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

The National Platform activities are geared towards strengthening national resilience of Ukraine. This could be achieved by establishing dialogue practices in society, providing authorities with proposals for developing relevant policies, in particular, 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 “Building Resilience in Conflict through Dialogue” 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 oblasts were selected based on analysis of changes in cohesion of the local populations due to the outbreak of war and include Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, Lviv and Zakarpattia oblasts. For data collection, we distinguish between the temporarily occupied areas, frontline areas, and rear areas.

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

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

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SUMMARY

Temporarily occupied and frontline territories

Within January–February 2023, Donetsk oblast has been expecting the so-called great offensive of Russia on the one hand, and the scheduled spring counteroffensive of Ukrainian defence forces. It is the results of military operations that will determine the future situation in the oblast. Without stopping the aggressor and pushing it closer to the Russian-Ukrainian border, it is impossible to stabilise the situation in the oblast and to revive the infrastructure and business operations. As of now, the oblast has actually coped with the main recent task – it survived an extremely difficult winter without significant interruptions in utility services provision which inspired a certain part of the population of the oblast to return home, but the sustainability of this process will depend on the safety component.

Despite the mandatory evacuation, the population of the oblast cities, located away from the frontline, continued to increase. One of the economic reasons is the high cost of renting housing in other oblasts of the country and the high unemployment rates. Furthermore, many returnees motivate their decision by the fact that there are currently no completely safe cities in Ukraine due to widespread missile attacks.

However, due to Russia's ongoing aggression, a large part of the local population remains in safer oblasts. They have been separated from their communities for long, adversely affecting the resilience and cohesion in the oblast. Local authorities attempt to address this problem by carrying out large-scale awareness-raising campaigns of life in the oblast and deploying a network of humanitarian hubs, which not only distribute humanitarian aid, but also work to consolidate members of a particular community. However, if hostilities continue, the feeling of separation from their communities and the extent of integration into new ones will only increase. This trend may affect the further life recovery in cities of the oblast following the end of military operations.

In the temporarily occupied territories (TOTs) of Donetsk oblast, the occupying authorities continue their attempts to integrate the population into the political and administrative life of Russia. For this reason, Russian authorities do not have much trust in local collaborators and try to advance "trusted people" from other oblasts of the country to leadership positions.

The humanitarian situation in the non-government controlled areas of the oblast remains critical. Specifically, in Mariupol, where, according to expert estimations, at least 100,000 people remained throughout the winter, most houses were left without heating and water supply. Volnovakha, located in the middle of the highway from Mariupol to Donetsk, was significantly destroyed. For the time being, there is little information about life in the city.

Practically all population centres of Luhansk oblast are under armed occupation. An aggravation of the situation was recorded in Kreminna and Svatove areas. The occupiers received an order from the Russian Defence Ministry to boost mobilisation measures.

The only way to evacuate from Luhansk oblast is through Russia and then through the Baltic States. At the same time, the occupiers restricted free entry and exit from Sievierodonetsk, Lysychansk, and Rubizhne. The forced acquisition of Russian citizenship in the oblast has been reported.

The leadership of the breakaway Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) considered the possibility of reorganising some cities of the oblast as urban-type settlements which implied budget and job cuts. 60–80% of Sievierodonetsk, controlled by Russian troops since late June 2022, remains without communications. The Russian occupiers disconnected the mobile Internet in the temporarily occupied areas of the oblast.

In the Ukrainian non-government controlled areas of Luhansk oblast, a list of so-called extremist literature to be removed from libraries was drawn up. Starobilsk locals are forced to send their children to the so-

called Cossack Cadet Corps. And in occupied Novopskov, collaborating teachers forced children to learn the verse of the Russian national anthem.

At the investment conference “Rebirth of the Nation. Municipalities of Ukraine. Opportunities for investors and partners” in Warsaw, the community of Sievierodonetsk presented three projects on revival and sustainable development.

71.83% of Zaporizhzhia oblast has remained under temporary occupation. Some 15% of members of local communities located close to the frontline are on the brink of survival in difficult circumstances: they are left without electricity, heat, water, and gas.

Zaporizhzhia oblast is among five of Ukraine’s oblasts where [air alerts were announced most often](#). Russian troops are attacking civilian facilities and homes of civilians on an ongoing basis.

Since 1 January 2023, the occupiers have banned the circulation of the hryvnia in TOAs, and raid on stores to track down those who accept it. Moreover, they increased accountability for the circulation of the hryvnia: high fines are imposed for trade in the Ukrainian currency, up to RUB300,000 (more than EUR3,500).

The occupiers have restricted access to social and humanitarian aid to the populations of the temporarily occupied areas of Zaporizhzhia oblast: the list of aid recipients declined, and its amount decreased; a passport of the Russian Federation is already required for receiving some types of financial aid; despite the promise, coal is given free of charge only to a few categories of the population. The invaders invent additional obstacles for those willing to receive social aid and organise an illegitimate collection of information, for example, by forcing them to bring copies of identification documents of neighbours to confirm the need for financial aid.

In the oblast, the issuance of vehicle permits to move through the non-government controlled areas has been launched. These permits will be issued at military command posts established by the occupiers in Melitopol, Berdiansk, Tokmak, and Vasylivka. In the future, these permits for moving through the non-government controlled part of Zaporizhzhia oblast will be mandatory.

Terror, kidnapping, rape of minors by the Russian militaries, robbery, forced evacuation for a patriotic stance or unwillingness to cooperate with the occupying authorities, raids in search of the underground, tortures, filtration measures, searches, removal of Ukrainian bank applications from phones, shortage of medications, and lack of duly health care/treatment, coercion for defensive works (digging trenches and the like) have become everyday life of local civilians living in the occupation. Six cases of sexual violence committed by the Russian militaries have been recorded in Zaporizhzhia oblast.

The occupiers declared Melitopol the “capital of Zaporizhzhia oblast”. Hence, the city became the centre of the enemy group of the entire captured south of Ukraine. The ruling elite of the occupiers and their Russian curators are concentrated in Melitopol. Representatives of the Russian media and of the Kremlin often visit the city and film propaganda stories about the illusion of a “peaceful life”.

Schools in Melitopol and other occupied population centres have become propaganda centres where teachers brought from Russia and local collaborators work. Every day they conduct “conversations about important things” with the children, during which they convince them that Russia has allegedly saved them from the ‘Nazis’. Children are also told that the captured territories are forever Russian; they are forced to sing the Russian national anthem and write “letters to soldiers”.

Earlier this year, several personnel decisions important for the oblast have been made: on 7 February 2023, Yuriy Malashko has been appointed as Head of Zaporizhzhia Oblast Military Administration following the dismissal of the former Head, Oleksandr Starukh, in January. The Head of the Prosecutor’s Office of Zaporizhzhia Oblast, Viktor Prykhodko, has also been sacked.

Around 60% of businesses in Zaporizhzhia have resumed their operation. Yet the output is reduced, so is the number of employees. Also, businesses and companies cannot work at full capacity, in particular, due to problems with electricity. Following the outbreak of a full-scale war, some 26 businesses relocated from Zaporizhzhia to the west of Ukraine.

The situation in Kherson oblast remains extremely difficult. Russian troops continue massive and chaotic bombardment from a distance the right-bank part of Kherson oblast, liberated from the Russian occupiers, which results in the destruction of residential areas, critical infrastructure, hospitals, schools, cultural centres, and businesses. People are forced to leave their homes because of unsuitable living conditions created in the liberated areas.

Thousands of hectares of land are mined and are not suitable for agriculture. Hitting a mine by a civilian is the most common cause of death after shelling. In connection with the use of incendiary shells by the Russian militaries, the number of fires in floodplains and islands of the Dnipro delta has increased. A significant part of the population of the right-bank communities has either evacuated or died. Some population centres are on the verge of extinction.

In fact, the aggressor continues the policy of displacing the civilian population from the territories where they traditionally lived. The population outflow continues. First of all, representatives of the most active, young, professional workforce leave these places. This prevents not only the recovery and development of territories, but also the quality provision of various services, including administrative, social, and health care ones.

Today, volunteers, public activists, international organisations, and the government actively help Kherson oblast through organising humanitarian aid, assisting in the recovery, and restoring a peaceful life. The Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) are holding back the enemy's blow and making devastating attacks on the enemy's combat positions.

Oleksandr Prokudin, a young manager, has been appointed as Head of Kherson Oblast Military Administration. Notwithstanding public criticism, the City Military Administration is taking measures towards greater transparency and comprehensibility of its actions. And external aid, civic activity, and smart actions of authorities will help to enhance the level of resilience and cohesion of the population of the oblast.

The security situation in Kharkiv oblast has become much more complicated. Although no changes in the frontline have been reported, a threat to the city of Kupiansk and Kupiansk community has increased significantly. There was no direct threat to Kharkiv, just as there was no critical concentration of Russian troops on the state border (a distance of 20–30 km from the city). This may signal the desire of the Russian army to conduct the offensive only from the south-east of the oblast.

A dramatic increase in population evacuation rates was not anticipated. An increase in the activities of international humanitarian organisations aiding the war-affected population is expected.

The political space has been quite equal, as minimal clashes between the city authorities and the head of the oblast have been recorded. This situation is explained by mobilisation of resources in crisis conditions and concentration on the issues of restoring a balanced life after deoccupation. The core task for the entire management team is to restore vitality of not only particular population centres of the oblast, but also to particular districts of Kharkiv (Northern Saltivka).

Amid public calls and the general tendency to 'purify' the authorities, most of the hidden or open supporters of the so-called Russian World were removed from their positions. At the same time, those processes have taken place without grabbing the media's attention.

Work with the civilian population for consolidation and adaptation, as well as resocialisation in the deoccupied areas has been carried out, though sporadically. This work has mainly concerned particular vulnerable groups: people with disabilities, children or the elderly. Less attention has been paid to women (especially those who survived the period of occupation) – there are only a few lines of psychological assistance and indirect communication channels.

Work is under way to [restore](#) electricity supply, especially in the deoccupied areas. The total number of subscribers who remain [without electricity](#) in Kharkiv oblast is about 35,000. Some 11,000 of them are people living under the temporary occupation.

The main priority of the oblast's economic sector is the preparations for the sowing campaign, accompanied by the preparation for the humanitarian demining of the oblast. It is possible that the number of accidental casualties due to the ammunition explosions may increase due to the warming and desire of people to go to 'cottages', most of which are located in the deoccupied areas or those that were until recently located along the frontline.

In early February, the Chairwoman of the Russian Federation Council, [Valentina Matviyenko](#), said that elections in the non-government controlled areas will be held on 10 September 2023, and preparations for them are already under way. According to the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation, almost 60 election cases will be simultaneously heard in September, primarily on elections to parliaments of the breakaway Republics and legislative authorities of Russian cities. Specifically, elections to the 'parliaments' of Russia-occupied Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson oblasts are scheduled. The Kremlin believes

that this will legitimate the process of occupation. Political parties of the Russian Federation are building their networks in the occupied oblasts, with a focus on the upcoming elections.

Ukrainian government-controlled areas

In the western and southern target oblasts, the situation of electricity supply has stabilised and improved to a certain extent in late February, in particular, due to a temperature rise and an increase in electricity production in the country. Practically no stabilisation and emergency power outages were reported, which has produced a positive effect on the population in general.

According to the [Ministry of Economy of Ukraine](#), 800 businesses were relocated to safer oblasts of the country during the year of war, of which 623 have already resumed operations in new places. Most businesses moved to Lviv (24%), Zakarpattia (14.5%), Chernivtsi (9.8%), Ivano-Frankivsk (8.3%), and Ternopil (6.3%) oblasts. Another 239 businesses are currently looking for a suitable location or transportation methods. More than 650 businesses, which planned to relocate their production facilities, have refused to relocate following the liberation of the areas where they are located.

Within the reporting period customs work on the Ukrainian-Romanian border, initiatives to open new entry-exit checkpoints (Diakivtsi–Racovăț) has intensified in Chernivtsi oblast, which is important in view of the war and active humanitarian cooperation with Romania. At the same time, Zakarpattia oblast has resumed passenger rail traffic with Romania in mid-January. After a 17-year break, the first train left [from Rakhiv](#), Ukraine's Zakarpattia oblast, to Valea-Viseului, Romania. The urgency of launching an international connection in Ukrzaliznytsia is explained by the large number of temporary migrants from Ukraine in Romanian cities.

The local self-government bodies of the oblasts continue to cooperate with the state structures of European countries and international funds to help internally displaced persons, and provide financial and material assistance needed for life support of the oblasts.

Various international organisations, hubs, and other stakeholders are actively working in the target oblasts with a view of providing humanitarian aid, access of population to health care and other services. The New Year and Christmas holidays have somewhat reduced political activity, but revealed new forms of fundraising to help soldiers.

The number of IDPs has stabilised, but there is an urgent need to create comfortable living conditions for them. Local authorities partly solve this problem in communities through resettling IDPs in renovated, habitable premises. Arrangements, as well as material and technical base are provided by international donor organisations. Also, new modular towns are opening in communities. However, this social housing is not enough. Many of the internally displaced persons rent housing, but the financial capacity of many families is low, which significantly actualises the need to provide housing for IDPs.

Another important problem for internally displaced persons is the difficulty of finding a job in the specialty, especially in small communities and rural areas. It has to be mentioned that IDPs are often employed in a different field, so they experience a great need for retraining and appropriate trainings.

In the target oblasts and throughout Ukraine, Russian propaganda narratives continue to circulate, although the local media systematically dispel them. Attention of activists to the problems of national memory and perpetuation of the events of the Russian-Ukrainian war is growing, which is positively perceived by communities.

The growing number of reports on those evading service in the Armed Forces, [attempted illegal crossing of the border](#), and risks of sending untrained recruits to the front prove that the issue of approach to mobilisation is acute. Mobilisation measures produce a certain societal tension. At the same time, the practice is evolving to form military units on the basis of the National Police, the State Border Guard Service, and the National Guard from motivated volunteers.

I. TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED AND FRONTLINE AREAS

Within January–February 2023, the frontline in Donetsk oblast has not changed significantly, the fiercest battles continue around Bakhmut, Avdiivka, and Vuhledar. Following the capture of Soledar in mid-January 2023, Russian troops tried their best to encircle and capture Bakhmut. However, the city is currently not surrounded, and the Armed Forces can deliver all necessities to the city, carry out rotations, and evacuate the wounded. At the same time, Ukrainian authorities have repeatedly emphasised that they have no intention of surrendering Bakhmut to the Russians, nor they are going to defend it at any cost. Attempts by the Russians to seize Vuhledar have also failed. According to the Defence Forces of Ukraine, the Marine Brigade of the Russian Pacific Fleet has been destroyed there during an attempted assault.

The Ukrainian militaries have continued to attack ammo depots and military deployment centres in the non-government controlled areas. Information about the vast majority of those strikes and their consequences is not officially disclosed or commented on by the Ukrainian militaries. However, on the night of 31 December – 1 January, the Ukrainian militaries have attacked the vocational school No. 19 in the outskirts of Makiivka. As there was ammunition in the premises and nearby parked military equipment, a detonation and a fire took place, which almost completely destroyed the building. Despite the tradition of not reporting the death of its own soldiers, the Ministry of Defence of Russia was forced, due to the large number of victims, to admit the fact of the strike and [report 89 soldiers killed](#). Moreover, at least [70 wounded were sent](#) to Samara for treatment. According to independent sources, 400 people were reportedly killed and about 300 were wounded. A few days following the attack, a video appeared in which a soldier, who was alleged to be seriously wounded as a result of the attack, said that the large number of victims was due to the fact that all the militaries had gathered in the assembly hall of the school to listen to Vladimir Putin's New Year greeting.

Earlier this year, heavy fights have been reported along the entire frontline in Zaporizhzhia oblast. The enemy continued to shell Ukrainian positions, using tank weapons, rocket and barrel artillery along the line of contact. Notwithstanding the current operational focus on Donbas, it is critically important for Russia to keep the defence in Zaporizhzhia oblast, according to the intelligence [review by the Ministry of Defence of the United Kingdom](#). As the UK intelligence agency has claimed with reference to photos posted in open sources, the Russian Federation further strengthened defence fortifications in the central part of Zaporizhzhia oblast as of 7 February, in particular near Tarasivka. Furthermore, Russia has established defensive fortifications between Vasylivka and Orikhiv as of 8 January.

Military operations continued in Kherson oblast. First of all, these are artillery duels and operations of sabotage and reconnaissance groups in the lower Dnipro. Russian troops continued to use massive daily chaotic shelling of populated areas of Kherson oblast. Hundreds of houses have been destroyed. Educational and health care facilities, institutional buildings, and architectural monuments are under constant shelling. In February, the archive, court, trade union, railway and bus station buildings were also damaged by shelling.

On the left bank, the occupiers have allocated a 15-kilometer zone and forced civilians to leave it. The two largest agglomerations of the left-bank part of Kherson oblast, Kakhovka agglomeration with the cities of Kakhovka and Nova Kakhovka, and Oleshky–Hohlyak agglomeration, which is part of Kherson agglomeration, were within that zone. All institutions from that territory were either evacuated or are being evacuated by the occupiers to other cities of the oblast (Skadovsk, Henichesk). That territory is the zone of intense artillery shelling.

In February 2023, significant changes occurred at the front in Kharkiv oblast. Military operations in Kupiansk direction have significantly intensified. The enemy conducts continuous mortar and artillery shelling of border and frontline population centres. The intensity of missile attacks on Kharkiv has increased several

times. The building of O. M. Beketov National University of Urban Economy and the historical centre of the city have been dramatically damaged.

The enemy's armed forces continue to control almost all populations centres of Luhansk oblast. Ukraine's defence forces fought heavy battles in Kreminna and Svativ areas. The occupying forces, supported by artillery and aviation, have attacked [in waves](#). At the same time, the Russian occupiers have installed a powerful electronic warfare system in Luhansk oblast restricting the operation of drones.

Military as well as military and civil administrations, which are part of Ukraine's system of governance, control processes in the areas occupied since 24 February 2022, although they are located outside the borders of the non-government controlled areas.

1. Changes in the system of governance

>> **LEGITIMATE LOCAL AUTHORITIES DURING THE OCCUPATION OF PART OF THE OBLAST. DEOCCUPIED AREAS**

The leadership of military administrations in Kharkiv oblast has focused its efforts on the restoration of critical infrastructure of the oblast and the creation of more favourable conditions for communities. A significant improvement of relations between local authorities and international organisations has been recorded. Reports on visits by foreign guests and working meetings with heads of UN humanitarian offices in Ukraine to continue cooperation in providing humanitarian aid to the war-affected population have appeared more and more often.

The general trends towards a change in the political landscape have continued – the large number of deputies, identified as supporters of the “Russian World” in the public space, were forced to lay down their mandates. Those are mainly deputies of the [two](#) parties, Opposition Platform – For Life (OPFL) and Kernes Bloc – Successful Kharkiv. The Deputy Head of the Oblast Council, Bohdan Malyovany, elected on the list of the now-banned OPFL, resigned and lost his mandate. Prior to that, social networking sites and media outlets said he had Russian citizenship.

In Kharkiv oblast, [mobile investigative and prosecutorial teams](#) have been set up to record and investigate war crimes committed by the Russian occupiers. According to the Head of Kharkiv Oblast Prosecutor's Office, [Oleksandr Filchakov](#), 1,780 civilians have been reported killed in Kharkiv oblast and another 2,718 wounded since 24 February 2022. In his words, mobile investigative and prosecutorial teams have fully inspected 67% of the liberated areas in the oblast. Law enforcement officers discovered 21 torture chambers, equipped by the aggressor, on the territory of Kupiansk (9), Iziium (7), Kharkiv (4), and Chuhuiv (1) raions of the oblast.

In view of the large amount of repair works, which are currently under way in Kharkiv oblast, the misuse of funds or exposure of corruption schemes have been reported in newsbreaks. One of those scandals erupted [around](#) Vilkhivka village council which had purchased construction materials at inflated prices, Kharkiv Anti-Corruption Centre reported.

According to general estimations, some [80%](#) of businesses in Kharkiv oblast that worked before the war have been shut down as of mid-February. Part of them does not plan to resume operations until at least mid-spring. First, this is due to a possible offensive by the Russian army. The second reason is the ongoing shelling of frontline communities and the absence of an adequate network of banking services.

On 7 February 2023, the 39-year-old ex-Chief of Kherson Oblast National Police, Oleksandr Prokudin, was appointed as Head of Kherson Oblast Military Administration which has triggered serious discussions among Kherson public. Some activists sharply criticised this appointment. Some [outlets](#) immediately recalled rumours about corruption schemes allegedly linked to Oleksandr Prokudin. The influential media outlet, [Most](#), provided details of how Prokudin had been fired twice from the post of Chief of Kherson Oblast National Police in 2021 and in early 2022 and said he had not handed over the keys to his office. Mr. Prokudin's main critics accused him of thwarting the investigation into the tragic death of a famous public activist, Kateryna Handziuk, following an attempted murder in July 2018. At the same time, some members of the public sincerely supported the new appointment.

On the evening of 23 February 2023, Oleksandr Prokudin has said in his [video address](#) that he was going to take the military administration of the city under his “manual control”. The OMA head did not disclose

the details to the public, but a copy of the document with a list of assignments for the head of Kherson Oblast Military Administration, Halyna Luhova, appeared on social media. According to the list, the claims to Kherson OMA include the unsatisfactory solutions to the city's acute problems (delivery of humanitarian aid, state of preparation of shelters and bomb shelters, renovation of buildings damaged by shelling), city budget expenditures in terms of administrators of funds, special and general budget funds (this is especially true for the Parks of Kherson municipal enterprise), and activities of the city executive bodies. That list of claims and the information leakage show that there are serious tensions between the heads of OMA and CMA and between the CMA head and his subordinates, which may end in a change of power in the city.

OMA and CMA heads held meetings with representatives of civil society organisations that attract volunteers and deliver humanitarian aid to the communities of Kherson and the right-bank raions of the oblast. On 22 February, Oleksandr Prokudin has conducted a meeting with the main leaders of the [Volonterskyi Desant 2.0 \(Volunteer Landing 2.0\)](#) initiative who arrived in Kherson. The project is initiated by the Coordinating Humanitarian Headquarters of Odesa Oblast NGO. More than 20 volunteers from Odesa, Kyiv, Lviv, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson supported the idea. Such initiative group already worked in the city in December. Volunteers will help city district councils and philanthropists organise evacuation, targeted delivery of humanitarian kits, deployment of a network of humanitarian headquarters, etc.

Oleksandr Prokudin also paid two visits to military positions and held a meeting with all Ukrainian MPs from Kherson oblast. All of them represent the Servant of the People party and have visited Kherson in this composition for the first time since its liberation on 11 November 2022.

The number of MPs, elected in Donetsk oblast from the [banned](#) political party, Opposition Platform – For Life, continued to decrease. On 24 February, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (VRU) has [revoked the mandates](#) of 3 OPFL MPs, including Yurii Solod, elected to the VRU from the 47th electoral district in Donetsk oblast. According to the 2019 parliamentary election results, 12 MPs from single-mandate constituencies of Donetsk oblast were elected to the parliament. As of now, 5 of them terminated their powers or do not participate in the parliamentary business. Dmytro Lubinets (60th district, Volnovakha) will hold the post of Ukrainian Parliament Human Rights Commissioner from July 2022, Vadym Novynskyi (57th district, Mariupol) resigned at his own request, [Andriy Aksyonov](#) (49th district, Pokrovsk) was stripped of his parliamentary powers in January 2023, Fedir Khristenko (46th district, Bakhmut) fled to Russia and does not participate in the parliamentary business. As is known, the holding of elections is prohibited under the martial law.

Donetsk Oblast Council has not worked since 2014, and its functions have been taken over by Donetsk Oblast Military and Civil Administration. Following the full-scale Russian invasion, the work of city councils practically stopped, and their functions were taken over by military administrations in almost all communities of Donetsk oblast.

Within the reporting period, several important personnel decisions were made for Zaporizhzhia oblast: Yuriy Malashko, who headed the Military Administration of Krasnohorivka, Donetsk oblast since 2018, has been appointed as head of Zaporizhzhia Oblast Military Administration. In 2020–2022, he worked as the deputy head of the anti-terrorist centre of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU). The Prosecutor General has also sacked the Head of Prosecutor's Office of Zaporizhzhia Oblast, Viktor Prykhodko. Changes also took place in the managerial staff of one of the city's key businesses: Oleksandr Myronenko left the post of Director General and Roman Slobodianiuk has been appointed as Acting Director General of Zaporizhstal.

1.1 Decisions of occupying authorities

Within the monitoring period, the inclusion of temporarily occupied areas in the system of power of the Russian Federation has continued. On 23 December 2022, representatives of the occupied oblasts, [Alexander Ananchenko](#) (in 2018–2022 headed the government of the breakaway DPR) and [Natalia Nikanorova](#) (in 2016–2022 was the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the breakaway DPR) [have received certificates](#) of membership of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. Olga Bas and Darya Lantratova (the LPR), Dmitriy Vorona (occupied areas of Zaporizhzhia oblast), Konstantin Basyuk (occupied areas of Kherson oblast) have also become the so-called senators.

>> PERSONNEL POLICY

Russia has continued to increase the presence of its law enforcement agencies in the temporarily occupied areas of Zaporizhzhia oblast. In the last days of January, data on the [Department of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation \(DFSB RF\) in Zaporizhzhia Oblast](#) have been entered in the Russian Unified State Register of Legal Entities. Alexander Gaglazov, the former Acting Head of the Department of the Federal Security Service of Russia in Tambov region and former First Deputy Head of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, has been appointed as Head of the so-called DFSB RF.

In the self-proclaimed LPR, Russian-appointed authorities trust collaborators less and less. The Kremlin stops relying on them and brings officials from Russia to the breakaway Republic. According to [Luhansk OMA](#), the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Tatarstan Yevgeniy Varakin has become deputy head of the occupying administration in occupied Lysychansk.

>> ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

By analogy with the breakaway LPR / DPR where there are the so-called Constitutions, the occupiers are to introduce in the TOAs of Zaporizhzhia oblast a [Charter](#) for harmonisation with the legislation of the Russian Federation. *"We have been working on the Charter of Zaporizhzhia oblast, and we will have the Charter, not the Constitution, for over a month. In fact, the Charter has been already written. It consists of about 20 pages. It is important for harmonising the legislation with that of the Russian Federation, to which Zaporizhzhia oblast becomes a part,"* said Vladimir Rogov, a representative of the occupying "oblast administration". According to him, the Charter will be approved after the election scheduled for September 2023.

In Luhansk oblast, the Russian occupiers want to assign a status of villages to some captured towns and cities to further reduce costs, e. g., for social infrastructure. According to [Luhansk OMA](#), *"Local administrations, staff of municipal enterprises will be cancelled or reduced, budget spending will be further decreased, and the network of hospitals, schools and kindergartens will be optimised."*

Having captured Soledar, Donetsk oblast, the Russian invaders [administratively annexed](#) it to Shakhtarsk. In actual fact, the city ceased to exist. At first it was not recognised, but the so-called Acting Head of the DPR Pushilin claimed that there [were no plans to open a humanitarian centre](#) of the United Russia party in the "liberated city", although this was usually done in any smallest population centre after its capture. The official reason was the evacuation of the local population to the Russian-controlled areas of the oblast. However, Pushilin later was forced to admit that [Soledar actually no longer exists](#), because it has been turned into ruins during the assault.

