

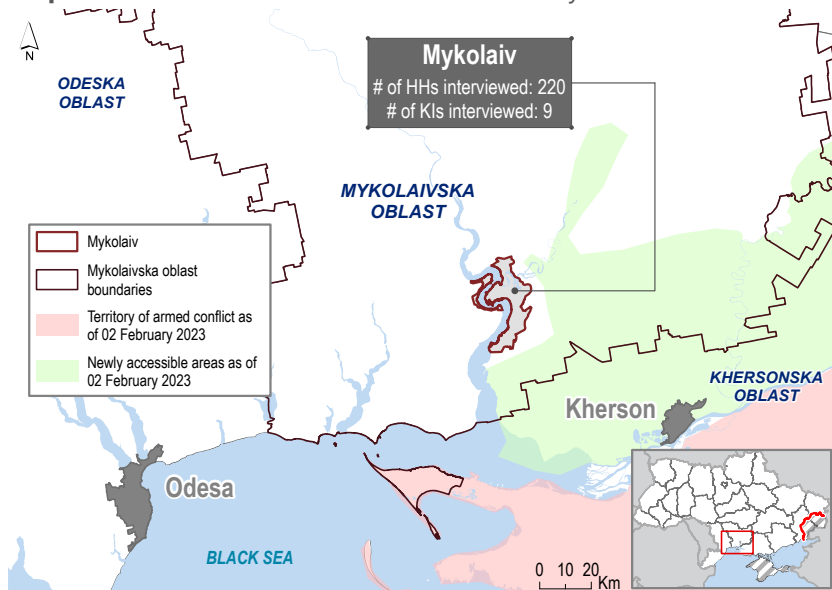
Arrival and Transit Monitoring: Situation Overview in Mykolaiv

February 2023 | Ukraine

CONTEXT & RATIONALE

As Ukraine's ninth largest city and a major urban centre within the south, **Mykolaiv has experienced rapidly changing displacement trends**. Since the Government of Ukraine's regained control of the oblast in November 2022 following the full scale war earlier in the year,¹ the city's location has been a major transit hub for evacuees and final destination for both IDPs and returnees in the area. Yet, Mykolaiv's volatile security situation has been the target of constant, substantial attacks, with city authorities reporting total damages of an estimated EUR 852 million.² Following the Russian withdrawal from areas west of the Dnipro river, waves of attacks on critical infrastructure, causing disruptions to power and water supplies, have impacted displacement in the southern regions of Ukraine.³ To inform the humanitarian response, **REACH conducted round 6 of the Arrival and Transit Monitoring (ATM) assessment, with a situation overview in Mykolaiv**. This overview strives to inform the programmatic and operational response regarding population movement to the settlement, as well as challenges and barriers that households (HHs) face in accessing humanitarian assistance upon arrival and, in the long-term, resettlement.

Map 1. Number of assessed households and key informant interviews in Mykolaiv.



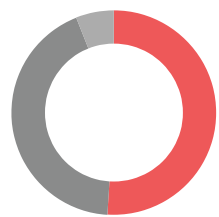
KEY MESSAGES

- **Majority of households interviewed in Mykolaiv arrived from areas in close proximity.** Almost half of all households (48%) interviewed in Mykolaiv were from Khersonska oblast, while other households mostly originated from areas within Mykolaivska oblast (42%).
- **Mykolaiv has been both a hosting area and a transit point in the southern region of Ukraine**, as over half of assessed households (51%) intend to settle, while 43% continued their transit journey. Of those in transit, 29% intend to resettle abroad.
- **While key informants suggested an influx of returnees as the predominant movement type in Mykolaiv, ATM quantitative findings identified only 15% of returnee households among all households arrived in Mykolaiv.** Moreover, most of these returns were considered temporary. Reasons for returning primarily included viewing the condition of their home (68%).
- **The vast majority of the households members arriving and transiting through Mykolaiv were female.** While households with children comprised 30%, less commonly reported were households travelling with a person with a chronic illness (24%) and with an older person (65+ years) (22%).
- **Key informants observed an acute level of needs for displaced households in Mykolaiv. As 34% of assessed households reported not always able to meet their everyday needs**, access to accommodation, food items and medicine were prioritized needs by assessed households.
- Among the main challenges to access humanitarian assistance and services were **finding affordable and suitable accommodation, navigating administrative services, as well as vulnerable groups accessing reliable information regarding humanitarian assistance.**

