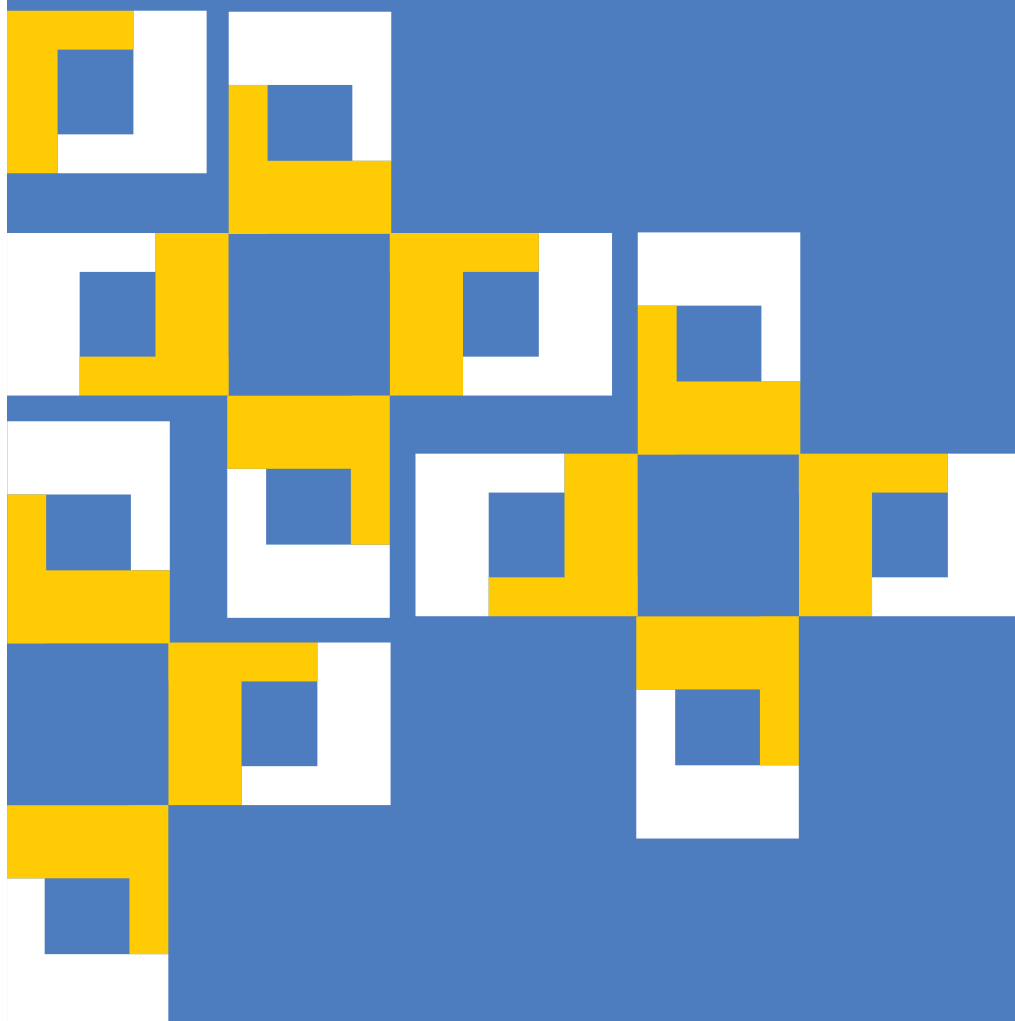


RESILIENCE AND COHESION OF UKRAINIAN SOCIETY DURING THE WAR

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

The National Platform's activities are geared towards strengthening the national resilience of Ukraine. This could be done through establishing dialogue practices in society, providing the authorities with proposals for developing relevant policies, particularly those on resilience and social cohesion as well as ensuring public awareness of these processes. The initiative has been implemented with the financial support of the European Union as part of Sustaining Ukrainian Resilience and European Security 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 target oblasts of the project were selected based on analysis of changes in cohesion of local populations due to the outbreak of military operations and include Vinnytsia, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zakarpattia, Zaporizhzhia, Lviv, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Kharkiv, Kherson, Chernivtsi, and Chernihiv oblasts. For data collection, we distinguish between the temporarily occupied areas, frontline and deoccupied areas, and relatively rear areas.

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

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFU	Armed Forces of Ukraine
ASC	Administrative Services Centre
CF	Charitable Fund
CMA	City Military Administration
DPR	Donetsk People's Republic
EW	Electronic Warfare
GAB	Guided Aerial Bomb
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IO	Influence Operation
LPR	Luhansk People's Republic
MMC	Military Medical Commission
NABU	National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine
NPP	Nuclear Power Plant
OCU	Orthodox Church of Ukraine
OMA	Oblast Military Administration
RF	Russian Federation
ROC	Russian Orthodox Church
SAP0	Specialised Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office
SESU	State Emergency Service of Ukraine
SMO	Special Military Operation
TOA	Temporarily Occupied Area
TPP	Thermal Power Plant
TRSSC	Territorial Recruitment and Social Support Centre
UGCC	Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church
UN	United Nations Organization
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UOC (MP)	Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate

SUMMARY

The situation at the front line

In March–April 2026, the front line remained generally stable, despite the high intensity of fighting along the main axes. Russian forces failed to achieve operational breakthroughs or significantly alter the configuration of the front. Even where they made local advances, these were mostly tactical and came at significant cost. As a result, the attacking side increasingly targeted civilian infrastructure, residential buildings, hospitals, energy infrastructure, and logistics and life-support facilities. These strikes not only caused material damage but also exerted psychological pressure on the population and complicated the operation of various services.

Ukrainian forces retained the ability to hold back the enemy and strike its equipment, air defence systems, command posts, and logistics. This was reflected, in particular, in [local counterattacks](#) and strikes on ammunition depots, supply routes, and military infrastructure both in the temporarily occupied areas and deep in Russia's [rear](#).

Overall, the enemy's advances remained localised and, according to [ISW](#) assessments, the pace of the offensive was slowing. At the same time, this did not remove the threat of further attacks, as in a war of attrition, resources, logistics, technology, and the parties' ability to sustain a prolonged high intensity of fighting became increasingly important.

I. TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED AREAS

Throughout the spring, the forced integration of the occupied areas of Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson oblasts into Russia's political, administrative, economic, and digital framework continued. Preparations for the elections to the State Duma of the Russian Federation in autumn 2026, the issuance of Russian foreign passports, and tighter control over property, the economy, and digital services pointed to an effort to entrench the occupation as a long-term model of governance.

Repression, seizure of property, control over communications and personal data, forced passporting, and conscription campaigns remained the key instruments of integration. Through these mechanisms, the population became increasingly dependent on the occupying administrations, Russian documents, and public services of the RF.

Plans to resettle Russian citizens, the purchase of new housing in Mariupol by people from Russia, the militarisation of education, and ideological work with children and young people were aimed at changing the composition of the population and weakening ties between the seized areas and Ukrainian government-controlled territory.

Meanwhile, the occupying authorities were unable to ensure basic living conditions: humanitarian crises, infrastructure problems, staff shortages, and dependence on budget subsidies from the centre persisted. In the long term, this deepened social and demographic losses and complicated the future recovery and reintegration of these areas.

II. FRONTLINE AND DEOCCUPIED AREAS

The security situation strongly affected most areas of life: governance, the operation of critical infrastructure, evacuation, education, transport, economic activity, humanitarian assistance, and social support. In these conditions, long-term planning often gave way to rapid responses to current challenges, although in some oblasts there were already visible attempts to prepare in advance for repeated crises through backup power supply, getting ready for the heating season, creating protected educational spaces and digital mechanisms for recording needs and damage.

Community resilience varied considerably. Communities relatively far from the front line were still able to maintain the provision of basic services, plan recovery, and develop some social and economic support tools. In communities close to the combat zone or the border, by contrast, public utility, transport, health care, and social services increasingly became fragmented. Transport isolation posed an additional risk: reduced or altered routes in frontline communities made it harder to access health care, administrative services, evacuation, and humanitarian assistance.

Humanitarian support generally remained effective but was under excessive strain. International, state, municipal, and volunteer assistance covered the population's basic needs, water supply, health care, evacuation logistics, and backup power supply. However, dependence on external resources was still one of the key risks.

Housing recovery and support for IDPs were urgently needed. Various procedures, including the eRecovery programme, housing certificates, local payments, and remote inspections of damaged property, were gradually being adapted to wartime conditions. However, the scale of destruction significantly exceeded the pace of compensation and actual recovery. Unresolved problems included long-term housing, stable employment, access to social services, and integration into host communities.

The economic resilience of frontline communities depended largely on whether local businesses could continue operating despite security risks, logistical restrictions, power supply disruptions, and damage to property. Practical tools to support entrepreneurs were used in the oblasts, including local tax benefits, grants, compensation, partial reimbursement of costs for generators and solar power plants, and platforms for dialogue between the authorities and businesses. However, these measures helped maintain basic economic activity rather than create conditions for full development, as businesses continued to operate under constant military, financial, and regulatory pressure.

Mobilisation processes, the work of territorial recruitment and social support centres and military medical commissions, reservation procedures, and issues of procedural fairness continued to fuel tensions. Stronger administrative measures may have been necessary from the perspective of defence capability, but without transparent rules, proper communication, and response to abuses, they could erode trust in institutions. Corruption cases involving military medical commissions, reservation procedures, defence-related construction, shelters, recovery, and procurement had a similar effect: in frontline conditions, they were perceived not so much as financial violations, but as matters of security, fairness, and trust in the authorities.

III. RELATIVELY REAR AREAS CONTROLLED BY THE UKRAINIAN GOVERNMENT

Despite their distance from the front line, the relatively rear areas remained vulnerable to drone and missile attacks, which affected the energy sector, transport, housing stock, and critical infrastructure.

Preparations for the next heating season and the implementation of comprehensive resilience plans remained key areas of activity. The oblasts channelled resources into cogeneration, backup power supply, autonomous water supply, the protection of critical infrastructure, and the development of distributed power generation. However, the main challenge was moving from approved plans to practical implementation under conditions of limited resources and constant security risks.

The social sector operated under increased strain. The needs of war veterans, IDPs, persons with disabilities, and families of military personnel continued to grow. In response, communities developed

rehabilitation services, accessibility measures, employment initiatives, psychological support, and veteran entrepreneurship programmes. However, the accumulation of these needs gradually became a long-term challenge for local budgets and social support systems.

The activity of volunteers, businesses, and international partners remained an important resource for communities. Through a combination of local initiatives, international assistance, and inter-municipal cooperation, communities maintained social infrastructure, implemented modernisation projects, and supported the Defence Forces of Ukraine. Nevertheless, many areas remained highly dependent on external support, especially in meeting energy-related needs, restoring infrastructure, and providing social services.