>> ISSUANCE OF RUSSIAN PASSPORTS

In the temporarily occupied areas of Donetsk oblast, the issuance of Russian passports continued. According to propaganda media, [550,000 residents](#) of the non-government controlled areas of the oblast have received Russian passports so far. Earlier this year, it was announced that the number of points for receiving documents to obtain a Russian passport would reach 34. However, as early as in February, the so-called Head of the DPR, Denis Pushilin, noted that the number was not sufficient and promised that it [would increase several times](#).

[Petro Andriushchenko](#), an advisor to the mayor of Mariupol, said that in schools of Mariupol raion, the occupiers are forcing school children of the 9th and 11th grades to get Russian passports, because otherwise the graduates will not receive school certificates. He underscored that 9th graders can make a passport only if their parents already have it.

Queues lined up for passports in Alchevsk, Luhansk oblast. The occupiers decided to forcibly issue passports for [workers of the steel mill](#) who are not allowed to work without a new identification document. The choice was either to resign or go to a passport office.

The Russian occupiers have continued extensive passporting of the populations of the temporarily occupied areas of Zaporizhzhia oblast. According to Melitopol mayor, [Ivan Fedorov](#), the occupying authorities demand that locals get Russian passports by 1 June. Anyone who fails to obtain this "document" will be punished – housing, vehicles, and property will be confiscated. He said, "Passports that are currently distributed

in the non-government controlled areas [are invalid in Russia](#) and in temporarily occupied Crimea, and that border guards of the Russian Federation call these passports internal for TOAs of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson oblasts". In temporarily occupied [Enerhodar](#), Russian troops forced about 3,000 workers of Zaporizhzhia NPP to obtain Russian passports.

>> FINANCE

On 18 January 2023, the so-called People's Council of the DPR has approved the "budget of the Donetsk People's Republic for 2023". Propaganda media emphasize that this is the first budget of the "Republic as a subject of the Russian Federation". According to this "[document](#)", expenses of the breakaway Republic will amount to RUB196.1 billion next year, of which only RUB25 billion (or about 13%) will be financed from own tax revenues, another RUB170 billion will simply be transferred by Russian taxpayers in the form of "irrecoverable revenues". How exactly these expenses will be distributed is currently unknown, as the relevant Annexes to the "budget" have not been made public. However, propaganda media said, with reference to the so-called Head of the Government of the DPR, that 70% of the budget will be channelled for payment of wages, pensions, and other social benefits.

Russian occupying forces have "banned" the circulation of the hryvnia in the non-government controlled areas of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia oblast, starting 1 January 2023. Locals exchange hryvnia reserves for roubles or look for points where it is still possible to withdraw money from cards of Ukrainian banks. According to [Oleksandr Pasichnyk](#), the Deputy Head of Berdiansk City Military Administration, it is possible to pay in Ukrainian cash only in small shops. Prices are indicated in roubles. Terminals of Ukrainian banks have been closed since 1 January.

In Russian-occupied [Kakhovka](#), Kherson oblast, the Russian militaries conduct raids to remove the hryvnia from circulation. The Russian occupiers check sales outlets in the city for the Ukrainian currency and threaten entrepreneurs with the seizure of cash and goods if they find hryvnias in any of them.

Since early January, raids by the occupiers on shops in the non-government controlled areas of Luhansk oblast have continued; they searched for those who still accept the hryvnia. As reported earlier, even money changers who exchanged hryvnias were detained for it. Moreover, bank terminals were seized during searches. To strengthen accountability for the circulation of the hryvnia, a fine of RUB300,000 (more than EUR3,500) has recently been imposed for the sale of goods in Ukrainian currency in the non-government controlled areas.

>> ZAPORIZHZHIA NPP

The RF has changed the legal address of [Zaporizhzhia NPP \(ZNPP\)](#). The occupiers are trying to make it "subordinate" to Moscow. [Enerhoatom](#) assures that the fake change of legal address will not help Russia control the nuclear plant.

At a joint briefing with IAEA Director General, Raphael Mariano Grossi, on 16 January, the Minister of Energy of Ukraine, [Herman Halushchenko](#), stated that the situation at Zaporizhzhia NPP was deteriorating. According to him, there is constant pressure on the ZNPP staff, because the occupiers did not receive the results expected under the contracts signed with the occupiers. The situation is also deteriorating from a technical point of view. *"The plant doesn't operate as of now, it only receives energy from the Ukrainian side. The situation is complicated, and this is emphasised by IAEA experts. They have an opinion that it is necessary for at least a few blocks to operate, and they told Russian about this,"* Halushchenko said.

On 11 January, the [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine](#) has announced that in temporarily occupied Energodar, the Russian occupiers deprived almost 1,500 ZNPP workers of their passes and access to the plant. At the same time, the occupiers were looking for nuclear plant's new workers in the RF and are preparing a housing fund for would-be workers through the so-called "nationalisation" of apartments of local residents who have left.

The self-proclaimed "management" of the plant [cuts wages](#) of workers who signed contracts with the Russian invaders by almost half, by 45%, explaining this by the fact that the work of Zaporizhzhia NPP has been ceased, its units are not being operated, and therefore there is no need to pay wages in full.

On 11 February, the [State Nuclear Regulation Directorate of Ukraine](#) has banned the operation of power units 3, 4, 5, 6 of Zaporizhzhia NPP due to the impossibility to eliminate the detected violations of nuclear and radiation safety requirements.

>> BUSINESSES

The occupiers continue to force businessmen to come under the jurisdiction of Russia. Expropriation of businesses has begun in Kherson oblast. Specifically, in late February, it became known that the occupiers have illegally transferred Kakhovka-based [Chumak](#) to management of the Crimea-based Olyva Group. According to residents of Kakhovka, Chumak PJSC has not been operating for the past few months. Its territory is guarded by several armed soldiers, and characteristic sounds are heard from workshops which indicate the dismantling of production lines. The occupiers really wanted to launch production, but they could not. They do not have the necessary software, in particular, SAP – a general system of control of production and its quality. Also, they could not find personnel who could handle the production lines. Moreover, launching lines that have stood idle for over six months will require a code from the manufacturer to start operating.

Within January–February, the Post of Russia has actually completed the merger of the so-called Donbas Post. Starting 13 February 2023, [only state postal stamps of the RF will be used](#) to pay for postal items. At the same time, the so-called Donbas Post does not seem to cease its existence and will be engaged in the issue of anniversary stamps and postcards. It should be noted that since 2014, the postal operator of the self-proclaimed Republics has turned into a powerful and well-oiled propaganda tool that popularised the war and spread Russian narratives, in particular, aimed at glorifying the Soviet past. Specifically, ahead of the New Year, postage stamps, cards, and even a souvenir coin dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the formation of the USSR were issued. In addition, postcards with the image of Stalin, Brezhnev, and other Soviet officials were issued in due time. Also, the company actively issued stamps with the so-called heroes of the Republic depicting dead militants. Its another propaganda task is to glorify the Russian army's capture of cities in the east and south of Ukraine – special stamps were issued on the occasion of the capture of Mariupol, Volnovakha, and Soledar.

The equipment of Rubizhne-based [cardboard packaging plant](#), Luhansk oblast, is being dismantled and taken to Kuban. According to workers, there is an identical plant there. The situation is similar to what happened in Sievierodonetsk, from where all survived equipment of Azot is exported to Russia.

>> BUILDING OF PARTY STRUCTURES OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

In January, Sergei Mironov, the leader of A Just Russia party, visited [Melitopol](#), Zaporizhzhia oblast, to set up a party cell in the city for participating in the upcoming election.

>> HOUSING

The number of cases of apartments looting has increased in the non-government controlled areas of Luhansk oblast. The list of apartments that the Russians invaders plan to “expropriate” is growing every day if owners do not contact them. Earlier, it was 20–30 apartments per week, whereas now it is up to a hundred apartments which are immediately looted, because either militaries or people from war-destroyed cities are settled there.

1.2. Access to public information

Since the end of 2022, Russian-controlled media has started to announce the appearance of a new satellite television operator, [Russian World](#). It was noted that this operator was created specifically for broadcasting to the non-government controlled areas of Ukraine, including Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson oblasts, as well as to the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol. In 2023, the so-called administrations of the Russian-controlled areas of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia oblasts have started to call on locals to submit applications for free installation of equipment needed to watch Russian World. This package of TV channels includes 20 Russian TV channels, and 9 local ones.

The presence of Ukrainian media in the non-government controlled areas is weak, [said a woman from Polohy](#), Zaporizhzhia oblast, “...Ukrainian T-2 primarily broadcasts exclusively in the areas bordering the frontline. I mean that it just finishes the signal transmission. The rest of the areas broadcast only Russian T-2. People are saved by satellite television in a certain sense. It is due to satellite television most people receive reliable information from Ukraine. ...Not a single Ukrainian-language radio station broadcasts on the territory of Polohy raion.”

According to the 2022 results, [7 media outlets were created](#) in the non-government controlled areas of Donetsk oblast to promote narratives of the occupiers. In Mariupol, Radio Breeze (broadcasting from No-voazovsk, occupied in August 2014) and Mariupol 24 TV Channel started broadcasting, and Priazovsky Ra-bochy newspaper resumed its publication. In Nikolske village (which the occupiers call the old Soviet name, Volodarske), Priazovian Zoria newspaper started to be published, Nashe Slovo newspaper in Volnovakha, and Selskaya Nov in Manhush.

The Russian occupiers have disconnected the mobile Internet in the temporarily occupied areas of Luhansk oblast. According to Luhakom, a cellular operator in the LPR branded since 1 July 2022 as MKS, [the mobile Internet will be disconnected from 11 February 2023](#) due to the order of the occupying authorities. Also, the relevant service will be excluded from all mobile communication plans. In this way, the occupiers are attempting to fight the resistance movement so that people cannot report on locations of the Russian militaries and the movement of equipment, as well as to isolate the population from the Ukrainian information space.

In Zaporizhzhia oblast, the occupiers continue the information war, creating fake messages and posting them on their own propaganda resources. Experts of the [Institute for the Study of War](#) assumed that Russian sources spread statements that certain groups of foreigners serve in a Russian volunteer battalion in Zaporizhzhia oblast to signal particular foreign countries that there are allegedly local groups in their countries supporting pro-Russian views. Specifically, on 2 February, Russia's media and propaganda Telegram channels have spread news that Turkish volunteers began combat training together with the Sudoplatov Volunteer Battalion, created and funded by a stooge of the RF and the Head of the so-called Zaporizhzhia occupying administration, Yevgeny Balytsky. One Russian source added a video of an anonymous volunteer speaking Turkish, but Russian sources did not provide any other visual confirmation that Turkish citizens really serve in the Sudoplatov Volunteer Battalion. Russian sources also claimed that citizens of Serbia and Sweden serve in the same Volunteer Battalion.

>> DEOCCUPIED AREAS

[Public](#) communication of authorities of the deoccupied communities of Kharkiv oblast has changed, as most of them have already resumed the publication of posts on official resources (except for the authorities of Kupiansk and Vovchanka). The number of publications on official resources of city mayors – communication through social networks – has increased. This helped significantly boost communication with citizens and create alternative communication channels in the absence of access to oblastwide television.

The appointment of Oleksandr Prokudin as Head of Kherson OMA has not fundamentally changed the situation of openness and transparency of the work of the oblast authorities. On the official website of Kherson Oblast Military Administration, there are no orders of the OMA Head, the text of the oblast budget, information about the OMA leadership. Also, there is no information about the leadership of raion military administrations. Only two orders of the newly appointed Head have been posted on the OMA Telegram channel, on the ban on taking photos and videos of positions of our troops and infrastructure facilities and on the imposition of additional security measures on the anniversary of the outbreak of a large-scale military aggression.

A similar situation was with access to the texts of orders of Kherson and Beryslav Raion Military Administrations. There is only one ordinance of the Head of Kherson Raion Military Administration. The decrees and orders of the Kherson City Military Administration have been partially published back in January 2023. Since the second half of January and in February, no text has been made public.

An important innovation of the newly appointed Head was his regular short video reports on Facebook and on the official Telegram channel of Kherson Oblast Military Administration, in which Mr. Prokudin reported on what had been done, on problems and the successes achieved.

Since January, Kherson City Military Administration has intensified its work on keeping the public aware and establishing feedback. In January, a meeting has been conducted with media representatives and later, an online meeting of Halyna Luhova with city residents has been held on the Facebook platform. Also, the city authorities started to communicate more actively with various groups. In December, Halyna Luhova met with Kherson residents only in response to citizens' protests or petition campaigns, whereas since February, such meetings have become regular practice.

2. Humanitarian situation

The non-government controlled areas of Donetsk oblast continue to experience a significant shortage of drinking water, due to which the local authorities cannot provide water supply on a 24-hour basis even in Donetsk. This was such a serious problem that an increase in water supply from 2 to 5 hours per day became almost the main New Year's gift, [according to all occupying media outlets](#). This situation is linked to the cessation of water supply through the Siverskyi Donets–Donbas canal due to military operations.

60–80% of [Sievierodonetsk](#), Luhansk oblast, which has been under the control of Russian troops since late June, remains without utilities. [Oleksandr Stryuk](#), the Head of Sievierodonetsk City Administration, said, *“They are attempting to equip the houses, which have more or less survived, for the militaries to live in. Parts of the quarters were provided with electricity. They bring in modular boiler houses which they try to attach to broken networks using their own primitive home-made tools. Nevertheless, 60–80% of the city is still left without utilities, so these are islands of life accommodated for their own needs.”* According to him, medications are imported from Russia, but they are in short supply. The local hospital has a minimum number of medical personnel, from Sievierodonetsk and from Russian-occupied Luhansk.

