive recipients of assistance and facilitated their participation in economic life.

Similar approaches were applied in other parts of the country. In Kharkiv oblast, 44 veterans with war-related disabilities (groups I–II) [received](#) monetary compensation for the purchase of housing. By the end of 2025, the waiting list for 118 apartments had reportedly been closed, with total state budget funding of around UAH 306 million.

In 2025, 27 war veterans and their family members in Chernihiv oblast [received](#) grants totalling more than UAH 13 million. Over the year, the oblast attracted nearly UAH 86 million, enabling 33 veteran families to secure housing. The service network also expanded through the establishment of a [veteran space](#) and an [inclusive](#) mental health centre. A municipal housing support programme for war veterans was also [introduced](#) in Chernihiv. Under this programme, the community financed housing purchases for veterans with group III disabilities, while compensation for groups I–II was provided from the state budget. This was the only such practice in Ukraine. The first 14 housing certificates had already been issued.

>> SUPPORT FOR ENTREPRENEURS AND ECONOMIC RESILIENCE OF COMMUNITIES

Kharkiv City Council [approved](#) a procedure for voucher-based support to producers participating in exhibition and trade fair events in Ukraine and abroad. The compensation covered up to 50% of eligible expenses, capped at UAH 100,000 per year, and was available to businesses with at least one year of operating experience and no outstanding debts or liquidation / bankruptcy proceedings. In parallel, the oblast expanded recovery programmes, combining them with mechanisms to engage residents in paid socially useful work. Under the 'Recovery Army' programme, more than 42,000 referrals for such work were issued. A total of 17,262 individuals, including IDPs, were engaged, with employers as well as civil society and charitable organisations participated in the implementation. A separate mechanism was also being developed to compensate agricultural producers for the placement of fortification structures on their land.

In Zaporizhzhia oblast, business support [was structured](#) through the Dialogue between Government and Business platform and the services of employment offices and Made in Ukraine offices. Key instruments included compensation to employers for hiring IDPs (UAH 19.9 million to 380 entrepreneurs for the employment of more than 860 displaced persons in 2025), compensation for adapting workplaces for persons with disabilities (UAH 2.1 million to 26 employers for 29 workplaces), and Own Business grants (more than 250 decisions exceeding UAH 98 million). For the frontline areas, the maximum grant amounts were increased (up to UAH 500,000 subject to the creation of two jobs, and up to UAH 300,000 for one job).

In December, Kherson city community approved the Unbreakable Business programme for 2026–2028. The programme [envisaged](#) a comprehensive set of measures, including financial and credit support, advisory and educational tools, digitalised services, and the development of entrepreneurial infrastructure. With a budget of UAH 1.516 million, the programme established an institutional framework for the community's economic resilience. However, its actual impact on cohesion and long-term stability would depend on the security situation, access to external resources, and the authorities' capacity to build effective partnerships with businesses.

>> HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

At the community level, the system for distributing humanitarian assistance remained uneven. Alongside coordinated municipal headquarters that maintained beneficiary registers and aligned the activities of foundations, fragmented approaches persisted, whereby organisations distributed assistance based on their own lists and without synchronisation with local authorities. This increased the risk of unequal access and perceived unfairness (duplication in some population centres and gaps in others), creating potential points of local tension both between communities and within cities. Horizontal volunteer networks partially mitigated these imbalances but did not replace systematic coordination.

In Mykolaiv, an official humanitarian assistance monitoring portal [operated](#), ensuring transparency and accountability in the use of resources, including construction materials, generators, transport, etc.

Security and logistical constraints persisted: delivery to front line villages was hazardous and irregular. In Synelnykove raion, Dnipropetrovsk oblast, some villages were effectively [isolated](#) due to destroyed bridges and hostile drones controlling road access. Entry was possible only during short 'windows of silence', and intervals between convoys at times reached two to three weeks. Volunteer crews, including the 'White Angels' and teams of the Red Cross, simultaneously delivered supplies and evacuated those willing to leave.