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

To inform the humanitarian response, REACH provided an indicative overview of the situation in Mykolaiv along side round 6 of REACH's Arrival and Transit Monitoring. During **20 January to 4 February 2023, REACH enumerators interviewed 2,145 recently arrived Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and returnee households**, including **220 interviews conducted in Mykolaiv**. To accompany the assessment, **nine in-depth key informant (KI) interviews** were conducted with volunteers and representatives of non-government and community-based organisations, as well as representatives of transportation services in Mykolaiv. Through the qualitative data, additional information regarding the barriers and challenges for IDP/ returnee HHs, including those travelling with a person(s) with a vulnerability, are also presented.

Figure 1. Types of intended movement, % of households.



Arrivals

IDP arrivals to Mykolaiv:
Current returns to Mykolaiv:

Transit

Movement within Ukraine:
Outbound from Ukraine:

Do not know

HHs	%
112	51%
78	36 p.p.
34	15 p.p.
95	43%
32	14 p.p.
63	29 p.p.
13	6%

Population Movement and Displacement

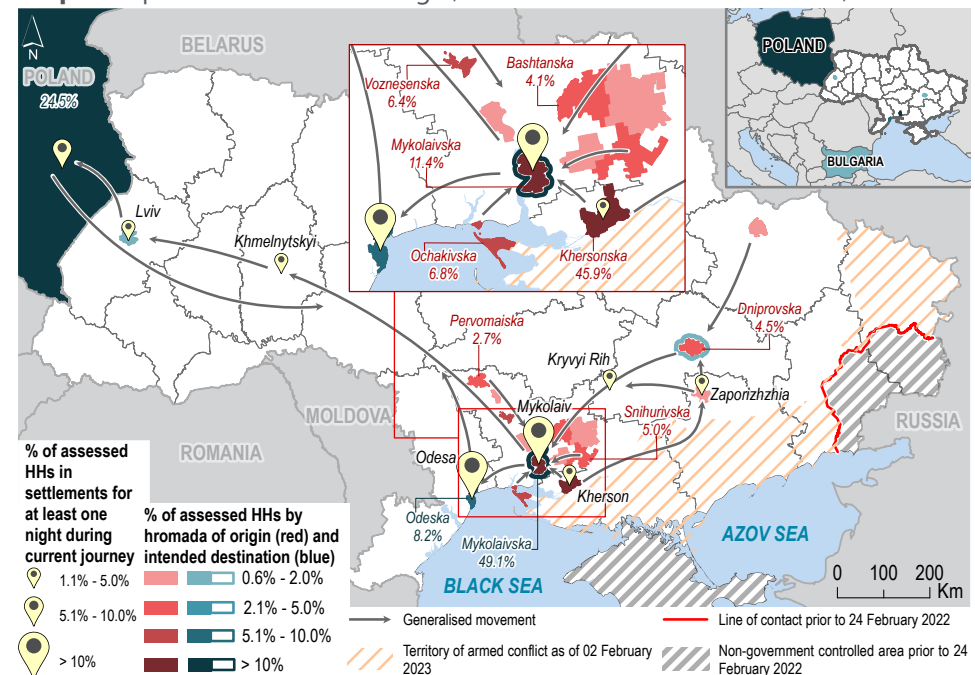
Recent arrivals and transiting displaced households

Figure 1 shows over half of HHs (51%) intended to settle in Mykolaiv. Of those, 15% are currently returning to their area of origin. Though, **due to its close proximity to newly accessible and conflict-affected areas, Mykolaiv has acted as both an area of resettlement and a transit point for displaced HHs**. While a considerable amount of HHs originated from areas within Mykolaivska oblast (42%), almost half of all HHs interviewed in Mykolaiv (48%) were from Khersonska oblast. Following the regained control of Kherson by the Government of Ukraine at the end of the 2022, government officials reported an increase in Mykolaiv residents.⁴ Additionally, the International Organization for Migration's (IOM's) Registered IDP Area Baseline Assessment saw an increase of registered IDP presence in Mykolaivskyi raion since 25 December 2022.⁵ **Displaced households are suggested to have diverse displacement movements prior to arriving in Mykolaiv, with secondary displacement having been experienced.** For example, Map 2 presents movement primarily within southern and eastern Ukraine, with HHs having stayed in settlements for a minimum of one night,