According to Luhansk OMA, in temporarily occupied [Lysychansk](#), sewers froze in high-rise buildings, and boilers burst in apartments due to the lack of centralised utility services, because people had not drained water during the evacuation.

The situation on the left bank of the Dnipro in the 15-kilometer zone, Kherson oblast, remains difficult. Local residents suffer from food shortages, high prices, and constant shelling. Moreover, Russian soldiers have developed a practice of taking revenge on the locals: for every accurate hit by Ukrainian troops, they fire on population centres, because they believe that it was local residents who “gave away” the exact location of combat positions. According to the latest reports, the health care facilities, relocated from the 15-km zone, are now gradually returning. Sometimes problems with electricity supply occur. In the non-government controlled areas outside of the 15-kilometer zone, the situation is difficult, but stable. Utilities are provided, there are foodstuffs, health care services are provided, etc.

According to Melitopol mayor, Zaporizhzhia oblast, [Ivan Fedorov](#), the occupiers closed the possibility of delivering humanitarian aid to the city. For this reason, local residents have to pay 3–4 times more for medications at pharmacies of the city compared to their prices in the Ukrainian government-controlled. The [occupiers](#) deprived the population of the southern part of Zaporizhzhia oblast of access to health care services. First, they took away all health care facilities for civilians of the oblast's TOAs and reequipped them for wounded Russian militaries, and then they closed the exit to Zaporizhzhia where civilians were going, including for treatment.

[Due to](#) the uncontrolled discharge of water at Kakhovka HPP, the water level in the Kakhovka Reservoir is rapidly decreasing. Due to this, the large population centres, including Enerhodar, Melitopol, and Berdiansk have already faced the problem of water supply.

>> HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN THE DEOCCUPIED AREAS

Life is almost impossible in the liberated territories of Kherson oblast due to constant artillery strikes. Most shops, cafés, and some pharmacies do not operate and are being destroyed on an ongoing basis. Water supply is repaired in the oblast centre where the largest number of people is concentrated so far. Accidents are eliminated quickly enough. Heat is supplied to most houses. In February, due to ongoing shelling, all heat-generating companies experienced problems with heat supply. Those problems have been overcome in a few days. In connection with problems of garbage removal to the municipal solid waste landfill, garbage is currently brought to landfills of Kyiv oblast. Garbage collection equipment and two brigades of municipal workers from Kyiv have been sent to help. Humanitarian aid, including foodstuffs, repair materials and equipment, is being delivered to population centres.

Humanitarian headquarters have been deployed in Kherson and in the liberated territories. Humanitarian aid regularly comes from international civil society organisations, philanthropists, and volunteers. The aid covers the following several areas: 1) provision of foodstuffs: grocery sets, bread, fresh vegetables, conservation, ready-made meals, drinking water; 2) provision of hygiene kits and essential goods, as well as

blankets, towels, electric heaters, mattresses, tablets for children, stoves; 3) provision of construction materials for repairing damaged buildings, coal, fuel, etc.; 4) provision of materials for the restoration of infrastructure facilities, support of the network of invincibility points, equipment for bomb shelters, structures for shelters from shelling, etc.

The fifth focus area of humanitarian aid covers the delivery of medical equipment and provision of health care services. While retreating, the Russian militaries have looted the equipment of health care facilities in Kherson. Hospitals are under constant fire. Many doctors were forced to evacuate. And therefore, the provision of medical equipment and medications is an important focus area of humanitarian aid provision. Hospitals of other countries and of other Ukraine's oblasts have joined international organisations of doctors who provide health care services in the destroyed rural communities of Kherson oblast. Representatives of Doctors Without Borders international organisation have examined 571 residents of the oblast. Volunteer doctors of the Ukrainian-Israeli medical volunteer mission, FRIDA Ukraine, worked in Kherson on 11 to 12 February. On the first day of work alone, doctors have provided more than 500 consultations and examined 204 patients. Locals were ultrasound diagnosed, where appropriate. Two medical teams from Rivne oblast will soon arrive in Kherson oblast. The first brigade is scheduled to visit the city for providing emergency assistance, whereas the second one for providing primary medical care. To this end, they have the necessary stock of medications.

Kharkiv oblast was not an exception among other ones, as prices for food and non-food stuffs rocketed, even within the period since the outbreak of a full-scale invasion. This is linked not only to nationwide trends, but also to the long stay of a large part of the oblast under the occupation and a loss of vegetable and grain harvest.

In Donetsk oblast, a network of invincibility points was deployed in case of a total power outage or complete stoppage of heat supply. For the time being, 186 of them have been opened, of which 87 in the city of Kramatorsk. [137 invincibility points have already been connected to the fibre-optic Internet](#), which will allow access to the Internet even in case of a complete power outage in the oblast. The exact location of those invincibility points has not been made public for security reasons, but residents can find out information of their location by calling contact numbers in their communities or through information leaflets. These fears about security are not without reason: in early December 2022, Russian troops [attacked a school](#) in the settlement of Malotaranyvka (Kramatorsk community) where one of invincibility points was located. Despite the fact that there has never been a total heat or power outage in the oblast, more than 61,000 locals have already used services provided by invincibility points.

On 10 February, an infrastructure facility in Kharkiv [has been attacked](#), which resulted in a continuous disconnection of most subscribers from electricity; the restoration of electricity and gas supply was gradual. Works on the [restoration](#) of electricity supply have continued on a regular basis, especially in the liberated areas. Scheduled power outages took place in view of the electricity consumption limits of the oblast: if the limit is not exceeded, there are no power outages. The total number of subscribers left [without electricity](#) in Kharkiv oblast has reached 35,000, of whom some 11,000 are people living under the temporary occupation.

2.1. Filtration measures of occupying authorities

In Starobilsk raion, Luhansk oblast, the occupiers [have blocked the village of Polovynkyne in the proximity of the Ukrainian-Russian state border](#) and are conducting "filtration measures" there. The village was surrounded, the entry to and exit from it was blocked. The reason was attacks on enemy positions located near the village for which the occupiers blame the local population. As is known, 30 village residents have already been taken to Luhansk as a result of the raids.

The occupiers [have restricted free entry to](#) and exit from Sievierodonetsk, Lysychansk, and Rubizhne. According to Luhansk Oblast Military Administration, people are required at the checkpoints to either register or provide a certificate of employment.

On 6 January 2023, [Vladimir Rogov](#), a representative of the self-proclaimed Administration of the non-government controlled areas of Zaporizhzhia oblast, has claimed that the oblast authorities started to issue vehicle permits to move through the occupied territory. Rogov noted that the permits will be issued in

the so-called military command offices of Melitopol, Berdiansk, Tokmak, and Vasylivka. He also wrote in a post that those permits will be mandatory in the future to move through the non-government controlled areas of Zaporizhzhia oblast.

On 26 January, the [Center for National Resistance](#) has reportedly said that the Russian occupying forces are increasing the number of entry-exit checkpoints between population centres in the captured part of the south. At checkpoints, residents are asked about the availability of military records, vehicles, personal accounts on social networking sites, and the data collected are further verified.

Six cases of sexual violence have been recorded in Zaporizhzhia oblast out of a total of 155 sexual violence cases committed by the Russian militaries in Ukraine. However, their real number is much higher. This was discussed during a joint meeting of prosecutors of the Prosecutor General's Office and the leadership of the Investigation Department of the National Police of Ukraine. *"These figures mirror only the number of facts when victims are ready to testify right away,"* [Iryna Didenko](#), the Head of the specialised department of the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine, said in a commentary.

2.2. Actions of occupying authorities regarding recruitment into armed formations

In Luhansk oblast, the occupiers have received an order from the Russian Ministry of Defence to boost mobilisation. This [was reported](#) by Luhansk OMA. *"Local collaborators need to register all men, carry out their medical examination, and provide them with documents,"* the report reads. It was underscored that it had been ordered to do everything under a simplified procedure and thereby shorten the period of selection of candidates to two days since the moment of mobilisation to that of sending to them to a military unit. At the same time, many of these men will reportedly not even know about this novelty because of the absence of mobile coverage in the western part of the occupied oblast for a couple of days.

2.3. Evacuation

Russian forces do not allow residents living under the occupation to enter the Ukrainian government-controlled areas. The checkpoint in Vasylivka, Zaporizhzhia oblast, was closed for over a month, Vasylivka mayor, [Serhii Kaliman](#), said on 20 January. Furthermore, he noted that now people are allowed to move only within the borders of the non-government controlled areas and provided that they have special permits. These permits are valid for one week.

The mayor of Melitopol, [Ivan Fedorov](#), also emphasised that the only way to leave of the non-government controlled areas today is the one through Crimea. However, there can be difficulties. *"First and foremost, before leaving the temporarily occupied areas of Zaporizhzhia oblast to Crimea, one needs to take a DNA test which is currently taken by the occupiers. Then, one goes either by ferry or via the Crimean Bridge, to cross the border for the EU or Georgia. Though, border guards there may simply not let this person cross the border without explanation,"* he said.

One can also leave the temporarily occupied areas of Kherson oblast only through Crimea to the Russian border with Georgia and the European Union. Prior to entering occupied Crimea, thorough filtration measures are carried out at the administrative border and at the Russian border. Since late February, another phase of evacuation has been announced in the 15-kilometer zone. According to the General Staff of the AFU, evacuation has begun in Oleshky. Specifically, since 21 February, local residents have left for Bakhchysarai, Simferopol, and Kerch; and since 24 February, the occupiers have announced the so-called evacuation for all those willing to leave.

>> DEOCCUPIED AREAS

The evacuation of citizens from the liberated territories of Kherson oblast to safer areas has continued. People have been evacuated with the help of the local authorities and volunteer organisations either by train

to Khmelnytskyi or by buses to other cities. Notwithstanding intense shelling, the same number of people left the right-bank communities of the oblast every day: about 50 by bus and about the same number by train. The evacuation has been carried out free of charge with the help of civil society and charitable organisations, including the Good Deed Foundation. Volunteers helped leave for safer oblasts every day. The free evacuation has been carried out along Kherson–Mykolaiv–Odesa route.

Certain contradictions regarding the evacuation processes in the frontline communities of Kharkiv oblast have been reported. On social media (in groups and chats), the activity of organisations and private carriers engaged in [evacuation](#) of the civilian population increased. Volunteer organisations also noted a certain increase in [demand](#) for evacuation in Kupiansk community due to the intensification of military operations and the risk of a repeated attack on the oblast. On the other hand, Andrii Kanashevych, the [Head of Kupiansk Military Administration](#), said that all information was merely an exaggeration, that demand did not increase, and that public reports are Russian misinformation. Conversely, Oleg Syniehubov, the Head of Kharkiv OMA, called on CSOs and volunteer organisations to be ready for evacuating the large number of civilians, if necessary.

According to estimations of social services of Donetsk oblast, approximately 1,200,000 residents have left it. At the same time, only 568,000 internally displaced persons have been registered. There are several reasons for the discrepancy in numbers. First, the large number of women with children and elderly people left the country and were not registered as IDPs. Second, a certain part of those displaced did not register for personal reasons: they have jobs, do not want to receive benefits from the state, do not want enter military records at the new place of residence.

However, the situation of evacuation and return to the oblast is far from uniform. For example, approximately 50–60% of the population returned to relatively safe Kramatorsk and Sloviansk. At the same time, almost no members are left in communities where active hostilities are taking place.

3. Work on identity

3.1. Changes in educational standards

Russia has continued to misappropriate research organisations and educational facilities in the non-government controlled areas. Specifically, [according to propagandists](#), 8 out of 21 research organisations operating in the occupied part of Donetsk oblast, are scheduled to be attached to the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation. Another 3 will be assigned to the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Emergency Situations, and the Federal Service for Intellectual Property (Rospatent). A similar situation is with higher educational institutions (HEIs): 7 out of 16 HEIs in occupied Donetsk oblast will be controlled by the Ministry of Education of Russia. These include Donetsk National Technical University, Donetsk National Academy of Construction and Architecture, the so-called Donetsk Academy of Management and Civil Service under the Head of the DPR, Donetsk National University of Economics and Trade, Mariupol State University, and Azov State Technical University. All other higher educational institutions and research organisations are to remain under the control of the local occupying administration.

According to the General Staff of the AFU, in temporarily occupied Starobilsk, Luhansk oblast, the Russian occupying authorities forced parents to send their children aged 6 years and above to the so-called Cossack Cadet Corps. *“Children will receive “correct patriotic education” there. People who refuse to send their children to the said Corps are threatened with deprivation of parental rights,”* the General Staff said.

In occupied [Novopskov](#), collaborating teachers forced children to learn the verse of the Russian national anthem. For example, parental chats regularly receive reminders from class teachers about the need to make children learn the verse of the Russian national anthem for singing it in school lines. Usually, community members receive these messages at the end of each week so that to make children ready to sing the anthem of the aggressor country on Monday morning.

The occupying authorities of Luhansk oblast [have announced an intention to take children](#) to Russian Karelia, allegedly as part of a school exchange. The local education authorities received a document according

to which it is necessary to provide a list of schools ready to participate in school exchange with other countries. No additional conditions have been specified. In other words, the lists of children will be drawn up by administrators and teachers, not by parents.

As reported by the occupying administration, the Deputy of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, Larisa Tutova, and school heads of the so-called LPR discussed “vectors of the development of the Russian education system”. Among the issues raised is the introduction of an educational component into the teaching process and rates of school head advisors responsible for upbringing in schools of the breakaway LPR. The first 260 teachers from the self-proclaimed LPR were trained in Crimea’s Artek camp in the specialty “school head advisor responsible for upbringing”.

Also, centres of the Russian movement of children and youth, Movement of the First, have been established in educational facilities of the non-government controlled areas, according to so-called Minister of Education and Science of the self-proclaimed LPR, Ivan Kusov. The Movement of the First was created at the initiative of the Russian leadership to “educate, organise leisure activities for teenagers, and shape a worldview based on traditional Russian spiritual and moral goals”.