The erosion of public trust posed a distinct risk. Corruption scandals, conflicts around mobilisation measures, the lack of transparency in certain decisions, and delays in addressing accumulated problems heightened tensions between citizens and institutions. Public demand for fairness, accountability, and effective communication by the authorities also continued to grow.

I. TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED AREAS

(DONETSK, ZAPORIZHZHIA, AND KHERSON OBLASTS)

1. Changes in the system of governance

In March–April 2026, the occupying authorities continued to integrate local administrative structures in the TOAs of Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson oblasts into the Russian system of governance. This process was accompanied by the further curtailment of local self-government, personnel reshuffles, and tighter control by the occupying leadership.

In the occupied part of Donetsk oblast, the practice of appointing managers from other regions of the RF to key positions [continued](#). Rotations also took place at the municipal level. The system of local self-government there had effectively been dismantled: the heads of the so-called municipal districts were appointed by the occupying leadership, while their subsequent approval by municipal assemblies was purely formal. Notably, such governance structures were being created even for areas that Russia did not fully control. Specifically, the appointment of the head of what the occupying authorities call the Krasnyi Lyman municipal district [was approved](#), although the city of Lyman remained outside the control of Russian forces, and fighting continued across much of the territory of this so-called district.

1.1. Decisions of occupying authorities

>> PREPARATIONS FOR ELECTIONS TO THE STATE DUMA OF THE RF

In the temporarily occupied areas, preparations continued for the elections to the State Duma of the RF scheduled for autumn 2026. The occupied areas of Ukraine were to be formally included in the Russia-wide electoral process for the first time.

Under the [Federal Law](#) adopted in May 2025, three single-member constituencies were created in the territory of the so-called DPR, with centres in Horlivka, Donetsk, and Makiivka. These constituencies included not only occupied population centres but also territories that were under Ukrainian government control or remained areas of active hostilities. Specifically, the Horlivka constituency included Kramatorsk, Sloviansk, Kostiantynivka, and Lyman, which had not been captured.

Voting in the occupied part of Donetsk oblast was to be organised not by separate district electoral commissions but by the so-called [DPR electoral commission](#). This further pointed to the formal nature of the process: if voters were able to express their will in any real sense, a single commission would not be able to fully administer voting for 1.6 million voters. In addition, many of the population centres captured after 2022 had been destroyed or were almost deserted, which in practice made proper voting impossible.

The selection of candidates also showed that political representation in the occupied areas was determined from outside and was not linked to the real interests of local communities. According to Russian media, the United Russia party [planned](#) to nominate, in the occupied part of Donetsk oblast, individuals connected to Russian propaganda, occupying structures, or the political orchestration around the events of 2014.

This approach to candidate selection was also evident in other occupied areas. In Zaporizhzhia oblast, Crimean deputy Aleksey Tikhomirov may become a candidate, while in Kherson oblast the candidate may be Olena Dmytruk, the First Deputy Head of the occupying regional дума. Before the full-scale invasion, she was linked to a number of business assets in Kherson oblast, including Khersonlift PrJSC, Zernokom Ahroiuh LLC, the Building Structures Combine, and Yantar Trading House, located in the now de-occupied part of the oblast.

Additionally, the party lists are likely to be headed by the heads of the occupying administrations, Yevhen Balytskyi and Volodymyr Saldo, who may act as political driving force, mobilising support for the party without necessarily taking seats in the State Duma.

Preparations for the United Russia party's preliminary voting also [began](#) in the temporarily occupied part of Kherson oblast. Registration was being conducted through Russia's Gosuslugi public services portal, with voting scheduled for 25–31 May.

Overall, preparations for the elections to the State Duma of the RF in the occupied areas formed part of a policy aimed at the long-term entrenchment of the occupying regime. Its purpose was not to ensure representation of the population, but to create the appearance of the political integration of these territories into the RF, legitimise the occupying administrations, and demonstrate control even over the population centres that Russia did not in fact control.

>> ZAPORIZHZHIA NPP

As of March–April 2026, the situation around the occupied Zaporizhzhia NPP remained unstable because of the vulnerability of its external power supply. In March, the plant lost connection to the main 750 kV [Dniprovsk](#) power line, and in April the 330 kV [Ferosplavna-1](#) line was disconnected, forcing Zaporizhzhia NPP to temporarily rely on backup power. The subsequent restoration of Ferosplavna-1 partly stabilised the situation but did not remove the systemic risks linked to the vulnerability of external power supply under conditions of occupation and hostilities.

In parallel, [according to](#) activists of the Yellow Ribbon movement, a group from the RF was operating at Zaporizhzhia NPP, carrying out an inventory of resources and recording equipment at the plant site.

Although radiation levels in Zaporizhzhia oblast were [within normal limits](#), the situation at Zaporizhzhia NPP remained a source of heightened technological and security risks.

>> INTENSIFIED REPRESSION

Repressive practices were one of the key instruments used to maintain control over the occupied areas. In the TOAs of Kherson oblast, the [growing number](#) of cases brought by occupying judicial bodies on charges of 'high treason' and 'espionage' pointed to increased persecution of people disloyal to the occupying authorities and to attempts to suppress any manifestations of Ukrainian resistance.

Extrajudicial pressure mechanisms were also used in parallel. According to the Crimean Tatar Resource Center, in February–March 2026, the RF [added](#) at least 22 natives of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson oblasts to the list of persons allegedly involved in extremism or terrorism. Inclusion on this list entailed the blocking of bank accounts, restrictions on the right to dispose of property, and de facto economic isolation. In this way, the repressive system combined criminal prosecution, administrative pressure, and financial restrictions, turning them into instruments of punishment for a pro-Ukrainian position.

>> 'NATIONALISATION' OF HOUSING

In Mariupol, the mechanism for recognising housing as ownerless was effectively being used for its subsequent 'nationalisation' and transfer under the control of the occupying administration. According to a journalistic investigation, 12,948 apartments and houses had already been [included](#) in lists of such property; some properties were being sealed even before the seizure procedure had been completed. Registration of ownership rights under Russian rules was accompanied by artificial bureaucratic barriers. Specifically, a resident of Mariupol could not register ownership of housing even after acquiring Russian citizenship if the property was co-owned by at least one Ukrainian citizen.

A further risk factor was the limited timeframe for registering property: under the occupation rules in force, real estate had to be re-registered under Russian law by 1 July 2026. For owners who had left the occupied areas, had no access to documents, or were unable to go through Russian administrative procedures, this posed a high risk of losing their housing rights.

A similar mechanism was also being developed in the temporarily occupied part of Kherson oblast. In late March, the occupying Kherson regional дума [supported](#) legislative amendments simplifying the transfer of so-called ownerless property into the ownership of the local occupying authorities. Formally, this was

explained by the need to provide service housing for recruited specialists. In practice, however, it amounted to creating legal conditions for the seizure of real estate and its subsequent use in the interests of the occupying administration.

Overall, these practices pointed to the systematic redistribution of property in the occupied areas. This could be used not only for economic control, but also to entrench a new social structure loyal to the occupying authorities.

>> DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSFORMATION

In the temporarily occupied areas, demographic transformation was being embedded in long-term plans for construction and territorial development. According to Russia's outlet [Vedomosti](#), Vnesheconombank, together with the Unified Institute of Spatial Planning, had drafted so-called development plans for Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson oblasts. By 2045, the RF planned to resettle almost 114,000 Russians to the temporarily occupied areas of Ukraine. This process was linked to the drafting of 15 master plans and 10 comprehensive development projects, the construction of more than 13 million square metres of housing, kindergartens, schools, and health care facilities, as well as the restoration of roads and railways and the development of tourist zones.

Meanwhile, according to the occupying authorities in Mariupol, around three quarters of new housing in the city was [being bought](#) not by local residents, but by people from RF regions, notably from the Central Federal District. Overall, these processes indicated a long-term change in the demographic composition of the TOAs and the formation of a new social environment more dependent on the occupying authorities and integrated into the Russian framework.

>> NEW MECHANISMS OF ECONOMIC CONTROL

In the temporarily occupied part of Kherson oblast, the occupying administration continued to build mechanisms of centralised control over the economy. Specifically, the so-called governor, Volodymyr Saldo, ordered the creation of a ['productivity task force'](#) to coordinate the work of local agencies and monitor progress against indicators set under Russia's Effective and Competitive Economy national project. The occupying authorities presented this step as part of governance modernisation. In practice, however, it pointed to the further subordination of the occupied part of Kherson oblast to Russian federal programmes and tighter administrative oversight. Meanwhile, this 'institutional stabilisation' remained artificial: the occupied part of Kherson oblast was critically dependent on financial injections from the RF against the backdrop of a slowing Russian economy.

>> HIKE IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS TARIFFS

Telecommunications infrastructure in the TOAs was increasingly becoming an instrument of financial and information pressure on the population. In 2026, internet and mobile communications services [could become](#) at least 20% more expensive. Operators attributed this to rising costs for equipment, network modernisation, taxes, import substitution, and compliance with Russian legal requirements on data storage.

Along with that, the tariff hikes were accompanied by tighter control over the information space and communication channels. Russia was gradually restricting the operation of popular messengers and promoting its own digital services, which could make it harder to maintain contact with TOA residents. The [launch](#) of mobile device registration using IMEI codes posed an additional risk: in the occupied areas, this process could effectively link a SIM card and phone to a specific person and make anonymous use of communications impossible. For TOA residents, this meant not only more expensive services but also a further narrowing of access to independent information and growing risks of digital surveillance.

>> DIGITAL SURVEILLANCE AND SECURITY AGENCIES' ACCESS TO DATA

The RF [was expanding the capacity](#) of its security agencies to control the digital environment, thus creating additional risks for residents of the occupied areas. Starting on 1 April 2026, the FSB was given the right to demand copies of databases from any organisation, including banks, corporations, and research

institutions, without a court order. This effectively gave the security agencies access to personal data, financial information, customer databases, and companies' internal information.

In parallel to that, the FSB's powers were being expanded in other areas. The security service could disconnect citizens from mobile communications and the Internet, influence access to individual websites, and take part in blacklisting international identifiers, or IMEI codes, of mobile devices. Combined with tighter control over telecommunications operators, this created a system of digital surveillance in which the use of mobile phones, the internet, and financial services was increasingly tied to oversight by security agencies. For residents of the TOAs, this meant growing risks of identification, surveillance, and punishment for a disloyal or pro-Ukrainian position.

>> **ISSUANCE OF RUSSIAN FOREIGN PASSPORTS**

The occupying authorities [reported](#) the start of issuing Russian biometric foreign passports in the TOAs. Mariupol was named as the first city where this service became available, with appointments for applications made through Russia's Gosuslugi public services portal. The introduction of such documents pointed to the further integration of the occupied areas into Russia's administrative, migration, and digital framework, as well as to the entrenchment of imposed RF citizenship as a condition for access to basic public services.