mainly in Mykolaiv and Odesa. Movement from Kherson to areas further east are also observed, as this was a common route out of non-government controlled areas when accessible. Such diverse journeys are conducive to HHs' date of initial displacement. Compared to other settlements, Mykolaiv has a relatively lower percentage of HHs that were initially displaced in 2023, as 56% reported first leaving their place of habitual residence from February to October 2022. ATM findings also show 63% of HHs arriving to Mykolaiv were already registered IDPs, **suggesting a longer duration of displacement and households returning to areas close to their area of origin**. Most common modes of transportation used to travel to Mykolaiv were commercial buses (45%) and volunteer transportation (21%).

ATM findings show Mykolaiv as a primary transit hub for IDPs with various movement intentions. In total, 43% of HHs reported transiting through Mykolaiv. Of those, most reported their intention to move outside of Ukraine (29%), and 51% indicated their intention to settle in neighbouring Odeska oblast. **Conversely, over half of households (51%) indicated that Mykolaiv city was their final destination as findings suggested settlement long-term.** Many intended to stay in Mykolaiv until the war has ceased (50%). Though 22% of HHs settling in Mykolaiv did not know the length of their stay at the time of the interview. Pull factors for HHs to stay was due to Mykolaiv being in close proximity to their area of origin (49%), the presence of family and/ or friends already in this location (26%), and the availability of housing options (20%).

Map 2. Reported hromadas of origin, transit and intended destination, % of households.



Returns to Mykolaiv

Along with government officials reporting an increase in IDPs, a reported influx of returnees in the past month suggests household returns as the predominant movement type in Mykolaiv. ATM findings show that only 15% of assessed HHs were returning to Mykolaiv, though most of these are considered temporary returns. Of those returning, 71% intended to stay for less than one week. Reasons for returning primarily included viewing the condition of their home (68%). Indeed, REACH's Residential Building Damage Assessment estimated 5,809 of residents in Mykolaiv to have been impacted by the intensity of hostilities,⁶ thus leaving uncertainty for households on their decision to return to their area of origin. Despite this, 5 out of 9 KIs categorised the influx of returnees as "high", as all 9 KIs reported returns as the predominant type of movement in the past month since data collection (January 2023). In January 2023, Mykolaiv Oblast Military Administration reported 50,000-70,000 people having returned to the city of Mykolaiv.⁷ Corroborating factors include the perceived safety of Mykolaiv, as reports of a decrease in shelling following the resumption of government control of Kherson. In total, 4 out of 9 KIs cited safety and stability as factors contributing to the increase in returnees. Despite this, the security situation in Mykolaiv is still quite volatile. Mykolaivska oblast has been deemed one of the most contaminated regions of Ukraine, as mines and unexploded ammunition throughout the oblast have been of grave concern.⁸

"Mostly people were leaving Mykolaiv, but now it's the other way around. The safety factor is the most important factor here."

- Volunteer

Image 1. Damage to a residential building following missile strikes in Mykolaiv on 29 June 2022.



Source: Inés Dadda, ACTED Ukraine 2023

Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics

Figure 2. Sex and age distribution of household members.

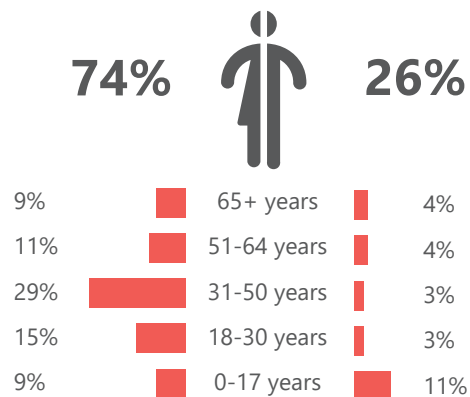


Figure 2 presents females as the majority of the household members arriving and transiting through Mykolaiv. A lower percentage of males, especially around conscription age, is observed when compared to women. While 30% of HHs reported travelling within women and children, smaller proportion of HHs in Mykolaiv were single parents travelling with children (20%). Other vulnerabilities of concern are HHs travelling with a person with a chronic illness (24%) and with an older person (65+ years) (22%).