Against this background, a reduction in international humanitarian funding posed an additional systemic risk. [According to](#) the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine, Matthias Schmale, with the winter response plan for the frontline communities and vulnerable groups funded at only 65%, assistance reached approximately 1 million people instead of the planned 1.7 million. This narrowed the scope of cash assistance, insulation programmes, and solid fuel provision, increasing risks for cities and small frontline communities, particularly during periods of severe frost and prolonged disruptions to heating and water supply.

>> CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN POLICYMAKING

A positive example of citizen engagement [was demonstrated](#) in the process of developing a resilience strategy of Kamianske community, Dnipropetrovsk oblast. The process combined resident surveys, public consultations, and partnership-based interaction between local authorities and civil society organisations. This case indicates that even under wartime conditions, inclusive governance approaches remained possible and could strengthen trust in local decisions through transparent procedures and the involvement of different population groups.

In most cities, formal instruments of local democracy (public hearings, petitions, local initiatives) operated in a limited manner or had limited influence on final decisions, which drew criticism from activists. In Dnipro, for example, representatives of the [Money for the AFU](#) civic group publicly stated that there was no effective dialogue with the city authorities and that their appeals, petitions, and other participation mechanisms did not lead to revisions of budget decisions on defence-related funding.

The launch of My City, a pilot online platform, [was announced](#) in Kherson. The platform is intended to simplify access to municipal information, appeals, e-services, and surveys. Such digital tools have the potential to expand communication channels and increase citizen engagement. However, trust in them will depend on clear rules of use, transparency in processing appeals, and a visible link between participation (requests and surveys) and administrative decisions. In the absence of these conditions, public dissatisfaction and criticism are likely to persist.

>> TRUST IN AUTHORITIES (SOCIOLOGICAL INDICATORS)

Sociological data in Kherson [indicated](#) a gap between trust in the heads of military administrations and in the institutions they lead. According to a survey by Kherson Community Foundation 'Zakhyst', 1% of respondents fully trusted the Head of the Oblast Administration (23% fully or partially trusted), and 2% fully trusted the Head of the City Military Administration (22% fully or partially trusted). At the same time, trust levels in the institutions were higher: 34% expressed trust in the City Military Administration and 29% in the Oblast Administration. Compared to the previous year, trust in the oblast authorities declined (from 42% to 29%). A separate decline in trust in the local police was recorded in 2023–2024, while trust in emergency services, the military, volunteers, and municipal services remained consistently high.

In Zaporizhzhia, an open online survey carried out in September 2025 (671 respondents) [recorded](#) very low levels of trust in local authorities and a predominance of perceptions of non-transparency in decision-making. 54% of those surveyed indicated that they did not trust local self-government bodies at all, and 32% rather did not trust them, while only 1% expressed full trust. Assessments of the performance of the City Council and the OMA were also predominantly negative (46% very negative, 33% rather negative). Many respondents considered decisions to be non-transparent (56% completely non-transparent, 29% rather non-transparent) and associated distrust primarily with corruption or lack of transparency in the actions of the authorities (83%) and the absence of accountability of officials (54%).

4. Changes in the social structure

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

In the frontline areas, social protection increasingly shifted towards targeted measures for the most vulnerable groups, primarily children, people with disabilities, and families with children, combining rights-based, humanitarian, and housing-related support instruments.

The fifth in Ukraine Regional Child Rights Protection Centre [was opened](#) in Kharkiv oblast. The centre, established at the initiative of the Verkhovna Rada Commissioner for Human Rights with the support of UNICEF and assistance from France and Norway, provides comprehensive support to children whose rights were violated as a result of the war.

In Zaporizhzhia, a transit centre for evacuated persons with disabilities and older persons [began operating](#), providing temporary accommodation, humanitarian assistance, and support with further relocation to relatively safer communities.

Mykolaiv oblast [continued](#) to receive the most vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities and older persons from Kherson and Zaporizhzhia oblasts. Safe transportation was provided by volunteers from oblast branches of the Ukrainian Red Cross Society, using specialised vehicles.