2. Humanitarian situation

In March–April 2026, the situation in temporarily occupied Oleshky in Kherson oblast was critical and showed signs of a humanitarian blockade. According to Ukrainian officials and volunteers, between 2,000 and 8,000 people may have remained in the town without stable access to electricity, water, food, medicines, or medical care. [Mined roads](#) and control by occupying forces made it difficult to leave the town, while attempts to deliver food and fuel involved high risks, including the risk of vehicles hitting mines.

Dmytro Lubinets, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, [claimed](#) that he had appealed to the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Russian ombudsman, demanding a humanitarian corridor for the evacuation of civilians from Oleshky and surrounding population centres. In April, he also [called on](#) the international community to secure access for international missions to the town, strengthen the documentation of crimes, and establish effective mechanisms for responding to the humanitarian catastrophe.

Meanwhile, the occupying administration publicly denied any crisis and shifted responsibility onto Ukraine. This position pointed to a controlled information policy aimed at concealing the scale of the humanitarian situation, while also complicating international efforts to provide aid to civilians.

2.1. Actions of occupying authorities regarding recruitment into armed formations

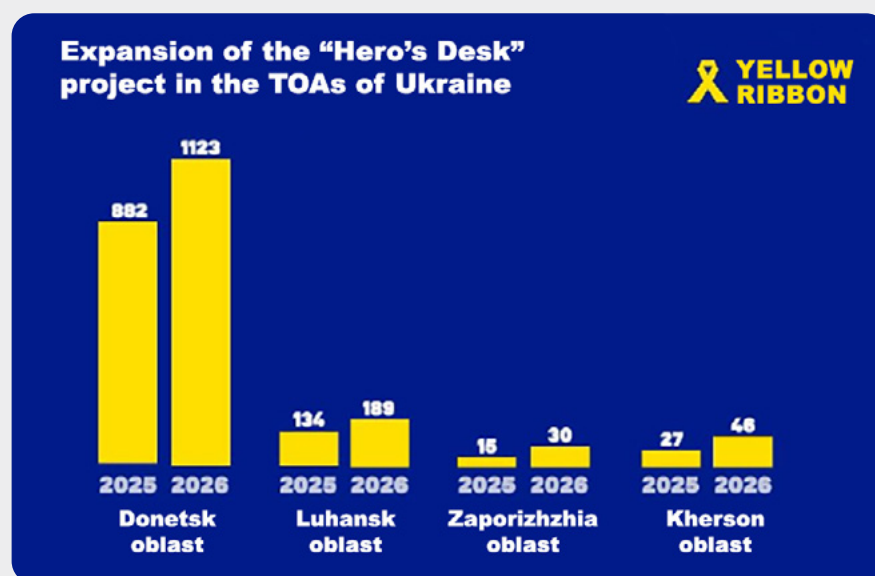
Starting 1 April, the Russian authorities launched the first conscription campaign in the temporarily occupied areas of Ukraine under the law on so-called [year-round conscription](#). Men aged 18 to 30 were subject to conscription, and the term of service was 12 months unless a military contract was signed during that period. The Yellow Ribbon movement [reported](#) that the occupying administrations had already formed conscription commissions and involved the police in searching for 'draft evaders' through raids at places of residence, checks, and forced delivery to military enlistment offices. Despite claims by the occupying authorities that conscripts would not be sent to the combat zone, previous campaigns pointed to the risk of their subsequent involvement in combat units of the RF. This represented another stage in the forced militarisation of the TOA population and the involvement of residents of the occupied areas in the military system of the occupying country.

The occupying administration was also increasing pressure on students. [Reports from](#) Yellow Ribbon activists indicated that educational institutions were required to ensure that at least 2% of students signed contracts with the RF Ministry of Defence. Agitation campaigns involving administrators and teachers were already being conducted in educational institutions: students were offered benefits, including transfer to state-funded study or simplified graduation procedures after completing service. Meanwhile, the heads of educational institutions were threatened with dismissal if they failed to meet the targets set. In this way, under the guise of voluntary contracts, a system of administrative coercion into service in the RF army was effectively being formed in the TOAs.

3. Work on identity

3.1. Changes in education standards

In the temporarily occupied areas, education remained one of the main instruments of ideological influence on children and young people. The occupying authorities were expanding the network of the [Orlyata Rossi](#) (Eaglets of Russia), [Yunarmiya](#), Movement of the First, and Yug Molodoy (Young South) projects, through which schoolchildren were gradually being drawn into pro-Russian education. Reports from Yellow Ribbon activists [indicated](#) that around 1,400 so-called Hero's Desks had already been installed in the TOAs. These formed part of a propaganda project run by the United Russia party that glorified Russian military personnel.



Source: [the Yellow Ribbon Telegram channel](#).

[Military themes](#) were introduced not only through extracurricular activities or meetings with Russian soldiers but also through clubs and lessons presented as technical or engineering activities. Specifically, schoolchildren were shown drones and taught the basic principles of operating them. In this way, military technologies were gradually becoming part of the everyday educational life.

The occupying authorities were also tightening control over higher education. Universities in the TOAs were used as platforms for the so-called [prevention of extremism](#), with such centres established notably in Donetsk and Melitopol. Under the guise of educational work, students were exposed to pro-Russian narratives through lectures, 'patriotic' events, conferences, and training sessions in which Ukraine was presented as a 'threat' and support for the RF as the only acceptable position. Students were also involved in propaganda initiatives and information campaigns.



Behind the façade of ideological mobilisation, however, problems with the basic operation of educational institutions persisted. Employees of Melitopol Pedagogical University [had not received](#) salaries for more than two months, while the administration attributed the delays to a 'lack of funding' and dependence on subsidies in the occupied part of the Zaporizhzhia oblast. This undermined public claims by the occupying authorities about the development of education and pointed to problems with governance and funding in the education sector.

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

In the left-bank areas of Kherson oblast, the occupying authorities complied a [so-called register of cultural heritage sites](#) of oblast significance. According to their data, the list included 34 sites, of which 16 were classified as monuments of the 'Great Patriotic War'. Meanwhile, the occupying administration stated that its so-called Department for the Protection of Cultural Heritage had only been established in April 2026 and that, therefore, no funding was available for the recovery or restoration of monuments.

II. FRONTLINE AND DEOCCUPIED AREAS

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

1. Changes in the system of governance

Governance in the frontline and deoccupied areas was shaped primarily by the security situation. In Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Kherson, and Chernihiv oblasts, decisions were increasingly focused on several core tasks: protecting the population, keeping critical infrastructure operational, responding to the consequences of shelling, and preserving access to basic services. As a result, long-term planning often took a back seat to rapid responses to immediate risks.

In some oblasts, however, the authorities were visibly trying not only to respond to the consequences of attacks but also to prepare communities in advance for recurring crises. These efforts included shelter planning, stronger protection against drones, fire safety measures, backup power supply, and preparations to protect critical infrastructure from further strikes. The security situation in Kherson oblast [affected](#) even routine governance decisions: the authorities wrote off property damaged by shelling, transferred equipment to hospitals, and removed machinery from the premises of social institutions to avoid creating additional risks for people.

Staffing shortages and institutional exhaustion posed a separate challenge for the governance system. The most vulnerable communities lacked administrative personnel, some senior positions remained vacant for months, and the work of local administrations increasingly depended on security conditions. Kherson oblast was a clear example: [more than 150 positions](#) remained vacant in the Oblast and City Military Administrations. In Sloviansk, Donetsk oblast, in-person reception of citizens [was suspended](#) and communication moved online. In Mykolaiv community, the military administration staff were no longer permanently based on site but travelled to the community depending on the security situation.

In frontline conditions, military administrations remained the main centres of decision-making, while the role of local councils and elected representatives continued to decline. On the one hand, this enabled faster responses to security threats in wartime; on the other, it created challenges for trust, transparency, and ensuring that the interests of different population groups were reflected in decision-making.

1.1. Decisions of authorities that affected cohesion

During a meeting of the [Congress of Local and Regional Authorities](#) in Zakarpattia, held with the participation of the President of Ukraine, particular attention was paid to the life of frontline and occupied communities, their support, and their further integration into the national agenda.

The awarding of the honorary title [‘Hero City of Ukraine’](#) to 16 cities marked an important symbolic step. Among those recognised were Druzhkivka, Kostiantynivka, Kramatorsk, Pokrovsk, and Sloviansk in Donetsk oblast. These cities had long served as a frontline stronghold and rear area for Ukrainian defenders and were now facing increasingly intense attacks and destruction. In Zaporizhzhia oblast, the title was awarded to Huliaipole, around which heavy fighting continued, and Orikhiv, which had been under constant strikes since

the first days of the full-scale invasion. In Kharkiv oblast, Kupiansk was recognised; it remained in an area of active hostilities and constant shelling. In Dnipropetrovsk oblast, Marhanets, Nikopol, and Pavlohrad received the title. Despite regular attacks, the cities continued to function, reflecting the organisation and resilience of their residents.

Such decisions helped keep frontline areas visible in the national space and strengthened the link between the state and the communities most affected by the war.

>> PRISONER SWAPS

Following several rounds of prisoner swaps with the RF, Ukrainian defenders and civilians returned home.

[On 5–6 March](#), a large-scale 500-for-500 swap took place in two stages: 200 people from each side were swapped, followed by another 300 from each side.

[On 11 April](#), an Easter swap took place, bringing 182 people back to Ukraine, including 175 service members and seven civilians.

[On 24 April](#), the 73rd stage of swaps took place, involving 193 Ukrainian defenders, including border guards, national guardsmen, and AFU members.

Prisoner swaps had important humanitarian and social significance for frontline communities. For military families, they confirmed that the government continued to fight for the return of its people; for communities, they were a source of hope and moral support. Each return home strengthened trust in the government and supported cohesion around a shared expectation: the return of those still in captivity.

>> BASIC SERVICES

Basic services in the frontline areas generally remained manageable but operated under the constant risk of damage, emergency outages, and increasing pressure on public utility services. Communities located close to the front line or in areas of regular shelling remained the most vulnerable, with access to electricity, gas, water, and heat increasingly dependent on the security situation.

In Donetsk oblast, the [shutdown of Sloviansk TPP](#), located in the city of Mykolaivka, effectively meant the loss of the oblast's last major power generation facility. At the same time, some plant personnel continued to maintain facilities essential for basic services in Mykolaivka and for the oblast's power supply. The most acute problems remained with water supply in Kramatorsk and Sloviansk because of the [damage](#) to the Siverskyi Donets–Donbas canal system. In some communities, including [Mykolaivka](#) and Druzhkivka, access to basic public utility services was gradually shrinking.

The oblasts were also preparing for the next heating season through the development of backup and distributed power generation. In the frontline areas, [cogeneration units](#), block-modular boiler houses, and generators for critical infrastructure facilities were planned or already being installed. This marked a gradual shift from emergency response towards building backup capacity intended to provide heat and water and keep health care and essential services operating in the event of renewed attacks.