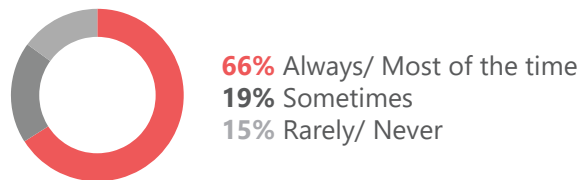
Majority of households interviewed in Mykolaiv primarily relied on forms of assistance as a primary source of income including humanitarian aid (63%) and government social assistance (57%). Though 12% of HHs interviewed in Mykolaiv reported being retired, 32% of HHs reported being unemployed at the time of the interview, but are actively seeking employment opportunities. According to Left Bank Analytics, the employment landscape within Mykolaiv has been relatively favourable towards women seeking employment due to employment opportunities mostly available in female dominated jobs.⁹

Conversely, close to half of households interviewed in Mykolaiv reported receiving a salary from employment as a source of income (45%). Of those employed, many intended to continue their journey and resettle outside of Ukraine (49%). This finding coincides with ATM household findings from all assessed settlements, suggesting those with income from employment have sufficient funds to relocate abroad.

Humanitarian Needs

Despite Mykolaiv's perceived safety in recent months, increasing concerns for the provision of assistance provided to those within the city remain. The winter months in Mykolaiv have posed a dire situation for residents and IDPs in Mykolaiv, with a focus on water supply due to damage to critical infrastructure.¹⁰ Yet according to Left Bank Analytics, residents of Mykolaiv have voiced frustration regarding the focus and provided resources towards newly accessible areas, while humanitarian concerns in Mykolaiv remain prevalent.¹¹ Though majority of the assessed HHs in Mykolaiv reported their ability to always or most of the time meet their everyday needs, 34% reported not always able to do so (Figure 7). Despite this, **KIs observed an acute level of IDP needs in Mykolaiv**. A sense of urgency for assistance was reported, as needs were classified as "high" (4 KIs) or "very high" (1 KI), while 3 KIs identified a "moderate" level of needs. One KI reported that needs in the city indeed fluctuate, ranging from "high" to "very high".

Figure 3. Reported ability to meet their everyday needs, % of households.



Accommodation

Overall, housing was a prioritized need as 36% of HHs in Mykolaiv required access to accommodation, while the vast majority of KIs (7 out of 9) indicated IDPs' need for access to housing. Damage or destruction to homes, including high-rise residential buildings in Mykolaiv as a result of conflict related incidents,¹² can limit the availability of suitable accommodation. While residents of Mykolaivska oblast can apply for compensation to restore their homes impacted the escalation of hostilities,¹³ the availability of alternative housing for IDPs is suggested to be limited. In February 2023, Mykolaiv's City Council launched their support for a project to provide more timely information regarding temporary residence housing for IDPs.¹⁴ Though, it is important to note that **temporary accommodations should be barrier free for IDP households, especially for those travelling with vulnerable groups**. HHs travelling with women and children (0-17 years) reported having experienced difficulties in finding suitable housing, as Figure 4 presents accommodation as a priority need. Additionally, due to continued missile attacks, those with low mobility require accommodation in lower level floors within multi-story buildings.¹⁵

Food items

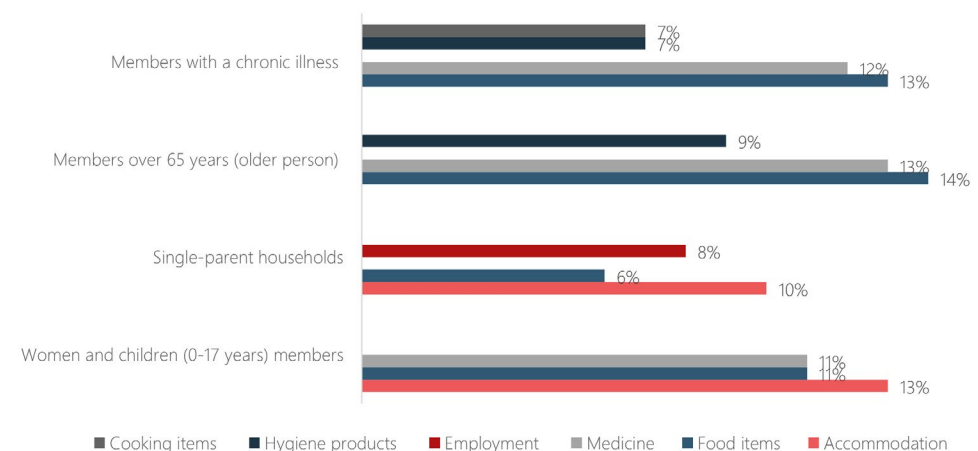
Findings suggest the need for food items is an increasing concern for both IDPs and returnee households within Mykolaiv. As food was a primary need for assessed HHs (35%), 3 out of 9 KIs also observed food items as required for immediate assistance.

