

Rapid Cash Feasibility Assessment

Orikhivska Hromada, Zaporizka Oblast

October 2023
Ukraine

KEY MESSAGES



Regular shelling makes it dangerous for retailers to open, suppliers to deliver, and consumers to access cash and markets.



Item availability is limited within Orikhiv. For most items, consumers access markets in neighboring settlements or Zaporizhzhia city [47km].



Lack of electricity, internet, and mobile data means cash or purchase on credit are the main payment options in Orikhiv. **Retailers report that there are no banks or ATMs working in Orikhiv**, though UkrPoshta is open a few days a week.

CONTEXT & RATIONALE

Orikhivska hromada lies within 5 km of the frontline in Zaporizka Oblast. Hromada authorities report a **population of around 1,550 people**.¹ Electricity supply is limited, centralized water is not functioning, and the hromada has been without gas supply since 2022.² According to OCHA, food and drinking water are supplied to the community regularly by humanitarian actors, and inter-agency convoys sometimes bring shelter, hygiene, and medical supplies.³

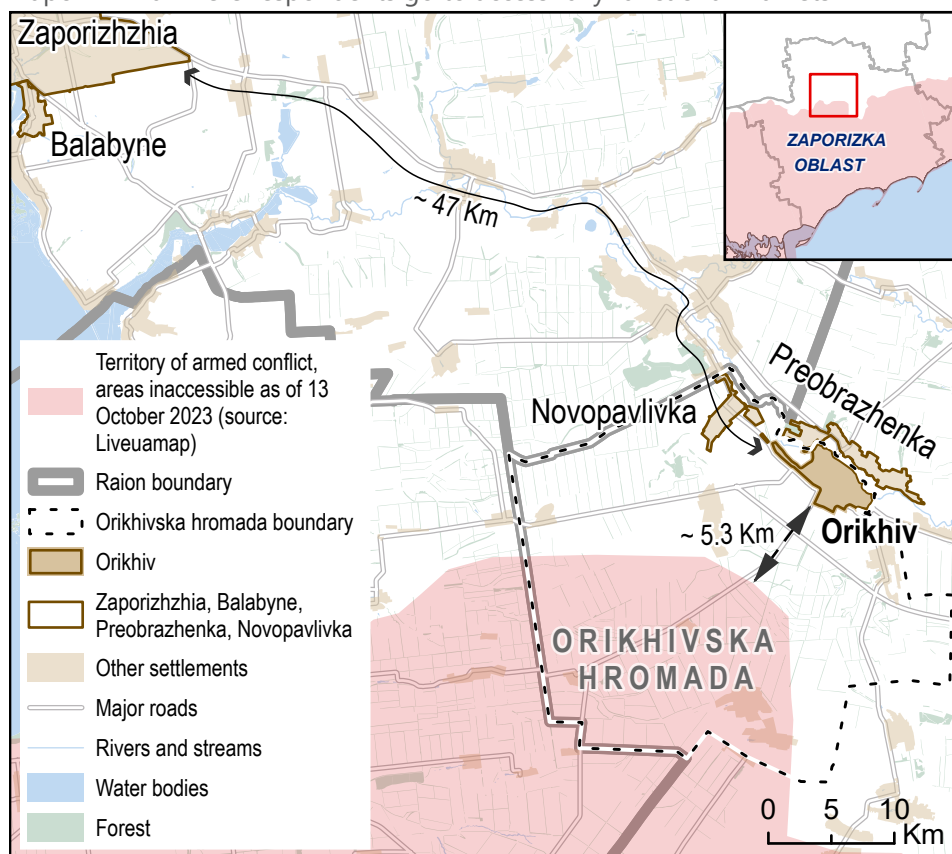
Due to its proximity to the frontline, Orikhivska hromada is frequently shelled resulting in high levels of damage to civilian infrastructure.

This assessment was initiated by the Cash Working Group's Task Team on Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) Feasibility in order to assess whether or not cash assistance would be feasible in Orikhivska hromada. Given the security context, providing multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) is a potential way to ensure local communities can meet their basic needs while reducing risk for humanitarian partners. Effectiveness of MPCA rather than in-kind aid, however, is subject to market functionality.