In Chernihiv, a preferential housing loan programme for young people for 2026–2028 [was approved](#), aimed at encouraging youths to remain in the community. For 2026, UAH 100 million (approximately EUR 1.9 million) was planned to be allocated under the programme. However, actual investment volumes were expected to vary depending on price levels and inflation trends. According to the National Bank of Ukraine, [inflation](#) stood at 8% as of December 2024, with a [forecast](#) of 7.5% for 2025.

4.2. Needs of displaced persons. Response

In December 2025, Mariupol began implementing a programme to construct municipal housing outside the city for community members. The first phase of the project [was launched](#) in Bila Tserkva and envisages the construction of a residential district comprising 16 multi-storey buildings for 1,000 apartments, designed to accommodate up to 3,000 Mariupol residents. The housing will remain in community ownership and will be provided on preferential rental terms – approximately UAH 3,000–4,000 per month but not exceeding 30% of household income. Free accommodation is also available for certain categories. The apartments are planned to be equipped with basic furniture and appliances. Even with these parameters, the scale of the project is not commensurate with the overall scale of displacement, although it represents the first example of a large-scale municipal housing programme for residents of a destroyed city.

Another illustrative case was Perechyn, where a cluster for residents of Kramatorsk was being formed. The model [was driven](#) by a private initiative of a relocated enterprise, including the construction of housing for employees, and is accompanied by the relocation of part of the social infrastructure. At the same time, compact and segregated residence may slow the integration of IDPs into host communities and increase the risk of local social tension.

In Kryve Ozero community, Mykolaiv oblast, the construction of five social housing units for IDPs and one outpatient clinic, a health centre, [was completed](#). The project was implemented with the support of the Ukraine Recovery Fund, in cooperation with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and with facilitation by Mykolaiv OMA and the Embassy of the Kingdom of Denmark in Ukraine.

A shift from emergency assistance for IDPs towards integration-oriented services was recorded in Dnipro, a humanitarian and logistics hub. Institutionally, these efforts were coordinated through the [Coordination Council on IDP Issues](#) under the city authorities. Similarly, a Council on IDP Issues was established [in Chernihiv](#) under the executive committee to support the integration and social adaptation of displaced persons. However, the effectiveness of such bodies depended on their capacity to translate IDP needs into practical decisions on housing, employment, and access to services.

A further risk to social cohesion remained the limited access of IDPs to local democracy instruments, as most community charters did not include IDPs as community members, [according to](#) a study conducted under the Unity for Action programme of the [International Research and Exchanges Board](#) (IREX) and Stabilization Support Services. This restricted participation of IDPs in public hearings and assemblies, as well as their access to certain local social programmes, creating a risk of institutional exclusion. Displaced persons were integrated into local communities but excluded from decision-making processes, which may contribute to passivity or growing dissatisfaction in the medium term.

III. RELATIVELY REAR AREAS CONTROLLED BY THE UKRAINIAN GOVERNMENT

(VINNYTSIA, ZAKARPATTIA, LVIV, ODESA, AND CHERNIVTSI OBLASTS)

1. Changes in the system of governance

In Odesa oblast, the political landscape underwent significant transformation following the [establishment](#) of Odesa City Military Administration (OCMA) in October 2025 amid a staffing crisis and heightened security threats. The creation of OCMA was intended to ensure stability and maintain effective control over the city. However, the division of powers between the administration and the city council remained insufficiently defined, giving rise to informational and administrative tensions. In December 2025, the oblast operated under conditions of acute strain on essential services due to strikes targeting energy infrastructure, logistics, and the port sector. This heightened public sensitivity to the effectiveness of governance and the fairness of resource allocation.

The absence of a formally appointed Head of the OMA remains a significant political factor in Vinnytsia oblast, with the First Deputy Head, Nataliia Zabolotna, acting as the Head. This status has practical implications for governance: even with expanded powers under martial law, a temporary appointment generally results in more cautious strategic decision-making, greater dependence on approvals from the centre, and restraint in long-term personnel and political decisions.