According to Melitopol mayor, [Ivan Fedorov](#), the Russian invaders have attempted to recruit children in the non-government controlled areas of Zaporizhzhia oblast to the “Russian World”. The occupiers created an illusion of choice: they opened about ten “youth organisations” and persuade school children and students to join one of them. “However, “different” organisations have a common feature, i. e., propaganda of “great Russia” and brainwashing of children,” Fedorov emphasised, having added that a so-called voluntary choice is in actual fact coercion, because children either must choose an organisation, or sanctions will be imposed.

In [Tokmak](#), school children were forced to sing the anthem of the aggressor country before classes began. Also, school children were forced to make postcards for the anniversary of a large-scale invasion with words of support and gratitude to the Russian invaders.

Journalists of [Suspilne. Kherson](#) have prepared an article on how school children in the temporarily occupied territory of Kherson oblast study in schools. According to their information, some children in TOAs, despite the danger and a lack of communication, continue their study according to the Ukrainian curricula in the online format. The occupiers prevent such study all the time and carry out inspections and raids. The unstable Internet connection and ongoing power outages are also among the serious problems.

In Skadovsk community, the occupying authorities have opened eight out of eleven schools, said the mayor of Skadovsk, Oleksandr Yakovlev. According to him, less than 10% of teachers cooperated with the occupiers. Most of them in schools of Prymorsk and Tavriisk. 2,700 school children of Skadovsk community continue their study online in Ukrainian schools. For some children, continuation of online education in Ukrainian schools pose a serious security challenge.

>> UNOCCUPIED / DEOCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Despite intense military operations, 297 schools in Donetsk oblast continue to operate in an online format. Currently, 120,000 school children study in oblast schools. At the same time, almost a third of them (33,000) did not leave the borders of the oblast. Another 66,000 continue their education from outside the oblast (27,000 went abroad and 39,000 relocated to other oblasts of the country).

At the same time, considerable attention is paid to the restoration of education in the liberated communities of Sviatohirsk and Lyman. There are 382 school children in Lyman, and 125 in Sviatohirsk so far. Due to the lack of electricity and communication, as well as significantly destroyed housing, school children of the said communities are unable to fully participate in online learning. To solve this problem, special consultation points have been deployed in the communities (4 in Sviatohirsk community and 10 in Lyman). Experts emphasised that these are not schools in the usual sense of this word. The points are equipped with safety places and have autonomous energy supply and Internet access. School children can join online lessons in their schools. Besides, teachers deliver consultations on various subjects in the special consultation points. Some of them are school employees who did not evacuate to other oblasts. Furthermore, some teachers come from neighbouring Kramatorsk and Sloviansk where the much larger number of teachers is concentrated.

With the beginning of a new year (as well as a new semester for students) in Kharkiv oblast, the problems of the education sector, which primarily included the problem of school funding, have actualised. The

learning process goes on in an online format because of the impossibility to ensure an adequate safety of school children. Some teachers teach online, whereas others can come to school. School children who do not have access to computers or laptops or have significant communication problems can also attend individual lessons at school.

The main problem is the insufficient number of school children. So far, the system is built in such a way that each school receives funding for each of its student. The percentage of school children who relocated to other oblasts, transferred to individual / home education, or transferred to schools in other oblasts is quite high. Currently, there are 37,000 school children in Kharkiv, or 32.1% of their total number, the City Council [has reported](#) with reference to the Education Department. Also, 55% of educational facilities in the city, or 241 buildings, were damaged as a result of Russian ground and air strikes.

About UAH 4 billion has been allocated from the state budget of Ukraine [in subvention](#) for the payment of salaries to teachers. This will help close the deficit and ensure timely payment throughout 2023. At the same time, due to a lack of funds, students of HEIs will be paid reduced educational allowances (the first payment of that kind has been made in January 2023). At Kharkiv National University, representatives of the student government decided that instead of reducing the number of recipients of educational allowances, the amount of the said educational allowance will be [reduced](#) by about half of the previous amount.

3.2. Policy concerning memory: toponyms, museums, holidays and their celebration

In Melitopol, Zaporizhzhia oblast, the occupying administration has begun to change the names of streets. Instead of Ukrainian place names, it returns Soviet place names, saying that the streets were allegedly named in honour of “Ukrainian Nazi ideologues”. A journalist [Denys Kazanskyi](#) said, *“They however decided to rename neutrally named streets, and even streets named after Soviet figures. For example, they decided to rename Academician Korolyov alleys in honour of Kuibyshev. ...And the street named in honour of General Ivan Petrov, who led the defence of Odesa against German troops in 1941, was renamed in honour of Menzhinsky. He is one of the most disgusting and bloody criminals of the Stalin era, who headed the Cheka-OGPU and sent millions of people to death just because of their wrong origin or political views.”*

The invaders have announced the renaming of a total of 86 streets in occupied Melitopol. After sharp criticism from Moscow curators, military leaders and even Russian war reporters, the collaborators Galina Danilchenko and Yevhen Balytskyi decided to shorten the list of renamed streets in the city. They have decided to change some street names again. However, the so-called experts of “Heraldry of Russia” have started dealing with the matter. They found 13 streets and 7 alleys in Melitopol that need to be renamed. Hence, one of the central streets of the city, Heroes of Ukraine Street, will become Kulikovskaya Street. They want to rename Ukrainian Street as Novorossiskaya Street, Kruty Heroes Street as Pionerskaya Street, Hetmanska Street as Bulvarnaya Street, and Petro Doroshenko Street as Bryanskaya Street.

The terrorist group of the breakaway LPR has created a list of books of “extremist literature” recommended to be removed from school library collections. The list includes 365 “banned” works, most of which are fiction and documentary books on the history of Ukraine. The occupiers banned the works of dissident Levko Lukianenko, military and political figure Simon Petliura, some works of Oksana Zabuzhko, Oleh Sentsov, Iren Rozdobudko, Yevhen Polozhii, Serhii Loiko, “The Case of Vasyl Stus” by Vakhtang Kipiani, “Girls’ Power” by Kateryna Babkina, and others.

The so-called local authorities have also advised to remove from bookshelves literature about the Holodomor in Ukraine, textbooks and Ukrainian history reference books, comics for children and teenagers, literature on gender, journalistic works published after 2014, books of the “Famous Ukrainians” series, fiction about “events of the period of recent history” in Ukraine and Donbas, etc. A copy of the order of the occupation authorities and a list of books was made public by [Oleksiy Artyukh](#), the editor-in-chief of Tribune. According to the [Center for National Resistance](#), Luhansk oblast, cases of massive burning of Ukrainian literature in local boiler houses have been recorded.

The confiscation of Ukrainian-language literature in Russian-occupied Luhansk oblast is a manifestation of the policy of linguistic by the Russian militaries, according to, the Commissioner for the Protection of the State Language.

>> DEOCCUPIED AREAS

Due to the stabilisation of the situation in the deoccupied areas of Kharkiv oblast and the reduced risks of military escalation, social processes have intensified. Campaigns for the renaming of place names in the oblast and in the city were very active. This concerned, first of all, the renaming of [streets](#) and memorial places, dismantling of [cultural monuments](#), and the renaming of public places. Some population centres ask Kharkiv Oblast Council to rename them.

In the public space of Kharkiv oblast, the use of the Russian language has decreased, many public figures declare an open transition to Ukrainian and call on the population to take similar steps. Kharkiv universities introduce the position of Language Ombudsman to ensure proper compliance with the legislation. One of the first [initiatives](#) of that kind has been proposed by H. S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University.

3.3. Freedom of religion

In the non-government controlled areas of Kherson oblast, the repressions against the Jehovah's Witnesses religious organisation, which began in November, have continued. In January, prayer houses in Skadovsk, Oleshky, and some other communities of the oblast have been searched. On 8 February, the so-called Main Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia in Kherson oblast announced that they had liquidated the head office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Skadovsk. The occupiers conducted searches, confiscated literature, and discovered that members of the religious organisation had led worship services. As reported by the [occupiers](#), a pre-trial inquiry of the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses is currently under way, and the issue of opening a criminal case under Article 282.2(1) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation is being decided.

The Russian occupying authorities have closed two Baptist churches in Berdiansk, Zaporizhzhia oblast. These churches are members of the All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists (AUC ECB). According to the [AUC ECB head Sviatoslav](#), the occupiers torture priests of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church detained in Berdiansk and force them to confess their crimes. [Churches are being searched](#) in Melitopol, whose priests did not support the "Russian World". Among the unreliable ones were Rector of the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral (Oleksandr Vinnychenko), Rector of the Church of the Holy Great Martyr and Healer Panteleimon (priest Mykola Lukashchuk), and Abbot of the Saint Tatiana Church (archpriest Mykhailo Petsiy). Following the occupation of the city, those priests did not commemorate Kirill, nor prayed for the victory of the Russian army in the war, as priests of other Orthodox churches of Melitopol did.

>> UNOCCUPIED / DEOCCUPIED TERRITORIES

The de-Russification of church life continued in Donetsk oblast. On 7 January 2023, [it has become known](#) that the President of Ukraine deprived, by his Decree, 13 priests of 6 dioceses of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate of Ukrainian citizenship. Among them were several representatives of the clergy of Donetsk oblast. First and foremost, it is Metropolitan Arseny (Yakovenko) of Sviatohirsk, Vicar of Donetsk Diocese, and Vicar of the Holy Dormition Sviatohirsk Lavra, [known for his pro-Russian views](#). Also, Archbishop Varsonofy (Vinichenko) of Novoazovsk, Archbishop Amvrosiy of Volnovakha, Vicar of the Donetsk Diocese, Abbot of the Sviatovasilivsky Monastery (Skobiola), and Archbishop Paisiy of Konstantinovka, whom the media suspect of the involvement in activities of the terrorist organisation of the breakaway DPR, were deprived of citizenship. According to sources in law enforcement agencies, the deprivation of citizenship may soon result in the deportation of those priests.

4. Changes in the social structure

According to the [Center for National Resistance](#), the Russian occupiers have stopped paying social benefits in the temporarily occupied areas of Zaporizhzhia oblast. The absence of social benefits was explained by the fact that there was not enough money. The occupiers promised to rectify the situation, but failed to specify the timeframe. It is known that there are no payments in Melitopol, Berdiansk, and Tokmak. At the same time, payments from Ukraine have come on time.

>> DEOCCUPIED AREAS

Ukrposhta [paid for the first time social benefits](#) in the liberated population centres of Luhansk oblast. Residents of Nevske village have received pensions and cash allowances from the Ukrainian Red Cross Society. In total, employees of the mobile branch of Ukrposhta have made over 100 payments.

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

More and more often, Russia publicly admits that it is engaged in the intense removal of Ukrainian children from the non-government controlled areas. Specifically, in the summer of 2022, it was stated that more than [307,000 Ukrainian children](#) were taken to Russia from “dangerous oblasts of Ukraine, the Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics”. By the end of the year, Russia’s estimations [increased](#) to almost 700,000. According to the [Children of War](#) Ukraine’s State Portal, 16,222 minors were deported during the full-scale war as of 5 February. Although these are registered and verified cases, there are no accurate due to active hostilities and the temporary occupation of part of Ukraine’s territory. For his part, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, [Dmytro Lubinets](#), believes that some 150,000 children were taken to Russia.

The situation of adoption of Ukrainian children also looks threatening. In Krasnodar alone, 1,000 children from Mariupol are on the list for adoption. As the names and birth data of these children can be changed under Russian laws, it will be extremely difficult to identify and find them later, if at all possible, said [Oksana Senatorova](#), an expert of the Council of Europe on internally displaced persons in Ukraine.

The situation in Bakhmut, Donetsk oblast, remains difficult. Notwithstanding ongoing shelling, battles in the city, and the absence of any utility services, some 5,000 locals remain in the city (more than 71,000 people lived there before the outbreak of active hostilities). These are primarily the elderly and socially vulnerable people. However, the sufficient number of middle-aged locals refused to evacuate, while [approximately 140 children](#) remained in the city as of early February. In February, it was possible to evacuate some of them, but as of 22 February, 42 children stayed in the city in areas to which the Ukrainian authorities still have access and can provide evacuation, and another 59 children remained in areas to which representatives of the Ukrainian authorities and militaries have no access due to active hostilities.

Given the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation, the Minister for Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine, Iryna Vereshchuk, has once again [called on](#) citizens to leave the cities and relocate to safer oblasts of the country. However, despite all the efforts of authorities, the locals are in no hurry not only to leave the city, but also to come back. [Over 250 locals](#), who formerly had volunteered to leave the city, have recently returned to Bakhmut.

II. UKRAINIAN GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED AREAS

The Russian occupiers continue to carry out massive attacks on civilian infrastructure. In particular, on the night of [16 February](#), the enemy has attacked several areas at once, using rockets and drones. The flights have been reported in the south and west of Ukraine, as well as in Dnipropetrovsk and Kirovohrad oblasts. At the same time, the enemy used a new tactic, according to which it first scouted the situation with false targets and then delivered the main blow.

As reported by the Head of the joint coordination press centre at Operational Command South, [Natalia Humeniuk](#), in Mykolaiv oblast, the main concentration of Russian troops as of February 2023 was recorded inside the temporarily occupied Kinburn peninsula, far from the Defence Forces of Ukraine. The Russian army deployed firing positions on the edge of the Kinburn spit, closer to Ochakiv. The occupiers have access to the mainland which enables them to transfer military personnel and equipment to the peninsula. The Russian army is constantly shelling Ochakiv and Kutsurub community.