At the national level, these preparations [were being implemented](#) through comprehensive resilience plans for oblasts and cities. The plans drew on the experience of the winter of 2025–2026 and focused on four areas: protecting critical infrastructure, developing distributed power generation, ensuring backup and alternative power supply, and decentralising heat supply. Meanwhile, the government was trying to adapt financing mechanisms to the capacities of frontline communities. It [simplified](#) the co-financing requirements for projects under the resilience plans: the local co-financing share was reduced to 15% for Dnipropetrovsk oblast and to 10% for Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Kherson, and Chernihiv oblasts. This was intended to speed up the implementation of projects related to the protection of critical infrastructure, backup power supply, and preparations for the heating season given the limited local resources available.

Overall, basic services in the frontline areas showed a capacity to adapt, but the situation varied significantly between communities. In relatively remote communities, the provision of essential services was largely maintained. In population centres closest to the front line, however, public utility services were increasingly fragmented, and preparations for winter depended not only on available resources but also on whether repair works and equipment installation could be carried out safely.

>> EVACUATION

In March–April 2026, evacuation from the frontline areas intensified as the security situation deteriorated, shelling increased, and the line of combat contact moved closer to some communities. At the same time, the evacuation effort remained uneven: some people left on their own, while others did so through evacuation hubs, the police, humanitarian missions, and specialised units such as the White Angels. In many cases, the decision to leave was not taken preventively, but only after homes had been directly hit or people had lost access to electricity, water, gas, or communications.

Evacuation remained most intensive in Donetsk oblast. In March, more than 10,000 civilians left the oblast, followed by around 3,500 more in the first half of April. As of mid-April, approximately 170,000 civilians [remained](#) in the Ukrainian government-controlled part of the oblast, including more than 22,000 in communities classified as areas of active hostilities. Particular attention was paid to the evacuation of children – dozens of children remained in dangerous population centres, including Sloviansk, Mykolaivka, Druzhkivka, Sviatohirsk, and Raihorodok.

Evacuation also intensified in Zaporizhzhia oblast because of increased shelling of frontline communities. According to Zaporizhzhia OMA, 331 people [had been evacuated](#) from the oblast's frontline areas since early March, including 140 women and 28 children. Evacuees were taken to a transit hub in Zaporizhzhia, where they received assistance with temporary accommodation or onward travel to safer oblasts. Meanwhile, the authorities emphasised that the evacuation of families with children could so far be organised without compulsory measures. On 10 February, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [adopted](#) a law regulating the procedure for mandatory evacuation of the population from areas of active hostilities, including the possibility of the forced evacuation of children.

In Kherson and Kharkiv oblasts, the lists of population centres subject to the mandatory or forced evacuation of families with children were also expanded. In Kherson oblast, the villages of Rozlyv and Tomyna Balka [were added](#) to these areas, and a ban was imposed on entry by families with children because of the threat to their lives. In Kharkiv oblast, more than 120 children and their families [were to be](#) evacuated from population centres in Shevchenkove and Velykyi Burluk communities.

In Chernihiv oblast, mandatory evacuation from 14 border villages in Novhorod-Siverskyi, Semenivka, Snovsk, and Horodnia communities, which were under daily shelling, [had been announced](#) back in late December 2025. Despite the danger, around 300 civilians remained there. Assembly points, special routes, transport, and temporary accommodation facilities were designated for the evacuation; and the evacuation process was scheduled to be completed within 30 days. The work with residents of border communities continued within the monitoring period.

In Dnipropetrovsk oblast, evacuation was mostly targeted and was carried out from frontline communities in Synelnykove and [Nikopol](#) raions. The main risks remained people's late decisions to leave, the danger of evacuation journeys because of FPV drone attacks, and pressure on transit centres and temporary accommodation facilities. Although the oblast [had already received](#) more than 470,000 IDPs, long-term housing remained a key problem.

>> HOUSING RECOVERY

Housing recovery for damaged and destroyed homes was one of the key areas of support for people in frontline and deoccupied areas. The main compensation mechanism was the state [eRecovery programme](#), although communities also introduced additional forms of local assistance. Specifically, Chernihiv residents whose homes had been damaged or destroyed as a result of Russian attacks were eligible for [one-time payments](#). However, these local payments were supplementary and did not cover the full cost of housing recovery.

Kharkiv oblast recorded one of the highest levels of damage and compensation. Since the outbreak of the full-scale invasion, almost [102,000 real estate properties](#) had been damaged or destroyed in the oblast. Under the eRecovery programme, residents submitted more than 68,700 applications for financial assistance for repairs; more than 45,500 people had already received compensation totalling over UAH 4.5 billion. Also, more than 10,000 housing certificates [had been issued](#) for destroyed property, and applicants had already purchased almost 5,700 homes.

Inspection of damaged housing in populated areas that commissions could not safely access remained a separate problem for frontline communities. Specifically, in Beryslav community, Kherson oblast, 19 housing certificates worth a total of more than UAH 43 million [were approved](#) for families who had lost their homes as a result of Russian aggression. However, because of ongoing shelling, specialists switched to remote inspections, making it possible to process another 27 addresses in hard-to-reach areas. Remote inspections helped keep the compensation process moving in communities exposed to ongoing shelling but did not resolve all problems: some applicants continued to face refusals because of the technical condition of buildings or errors in documents.

Digital tools were also playing a growing role in recording damage and in communication between residents and the authorities. Following shelling attacks, Dnipro residents began using [eDnipro](#) more actively to report housing damage, submit compensation applications, and receive information about next steps. The app made it possible to record the consequences of shelling, describe the damage, and forward the data to the relevant services.

>> TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY OF FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES

Transport connectivity in frontline communities was increasingly dependent on the security situation. In communities located closer to the front line, or on routes regularly threatened by shelling and drone attacks, public transport services were reduced or rerouted. This made it harder for residents to reach workplaces and health care facilities and to access administrative and social services, increasing their dependence on private transport or humanitarian logistics.

These restrictions were most visible in Donetsk oblast. In Sloviansk, bus services to the settlement of Semenivka [were suspended](#) from 20 April; Khimik microdistrict became the final stop on this route, and the suspension of bus services to Skhidnyi microdistrict was announced with effect from 1 May. Both microdistricts are located near Bakhmut–Izium highway, which remained under constant threat of drone attacks.

In Zaporizhzhia oblast, rail connectivity was generally maintained but remained dependent on the security situation. In March, trains to and from Zaporizhzhia mostly [ran](#) according to schedule. In April, however, Ukrzaliznytsia [changed](#) the suburban train timetable: some suburban services on the Zaporizhzhia–Dnipro and Zaporizhzhia–Synelnykove routes were cancelled or rerouted.

In Dnipropetrovsk oblast, the transport situation remained more stable, although frontline and transit routes were still exposed to safety risks. In March, damage to transport infrastructure was recorded in Apostolove and Kryvyi Rih. In April, several suburban bus routes in Nikopol [were rerouted](#) because of the security situation.

>> INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

International support continued to be an important resource for frontline and deoccupied communities, although its form depended on the security situation and the needs of specific areas. In more stable communities, it was increasingly geared towards recovery, infrastructure modernisation, digitalisation, and strengthening governance capacity. In communities closer to the front line, however, international assistance mainly served a stabilising function: supporting hospitals and mobile clinics, repairing water networks, distributing humanitarian aid, providing legal counselling, and making targeted payments.

Projects aimed at strengthening community resilience were particularly illustrative. Denmark financed infrastructure projects in [Mykolaiv oblast](#), including the modernisation of a maternity hospital, the construction of a shelter, and the renovation of buildings in Pervomaisk community.

In [Chernihiv oblast](#), a digital competence centre was opened with support from the Swiss–Ukrainian EGAP Program. The initiative was intended to help communities assess digital literacy needs, develop digital transformation programmes, and train local self-government representatives to work with digital services. For a border oblast, this was important for keeping communities operational despite security risks.

In [Kharkiv oblast](#), Polish partners provided Rohan community with equipment for setting up mini boiler houses, strengthening its preparedness for possible interruptions in heat supply.

Inter-municipal cooperation was a separate area of work. [Pavlohrad](#), Dnipropetrovsk oblast, signed a cooperation agreement with the Norwegian municipality of Lier, facilitated by the Association of Ukrainian Cities and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities. Such partnerships expanded communities' expertise, access to resources, and international contacts, partly offsetting resource shortages caused by the war.

The involvement of communities in recovery processes was another area of international support. UNDP, in partnership with the EU and Denmark, [announced a grant programme](#) to develop regional networks of working groups on community engagement in recovery processes in Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Kherson, and Chernihiv oblasts. The initiative was intended to strengthen the interaction between the authorities, civil society organisations, and residents in recovery planning and the implementation of local projects.

Former UK Prime Minister [Boris Johnson's](#) April visit to units of the 65th Separate Mechanized Brigade of the Ukrainian Armed Forces on the Zaporizhzhia axis was a visible sign of continued international support for Ukraine. He visited frontline villages, including Komyshuvakha, spoke with Ukrainian service members, and saw first-hand the conditions in which they were carrying out combat tasks. For service members and communities, such visits were important because they showed that international attention to areas directly holding the defence line had not faded.

>> INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION

Interregional cooperation remained a practical way to support frontline and border communities. It helped provide financial and material assistance while also maintaining ties between communities living under very different security conditions.

The [Shoulder to Shoulder: Cohesive Communities](#) initiative was under way. It involved cooperation between rear communities and frontline and border communities under constant shelling. As part of the initiative, representatives of Rivne and Kyiv oblasts visited [Chernihiv oblast](#). Overall, 47 communities in Chernihiv oblast took part in the project and had already received more than UAH 9 million from partners. The funding was used to purchase modular shelters, materials for emergency repairs after shelling, equipment for housing IDPs, generators, vehicles, and construction materials. Some oblasts also invited children from border communities in Chernihiv oblast for recreation, health improvement, and sports activities.

Another aspect of interregional cooperation was the transfer of resources between communities based on current needs and the security situation. Kharkiv [leased](#) 16 trolleybuses from Kramatorsk. For Kharkiv, this helped strengthen public transport after losses caused by Russian strikes. For Kramatorsk, it allowed part of the rolling stock to be moved out of the city, where electric transport had become dangerous or impossible to operate. Nine of the trolleybuses had autonomous operation and could run during power outages. The later strike on Kramatorsk trolleybus depot showed that the relocation mattered not only operationally, but also from a safety perspective.

>> HIGH-PROFILE CASES

In March–April 2026, public attention in the frontline areas focused on possible misuse of public funds. The most sensitive areas were those directly linked to safety and recovery: shelter construction, defence procurement, infrastructure repairs, health care, and demining. In these conditions, even individual reports of inflated costs, questionable contractors, or poor contract performance quickly undermined trust in governance decisions.