Autumn 2025 was marked by personnel changes. On 11 September 2025, deputies [prematurely terminated](#) Oleksii Boiko's mandate as Head of Chernivtsi Oblast Council and dismissed him from office. Following this, the First Deputy Head, Mykola Hutor (a Servant of the People deputy), assumed the duties of the Head. As a result, key leadership positions in the oblast are concentrated in the hands of representatives of a single political force. Governance within the Oblast Council was further [complicated](#) by difficulties in convening and holding sessions. The issue of electing a new Council Head was not placed on the agenda of the October session, and subsequent attempts to convene a session were hindered by the non-attendance of certain factions and deputies.

1.1. Decisions of authorities that affected cohesion

>> **CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY RESILIENCE**

In November–December 2025, energy infrastructure and related life-support systems operated under conditions of heightened vulnerability: recovery following attacks and accidents proceeded in parallel with regular power outages and the need to provide backup power for water supply, heating, transport, and critically important institutions. At the oblast level, the authorities acted as a coordination centre between energy providers, communities, and the population.

In December, isolated local disruptions gave way to signs of a systemic energy crisis in particular communities. Following the 13 December attack, prolonged power outages were recorded in Odesa oblast (including in Artsyz where an extended blackout was followed by partial restoration according to scheduled supply), leading to cascading disruptions: restrictions on water supply and heating, the suspension or reduction

of electric public transport services, the transition of some educational institutions to remote or asynchronous formats, and disruptions to communications and internet access. Due to the scale of the consequences, the situation was classified as a state-level emergency following the [decision](#) of the relevant commission under Odesa OMA.

In response to the situation, the oblasts introduced hourly and emergency outage schedules, reserved backup power supplies, and deployed support points (for heating, charging, and Points of Invincibility). At the same time, the duration and unevenness of power outages increased public sensitivity to unequal access to basic services and heightened the risks of local tensions during periods of resource scarcity.

Another example of preventive preparedness was provided by Vinnytsia, where exercises [were conducted](#) to organise the operation of public transport in the event of blackouts, reflecting the efforts of municipal services to reduce operational risks to urban mobility under crisis scenarios.

>> **MECHANISMS FOR COMPENSATION AND RESTORATION OF HOUSING DAMAGED AS A RESULT OF THE WAR**

Within the monitoring period, restoration and compensation for damaged housing have been implemented as a combined model: the state programme, eRecovery, remains the core instrument, while communities complement it with municipal payments and local assistance to partially address the needs of affected households.

Lviv City Council [continued](#) to support residents whose housing was damaged following the missile strikes on Lviv on 12 July, 21 August, and 5 October 2025. On 14 November, the Executive Committee adopted two additional decisions to provide financial assistance to affected residents amounting to more than UAH 2 million. In Lviv territorial community, a [Procedure was in force](#) providing for partial compensation for housing repair, including windows and doors, apartment repairs, roofs of private houses, as well as damage caused by blast waves, debris, or flooding.

A new type of financial support [has been introduced](#) in Vinnytsia. Residents whose housing has sustained damage will receive support from the community ranging from UAH 10,000 to UAH 50,000. These funds will be additional to those that residents may apply for under the eRecovery programme.

2. Work on identity

2.1. Changes in education standards

Schools in Chernivtsi operated in a face-to-face format under stable electricity supply and in a hybrid format during outages. As a result, school administrations [independently](#) decide on extending the academic year until June.

In 2026, Lviv schools, including Leader School, School No. 84, and the Linguistic Gymnasium, will start [piloting](#) the reform of upper secondary specialised education, under which students will be able to obtain a bachelor's degree one year earlier.

In Zakarpattia oblast, school catering facilities were modernised and culinary hubs were established, improving nutrition for more than 9,000 children [within the framework](#) of the School Nutrition Reform Strategy. In [Mukachevo](#), winter holidays were extended until the end of January due to power outages and epidemiological risks, while in [Khust](#) community, education was partially shifted to a remote format due to an outbreak of viral hepatitis A in Iza village. In [Perechyn](#) community, more than 300 internally displaced children continued in-person learning on the basis of the relocated First Kramatorsk Lyceum.