For households travelling with vulnerable groups specifically, Figure 4 shows that food items were of the top requested humanitarian needs. Corroborating factors include costly food items. According to REACH's Joint Market Monitoring Initiative, median values of food and non-food items increased the most in January 2023 in Mykolaivska oblast by 26%.¹⁶ Though high costs of food are prevalent, smaller shops including grocery stores remain open. Yet, challenges for these small businesses include logistical problems and damaged infrastructure.¹⁷ For the year 2023, Mykolaiv's City Council reported being awarded funding to support small and medium-sized enterprises during the war.¹⁸ In parallel, the result of active conflict has delayed the cultivation of land, as heavily mined areas within Mykolaivska oblast has impacted the region's agriculture efforts to feed those within Ukraine and other countries. According to Mykolaiv Oblast Military Administration, 10% of the land within the region are contaminated with landmines or requires inspection, most of which are agricultural lands.¹⁹

Medicines

Access to medicine was also a prioritized needs for IDP and returnee households in Mykolaiv (35%). As residents in regions where frequent escalation of hostilities are more susceptible to lower levels of access to family doctors and medicines, those internally displaced face similar barriers.²⁰ According to the World Health Organization, one in five persons were not able to locate medicines required, top barriers included high costs and unavailability in pharmacies.²¹ Indeed, while pharmaceutical warehouses have also been a target of attacks,²² 50 medical objects in Mykolaiv have been destroyed, totaling EUR 45.3 million in damages.²³ Figure 4 shows that members of vulnerable groups including older persons (65+ years), persons with a chronic illness, as well as HHs travelling with women and children also require medicine.

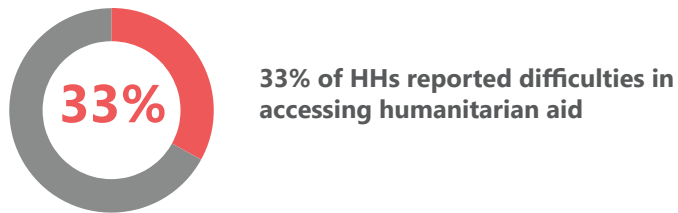
Figure 4. Top reported needs, % of households with a vulnerable member.



Challenges accessing Humanitarian Assistance and Services

Though 4 out of 9 key informants have cited the city's improved preparedness since the full scale war in February 2022, **continued challenges to access humanitarian assistance and services are observed.** Of all assessed HHs, 33% reported difficulties in accessing humanitarian aid. Key informants identified additional challenges faced by IDP households in the last month, suggesting that barriers are still present and pose additional barriers for certain vulnerable groups.

Figure 5. Reported difficulties in accessing humanitarian aid, % of households.



Access to housing

As findings suggest that IDPs and returnees assessed in Mykolaiv require provision of accommodations, **there are reported challenges in accessing adequate and affordable housing which remain a primary concern.** The majority of KIs (7 out of 9) reported access to housing as a main challenge for IDPs that have arrived in the past month, while citing the high cost of accommodation as a barrier. Contributing factors could be increase in demand for accommodations in the city for both IDPs and host communities due to the attacks on residential infrastructure. Since September 2022, REACH data reports critical damage to infrastructure,²⁴ as 5,809 residents of Mykolaiv having been affected.²⁵ Due to the high price tag of repairs in residential areas (more than EUR 386 million),²⁶ an exhaustive plan to for recovery and reconstruction phase leave limited housing availability for those displaced and resident HHs.