In Kherson, the construction of underground schools came under scrutiny. Inspections had found deviations from the project documentation, including insufficient foundation thickness and a shortage of reinforcement, the MOST online publication [reported](#). The outlet also claimed that payments had been made under some contracts even though the relevant work had not yet been completed. As a result, construction of the shelters was suspended, directly affecting the community's ability to protect residents. The oblast was also mentioned in connection with cases involving [poor-quality](#) road repairs, [questionable](#) health care contracts, [overpriced](#) anti-drone nets, and [fictitious](#) land demining.



In Zaporizhzhia oblast, a high-profile case involved the [head of Kushuhum community](#), suspected of embezzling around UAH 1.5 million in budget funds. In March, a court released him from pre-trial detention on bail of UAH 665,600. In [Zaporizhzhia](#), a former official from one of the security agencies was also served with a notice of suspicion over the purchase of service vehicles that may have involved an overpayment of almost UAH 3 million. Both cases increased scrutiny of how public resources were used at the local level and in the security sector.

In Dnipropetrovsk oblast, possible abuses in defence-related construction became the most sensitive issue. In March, the Prosecutor General [said](#) that corruption schemes had been uncovered during the construction of defensive lines, with five people being served with notices of suspicion and declared losses exceeding UAH 14 million. For a frontline oblast, such reports had a particularly strong effect because they concerned not only the use of funds but also territorial safety and trust in oversight procedures. In [Dnipro](#), court cases involving City Council officials and long-running criminal investigations also drew public attention, raising questions about accountability, the quality of investigations, and reputational damage.

2. Work on identity

2.1. Changes in education standards

Within the monitoring period, the education system in frontline areas continued to adapt to security conditions. The main trends were optimisation of the education network, the development of protected learning spaces, digitalisation, and restoration of damaged institutions.

The most significant changes were recorded in Kherson city community. From 1 September 2026, 71 educational institutions founded by Kherson City Council were expected to [temporarily suspend their educational activities](#). The decision was linked to security risks, the decline in the number of children due to evacuation, and the need to optimise budget spending. Its implications, however, went beyond education: it also meant job losses, weaker local social ties, and the gradual curtailment of part of the city's social infrastructure.

In Donetsk oblast, education policy was increasingly linked to the relocation of institutions. A memorandum between Donetsk and Zakarpattia oblasts, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, and the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development of Ukraine on support for educational institutions relocated from Donetsk oblast [provided for](#) assistance with finding premises for academic buildings, workshops, and dormitories, creating modern practical training centres, and strengthening cooperation between educational institutions, local authorities, and businesses. Particular emphasis was placed on combining learning with practical training at enterprises, retraining, and integrating IDPs into host communities. Specifically, Donbas State Engineering Academy [was expected to be relocated](#) to Khust. Following the relocation, the Academy was expected to have around 1,000 students, with the first intake estimated at about 500 entrants. The focus was to be on technical fields, notably mechanical and electrical engineering and computer science, where the Ukrainian economy was facing significant staff shortages.

In Zaporizhzhia, Kharkiv, and Mykolaiv oblasts, the focus was on combining safety measures with recovery. In Zaporizhzhia, shelters in educational institutions [were being repaired](#), underground [kindergartens](#) were under construction, [school canteens](#) were being modernised, and the oblast was receiving funding to purchase [school buses](#). In Kharkiv oblast, the network of underground schools and protected learning spaces was expanded: underground schools and classes at metro stations were already operating in Kharkiv, the first underground school [was opened](#) in Balakliia community, and a radiation-protection shelter was being fitted out in a [kindergarten](#) in Pischyn. In Mykolaiv oblast, the education system was gradually stabilising: some institutions were operating face-to-face or in a blended format, damaged schools were being [repaired](#), [buses](#) were being purchased, and the Mriia educational app was being launched.

In Chernihiv oblast, six communities [were selected](#) for the second phase of the Swiss–Ukrainian DECIDE project for 2026–2030. The initiative supported specialised upper secondary education reform, career guidance, strategic education planning, infrastructure grants, and local democracy tools for young people.

In Dnipropetrovsk oblast, educational institutions mostly operated face-to-face, without a large-scale shift to distance learning. In the oblast's frontline communities, however, education remained dependent on the security situation. In Nikopol, protected learning spaces were temporarily [suspended](#) from 14 April because of deteriorating security conditions and risks to children. In Dnipro, a missile and drone attack [damaged](#) buildings and dormitories at several universities.

Overall, education remained heavily dependent on security conditions in each community. Where risks were lower, schools were gradually returning to face-to-face or blended learning, upgrading infrastructure, and developing digital services and shelters. In frontline communities, the priority was to preserve access to learning, even if this meant switching to distance learning, reducing the education network, or setting up underground and protected spaces. Across most oblasts, common problems remained, including the safety of children and teachers, staff shortages, unequal access to face-to-face learning, worn-out infrastructure, and children's mental and emotional wellbeing.

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

In frontline communities, the memory of resistance, liberation, and loss continued to be reinterpreted. This process was reflected not only in individual commemorative events, but also in local government decisions, renaming initiatives, the creation of memorial spaces, and cultural initiatives.

In Kherson community, consultations [were initiated](#) on making 5 March and 11 November commemorative dates linked to local resistance to Russian aggression and to the liberation of the city. Such decisions gradually embedded the experience of resistance in the city's identity. A similar logic was applied to street renaming. Following a public consultation in Novoraisk community, Kherson oblast, it [was recommended](#) that Hardyman Street be renamed as Defenders Street.

In Dnipropetrovsk oblast, discussions focused on place names. In Kamianske, a draft decision [was considered](#) to suspend the renaming of streets and other toponymic sites until the end of martial law. The initiative was explained by the need to preserve social cohesion, avoid conflicts over memorialisation, and develop a more coordinated approach to honouring the memory of fallen defenders. The discussion was prompted by a dispute over the renaming of a lane after a fallen service member, which triggered emotional debate on social media.

Meanwhile, communities were creating memorial spaces to honour those killed, captured, or missing. In Kherson oblast, Velyka Oleksandrivka community [opened](#) an Alley of Hope with portraits of 31 soldiers whose families and loved ones were waiting for their return. Such initiatives supported military families while bringing wartime losses into public view.

Mykolaiv Oblast Council [approved](#) a new coat of arms and flag after reviewing three heraldic designs that had undergone expert assessment. Following the discussion, 46 out of 52 communities supported the design featuring Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, who is regarded as the patron saint of sailors and was the Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, now part of Türkiye. The debate around the new symbols showed that decisions of this kind required careful communication during wartime. For many residents, the issue was not only about symbolism but also about what the oblast should represent during the war.



Source: [website of the Mykolaiv Oblast Council](#).

Cultural initiatives also became a way to speak about the experience of war. The [multimedia performance](#), Planet Kherson, Or Draw Me a Dragon, in Ternopil brought the experience of frontline Kherson beyond the oblast. Through the stories of children and adults, documentary material, music, and video, the performance served as a form of testimony about life in the city under shelling.

There was also a clear demand for the personalisation of loss. In Dnipropetrovsk oblast, local media [continued](#) to name fallen service members individually, giving public recognition to each defender's sacrifice.

3. Joint action

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

>> NEEDS OF WAR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Veterans' issues remained one of the key areas of interaction between communities and the authorities. Their importance was growing as the number of war veterans, families of fallen service members, missing persons, and prisoners of war increased. For communities, this had already become a long-term challenge covering rehabilitation, housing, employment, psychological support, family adaptation, and access to services.

Support infrastructure for war veterans was gradually expanding across the oblasts. In Mykolaiv, a psychological and rehabilitation centre for war veterans and their family members [was opened](#) at Pylp Orlyk International Classical University. In Chernihiv oblast, which had more than 69,000 war veterans and relatives of fallen defenders, the authorities [were developing](#) support services, digital services, veterans' spaces, rehabilitation, health care, and sports.

Particular emphasis was placed on veterans' economic adaptation. In Dnipro, a five-day course, New Start, [was held](#) for veteran entrepreneurs, helping participants develop business plans. In Chernihiv oblast, veterans and their family members [received](#) grants to start their own businesses through the employment service: in 2025, 30 applications were approved for a total of UAH 14.2 million, or approximately EUR 275,000, and in 2026, another four applications were approved for UAH 1.7 million, or approximately EUR 32,900. Such programmes provided social support while also helping veterans and their family members regain an active role in their communities.

Housing remained an important part of veteran policy. In 2025, Chernihiv oblast [received](#) UAH 143.6 million, or approximately EUR 2.78 million, in government funding for housing certificates for 57 persons with war-related disabilities in Groups I–II.

Overall, support for war veterans and their families was gradually moving from individual measures towards a broader system of services. At the same time, the scale of needs already exceeded the capacity of many communities. Unless housing, employment, rehabilitation, psychological assistance, and family support were addressed systematically, this could increase social tensions and erode trust in the authorities.

>> SUPPORT FOR ENTREPRENEURS AND ECONOMIC RESILIENCE OF COMMUNITIES

Kharkiv City Council [extended](#) tax benefits for entrepreneurs: businesses were exempt from local taxes and fees until 30 June 2026, and zero rates also applied to land and real estate properties.

Support for business energy independence was another important area of activity. In Zaporizhzhia, the programme for partial reimbursement of the cost of energy-generating equipment [continued](#). Under the programme, entrepreneurs were reimbursed for spending on generators and solar power plants, helping micro, small, and medium-sized businesses operate more reliably during power supply disruptions.

Financial support tools for small and medium-sized businesses were also playing a greater role across the oblasts. In Mykolaiv oblast, a [competition was announced](#) to provide financial support to local entrepreneurs, offering partial compensation of up to UAH 200,000 on a competitive basis. In Chernihiv oblast, under the government's eRobota (eWork) project, entrepreneurs [received](#) 61 grants to start their own businesses, worth UAH 26 million, or approximately EUR 503,000. Five business proposals submitted by veterans were also approved, with funding totalling more than UAH 2 million. Overall, the grants were expected to create 125 jobs.

The Dialogue Between Government and Business platform was also active in the oblasts. In Zaporizhzhia oblast, meetings held under the initiative [focused on](#) compensation for damage caused by hostilities and business support mechanisms during economic recovery. In Mykolaiv oblast, discussions covered government support for the [agricultural sector](#), logistical challenges, [taxation](#), and opportunities to [import electricity](#) to keep businesses operating steadily.

At the same time, community economic resilience faced a number of risks, including property damage, logistical restrictions, power supply disruptions, and the regulatory burden.

>> HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

According to monitoring findings, the humanitarian situation in the frontline areas was shaped by two interconnected processes: the continued destruction of essential services as a result of hostilities, and the active involvement of international, government, municipal, and volunteer assistance. In practice, the humanitarian system operated in a state of continuous crisis response, while gradually developing some elements of communities' long-term resilience.