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

According to the monitoring data, the establishment of public memorial sites for the fallen continued at the community level: memorial alleys were supplemented with new photographs, and [memorial plaques](#) and [banners](#) were installed.

At the institutional level, the politics of memory is gradually becoming formalised. In Chernivtsi oblast, the Coordination Council for the Promotion of Ukrainian National and Civic Identity [was in operation](#), and projects of historical routes are under discussion. Lviv oblast [was developing](#) a Strategy for the Restoration and Preservation of National Memory until 2030, intended to serve as a pilot initiative for the country as a whole.

In Odesa, decolonisation processes largely proceeded without mass conflicts and took the form of a procedural discussion on the pace and appropriateness of change ('gradualism and explanation' versus 'rapid decisions'), indicating that tensions here are more often linked to decision-making mechanisms than to fundamental identity-based divisions.

2.3. Freedom of religion

In Zakarpattia oblast, re-affiliation of communities from the UOC (Moscow Patriarchate) to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) were recorded, including in the villages of [Zbyny](#) and [Pashkivtsi](#) in Mukachevo raion. At the same time, the UOC (MP) retains the lead in terms of the number of parishes in the oblast.

In Chernivtsi, discussions surrounding the calendar date of Christmas events in schools prompted public discussion: some educational institutions (five state and six private) announced that celebrations would be held on 7 January instead of 25 December in accordance with the church calendar observed by the UOC (MP). The situation brought to the fore a broader debate on cultural and symbolic distancing from the Moscow tradition in the context of the war.

2.4. National minorities

A [survey](#) by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation carried out from 17 to 28 October 2025 (a sample includes 500 members of national minorities in areas of compact residence: 300 Hungarians and 200 members of Roma, Romanian, and Slovak communities) [demonstrates](#) heterogeneous but predominantly pragmatic attitudes among national minorities in Zakarpattia oblast. Specifically, 41% favour the idea of dual citizenship, 23% the expansion of local council powers, and 13.8% granting the oblast the status of an autonomous entity. Along with that, 31.6% primarily identify themselves as citizens of Ukraine, and 21.8% as representatives of their ethnic group.

Perceptions of Hungary's policy in the oblast are rather conditionally positive: the largest share of respondents (38.6%) interpret it as contributing to the development of the oblast, provided that it is coordinated with the Ukrainian authorities; 21.1% view it as friendly support for the Hungarian minority, while 14.7% see risks of weakening Ukrainian identity and preconditions for separatism, and 5.2% perceive it as preparation for annexation.

In this context, a [statement](#) by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán declaring the absence of intentions to expand Hungary's borders at Ukraine's expense and the 'unacceptability' of incorporating Zakarpattia even in the event of such a proposal from Russia has been welcomed, but has not lowered sensitivity to the issue.

In Zakarpattia, the issue of Rusyn identity sharply [gained prominence](#) in the public space following a speech by blogger Gabriella Derepa at the 18th session of the UN Forum on Minority Issues in Geneva. In her address, she combined socially sensitive issues for the oblast (the economy, business relocation, the ecology of the Carpathians, and the development of mountain areas) with calls for the 'official recognition

of the Carpatho-Rusyn minority' and for 'cooperation between Carpatho-Rusyn civil organisations and state institutions'. The video of her speech quickly went viral. She subsequently publicly denied separatism and any links with the Russian Federation, referring to the Constitution and international law.

At the level of oblast institutions, a distancing from problematisation has been observed. Specifically, the First Deputy Head of Zakarpattia Oblast Council stated that in recent years no appeals or petitions had been received from Rusyn organisations and described rhetoric about 'oppression' as politically constructed. At the same time, he characterised Rusyn identity as a historical ethnonym of Ukrainians in the oblast and emphasised the distinction between cultural identity and political Rusynism.

The Head of the People's Council of Rusyns of Zakarpattia also emphasised that Derepa's statements do not reflect the views of the organisation: following the outbreak of Russia's full-scale invasion, they publicly condemned the aggression of the RF and agreed to postpone any political demands until the end of the war, focusing instead on cultural initiatives.