According to the [Prosecutor General's Office](#), since the outbreak of a full-scale invasion, the enemy has hit Odesa oblast 54 times with missiles from ships, planes, etc. As a result, at least 111 missiles hit civilian infrastructure objects. Two attacks from tactical-level aircraft, seven attacks from ship artillery, and seven attacks, as well as damage caused by unmanned aerial vehicles were also recorded.

1. Changes in the system of governance

Within the reporting period, the local self-government bodies and executive authorities of Zakarpattia, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Chernivtsi, Odesa, and Mykolaiv oblasts have carried out activities to ensure their livelihood and solve the tasks set to support the defence goals of the country. The urgent problems have included the restoration of damaged energy infrastructure facilities, creation of optimal conditions for the heating season, provision of IDPs with permanent housing, coordination of financial and logistical assistance to the AFU.

1.1. Decisions of authorities that affected cohesion

On 9 February, [the first meeting of the Competitive Economy working group has been held as part of activities on updating the Development Strategy of Lviv Oblast for 2021–2027 and developing an action plan for its implementation in 2024–2027](#). Together with representatives of business associations, research organisations, experts on local economic development, representatives of think tanks and Lviv Oblast Council, and in the framework of the USAID-funded “Governance and Local Accountability” (HOVERLA) project, they assessed the impacts of the war, the coronavirus pandemic, and European integration processes on the economic development of the oblast. Experts have listed the following possibilities that can give an impetus to the future development of the economy of Lviv oblast: revitalisation of European integration processes; use of the transit and transport potential of Lviv oblast under the conditions of further development of the infrastructure of international entry-exit checkpoints, construction of a track in line with the EU standards and international transport corridors; increase in economic potential due to relocated business and IDPs, etc.

22 businessmen working in Zakarpattia oblast, including 5 IDPs, will receive grants worth over UAH 5 million [under the Own Business programme](#) (as part of the government's eRobota programme). According to the oblast employment centre, the amount of grants averages UAH 244,000. The winners will be able to use

the government support for the purchase of equipment, raw materials, licensed software, payments of rent, advertising services, etc.

>> **DEMINING OF AGRICULTURAL LAND**

Over 270,000 hectares of Mykolaiv oblast require demining as of 16 February. Unexploded ordnance poses the greatest danger. According to the Head of Mykolaiv OMA, [Vitalii Kim](#), 270,000 hectares make up more than 10 percent of the oblast's territory. "Shells, cassettes or 30 percent of the ammunition fired by the Russians did not explode. There are a lot of shells scattered in the areas where the fighting took place. And it is impossible to predict what may happen. There are fields that are scary to approach," Vitalii Kim said. As of February 16, pyrotechnicians continue to work in the areas where Russian troops were stationed for a short time, which can be demined quickly, according to the Governor of the Mykolaiv oblast.

>> **INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION**

In the framework of assistance to the oblasts affected by Russian aggression, the population of Bukovyna (Bohdan NGO) contributed to the establishment of contacts between Kherson Oblast Children's Hospital and the U. S. Direct Relief humanitarian aid organization. [As a result, an ambulance vehicle, medications, and sweets have been brought to Kherson.](#)

Also, a [medical hub](#), where medical humanitarian aid is taken, was established on the basis of the Central City Hospital a year ago, has continued its work in Chernivtsi oblast. The hub receives medical aid from Western donors and transfers it to frontline population centres depending on their needs. The [volunteer movement](#) is actively working at Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University for collecting humanitarian aid. The collected aid is transferred to the front, frontline cities, towns, and population centres.

>> **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

The Agreement on Unblocking Ukrainian Ports for the Grain Export remains valid until mid-March 2023. During the [extension of the Agreement, Ukraine](#) will insist on involving Mykolaiv ports and expanding the range of exported products.

One of the important events in Chernivtsi oblast within the reporting period was the [opening](#) of a new international crossing point, Diakivtsi–Racovăț, on the Ukrainian-Romanian border, which [had been under construction for almost 8 years](#). At a joint meeting of the Head of Chernivtsi OMA, Ruslan Zapanariuk, and the Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers, Oleh Nemchinov, [negotiations have been held with the Romanian side regarding new crossing points on the Ukrainian-Romanian border](#), in particular, Bila Krynytsia–Climauti international crossing point through which trucks will have to pass. This focus area of activity of the oblast authorities is strategically important for Ukraine, especially a time of the Russian-Ukrainian war and crises triggered by Russia (in particular, the grain crisis which has resulted in a significant increase the amount of cargo transport on the Ukrainian-Romanian border has significantly increased).

At the same time, on 9 January, another international crossing point for rail passenger traffic across the state border has been opened in Zakarpattia oblast. The checkpoint operates at the base of [Rakhiv](#) railway station on a 24/7 basis, but only within the period of martial law and 90 days after its termination or cancellation. Back on 17 January, Zakarpattia oblast resumed passenger rail traffic with Romania. After a 17-year break, the first train left Rakhiv for Romanian Vala Vișeuului. This train is scheduled to run twice every day.

On 16–20 January 2023, the World Economic Forum has been held in Davos. This year, a [panel discussion](#) has been carried out for the first time with the participation of mayors of Ukrainian cities. It was attended by Mykolaiv mayor Oleksandr Sienkevych, Lviv mayor Andriy Sadovyi, and Zhytomyr mayor Serhii Sukhomlyn. The mayors had the opportunity to talk with potential partners, to tell them what kind of help they need right now after the end of the war. Specifically, Mykolaiv mayor [Oleksandr Sienkevych](#), announced the amount of EUR900 million in damages caused by the city's occupiers as a result of military operations. *"The figures are high. Needless to say, they are not final. There is a methodology for calculating losses. ...We use various methods to calculate how much it will cost to restore a kindergarten, a school or other building. For this very reason, Kyiv School of Economics created a new layer on our geosystem to map all these problems we had. These problems are confirmed with photos taken by drones and a satellite, so there are evidence of what this building was and what it has become."*

In January 2023, [1,001 generators have been purchased and delivered to Ukraine](#) in the framework of cooperation of Lviv OMA, Razom for Ukraine foundation, and Nova Ukraine non-profit organisation. According to the Nova Ukraine Regional Coordinator, Iryna Berezhnytska, the generators will be distributed throughout Ukraine where there is the greatest need. Some of them will be given to military units in the frontline areas, others will be distributed to health care facilities of Ukraine, and the rest will go to shelters and heating points. The generators were ordered from many European countries, and the largest number was received from Lithuania.

According to Mykolaiv mayor Oleksandr Sienkevych, foreign partners continuously provide the city with the important assistance thereby enabling Mykolaiv to maintain its vital activities. *“For the time being, Parky municipal enterprise cleans the city with equipment delivered from Dortmund and Hannover. The windows are closed with OSB plates from Denmark. MykolaivVodokanal repairs pipes using materials from Denmark. There are ambulance vehicles in our family dispensaries and hospitals from Narbonne and other cities, as well as from Nova Ukraine. And again, we received water purification stations from all over the world, including Israel, the U.S., Denmark, Germany, and France,”* the mayor said. He reminded that German partners earmark EUR5 million to maintain the reconstruction of Mykolaiv and Kharkiv, and Italian architects work on developing a master plan.

Specifically, for the [implementation of the first phase of reconstruction](#) of Mykolaiv, Italy’s design and consultancy firm, *One Works*, together with local specialists, is developing a strategy for the city development. Foreign experts noted that the objects will be chosen for reconstruction based, among other things, on the opinion of the local community, i. e., the results of discussions and questionnaires. Therefore, the participation of Mykolaiv local in a survey by *One Works* is important for future transformations in the city and a coherent system of interaction between the city authorities and the community on urban planning issues.

Zakarpattia Oblast Military Administration and People in Need SK international organisation, the Slovak Republic, provided some 300 households in Rakhiv and Tiachiv raions with firewood. Firewood is provided to vulnerable groups of the population, forced migrants, and natives who sheltered the latter.

A psychological and social support programme is also being implemented in the oblast. From now on, Zakarpattia locals and forced migrants will be able to get the necessary support, including free psychological consultations, social information services, as well as assistance with the preparation of documents related to health care, education, financial literacy, and employment. The programme is developed and implemented by Man in Need NGO, the Slovak Republic, with the coordination and support of Zakarpattia OMA.

1.2. Access to public information

Access to public information in Odesa oblast remains significantly restricted. The executive authorities and local self-government bodies, especially at the oblast level, have closed most of socially important information on their websites. However, a tendency towards positive changes in this direction is gradually emerging. For example, in late January 2023, the Your Deputy of the Odesa City Council deputy portal has partially [resumed](#) its work after 11 months of closure.

2. Work on identity

2.1. Changes in educational standards

As of January 2023, the Education Department of Odesa Oblast Military Administration expects UAH 60 million to be allocated from the national budget for the construction of shelters and bomb shelters in oblast schools, [according to](#) the Education Department Director Oleksandr Lonchak. The schools can use these funds both for arranging ready-made shelters and for constructing new ones. A community will submit a request to the Department for the arrangement of a bomb shelter along with project and estimate documentation. After receiving requests from each community of the oblast, the Department will set priorities, taking into account some factors, e. g., whether this educational facility is a hub, how many children will study, etc. The list will be

submitted to a relevant commission of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine which will determine which shelters are to be funded.

According to Oleksandr Lonchak, at the end of the 1st semester of the current academic year, 450 general secondary education institutions will switch to full-time and mixed formats of learning. For comparison, there were only 331 schools as of 1 September.

He also noted that the total amount of educational subsidies that the oblast will receive this year is 7% less against the last year. The amount of state education subvention in Odesa has also been significantly **reduced**, by UAH 200 million, the Director of the Department for Education and Science of Odesa City Council, Olena Buinevych, said. According to the Chief Educator of the city, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine explains in the letter that the variable part of the plan, i. e. elective lessons, circles, and the like, is not taken into account in the subvention formula.

Zakarpattia oblast **has sent over 5,600 books** to Ukrainian children abroad. Last year, 1,300 textbooks were handed over to school children forced to move to Slovakia and Hungary with the assistance of Zakarpattia OMA. This is educational literature in all subjects for primary school children according to the curricular of the New Ukrainian School and high school children. Another 888 copies of fiction children's literature were given to the Ukrainian Sunday School in Bratislava.

2.2. Policy concerning memory: toponyms, museums, holidays and their celebration

In February, a noticeable increase in attention to the commemoration of events of the Russian-Ukrainian war has been recorded in Chernivtsi oblast. On 24 February, at Chernivtsi railway station, a photo exhibition, **Unity for Peace**, was opened. The exhibition showed how the evacuation trains ran and how Ukrzaliznytsia operated within a year of war. On 27 February, a **museum for the commemoration of events of the Ukrainian-Russian war** opened in Sokyriany, Chernivtsi oblast. The **"Unforgettable: Bukovyna remembers" project**, initiated by Chernivtsi Oblast Council with the assistance of Chernivtsi Mykhailo Ivasiuk Oblast Universal Scientific Library and dedicated to the Ukrainian militaries who died in the defence of Ukraine from the Russian aggressor.

On 14 February, a second meeting of the working group on decommunisation of Lviv oblast has been held. Participants in the meeting discussed how the process of decommunisation and decolonisation is taking place in Lviv oblast. At the end of last year, the first meeting of the working group on decommunisation was held. At the meeting, it was decided to create relevant working groups under raion military administrations, tasked to collect information about the presence of the Soviet-era monuments and memorial plates in the raion, as well as Soviet place names to be decommunised in accordance with applicable legislation or the needs of the time.

In Odesa oblast, particular attention should be paid to a campaign for de-Russification and decolonisation of street names and other place names which took place in communities of the oblast, as well as the demolition or transfer of monuments dated back to the USSR or the Russian Empire. It was even **decided** to rename the Chernomorets stadium in Odesa and change the spelling of the place name on its facade to a Ukrainian version.

In the city of Odessa, the epic around the statue of the Russian Empress Catherine II, located on Catherine Square in Odesa since 2007, has finally come to an end. On the night of 28–29 December 2022, utility workers **dismantled** the monuments to Catherine II and Alexander Suvorov and moved them to Odesa National Art Museum for preservation.

2.3. Freedom of religion

News have started to appear around the beginning of the process of returning the Pochaiv Holy Assumption Monastery, Ternopil oblast, under control of the Ukrainian government. The Pochaiv Lavra **was rented** to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC MP) in 2003; the contract is valid until 2052. The Pochaiv Lavra complex includes 18 buildings, of which six are on the balance sheet of Kremenets-

Pochaiv State Historical and Architectural Reserve. In February 2023, [Mykhailo Holovko](#), the Head of Ternopil Oblast Council, notified about the first meeting of a working group on the legitimacy of using the complex of the Pochaiv Holy Assumption Lavra of the UOC MP.

Earlier this year, the processes in Chernivtsi-Bukovyna Diocese of the UOC MP, initiated by the [State Security Service of Ukraine's \(SBU\)](#) counterintelligence measures last November, have developed. Specifically, the Ukrainian citizenship of the Diocese Head, Metropolitan Meletius, was [suspended](#), which opens up a potential for his deportation, and therefore the weakening of both the Diocese and the position of Metropolitan Onufriy.

The local self-governments intensified their activities and have started petitioning the central authorities to ban the UOC MP and other religious organisations headquartered in the Russian Federation. For example, deputies of Chernivtsi [Oblast](#) Council and Chernivtsi [raion](#) councils voted on the relevant petitions.

A sermon by the abbot of Banchen Monastery in Bukovyna, Longinus (Mykhailo Zhara), has triggered a nationwide response (*due to its popularisation by the boxer [Vasyl Lomachenko](#)*). The abbot emphasised that the “Ukrainian government has started a war against God, the Church of God and the people, and wants to crown the antichrist”. Specifically, what is meant are searches by security forces officers in UOC MP churches and monasteries, sanctions against some clergymen of the UOC MP for collaborating with the Russian occupiers in a time of war.