Frontline communities remained critically dependent on external assistance to maintain the provision of basic services. This was particularly visible in Kherson oblast, where international partners and charitable organisations provided communities with [generators](#), [vehicles](#), as well as [medical](#) and [rescue equipment](#). Communities in the oblast [received](#) petrol generators to support water supply systems; Khersonvodokanal received a [modular laboratory](#) from UNICEF to monitor drinking water quality; and medical and rescue teams received an ambulance, a fire engine, and other vehicles. These examples showed that humanitarian assistance was no longer only meeting immediate needs but was also helping critical infrastructure continue to function at a basic level.

Even with substantial external support, however, access to basic services remained uneven and locally vulnerable. The case of [Oleksandrivka](#), a village in Stanislav community, Kherson oblast, was illustrative: after a medical worker was killed in a drone attack and another left the village, Oleksandrivka was effectively left without medical staff.

Food and cash assistance remained important tools for supporting vulnerable groups, especially IDPs, evacuees, and residents of frontline communities.

Humanitarian logistics in frontline communities was also gradually taking on the features of specialised wartime infrastructure. Assistance was increasingly channelled into evacuation transport, humanitarian

deliveries, autonomous power supply for shelters, hospitals, water utilities, fire and rescue units, and equipment needed to operate under constant danger. This meant that humanitarian policy in these areas was focused primarily not on development, but on maintaining communities' minimum viability under ongoing attacks.

4. Changes in the social structure

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

Support services for vulnerable groups, including persons with reduced mobility, IDPs, women, children, and older people, continued to develop across the oblasts. In Kharkiv oblast, the emergence of specialised services for IDPs with reduced mobility and children affected by the war was particularly illustrative. In Zlatopil community, a supported living centre [was opened](#) for IDPs with reduced mobility who had been displaced from frontline and temporarily occupied areas. The centre was equipped in line with accessibility principles. In parallel, safe learning spaces were created in two lyceums in the community, where children could catch up on learning losses, attend clubs, and get support from a psychologist and a speech therapist. Almost 1,100 children were covered by these services, including those with special educational needs.

In the village of Novomykolaivka, Mykolaiv oblast, the [Porada Support Centre for Women and Children](#) provided psychological and social support, as well as information assistance. More than 60 families had already received assistance and Porada's team also worked in five other villages in the community. This indicated that social services were gradually expanding beyond oblast centres and becoming more accessible to residents of smaller communities.

In Kherson, particular attention was paid to helping older people adapt to digital services. Libraries in Kherson oblast hosted a media literacy [course](#) for older people, organised together with the Territorial Centre of Korabelnyi District Council. Over 10 sessions, participants learned how to use smartphones, websites, apps, online services, and electronic payments. Such initiatives helped improve digital skills, reduce social isolation, and maintain access to services during the war.

Access to such services, however, remained uneven. In remote communities and frontline population centres, access was constrained by security risks, transport restrictions, staff shortages, limited accessibility, and the dependence of some initiatives on international or donor support. The key challenge, therefore, was not only to create individual services, but also to ensure their sustainability and accessibility for those who needed support most.

4.2. Needs of displaced persons. Response

In March–April 2026, IDPs remained one of the key groups requiring humanitarian and social support in the oblasts. Frontline and transit oblasts, notably Zaporizhzhia and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts, faced especially heavy pressure because of large numbers of IDPs, limited housing resources, and increased demand for social services. As displacement became more protracted, the response also began to shift. It was no longer limited to emergency assistance, but increasingly focused on integrating IDPs into communities and ensuring their access to employment, education, social services, and local initiatives.

The main support tools included cash assistance, humanitarian services, resilience centres, and specialised spaces for IDPs. In Mykolaiv, IDPs from Kherson, Donetsk, and Luhansk oblasts [could apply](#) for one-time assistance through Caritas Mykolaiv UGCC, while UNHCR [began](#) registering applicants for multipurpose cash assistance. At the national level, the Cabinet of Ministers [extended](#) living assistance for certain categories of IDPs for another six months. The extension strengthened support for displaced children and allowed payments for IDPs unable to work to be reviewed following an increase in the subsistence minimum.

An additional element of state support [was](#) a one-time cash payment of UAH 1,500 for certain categories of citizens, including recipients of IDP living assistance, low-income families, persons with disabilities, families with children, and other vulnerable groups. The automatic payment mechanism reduced the administrative burden on recipients. However, such tools remained largely compensatory and did not address IDPs' long-term needs.

Despite the expansion of support tools, the key problems remained systemic. Housing was the most pressing of these. Chernihiv oblast [was to receive](#) more than UAH 14.5 million in subvention funding to develop housing stock for evacuees and IDPs. In Dnipropetrovsk oblast, where more than 470,000 IDPs [were registered](#), 134 temporary accommodation facilities were operating, but the existing capacity was insufficient to meet IDPs' long-term housing needs.

Difficulties with IDP employment also persisted. [According to](#) the State Employment Service of Ukraine, 43,600 IDPs sought support from the SESU in the first quarter of 2026, confirming continued high demand for job-search assistance. At the same time, employer incentives were used only to a limited extent: in 2026, compensation for labour costs related to the employment of IDPs covered 308 people, compared to 3,400 people covered since 2022.

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

Mobilisation remained one of the most sensitive issues across the oblasts, as it combined security needs, administrative pressure, and risks to public trust. On 19 March, Kherson Oblast Defence Council [emphasised](#) the need to step up efforts to locate and bring in citizens evading military duty, and to ensure that mobilisation targets were met. Along with that, within the previous monitoring period, Kherson oblast [recorded](#) the lowest number of conflicts between citizens and TRSCCs.

Trust in military medical commission procedures was another sensitive issue. Kherson Oblast Defence Council stressed the need to strengthen oversight of military medical examinations at every stage, from referral to completion of medical assessments. The issue [was illustrated](#) by a case involving a military medical commission head at a hospital in the Korabelnyi district. The court found her guilty of accepting an undue benefit for manipulating documents certifying temporary unfitness for military service.

Reservation procedures created similar risks for public perceptions of mobilisation. In Dnipro, the Oblast Prosecutor's Office [reported](#) that a district council deputy had been served with a notice of suspicion over an alleged scheme involving fictitious employment at a critical infrastructure enterprise to secure exemption from mobilisation. Such cases were seen not only as corruption incidents but also as violations of fairness, which could undermine trust in local authorities, TRSCCs, MMCs, and reservation procedures.

III. RELATIVELY REAR AREAS CONTROLLED BY THE UKRAINIAN GOVERNMENT

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

1. Changes in the system of governance

In Odesa oblast, governance changes were primarily linked to the growing role of Odesa City Military Administration. The oblast saw not only the use of military administrations as a crisis-management tool, but also the risk that local self-government would gradually be pushed out of actual decision-making. For resilience, this had a dual effect. On the one hand, the vertical chain of command could enable rapid action in critical situations. On the other, without tangible results for residents, it did not strengthen trust but instead widened the gap between the authorities and the community.

A conflict surrounding the dismissal of Mykhailo Lazarenko, Head of Podilsk Raion Military Administration, illustrated an acute political and legal confrontation between the oblast and raion levels of government in Odesa oblast. Following a vote of no confidence by Podilsk Raion Council, the President of Ukraine [accepted](#) Lazarenko's resignation. Lazarenko alleged [political pressure](#), the [forgery](#) of his resignation letter, and interference in the activities of the executive authorities. As a result, the local conflict around the Military Administration Head turned into a presidential personnel decision. This strengthened the perception that local governance depended on the vertical chain of command rather than on transparent procedures and public debate.

1.1. Decisions of authorities that affected cohesion

>> CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY RESILIENCE

In frontline and rear areas, preparations for the next heating season [were under way](#) as part of comprehensive resilience plans for oblasts and cities, developed with the experience of the winter of 2025–2026 taken into account. In rear areas, notably Vinnytsia and Lviv oblasts, these plans focused more on energy efficiency, backup power supply, cogeneration, and autonomous water supply.

For Odesa oblast, energy resilience and the protection of critical infrastructure remained among the key issues, given the vulnerability of port infrastructure and regular attacks on energy facilities. In March, the government [allocated](#) UAH 582.3 million, or approximately EUR 11.29 million, from the reserve fund to the oblast for the protection of critical infrastructure ahead of the next heating season. The priorities identified were the protection of energy facilities, the development of distributed generation, backup power supply for heating and water supply systems, and the decentralisation of heat supply.

Zakarpattia was among the oblasts actively developing decentralised energy generation. At oblast and community levels, projects [were in place](#) to develop distributed generation, backup power supply, and renewable energy sources, which were seen as one of the key elements of the oblast's energy resilience. Meanwhile, some environmental organisations [warned](#) that environmental restrictions could be weakened under the guise of energy projects.

Chernivtsi oblast showed a different type of problem: a combination of worn-out networks and targeted modernisation. In Chernivtsi, large-scale water supply outages, network failures, and [numerous ruptures](#) in heating networks during hydraulic testing [were recorded](#). At the same time, the city was introducing specific solutions to improve energy efficiency, including a [solar power plant](#) for the water utility company.

The main risk remained the gap between approved plans, available funding, and the actual completion of works prior to the start of the heating season.

>> INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

International cooperation increasingly shifted from humanitarian assistance towards long-term partnerships linked to recovery, energy resilience, logistics, culture, and community development. Along with that, the humanitarian component was maintained, particularly in health care, education, transport, and public utility infrastructure.

For Odesa oblast, international cooperation had a clear logistical focus. The Port of Odesa signed a [memorandum of cooperation](#) with the Port of Rotterdam. The agreement provided for experience sharing, the digitalisation of port processes, the use of up-to-date logistical solutions, and support for the recovery of port infrastructure. For the oblast, this was important not only as an international partnership, but also as a step towards preserving Odesa's role in global logistics.

For Chernivtsi oblast, the cross-border dimension remained key. The oblast developed cooperation with Romania and Moldova, notably on energy, border crossing points, infrastructure, education, culture, and partnerships between communities. An important infrastructure priority was the construction of new power transmission lines between Ukraine and Romania, which was expected to strengthen electricity import capacity. In parallel, communities in Bukovyna received technical and humanitarian assistance from European partners, ranging from equipment for public utility companies to support for heating systems.

Vinnitsia expanded its network of municipal partnerships. The city signed an agreement with the Swedish city of [Helsingborg](#) and a declaration of intent with the US city of [Boulder](#), Colorado. Vinnitsia continued to receive assistance from its partner city of [Münster](#), including medical equipment and school furniture. The city used international platforms to promote its own experience of adapting to wartime conditions and to seek partners for recovery. At the Rebirth of Ukraine forum in Madrid, Mayor Serhii Morhunov [presented](#) the community's approaches to developing alternative generation, strengthening energy autonomy, digitalising city services, and modernising transport and the health care sector. Such events became not only platforms for experience sharing, but also tools for attracting international contacts and potential partnerships for the implementation of local initiatives.