The expert community interprets the recent wave of attention as a potential element of hybrid destabilisation: the Rusyn issue is more often activated from outside Ukraine and may be used by Russia alongside the Hungarian issue, drawing on local grievances (changes in the economy and demographic structure due to relocation and displacement, disputes surrounding construction in the Carpathians, etc.) to fuel tensions and mutual suspicion in the oblast.

According to the monitoring data on Chernivtsi oblast, the educational platform, Romanian for Ukrainians, [has prepared](#) new textbooks and visual materials for Ukrainian-speaking learners of Romanian (levels A1–B1), including practical exercises and structured explanations.

In parallel, Romania continues its institutional support for schools with Romanian as the language of instruction: the Department for Romanians Abroad (DRP) [selected](#) nine partner organisations for a scholarship programme in Ukraine. Scholarship payments will be coordinated in Chernivtsi, Odesa, and Zakarpattia oblasts; the programme covers 90 schools, reaching 2,813 students.

3. Joint action

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

>> AID FOR THE AFU

Aid for the AFU from local authorities and communities remained structured and consistent, financed through a combination of oblast and municipal programmes, intergovernmental budget transfers, and charitable fundraising. In Lviv oblast, this was reflected in regular [transfers](#) of equipment and [UAVs](#) to military units, including transport vehicles, FPV drones, communications equipment, and charging stations. It was also reflected in significant budgetary commitments. The city [allocated](#) additional funds for procurement and recorded annual support from the municipal budget amounting to UAH 1 billion. In parallel, Lviv [participated](#) in nationwide defence fundraising initiatives, including the Yedynozbir campaign launched by the Serhiy Prytula Charity Foundation, the 412th Nemesis Brigade, and the Ukrainian World Congress.

In Vinnytsia oblast, assistance was institutionalised at both oblast and city levels and focused on strengthening specific units through the [transfer](#) of quadcopters (Mavic and thermal models), FPV drones, specialised equipment, and gear.

In Bukovyna, Chernivtsi oblast, support combined logistics tailored to unit requests ([visits](#) by oblast leadership to military units, transfers of radio control systems, FPV drones, generators, medical and supply kits) with a financial participation mechanism for communities: in 2025, communities in the oblast [allocated](#) more than UAH 226 million to the needs of the AFU, with the largest contribution provided by Chernivtsi urban

community. Overall, a common trend across these regions is evident: a focus on high-technology equipment (UAVs/EW/communications) and mobility (transport) as priority frontline needs, alongside a gradual shift from ad hoc initiatives to programmatic and predictable forms of support.

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

According to the monitoring data, veteran policy in the oblasts has become increasingly institutionalised: alongside basic guarantees, the role of local programmes, veteran spaces/hubs and service-oriented models has grown. In Vinnytsia oblast, this was reflected in the development of the [Veteran 360](#) service ecosystem, regular communication with veterans, and a focus on housing compensation. In 2025, the oblast [provided](#) housing purchase compensation to 242 families, amounting to around UAH 600 million (approximately EUR 11.8 million). At the same time, the community introduced targeted payments, including annual assistance worth UAH 5,000 to mothers of fallen Heroes of Ukraine who were awarded the Order of the Golden Star, as well as a new form of [social support](#) for veterans with amputations – UAH 20,000 (approximately EUR 390) annually for sanatorium treatment.

In Zakarpattia oblast, hospitals [launched](#) a one-stop shop model to ensure faster access for veterans to health care services and [expanded](#) the network of veteran hubs.

In Lviv oblast, a shift is visible from passive payments towards reintegration through employment and entrepreneurship. This took the form of [career events](#), [forums](#), and veteran business fairs. It also included the establishment of new [support mechanisms](#), such as professional training and mentoring, as well as digital tools, including the Veteran's Assistant [chatbot](#). In parallel, [international dialogues](#) continued on strengthening veteran services at the oblast level. Additionally, Lviv City Council [expanded](#) its package of municipal benefits by introducing 100 free hours per month of paid parking for combatants and persons with war-related disabilities registered in the community.