Amid scandals in the UOC MP, local religious communities have continued to join the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC). Such decisions were taken at meetings in the [village of Khreshchatyk](#), Kadubivtsi community, and the [village of Babyn](#), Kelmenets community. In Chernivtsi OMA, the charters [had been registered](#) which completed the transition to the UOC of communities of the villages of Rynhach, Novoselytsia raion, Babyn Verenchanskyi and Yurkivtsi, Yurkivtsi community. A total of five religious communities have completed the process of transition since the beginning of the invasion. As of early 2023, 418 parishes of the UOC MP and 205 parishes of the UOC [have operated](#) in the oblast.

The bishop of the Reformed Church in Zakarpattia, [Oleksandr \(Shandor\) Zan-Fabian](#), has been re-elected for the fourth time. On 28 January, in Berehove, Zakarpattia oblast, the bishop of Zakarpattia Reformers, elected by a secret ballot by members of the Synod and trusted presbyters of the ecclesiastical districts of the oblast, was solemnly introduced. The ceremony was attended by representatives of Zakarpattia OMA, the incumbent Minister of the Prime Minister's Office of Hungary, Gergely Gulyás. The church institution includes 113 religious communities of the oblast and consolidates some 100,000 believers, as well as the large number of humanitarian and civil society institutions. Most parishioners of the Church are representatives of the Hungarian minority of the oblast, therefore services are conducted in the Hungarian language.

2.4. National minorities

Notwithstanding the relative calm of the political situation in Zakarpattia oblast since December 2022, it has been broken in late January by another scandal surrounding the Hungarian factor in the oblast. On 19 January, the State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary [Tamás Menczer](#), accused Ukraine of new “anti-Hungarian measures”. *“If Ukraine wants to be a member of the European Union, continuous and systematic repression measures, coupled with the deprivation of the national minority rights, are unacceptable,”* he wrote in a commentary. Tamás Menczer did not detail what happened in Zakarpattia. However, he gave a link in the comments to an article, posted on [Index.hu](#) and entitled “Hungarian flags removed from schools in Zakarpattia oblast, several teachers fired”. It says, with reference to a KMKSZ's publication, [Kárpátaljá](#), that Hungarian flags and Hungarian-language signs have been removed from the buildings of local state institutions in the Hungarian-speaking villages, Mukachevo raion. The head of Ferenc Rákóczi Secondary School was also dismissed. The Ukrainian official authorities have not provided a response so far.

The above [aggravation](#) of the international problem in Zakarpattia oblast has echoed the opinion of Hungarian authorities on the support of Ukraine in the war with the Russian aggressor. Earlier, Hungary repeatedly scrapped the anti-Russian sanctions, Hungarian government officials continued their visits to Moscow, blocked decisions on the provision by the EU of financial assistance to Ukraine. On 19 January 2023, Hungary [voted against](#) the decision on a tranche to Ukraine from the European Peace Fund worth EUR500 million for military aid.

The [Center for Countering Disinformation](#) at the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine posted a message that the Hungarian media started a disinformation campaign to discredit Ukraine and the Ukrainian Armed Forces. “Hundreds of bodies of Ukrainian soldiers are stored in refrigerators a few hundred meters from the border with Hungary,” (*Metropol*), “The Ukrainian authorities are carrying out a large-scale mobilisation of ethnic Hungarians in Zakarpattia oblast to replenish heavy losses on the battlefield,” (*Pesti Srácok*), “The 128th Separate Mountain Assault Brigade (SMAB) of the Armed Forces of Ukraine from Mukachevo is almost entirely staffed by ethnic Hungarians... Following a “slaughterhouse” in Soledar, the number of those killed in the 128th OGSB is very high, the Hungarians claim... [They] wonder why it is the 128th SMAB that is thrown into places of bloodshed battles”, (*Magyar Nemzet*). The Center for Countering Disinformation underscored that none of those messages are true, all messages spread by the Hungarian media are widely reproduced in Russia’s media space, and all those messages are aimed exclusively at inciting interethnic enmity between Ukrainians and Hungarians in Zakarpattia oblast.

The actions of Romania, which has raised with the Ukrainian government the issue of amending the [Law of Ukraine “On National Minorities \(Communities\) of Ukraine”](#) adopted in November 2022, will have a serious impact on ethnic life of Chernivtsi oblast. Specifically, at the negotiations with Volodymyr Zelenskyi in early January 2023, the President of Romania, Klaus Iohannis, [emphasised](#) that this law “caused concern and dissatisfaction of Romanian authorities and representatives of the Romanian community in Ukraine. Klaus Iohannis asked the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyi to find a quick solution to eliminate the said problems”. The Ukrainian President [has expressed readiness](#) to find solutions so as to help the Romanian community in Ukraine enjoy the same rights as the Ukrainian community in Romania.

3. Joint action

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

According to Mykolaiv mayor [Oleksandr Sienkevych](#), more than 100,000 Mykolaiv locals have returned home following the liberation of Kherson. Vital problems of the city are being gradually solved: step by step drinking water is becoming available, the city was helped with the purchase of new boilers. “Issues related to survival have been resolved in the city, we are currently working on the restoration,” Sienkevych said.

[Ukrtelecom](#) has opened a network of free public Wi-Fi zones in the following five cities: Kyiv, Dnipro, Lviv, Odesa, and Kharkiv. As of early February 2023, some 700 free public Wi-Fi zones in large cities have already been operating. In the absence of electricity in the raion, Wi-Fi services may be available for 2–4 hours.

>> RELOCATION OF BUSINESSES

More than 100 businesses have appeared in Chernivtsi oblast since the beginning of invasion, and the oblast is ready to host up to 300 more new companies. The relocated businesses [created](#) 4,000 jobs, a third of which were occupied by local residents, and the rest by internally displaced persons and evacuated full-time employees.

There have been 369 relocated businesses in Zakarpattia oblast as of 25 January, of which 332 are operating, 30 have already moved in, but have not yet started operating, and another 7 are in the process of relocation. In general, the largest number of relocated businesses is from the IT sector (more than 47%), 27.6% the service sector, 19% the processing industry, slightly more than 4% construction, and 0.5% each freight transport and agriculture.

In Zakarpattia oblast, 47 entrepreneurs won a grant programme funded by the International Organization for Migration. In January 2023, representatives of 4 small companies and 17 micro-businesses have been selected; they will receive up to UAH 20,000 and EUR4,500 respectively. Relocated companies are also among the

winners. Funds will be received by companies specialising in the cultivation of microgreens, beekeeping, production of children's clothing, plastic products, recovery of wood waste into ecological fuel, sheep breeding, etc.

On 12 January, Ivano-Frankivsk oblast [employment](#) service took the stock of the work with relocated businesses. Within the past year, cooperation was established with 98 employers who relocated their companies to Ivano-Frankivsk oblast (13 businesses have returned to their previous location). In 2022, relocated to Prykarpattia businesses employed 159 people, including 30 internally displaced persons.

[According to Lviv Oblast Military Administration, 225 relocated businesses are registered in Lviv oblast.](#)

An [oblast plan to provide assistance to IDPs for 2023](#) has been developed in Zakarpattia oblast. It was presented at a forum on "Starting life from scratch: how to help displaced people in Zakarpattia oblast". It contains an action plan for comprehensive assistance to forced migrants, particularly in the areas of education, health care, social and psychological support, employment, etc. It will be implemented by Zakarpattia OMA together with territorial communities of the oblast, international partners, charitable organisations, and volunteers. The socio-economic forum took place as part of the United Voices for Action programme implemented in Ukraine by IREX together with the Charitable organisation "Charity Foundation "Stabilization Support Services" and with the support of the U. S. Department of State.

On 25 January, the Executive Committee of Mykolaiv City Council [has agreed the procedure for partial refunding](#) the cost of generators for apartment buildings. To get a refund, a generator owner must submit a package of documents to the Mykolaiv Energy Efficiency Center municipal institution. [The city refunds](#) 50 percent of the cost of the generator (but no more than UAH 30,000). The device must be purchased after 1 June 2022 and have power from 3 kW inclusive. The relevant [Regulations](#) on financial support to small and medium-sized enterprises, which provides for a partial refund of the cost of purchased generators, was also approved by the executive committee of Ternopil City Council.

An oblast budget-funded programme for [comprehensive social support](#) to participants in the Anti-Terrorist Operation (Joint Forces Operation), ATO volunteer fighters, defenders of Ukraine, their family members, as well as families of the Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred for 2021–2025 has been launched in Lviv oblast. Within the framework of the programme, servicemen who, after being wounded, were awarded the status of a person with a disability due to the war, should receive financial aid from the oblast budget to pay for medical, physical, and psychological rehabilitation. The amount of aid depends on the disability group. In 2023, the oblast budget is to channel UAH 64.5 million hryvnias for the programme implementation.

Furthermore, the [Office of Support for Families of Servicemen](#) has started operating under Lviv OMA. It was established to rapidly solve the problems of volunteers, reservists, militaries participating in the defence of the state, and veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war. Due to the efforts of experts from various structures and areas, people can get social, psychological, and legal help there.

[Businessmen registered in Lviv can receive voucher support for their businesses in a time of war estimated at up to UAH 300,000.](#) Lviv City Council provides the following four types of vouchers: investment, refund, relocation, and energy supply vouchers.

Ivano-Frankivsk City Council returned to the project competition within the framework of the participatory budget. On 20 February, the city competition for [projects](#) and programmes for the development of local self-governance and civil society in 2023 was announced. The competition is held under the conditions of co-funding projects and programmes according to the formula: 70% of funds of the city budget + 30% of funds of a competition participant. The competitions of this kind promote social cohesion, increase the level of trust and resilience in communities.

>> LOCAL INITIATIVES

Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast Military Administration transferred [25 contract students](#) to a budget form of education. Specifically, 19 children of militaries, 5 of combatants and 1 from among IDPs will get education for the budget money. Money for higher education has been allocated from the oblast budget within the framework of the oblast order.

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

>> AID FOR THE ARMY

Due to the implementation of the [SKY project](#), on 2 February, Lviv IT Cluster has delivered to Lviv Air Command West another batch of tablets, computers, monitors, TVs, and the first VR simulator that teaches how to control Igla-1 MANPADS. The simulator allows the militaries to train in conditions as close as possible to real ones and to prepare more effectively for the performance of tasks.

Ternopil city authorities have decided to fully provide winter clothing and footwear to military units formed in Ternopil. In the words of Ternopil mayor [Serhii Nadal](#), the city provided more than 3,049 militaries with winter uniforms and footwear.

>> HUMANITARIAN AID

On 25 January, the [Norwegian Refugee Council provided charitable assistance to internally displaced persons](#) of Yavoriv raion, Lviv oblast. 30 families from among families with many children and persons with disabilities of the I–II groups received folding beds, mattresses, blankets, sheets, pillows, and towels.

[On 10 February, the International Organization for Migration \(IOM\) delivered humanitarian aid to 42 invincibility points of Drohobych raion. The aid has been distributed among 5 communities of](#) Drohobych, Truskavets, Boryslav, Skhidnytsia, and Medenytsia. IOM partners donated a total of more than 500 battery-powered lanterns, mattresses, blankets, bedding sets, and others to invincibility points.

>> GRANT AID

2 February has marked the end of another selection phase for [grant](#) support of local and relocated business projects in Ivano-Frankivsk oblast, conducted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as part of the “SME boost: economic integration of internally displaced people and business recovery” project. According to the competitive selection results, 36 micro- and small businesses operating in the oblast were selected as winners. They will receive grants for the implementation of development projects in the amount of around EUR300,000.

>> CHARITABLE PROJECTS

Still strong [charitable project](#), created by Ukrainian doctors, has been launched. The goal of the initiative is to unite Ukrainian and foreign specialists for free assistance to Ukrainian defenders and civilians with head and neck injuries sustained as a result of the Russian armed aggression. The project is supported by the Ukrainian Association of Head and Neck Endoscopic Surgery, Face the Future Foundation, as well as Karl Stortz Ukraine, Bionorika, Materialize, and Scanner companies. Assistance to patients and surgical treatment will be provided on the basis of project partner medical institutions in Ivano-Frankivsk, Kyiv, Lviv, and Odesa.

4. Changes in the social structure

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

As of 19 February 2023, over 1,385 [children have suffered](#) in Ukraine as a result of a full-scale armed aggression of the Russian Federation, of whom 461 were killed and more than 924 had wounds of various degrees of severity. Therefore, the evacuation of children from zones of military operations and other dangerous areas is among the priorities of the National Police of Ukraine, in particular its specialised unit, the Juvenile Prevention

Department. It was this unit that asked for help the largest domestic manufacturer of body Armor, [Lviv Defence Cluster](#) (LDC), so as to successfully fulfil its tasks. To complete the request, LDC handed over 500 children's protective gear kits to the National Police in early February.

Children's protective gear kits, each of which consists of a helmet and a bulletproof vest, have passed all required tests, and received appropriate certification. The helmet is a standard military one in terms of protection, but smaller in size (S and L sizes). And the vest meets the protection standards of the 1st class body armour. Despite that the kits can ensure a sufficiently high level of protection (primarily from debris), they are also very light, because they are made of ultra-high molecular weight ballistic polyethylene. The developers also made the vest as convenient as possible for use during the evacuation of children: it is quick to put on and take off, has bright colours and reflective stripes, and contains a transparent pocket for ID information on the front.

Designers of Kharkiv-based plant of personal protective equipment and Kalin Dimitrov, one of the best experts on military equipment and individual ballistic protection who has over 20 years of experience in equipping the army and police, took part in the development of the children's protective gear. For the time being, the production of children's evacuation kits launched by LDC is the only serial production of this type of personal protective equipment in the world. Children's protective gear kits are produced for funds raised as charitable donations. The kits will then be handed over free of charge to organisations dealing with the evacuation of children.