Lviv oblast remained a platform for international cooperation in urban resilience and culture. [Riga](#) joined the UNBROKEN Cities Network, established for experience sharing between cities in crisis management. Furthermore, Lviv [hosted](#) the international conference 'Cooperation for Resilience', which brought together representatives of governments, UNESCO, and international institutions and helped secure additional support for Ukrainian culture and the protection of cultural heritage.

>> INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION

In March and April, interregional cooperation developed in two areas: through economic initiatives between neighbouring oblasts and through support for communities located closer to the front line.

One example was the [Carpathian Regional Economic Development Zone](#), involving Lviv, Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Chernivtsi oblasts. The initiative focused on areas of practical relevance to communities: energy, water supply and wastewater services, waste management, development of the industrial base, and staff training. In this way, community resources were pooled around joint infrastructure and economic projects that would have been difficult for individual communities to implement on their own.

In parallel, rear communities supported frontline ones. Hlyboka community, Chernivtsi oblast, [signed](#) memoranda with Liashkivka community, Dnipropetrovsk oblast, and Aidar community, Luhansk oblast, as part of the Shoulder to Shoulder: Cohesive Communities initiative.

>> OPERATION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

In March, the situation with public transport in Lviv oblast worsened following a sharp hike in fuel prices. Carriers raised fares on suburban and intercity routes by around 10–15%, citing higher fuel prices and rising labour costs. In Lviv, private carriers also warned that some bus routes could be reduced if the city authorities did not address the financial burden on carriers.

In response, the city authorities suspended free transfers on public transport for one month, which was intended to give carriers additional resources to purchase fuel. Separately, Lviv began regulating concessionary travel for residents of other communities: territorial communities that had not concluded agreements on compensation for such journeys lost access to concessions for their residents. [Exceptions](#) were made for veterans, persons with war-related disabilities, family members of fallen soldiers, and children from other communities studying in Lviv. This reduced social tensions around these decisions, which affected around 10,000 people overall.

>> IMPOSITION OF LABOUR DUTY

A separate administrative decision in Odesa [imposed](#) labour duty and provided for the involvement of able-bodied persons in socially useful work by order of the City Military Administration. The document provided for involving people in work required under wartime conditions, primarily work of a defensive nature and work to support the life of the city.

This decision had a sensitive social dimension. On the one hand, it could strengthen the city's capacity to respond to the consequences of attacks and maintain critical functions. On the other hand, without a clear explanation of the procedures, guarantees, and limits of its application, labour duty could be perceived as an additional coercive mechanism. Communication and implementation practice would therefore determine whether the decision was perceived as an element of resilience or as a new source of tension.

>> PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

In Lviv, the issue of protecting cultural heritage came to the fore after the Russian drone attack of 24 March, which damaged the Bernardine Monastery Complex on Soborna Square. Stained-glass windows in the church, windows in the archive building, the bell tower, and a residential building were damaged. Some residents had to be relocated.

A visit by UNESCO representatives to Lviv [showed](#) that the damage to the Bernardine Monastery Complex was not treated as a local incident, but as part of the broader problem of preserving cultural heritage during the war. According to UNESCO, more than 500 cultural heritage sites in Ukraine had been damaged since the outbreak of the full-scale invasion.



The Bernardine Monastery building in Lviv hit by a drone
Source: [Ukrainska Pravda](#).

The situation with [Khotyn Fortress](#) in Chernivtsi oblast, where part of a wall collapsed in April, also attracted particular attention. The incident prompted discussion of the causes, ranging from natural factors to the [possible effects of shelling](#), and again raised the issue of sustainable funding and the quality of restoration work on monuments. Importantly, the fortress walls [had already been repaired](#) in 2023 using funding from the Great Restoration programme and the reserve's own resources. The latest collapse therefore again raised the issue of long-term care for cultural heritage sites, rather than one-off repairs alone.



Collapse of part of the wall of Khotyn Fortress
Source: [BukInfo](#).

>> **ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS**

In March, [contamination](#) of the Dniester following a Russian strike on Novodnistrovsk HPP emerged as a distinct environmental risk. Oil products entered the river, causing concern about the state of water resources in both Ukraine and Moldova. At the same time, according to the State Environmental Inspectorate in Vinnytsia oblast, no oil-product slicks were detected near Mohyliv-Podilskyi and Yampil, and the concentration of oil products remained within permitted limits. The consequences were localised. The situation demonstrated the vulnerability of aquatic ecosystems to attacks on energy infrastructure and the need for continuous environmental monitoring of transboundary rivers.

2. Work on identity

2.1. Changes in education standards

In April, practical challenges in implementing the reform of specialised upper secondary education [were discussed](#) in Lviv oblast with the participation of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the Office of the President of Ukraine, Lviv OMA, and communities. The main problems identified included organising student transport, providing lyceums with shelters, equipping laboratories, and ensuring adequate staffing. According to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 91% of Ukrainian communities had already formed a network of academic lyceums; however, in mountain, rural, and frontline areas, the reform required additional infrastructure solutions.

In Zakarpattia, particular attention [was paid](#) to the problem of learning losses accumulated over the years of the pandemic and the war. In April, an oblast-level strategy to overcome these losses was presented in Uzhhorod. It provided for expanding free preparation courses for the National Multi-Subject Test, additional consultations for graduates in communities, and methodological support for teachers. Special emphasis was placed on preparation for the 2026 National Multi-Subject Test, in which a record number of graduates for the oblast could take part.

Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University and Bukovinian State Medical University [were selected as winners](#) of the UK–UA Visiting Professors Programme, which will help involve professors from leading UK universities in teaching.

In Zakarpattia, the two largest higher education institutions [were merged](#) into one, Uzhhorod University, expected to become the sixth-largest university in the country by student numbers. Supporters of the merger explained it by the need to strengthen the staffing, research, and financial capacity of higher education in the oblast, while some lecturers and students voiced concern that individual institutions could lose their identity and status.

Overall, within the monitoring period, the focus was on the reform of specialised upper secondary education, renewal of education infrastructure, development of research, and adaptation of the network of institutions to demographic change. At the same time, staff shortages, the declining number of students, the need to modernise the material base, and the transparent use of resources remained key challenges.

2.2. Language policy

Language policy in Odesa oblast was one of the most sensitive social issues. At the same time, attention gradually shifted from symbolic debates to the practical application of language legislation in education, culture, and public space.

A telling example was Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy urban community's [decision](#) to impose a moratorium on the use of Russian-language cultural products. This was the first step of its kind in the oblast and demonstrated the intention of some communities to pursue the further Ukrainization of public space and cultural policy.

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

In Lviv oblast, the institutionalisation of the politics of memory continued. The oblast military administration discussed [updating](#) the list of commemorative dates and anniversaries, installing information plaques, and approaches to commemorating events of the Russian-Ukrainian war. In parallel, the Mariupol Ukrainian Identity exhibition dedicated to preserving the memory of the occupied city [was opened](#) in Lviv, and [work began](#) to restore Roman Shukhevych Museum, which had been destroyed by a Russian strike in 2024.

Commemoration of the victims of Russian aggression was a prominent element of the memorial landscape. Commemorative events marking the anniversary of the bombing of Mariupol Drama Theatre were held in [Lviv](#) and [Odesa](#). They indicated the gradual formation of a shared nationwide calendar of remembrance linked to the events of the full-scale war.

At the same time, the memorialisation of fallen soldiers in Odesa became the subject of a [public conflict](#) between the families of the fallen and the city authorities. Disputes concerned both the proposed design of the memorial and the format of public consultations. For some families, this became an example of insufficient community involvement in decision-making on commemorating the fallen.

2.4. Freedom of religion

In Vinnytsia oblast, mass public religious events outside places of worship [were banned](#) from 4 April to 1 December 2026. The decision was adopted at the level of the oblast Council of Churches and Religious Organisations. Its logic was primarily security-related, but it also narrowed the visibility of religious communities across the oblast.

In Chernivtsi oblast, a legal dispute between the UOC and the OCU over the Holy Spirit Cathedral [remained unresolved](#). Despite court rulings in favour of the OCU, appeals were still under way, and the case remained one of the most sensitive religious issues in the oblast because of the significant attention of believers and the risk of further inter-confessional tensions.

Another high-profile incident was an [arson attack](#) on the Sadhora Synagogue in Chernivtsi in November 2025. In late May 2026, the court found a man guilty of setting the synagogue premises on fire, damaging religious books and elements of the interior.

Notably, during his visit to Chernivtsi oblast, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities took an interest, among other issues, in the religious situation, particularly the right of members of the Romanian community to worship in their mother tongue and relations between the UOC and the OCU. This indicated that the religious dimension in the oblast remained part of the broader issue of interethnic, linguistic, and social sensitivity.

3. Joint action

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

>> AID FOR THE AFU

Support for the Defence Forces of Ukraine remained a key priority for the authorities and local self-government bodies. In April 2026, aid included both direct budget funding for military units and the transfer of equipment, vehicles, drones, EW systems, and other items with the involvement of communities, businesses, volunteers, and international partners.

According to the [CHESNO Movement](#), Vinnytsia ranked first among oblast centres by the share of city budget expenditure allocated to defence needs, at 17.6% of total expenditure. The [oblast](#) and [city](#) authorities continued to channel resources towards providing the military with vehicles, drones, and specialised equipment.

As part of the Pomsta Leva (Lion's Revenge) initiative, Lviv community [regularly transferred](#) drones, vehicles, communications equipment, and other hardware to the military, while UAH 58 million [was earmarked](#) from the oblast budget in April for the needs of the Security and Defence Forces. International assistance was also mobilised separately. Humanitarian convoys from [Norway](#) and the [United Kingdom](#) arrived in Lviv, delivering dozens of vehicles for the military.

In Chernivtsi oblast, support for the Defence Forces remained one of the standing areas of work of the Oblast Defence Council. In March and April, [decisions were adopted](#) to allocate funding for the purchase of drones, EW systems, anti-drone protection, and other equipment for military units, border guards, and the Security Forces. Special attention was paid to [developing cooperation](#) with unmanned systems units, including the Achilles Brigade.

In Zakarpattia, the transfer of [confiscated property](#) to the military remained one of the areas of support for the Defence Forces. In April, Zakarpattia Customs Office transferred property worth more than UAH 1 million for the needs of border guard units, the National Guard, and a military hospital. Overall, confiscated property worth over UAH 7 million had been transferred for defence needs in the oblast since the beginning of 2026, bringing the total since the onset of the full-scale war to around UAH 128 million.

>> NEEDS OF WAR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

War veterans and their families remained one of the key social priorities in the oblasts under review. The main focus was gradually shifting from one-off assistance towards the formation of a comprehensive support system covering employment, rehabilitation, adaptive sports, veteran entrepreneurship, housing programmes, and support for the families of fallen service members.