In Chernivtsi oblast, in addition to [grant](#) support and [employment](#) assistance, efforts have focused on strengthening access to rehabilitation and community-based initiatives, including sports activities ([amputee football tournaments](#)) and cross-oblast [retreats](#).

>> **SUPPORT FOR THE SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES**

On 5 December, a [Made in Ukraine](#) office supporting small and micro-businesses [was opened](#) in Mohyliv-Podilskyi. It is the fifth office of this kind in Vinnytsia oblast and the 95th in Ukraine. The office was established under the Made in Ukraine national programme to support domestic producers and operates on the premises of the local branch of the oblast employment centre. It provides structured assistance to entrepreneurs, from initial consultations to guidance across support programmes and training opportunities.

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

In December, alongside continued support for the AFU and winter holiday activities, mutual aid initiatives intensified in communities across Chernivtsi oblast. These initiatives focused on supporting the children of militaries, IDPs, and children from the deoccupied and temporarily occupied areas. The initiatives relied on an established practice of charitable engagement by educational institutions. Students of Lomachyntsi Gymnasium [delivered](#) gifts to local militaries, while students of Lyceum No. 9 [collected](#) gifts for children from Kherson and [sent](#) an EcoFlow charging station and heaters to Kramatorsk. As part of the Give Kindness. Children to Children nationwide campaign, students from several schools in Chernivtsi [collected](#) more than 350 gifts for children from Chernihiv and from Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Sumy, and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts.

The volunteer movement was also reinforced by local examples reflecting trust and personal responsibility. One such example was a 16-year-old from Drachyntsi, Oleksandr Kostetskyi, who [raised](#) UAH 750,000 for the front line by playing the guitar. Cultural and civic institutions also contributed. During the Golden Applause of Bukovyna festival, Olha Kobylianska Chernivtsi Drama [Theatre](#) raised funds for the 82nd Air

Assault Brigade. Volunteer groups, including the Volunteer Hundred's office in [Zastavna](#) and camouflage net-weaving [workshops](#) in Chernivtsi, continued to send assistance to the front line on a regular basis, reinforcing a sense of shared participation and mutual support as a core social value.

4. Changes in the social structure

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

In the relatively rear areas, policy towards women, children, and people with disabilities combines two levels: long-term structural changes (barrier-free accessibility, accessibility planning, and facility audits) and short-term interventions (financial assistance, social support, and psychosocial assistance).

In Lviv oblast, systematic governance efforts were undertaken to advance accessibility. Lviv community [ranked first](#) in the Barrier-Free Index among 95 communities and two Kyiv districts. Accessibility councils [have been established](#) in all territorial communities of the oblast, barrier-free routes have been developed and introduced, and more than 6,400 facilities have been assessed. At the same time, audit results indicate that only around 5% of facilities are fully barrier-free.

In Vinnytsia, an example of targeted support is a project of the [Parostok NGO](#) for IDPs with disabilities. The initiative incorporates social support, digital skills training for women, household services for families, and art therapy sessions, complemented by humanitarian assistance.

One of the challenges faced in Chernivtsi oblast was access to basic services in rural areas: 340 villages [lacked pharmacy outlets](#). Part of the demand was addressed through medicine delivery via Ukrposhta and mobile pharmacies. At the same time, programmes of financial assistance for vulnerable groups were implemented, alongside pilot services of supported living and residential care for elderly IDPs and persons with disabilities. A decline in the number of births resulted in reduced budget allocations for a perinatal centre, creating a need for [additional funding](#). Alongside this, targeted social support mechanisms continued to operate. The oblast [was implementing](#) an experimental project for elderly IDPs and persons with disabilities, funded from the state budget and designed to provide supported living or residential care services for those requiring long-term support.