Since 25 February 2022 until present, the staff of [Cheresh psycho-neurological boarding house](#) in Bukovyna has cared of 25 people from Zaporizhzhia oblast are cared for in (patients of the same institution who need constant external care). There are currently a total of 200 patients in the boarding house, of whom more than 40 are evacuated from Luhansk, Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia oblasts.

At the same time, a [scandal](#) has erupted on social networking sites and in local media outlets of Chernivtsi oblast, surrounding the work of the raion and oblast commission on disabilities, which issued a disability absence certificate to a young man with congenital cerebral palsy. At present, the next step may be to challenge the decision in court or file a repeated complaint with the Ministry of Health and make a public disclosure.

On 22 February, the teams of the Drug Centre and Psychiatric Hospital No. 1 came to the building of Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast Council to hold a peaceful [rally](#) and prevent the closure (merger) of health care facilities. The health workers were concerned over the actions of the Oblast Council, willing to close the said facilities and merge them with the Psycho-neurological oblast hospital No. 3 and build multi-storey buildings in their place. *"Now there is a war in the country and the number of patients has increased at times... Since the beginning of the year, we have treated some 400 patients,"* claimed a psychiatrist and narcologist Lidia Nikolenko. She added that now they have a lot of militaries and this number will rocket following the end of war.

On 20 February, Doctors Without Borders international humanitarian organisation has announced its intention to [help](#) people with disabilities who have the status of IDPs and live in Prykarpattia. Mykola Makar, the Commissioner for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast State Administration, met with representatives of Doctors Without Borders Alicante Elvira Parafito and Ivan Dzeman. The representatives of the humanitarian organisation expressed their readiness to cooperate and help in solving problems of people with disabilities in the oblast. Their expertise and knowledge of medicine and rehabilitation can be extremely useful for internally displaced people with disabilities and community organisations that help such people.

4.2. Needs of displaced persons. Response

Assistance to internally displaced persons remains a crucial problem for the oblast. It is necessary to create adequate living conditions, provide basic necessities, and step up action on professional adaptation.

Earlier this year, 400,000 displaced persons have been registered in Zakarpattia oblast. According to Zakarpattia OMA, less than half of them, or 156,000, are [officially registered](#) as IDPs. In other words, the number of officially registered IDPs in the oblast has remained practically unchanged: the figure exceeding 155,000 has been more or less the same since the summer. The absolute majority, or 95% of all IDPs, live in the private sector of Zakarpattia oblast, i.e., they rent housing by themselves, whereas the rest live in shelters. In the past year, up to 3,000 people were resettled in shelters; this year, places are being prepared for another 6,000.

According to the Head of Zakarpattia Oblast Military Administration, [Volodymyr Trush](#), there are currently 86,000 displaced persons in [Ternopil oblast](#).

As of 2 February, 88,619 people were registered in the [Unified Information database of Internally Displaced Persons](#) in Bukovyna, including 60,658 households; 28,645 children; 3,349 persons with disabilities; 2,402 IDPs since 2014; and 18,459 transit IDPs (those who stay for a couple of days). 70,027 displaced persons live in communities.

[243,208 internally displaced persons have officially been registered the oblast as of 19 February according to Lviv OMA.](#)

As of 7 February, the number of officially registered displaced persons in Odesa oblast reached 141,241 against 137,165 in late December, 129,151 in November, and 123,657 in October. Some 40,000 migrants are children, 5,261 are persons with disabilities.

>> HOUSING FOR IDPs

In Voznesensk community, Mykolaiv oblast, dormitories are being repaired to provide housing for those who relocated from other oblasts. Also, there are plans to convert the building of the former kindergarten into an 18-apartment residential building, according to the city mayor, [Yevhen Velychko](#). He noted that some 3,600 displaced people from the east and south of the country came to the community.

The deoccupation of Kherson has sparked a significant increase in the number of IDPs in Odesa oblast, which caused problems in the oblast linked to the provision of displaced persons with collective accommodation, [according to](#) the Head of the Humanitarian Aid Coordination Headquarters of Odesa Oblast, Oleksii Chornyj.

[As of mid-February 2023, over 750 IDPs lived in Lviv's largest winter modular town.](#) These are the residents of three summer towns from Stryi Park, Puliuia Street, and "Mariapolis", who moved from the houses conserved for the winter. A total of some 150,000 IDPs live in Lviv. Modular houses were delivered by the Polish government in the framework of the aid and support programme. Funds were allocated from the city budget for the construction of networks and utilities, arrangement of yards, supply of electricity, diesel generation, and provision of foods. Lviv mayor Andriy Sadovyi said that housing for 700 people is under construction in the city. Those undergoing rehabilitation will live here. He emphasised that the above project was funded by the European Union.

On 1 February, a modular town for IDP families was opened in the town of Sosnivka near Chervonohrad, Lviv oblast, with several houses currently operating there. The town consists of residential buildings, plumbing buildings, and catering departments. As of now, a comprehensive scheme for placing temporary structures has been developed, according to which it is planned to place 50 houses. The project is implemented with the support of Green Planet Energy eG and GIZ Ukraine.

On 24 February, the Move Ukraine Charitable Foundation signed memorandums with Kalush City Council, Ivano-Frankivsk oblast, on the arrangement of two [shelters](#) for displaced persons. One of them, located in the centre of Kalush, is designed to house 45 people. Volunteers put forward the main condition – the buildings in which the shelters will be arranged should be in municipal ownership. Deputies adopted the Memorandum of Understanding. The condition is 10% co-funding from the city budget. This amount includes various project works, estimates, laying communications, increase in electric power. The International Organization for Migration is responsible for the house's insulation. IOM volunteers also provided furniture and appliances for the shelter. Ukrainian manufacturers and businesses are also involved in cooperation. Throughput 2023, 10 more shelters should appear in the community, one of them is designed to accommodate 240 people. 26 people from other oblasts who currently live in the kindergarten are first on the waiting list to move to the new shelter. A total of approximately 6,000 internally displaced persons are registered in Kalush city territorial community.

>> EMPLOYMENT OF IDPs

[This January, 166 IDPs from war-affected or temporarily occupied areas have filed applications with offices of Lviv oblast employment service, seeking help in finding jobs, of whom 130 were granted the status of unemployed.](#) Guided by the employment service, 44 IDPs could get jobs last month. IDPs were employed primarily in trade and service outlets (31%) and processing industry enterprises (27.6%).

Health care professionals from the war-affected areas have strengthened the health care sector of Ivano-Frankivsk oblast. "Since the beginning of the full-scale war, more than a hundred health care profes-

nals have been employed in health care facilities of the oblast. Doctors make up the lion's share. The largest number of doctors from among the IDPs work in health care facilities of the oblast administrative centre," the Head of the Oblast Military Administration, [Svitlana Onyshchuk](#), said.

Businessmen of Chernivtsi oblast offer wartime employment and business start-up opportunities for the IDPs. Specifically, in Storozhynets raion, [there is a rapidly developing sewing workshop that operates for the needs of the Armed Forces](#). Both locals and IDPs work for the company, which positively affects the processes of mutual integration.

>> INTERNATIONAL AID

Zakarpattia oblast still takes the lead in Ukraine as terms of the amounts of [financial assistance](#) provided to IDPs in 2022. Funding came from the state budget and from the contributions of international partners. Forced migrants who had registered in the oblast last year received state aid in the amount of UAH 1.8 billion and aid from foreign donors worth over USD100 million.

To provide IDPs with financial assistance, Zakarpattia OMA cooperated with 13 international organisations. Last year, with their help, more than 250,000 people received payments. Most funds came from UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration, and the UN World Food Programme.

Chernivtsi Association "Zakhyst" NGO [announced](#) that, based on the results of their micro-grant competition, initiatives aimed at attracting and integrating IDPs will be funded in five communities. The donor was the French charity organisation, Triangle Génération Humanitaire.

>> PROVISION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELLING AND LEGAL AID

[Within January–February, 3,746 services have been provided in the coordination and advisory centres of Lviv oblast, another 725 services have been provided during on-site visits to the communities of Lviv oblast](#). Assistance to IDPs consists in providing psychological support, legal counselling, humanitarian, and financial assistance, as well as referrals to doctors. Internally displaced persons who stay in Lviv can register for a consultation and apply for assistance via [the link](#).

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

In early February 2023, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine has started to form the [Offensive Guard](#) assault brigades. The brigades will consist exclusively of volunteers. They will be formed on the basis of the National Police, the State Border Guard Service, and the National Guard of Ukraine. The volunteer will be able to choose from the following brigades towards the one which he or she will feel most motivated and where he or she will meet like-minded people: "Stalevyi Kordon", "Chervona Kalyna", "Lyut", "Rubizh", "Spartan", "Kara-Dag", "Burevii", and "Azov".

According to [the National Guard's spokesperson, Ruslan Muzychuk](#), volunteer brigades of the Offensive Guard are primarily intended to form reserves and ensure the possibility of military rotation. Muzychuk noted that the average age of candidates is 33 years. The youngest of them are 18 years old, there are also people over 60 who have experience of serving in military formations. All militaries who will become stormtroopers in the Offensive Guard [are promised a list of social benefits](#), including the opportunity to receive housing and treatment, as well as to study in universities. In February, a nationwide campaign for recruiting volunteer brigades has been launched in Ukraine's oblasts.

According to the Head of Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast State Administration, Svitlana Onyshchuk, more than 460 [volunteers](#) have applied for the assault brigades.

At the same time, in Chernivtsi oblast, the growing number of mobilisation evaders who tried to illegally cross the Ukrainian-Romanian border is reported. Messages on this issue systematically appear in local media. The problem gained publicity in the world media: in its report [BBC News mentioned Chernivtsi and the Shliakh system](#).

According to the monitoring data on Zakarpattia oblast, the same problem remains topical for this border oblast. Specifically, the number of detentions of citizens of conscription age, who are restricted from leaving Ukraine due to their age during martial law and who intend to go abroad without the appropriate documents, is growing. The matter concerns everyday detentions of so-called evaders and their guides. For example, on 10 February, [ten men](#) who intended to illegally cross the Ukrainian border, as well as six people who guided them, have been apprehended a kilometre from the border with Hungary. The day before, the evaders were taken to the border where they planned to cross the river using an inflatable boat. Each of the detainees had to pay the dealers up to USD5,000 for such “voyage”.

Mobilisation measures are actively taking place in Ivano-Frankivsk oblast. On the streets of population centres, one can regularly meet the militaries who check identification documents of persons of conscription age and serve summons on some of them. The situation has prompted a flurry of discussions on social media; videos showing detention of individuals are being distributed, but they are not linked to particular areas of the oblast. These events are widely used to spread Russian narratives in favour of war fatigue, injustice of conscription, and corrupt evasion schemes.

Employees of recruitment centres are attempting to conduct explanatory work. Volodymyr Shakhovets, the Head of Kolomyia Raion Territorial Centre for Recruitment and Social Support, explained that serving the [summons](#) in the streets is needed exclusively for clarifying data to build up a reserve for the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

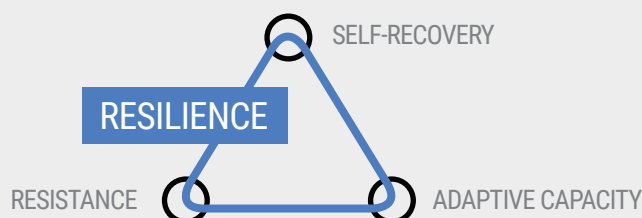
The information about closure of particular areas for mobilisation, especially the territory of the Bukovel alpine and ski resort, is being spread on social networking sites. Mobilisation is taking place throughout Ivano-Frankivsk oblast and Bukovel is no exception, Ivano-Frankivsk Territorial Centre for Recruitment and Social Support claimed.

According to the monitoring data on Ternopil oblast, the tragic situation with Ternopil resident [Bohdan Pokitko](#), who was mobilised after being served a summon in the street, has triggered a strong response. Having no military experience, he soon found himself in the combat zone where he died less than a month after the recruitment. [Oksana Ohorodnyk](#), a volunteer from Ternopil who was first to report the high-profile case, underscored that Bohdan Pokitko had received no military training. The territorial recruitment centre is conducting an internal inquiry to find those responsible for training of the military personnel.

DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

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

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



We measure resilience in the following three dimensions:

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

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

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

>> FOCUS

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

>> DATA COLLECTION:

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

DATA SOURCES: publications in the media, decisions of authorities, draft decisions of authorities, data of surveys and public opinion polls, data of social networking sites, reports of non-governmental organisations, and any other publicised information. The data are collected by coordinators of the National Platform for Resilience and Social Cohesion in 12 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; opinion of the population of the oblast / community / political forces regarding Russia's occupation and military actions.
- Changes in the system of governance. Decisions and information of the occupying authorities; cases of collaborationism; seizure of property; expropriation of products by the occupying administrations.
- Humanitarian situation. Filtration measures of the occupying authorities; forced deportation and its routes; hostage taking; recruitment into armed formations; nature of evacuation; destruction; access to health care services.
- Work on identity. The operation of educational facilities; relocation of school children, students, and teachers; forced Russification; Russian state education standards; politics of memory: place names, museum work, holidays and their celebration; activities of religious organisations.
- Changes in the social structure. Challenges related to the situation of women, children, and people with disabilities.

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

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

>> THE PUBLISHING FREQUENCY OF THE REPORT

The initial monitoring report covers the first four months of the large-scale invasion (from February through June), starting 24 February 2022; and each of the follow-up reports has a two-month timeframe.



ABOUT UKRAINIAN CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT POLITICAL RESEARCH

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RESILIENCE AND COHESION OF UKRAINIAN SOCIETY DURING THE WAR

Periodic report based on monitoring materials from selected regions of Ukraine
Issue No. 5. January–February 2023

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