Lviv oblast remained one of the most active oblasts in developing veteran infrastructure. In April, programmes for veteran support, veteran entrepreneurship, adaptive sports, and rehabilitation continued to expand. Notable examples included a [residency](#) for the development of veteran businesses, the opening of the Veterans and Adaptive Sports [Centre](#) 'League of the Unconquered', and the further development of the [UNBROKEN](#) ecosystem.

In Zakarpattia, veteran hubs were operating, rehabilitation services were developing, and a system of support for veterans was being strengthened. One of the largest rehabilitation projects was the [creation](#) of the 4.5.0 Recovery Center in Uzhhorod, which was expected to become one of the key centres for veterans' recovery in the oblast.

In Chernivtsi oblast, the emphasis was on the economic reintegration of veterans through grant programmes, support for starting a business, and the development of veteran communities. A notable event was the [Veterans Future Forum](#) in Chernivtsi, which brought together veterans, businesses, and representatives of the authorities around issues of employment and entrepreneurship.

In Vinnytsia oblast, attention focused on the [social adaptation](#) of war veterans and members of their families, the development of support services for military personnel released from captivity, and support for veteran entrepreneurship. A notable trend was the emergence of programmes combining rehabilitation with the acquisition of practical skills and the social integration of veterans. One example in Vinnytsia was the [Pottery in the Dark 2.0](#) project, aimed at veterans who had lost their sight as a result of the war. Its goal was not only psychological recovery but also the creation of conditions for professional self-realisation upon returning to civilian life.



The 'Pottery in the Dark 2.0' project for teaching pottery to blind veterans
Source: [Suspilne](#).

>> SUPPORT FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES

In April, support for small and medium-sized enterprises in the relatively rear areas was linked primarily to [grant programmes](#), [business relocation](#), and the staffing needs of the economy. In Zakarpattia, the focus was shifting towards links between business and vocational education and towards the development of permanent communication mechanisms between entrepreneurs and the authorities. One such tool was the Dialogue Between Government and Business [platform](#), used to discuss staff shortages, vocational training, employee reservation, security issues, and operating conditions for enterprises. Particular attention was paid to involving businesses in the design of education programmes and the development of dual education. At the same time, the low level of engagement by some businesses in such initiatives indicated a degree of continuing inertia and distrust in the possibility of influencing the oblast's economic policy. Additional challenges included graduates leaving the country, weak interest among young people in skilled trades, and the need to update the qualifications of vocational training instructors.

3.2. Cooperation at the societal level. Initiatives. Trust between groups

In March and April, horizontal cohesion in communities was reflected primarily in volunteering, aid for the Defence Forces, support for health care facilities, and rapid self-organisation after shelling. These practices remained an important resource for trust between people, but at the same time increasingly depended on the sustained activity of volunteers and residents' willingness to regularly join fundraising efforts and initiatives.

In Chernivtsi oblast, volunteer networks continued to work on a systematic basis. In March, the volunteer hub of the [Ukrainian People's House](#) produced and delivered camouflage nets and trench candles to the front. The [Medic for Medic](#) initiative was developing a project to support military medics, while charitable foundations and local communities delivered medical cargo, food, and assistance for the military. Public involvement in charity events was also notable: during an Easter fair in Chernivtsi, more than UAH 100,000 [was raised](#) for the needs of the AFU.

At the same time, signs of fatigue from constant fundraising and volunteer workloads were visible in the oblasts. The core group of active volunteers remained in place, but fundraising had slowed down, and the circle of people regularly involved in aid efforts was not expanding. This indicated that volunteering remained a strong resource for cohesion but was already operating under conditions of exhaustion.

In Odesa oblast, horizontal interaction was most visible after Russian attacks. Following [shelling](#), residents, public utility services, rescue workers, and volunteer networks quickly became involved in helping those affected, clearing rubble, advising on compensation, and supporting people whose housing had been damaged. This self-organisation showed the community's capacity to respond quickly to a crisis, but it largely operated as a response to the consequences of attacks and could not replace long-term recovery of housing, infrastructure, and services.

4. Changes in the social structure

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

Barrier-free access and service accessibility remained important for communities receiving veterans, IDPs, persons with disabilities, and military families. Lviv demonstrated a systematic approach: according to the 2025 [Community Barrier-Free Index](#), the city ranked first among 24 large communities in Ukraine. Lviv also shared this experience with other communities. In March, A City for Everyone: Accessibility, Dignity, Respect

residency programme for representatives of 16 communities [was completed](#). Participants studied the city's approaches to accessibility, work with war veterans, social housing, rehabilitation, prosthetics, and inclusive services.

Specifically, therapeutic groups [started operating](#) in Lviv for women whose husbands had gone missing during the war. They were aimed at providing psychological support to women living with uncertainty over the fate of their missing husbands.

In Chernivtsi oblast, the emphasis was on developing social infrastructure in communities. In five communities in Bukovyna, spaces [were set up](#) for the provision of social services and work with children and families. Chernivtsi community also [received](#) specialised vehicles for transporting persons with disabilities under the GIZ-funded Municipal Support for Ukrainian Cities project, with support from the municipality of Mannheim.

Of special note was the strengthening of support for children with special educational needs. In Chernivtsi, the premises of an inclusive resource centre [were repaired](#); speech therapists, psychologists, special education teachers, and rehabilitation specialists work there. Overall, four centres of that kind operated in the community, expanding access for children and parents to special educational and rehabilitation services.

In communities, attention to barrier-free access, inclusion, and psychological support was gradually increasing. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of such measures depended on international assistance, partnership projects, and co-financing. This strengthened the capacity of communities but also showed that local-level resources were often insufficient to fully cover the needs of women, children, war veterans, and persons with disabilities.

4.2. Needs of displaced persons. Response

Within the monitoring period, several forms of assistance for IDPs were in place in the oblasts, including state subventions for housing provision, local support programmes, charitable initiatives, and special temporary or supported accommodation projects.

In Lviv oblast, housing for IDPs remained the main focus of attention. The oblast was expected to receive more than UAH 52 million in [state subvention](#) for the reconstruction, repair, and construction of temporary and supported accommodation facilities for displaced persons. In parallel, the coordination commission continued to [compile a list of properties](#) that could be used for the housing needs of IDPs following repair or repurposing.

In Vinnytsia, the housing voucher mechanism for certain categories of IDPs [remained in place](#). This primarily concerned IDPs from the temporarily occupied areas who were combatants or had war-related disabilities and had no other housing in the Ukrainian government-controlled areas.

In Bukovyna, housing also remained a key issue. A modular settlement for displaced persons [was opened](#) in the village of Chornohuzy, including for military families and persons with disabilities. However, there was still a critical shortage of accommodation places. Two communities in the oblast [were to receive](#) more than UAH 27 million in state subvention for the repair and reconstruction of housing for IDPs.

In Odesa oblast, a positive example was the [provision](#) of nine free apartments to displaced families from Bakhmut, Nova Kakhovka, Popasna, Sievierodonetsk, Berdiansk, and Oleshky. However, this case did not resolve the systemic problem of high rental costs, income instability, and competition for affordable housing, all of which remained long-term risks for IDPs.

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

Mobilisation processes remained among the most sensitive issues in the oblasts. Public criticism focused less on the need for mobilisation as such than on the way it was being carried out: coercion, unlawful detention, corruption schemes, opaque decisions by MMCs, and abuses by individual representatives of TRSSCs.



In Vinnytsia oblast, conflicts between citizens and TRSSC staff prompted public outcry, including an incident in [Khmilnyk](#) and the blocking of a TRSSC vehicle in the village of [Sosonka](#). Such cases pointed to the risk of individual conflicts escalating into public protests.

In Zakarpattia, the situation appeared particularly problematic. People were [reportedly](#) unlawfully detained at Uzhhorod Raion TRSSC; reports also referred to inadequate living conditions, the confiscation of documents and phones, and disregard for the health condition of some detainees. Separate reports concerned [corruption schemes](#) involving [tampering with](#) entries in the Oberih register, the removal of persons liable for military service from wanted lists, and the [extortion](#) of property or money. This contributed to a persistent perception of a crisis of institutional trust in the oblast's mobilisation system.

In Odesa, the most high-profile case was the [detention](#) of a group of staff members of Peresyp TRSSC and a law enforcement officer suspected of extortion, unlawful deprivation of liberty, and the use of violence. Following this, the heads of Odesa Oblast and Peresyp Raion TRSSCs were suspended from duty, and the Ground Forces reported that an internal investigation had been launched. The case was significant because it involved not an isolated conflict but a possible organised scheme within the institution.

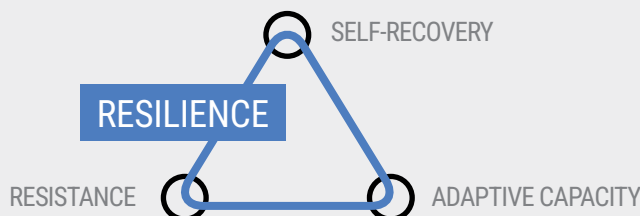
In Lviv oblast, mobilisation-related issues were also accompanied by high-profile incidents. The [fatal stabbing](#) of a TRSSC service member in Lviv on 2 April during notification measures drew the widest public attention. The attacker stabbed the service member in the neck, causing a fatal injury. The incident resonated widely amid earlier conflicts involving TRSSC staff. This case went beyond the usual conflicts between citizens and TRSSC representatives and pointed to the risk of isolated manifestations of public discontent becoming radicalised.

A separate issue concerned [court rulings](#) on divorce and the determination of children's place of residence with their father. In Chernivtsi oblast, such cases increased sharply following changes to mobilisation legislation. Under the new rules, court confirmation that a father was raising a child alone could provide grounds for deferral of mobilisation. According to Chernivtsi Court of Appeal, it received 250 appeals from TRSSCs and military units against local-court rulings in such cases in the first quarter of 2026, with most first-instance rulings overturned. Given the scale of the issue, the situation prompted wider public debate about the possible use of family-law mechanisms to secure deferral of mobilisation.

DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

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

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



We measure resilience in the following three dimensions:

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

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

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

>> **FOCUS:**

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

>> **DATA COLLECTION:**

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

DATA SOURCES: publications in the media, decisions of authorities, draft decisions of authorities, data of surveys and public opinion polls, data of social networking sites, reports of non-governmental organisations, and any other publicised information. The data are collected by coordinators of the National Platform for Resilience and Social Cohesion in 11 oblasts, based on data sources, their own understanding of the state of affairs and involvement in local cohesion processes.

>> PROBLEMS

In the temporarily occupied areas:

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

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

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

>> THE PUBLISHING FREQUENCY OF THE REPORT

The initial monitoring report covers the first four months of the large-scale invasion (from February through June), starting on 24 February 2022; the monitoring reports Nos. 2–9 have a two-month timeframe, while those beginning with Report No. 10 have a three-month timeframe; beginning with Report No. 15, the timeframe returns to two months.



ABOUT UKRAINIAN CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT POLITICAL RESEARCH

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