4.2. Needs of displaced persons. Response

From 1 December, [applications opened](#) for a housing voucher worth UAH 2 million – a new government support scheme for IDPs, which may be used to purchase housing, invest in construction, or cover a down payment or mortgage. At the initial stage, the programme was available to IDPs with combatant status or war-related disabilities, provided they could confirm prior residence in the temporarily occupied areas, held a valid IDP certificate, and did not own other housing in the Ukrainian government-controlled areas (subject to specified exceptions). Applications were submitted via the Diiia app and subsequently forwarded to local commissions for review. The review period was up to 30 days. High demand during the first days of submission indicated significant public need for the new scheme. At the same time, the actual use of vouchers will depend on further funding, including allocations from local budgets and potential reparations. However, as of 25 November, [according to](#) Ukraine's Ministry for Communities and Territories Development, commissions responsible for implementing housing programmes had been established in only 541 out of 1,306 communities, indicating uneven preparedness across communities.

Within the monitoring period, Chernivtsi oblast continued to expand housing capacity for IDPs through an inventory of available premises. At the 5th meeting of the Coordination Commission, data on 76 facilities

[were reviewed](#), and a list of 194 state- and municipally owned properties was approved for further inspection. In parallel, 117 inspection reports had already been formalised following the work of assessment commissions.

A sociological survey [carried out](#) in October 2025 in Zakarpattia oblast by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation jointly with the Centre for Political Sociology recorded elevated levels of social tension in attitudes towards internally displaced persons. According to the findings, 40.6% of those surveyed stated that they treat IDPs worse than locals, while 35.9% reported treating them equally. Negative attitudes were linked primarily not to security concerns but to perceptions of the socio-economic behaviour of IDPs, including widespread narratives about their alleged affluence, property purchases, insufficient integration into local communities, dependence on social benefits, or 'unjustified' migration (relocation from relatively safer areas). The findings indicate a need for communication and integration measures, including clarification of assistance rules, employment support and local-level engagement, to reduce stigmatisation and mitigate risks of conflict in host communities.

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

In border areas, particularly those in Zakarpattia oblast, mobilisation-related issues were closely intertwined with illegal border crossings and informal practices of draft evasion. A steady flow of individuals attempting to leave Ukraine was recorded, which had become an alternative [source of income](#) for part of the local population amid declining tourism activity. The situation was further complicated by high-profile personnel and disciplinary cases within TRSSCs. In Zakarpattia, an officer of the oblast TRSSC [was apprehended](#) on suspicion of organising the unlawful transfer of conscription-age men across the border, while the Head of the oblast TRSSC [received](#) an official reprimand following numerous complaints. Individual [cases](#) of mobilisation of persons with valid grounds for draft deferment (including teachers) also triggered public scandals.

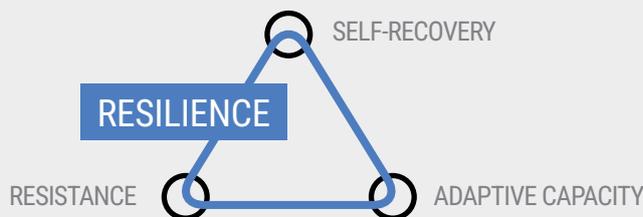
The growing aggression towards TRSSC representatives has been a further source of tension in Lviv oblast. [According to](#) the West Operational Command, [attacks](#) on servicemen and officials have shown signs of becoming a dangerous trend, fuelled by a toxic information environment where efforts to discredit mobilisation and to target individual officials contribute to the normalisation of violence in the public perception. At the same time, law enforcement agencies [have recorded](#) corruption schemes related to draft evasion and involving employees of recruitment centres and other governmental agencies, further eroding public trust.

A separate set of challenges concerns how to balance the mobilisation process with maintaining critical local services. Specifically, due to a shortage of drivers, Chernivtsi authorities stated the need to expand [exemption arrangements](#) for municipal public transport employees. This points to the need for more flexible, transparent and socially sensitive approaches to implementing mobilisation policy at the local level.

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 – Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, Kherson, Kharkiv, and Chernihiv oblasts,
Ukrainian government-controlled areas where military operations are not taking place – Vinnytsia, Odesa, Lviv, Zakarpattia, and Chernivtsi oblasts.

DATA SOURCES: media publications, decisions and 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 affairs, 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 authority activities 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, while those beginning with Report No. 10 have a three-month timeframe; beginning with Report No. 15, the timeframe returns to two months.



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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