Access to administrative services

High demand for administrative services for IDP households in Mykolaiv, have prompted a range of barriers to access support services from the state. Five KIs mentioned access to **administrative services as a primary obstacle, mostly concerning where to access such services, what documentation is needed, as well as long wait times.** Indeed, damage to administrative buildings in Mykolaiv city, including the regional state administration, totaling around EUR 12 million in repairs suggests concerns in Mykolaiv regarding access to administrative services.²⁷

Access to information for vulnerable groups

Access to information for IDPs and returnees classified within a vulnerable group, specifically older persons and persons with a disability, is of grave concern and a primary challenge for households accessing humanitarian assistance in Mykolaiv. Of the assessed HHs interviewed, 85% reported receiving information regarding access to humanitarian assistance and services electronically via social channels including Telegram. The use of such applications, has often been referred as the most convenient way to disseminate information to local populations due to their convenience and accessibility. Conversely, the use of smartphones and other technology is not always accessible to vulnerable groups, thereby possibly creating barriers to access information regarding humanitarian assistance and services. For older persons and persons with disabilities particularly, 5 out 8 KIs reported older persons faced barriers to accessing information. **Such concerns cited include the digitization of information, preventing older persons without a smartphone to access timely information.** Though ATM findings show 14% of HHs with an older person in Mykolaiv indicated receiving information electronically, 13% reported receiving information through word of mouth. For people over the age of 70, establishing community ties to receive informant is pertinent.²⁸ Yet, such barriers to access to information is not only a challenge for understanding where to access assistance, but also what assistance is available. According to General Truth Solutions, findings show that older persons are likely to feel less informed when trying to identify the type of aid that is accessible.²⁹ Amidst difficulties in accessing information, reports of false information being circulated can also lead to confusion when trying to distinguish what announcements are official and informal.³⁰

Disruption to Utilities

Damage and prolonged repairs to critical infrastructure in Mykolaiv has impacted the availability of electricity and access to water, prompting challenges for residents and recently arrived IDPs. Of those arriving to Mykolaiv and have stayed in the city for at least one night, **97% reported experiencing disruptions to utilities. Most notable included disruptions to electricity (81%) and centralized cold water supply (54%).** Indeed, attacks on Mykolaiv's energy and water supply infrastructure (within Kherson) in November 2022 has been quite slow. Partial solutions to access clean water have been implemented, though eventual replacement is required.³¹ This is in part due to the considerable amount of funds required to repair the damages, while other damages are deemed irreparable.

Support for Long-term Settlement

Integration for IDPs

The duration of IDP settlement in Mykolaiv is deemed uncertain. Though the vast majority of KIs reported that IDP households intend to return to their areas of origin (7 out of 9 KIs), 4 of these KIs reported IDPs' desire to return to their home when they have the opportunity to do so. Yet, half of assessed HHs settling in Mykolaiv intend to stay until the war is over (50%). Therefore, it is suggested that IDPs intend to remain until active hostilities have ceased, which leaves much uncertainty regarding the duration of their stay. Thus, support for IDP resettlement is pertinent.

"The longer their [IDPs'] homeland (city or village) is under occupation, the more they become attached to the new place, they are seeking new life here."

- Volunteer

Supporting IDPs' long-term settlement within Mykolaiv echoes many of the humanitarian needs previously presented (see page 5). **When IDPs staying within Mykolaiv were asked to identify the kind of external support needed to overcome all displacement-related vulnerabilities to be fully integrated in Mykolaiv in the long-term perspective, access to housing was identified as a primary need.** Figure 6 presents over half of HHs (68%) reported requiring support with long-term housing solutions, as this was also reiterated by 7 out of 9 KIs. **Less commonly reported was assistance with employment, such as finding a job opportunity, or assistance with becoming re-qualified, as reported by 32% of HHs.** The majority of KIs also identified employment opportunities as a challenges for IDP resettlements (8 out of 9 KIs). Indeed, 5 KIs mentioned the security situation within Mykolaiv as a challenge to stay long-term. Less commonly reported were access to medical services (2 KIs) and misunderstanding with other residents (including trust impacting the availability of employment opportunities) (2 KIs).

Figure 6: Reported need in external support for integration, % of IDP households.



Reintegration for returnees

Following reports of residents returning to Mykolaiv (see page 3), challenges for reintegration are prevalent. **Most households identified long-term housing solutions as a primary need (59%), which remains a priority for both households in the short and long-term.** Indeed, damage to residential buildings can leave many HHs with uninhabitable homes to return to as reported as a concern by 2 out of 9 KIs. According to REACH's Residential Building Damage Assessment, over half of all damaged buildings in Mykolaiv range from moderate damage to destroyed including multi-apartment buildings and single-occupancy dwellings.³² Though areas most affected are concentrated to eastern and southern-eastern parts of Mykolaiv including Ingulskyi and Korabelnyi districts, Tsentralnyi and Zavodskyi districts also reported damage.³³ For HHs intending to return to homes with repairable damage, including roofs and broken windows, there are reported concerns on when to begin repairs during the volatile security situation.³⁴ As continued attacks can cause further damage, prolonging the opportunity to refurbish buildings may be favourable in certain cases. Furthermore, if the homes of returnees are uninhabitable and they are looking to resettle in adjacent areas, movement to another home can be costly. Rental prices in Mykolaiv are reportedly on the rise following the Government of Ukraine's regained control of Kherson.³⁵ Though Mykolaiv's volatile security situation impacting housing are noted regarding long-term solutions, a lack of financial resources for returnee HHs should also take precedence.

Additionally, **key informants are primarily concerned about the mental health of households reintegrating into the city, especially those returning from rather safe areas of resettlement, including abroad.** In Mykolaiv, 4 out of 9 KIs reported concerns for households' psychological adaptation, as well as concerns for their own safety upon return. Thus signaling anticipated needs for psychosocial support. Assistance seeking and/or becoming qualified for employment was reported by almost half of assessed HHs (48%), while 4 out of 9 KIs also reported seeking employment upon returning would be a challenge. Indeed, reports of factories have either moved out of Mykolaiv,³⁶ thereby concerns over minimal opportunities to reintegrate into the job sector.

"We understand that people will be returning from quieter places, so they will need to get used to our lifestyle here again, constant air raid alerts, drones, shelling, this is everything we are already used to."

- Volunteer

ENDNOTES

PAGE 1

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- ³ BBC, [Ukraine war: Kherson curfew and river ban in security crackdown](#), 13 November 2022.

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- ⁴ [English translation] RBA-Ukraine, [In Mykolaiv the number of inhabitants increased by 10%. The may told how many people returned](#), 5 December 2022.
- ⁵ International Organization for Migration, [Registered IDP Area Baseline Assessment](#), January 2023.

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- ⁶ REACH, [Residential building damage assessment Mykolaiv, July-September 2022](#), February 2023.
- ⁷ Ukraine Media Center, [People returning to Mykolaiv region: Population increases by 50,000-70,000 in regional center and by over 100,000 in oblast; Business recovering - Vitalii Kim](#), 11 January 2023.
- ⁸ The Kyiv Independent, [UN to allocate around \\$4 million for demining of Mykolaiv Oblast](#), 20 January 2023.
- ⁹ Left Bank Analytics, [Critical Areas Situation Report](#), 19 January 2023.

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- ¹⁰ UN News, [Ukraine: Heading into winter without heat or waer, needs in Mykolaiv are 'critical'](#), 28 November 2022.
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- ¹⁹ Ukraine Media Center, [About 10%, or 270,000 hectares of the territory of Mykolaiv region are mined - Vitalii Kim](#), 2 February 2023.

- ²⁰ World Health Organization, [Ukraine's health system shows resilience, but barriers remain](#), 17 March 2023.

- ²¹ World Health Organization, [Health needs assessment of the adult population in Ukraine: survey report: December 2022](#), 10 March 2023.

- ²² Ukrainska Pravda, [Russia hit phamaceutical warehouse in Mykolaiv, using drone](#), 17 October 2022.

- ²³ Rebuild Ukraine, [Mykolaiv city territorial community](#), 2023.

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- ²⁹ Ground Truth Solutions, [A locally informed humanitarian response: Insights from Ukraine](#), 17 January 2023.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
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- ³² REACH, [Residential building damage assessment Mykolaiv, July-September 2022](#), February 2023.
- ³³ Ibid.
- ³⁴ DRC, [Urgent support to Mykolaiv: Safe water and house repairs before winter](#), 20 December 2022.
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