METHODOLOGY:

Task Team partners Caritas Ukraine and Polish Humanitarian Action interviewed 3 retailers and 34 consumers in the hromada. Due to the security situation in Orikhiv, all interviews were conducted over the phone. Data collection took place from the 2-13 October 2023. **Findings presented in this factsheet should be considered indicative of the overall situation.**

Map 1: Orikhivska hromada, respondents' settlements, and the distance to Zaporizhzhia where respondents go to access fully functional markets



Availability and Affordability of Items

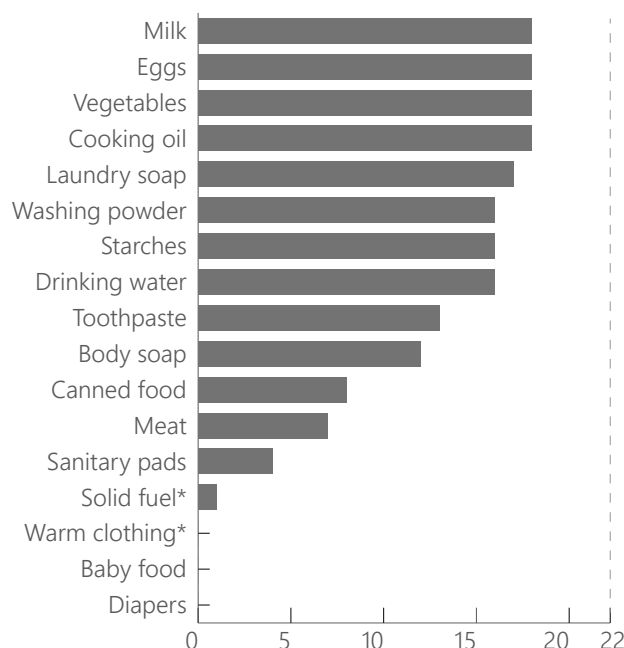
Of the 34 interviewed consumers, 22 regularly access the market in Orikhiv, while the other 12 frequent markets in Zaporizhzhia. According to consumers, **only 1 or 2 stores are open in Orikhiv**. Informal street markets, consisting of 2 or 3 local residents, offer items like milk, eggs, and chicken. Reportedly, additional informal vendors from nearby settlements, including Zaporizhzhia, come on occasion to Orikhiv and spend 1-2 hours selling meat, fish, and sweets.

Aside from these options, consumers can access some additional items in the bordering settlement of **Preobrazhenka** [see Map 1]. However, interviewed consumers reported that for more specific items like medicines and winterization materials, **Orikhiv residents must go to Zaporizhzhia** or have items brought by relatives or neighbors. Authorities reportedly provided firewood during the winter of 2022/23 but are unable to provide it for the upcoming winter. Many consumers mentioned going to Zaporizhzhia to purchase firewood, though it should be noted that a limited amount of firewood can be carried by an individual consumer without a private car.

Moreover, according to REACH's [Joint Market Monitoring Initiative \(JMMI\)](#), in September 2023, the Ukrainian-controlled part of **Zaporizka oblast was struggling more than any other assessed oblast regarding access to essential winter items**. Thirty-three percent of consumers interviewed by the JMMI were unable to find any winter items and 38% reported limited availability. In addition, 14% reported shortages in food items and 24% reported insufficient availability of hygiene items. **This suggests that while many items that are unavailable in Orikhiv may be found elsewhere in Zaporizka, supplies of both food and NFI are also limited throughout the oblast**. Further, 25% of interviewed retailers in the oblast reported that all items within the JMMI basket had increased in price compared to August.⁴

The lack of available winterization items reported both by Orikhiv consumers and the JMMI is especially concerning considering that [REACH's Cold Spot Risk Assessment](#), rates Polohivskiyi raion among the highest in **lack of coping capacity**, which takes into account cumulative damage to critical infrastructure, conflict incidents, and electricity consumption.⁵

Graph 1: Item availability in Orikhiv reported by consumers



*Solid fuel includes firewood, briquettes, and/or coal and winter clothing includes winter coats, winter boots and/or warm blankets.

Supply

A total of 3 retailers were interviewed: 2 in Orikhiv and 1 in the adjacent settlement of Preobrazhenka, the next closest market for consumers in Orikhiv (see Map 1). **Both Orikhiv retailers reported selling starches, milk, cooking oil, drinking water, and canned food items**, as well as **body soap, washing powder, toothpaste, sanitary pads, warm blankets, and winter boots**. Eggs, vegetables, and meat were sold by one retailer. Neither reported selling baby food, diapers, solid fuel, or winter coats, supporting consumer reports that these items have limited availability in Orikhiv. Baby food and diapers were, however, sold by the retailer in Preobrazhenka. Considering the mandatory evacuation of children in Polohivskiyi raion, there may be less demand for those items.⁶ Both retailers in Orikhiv felt they could keep a 7-day stock of food items but could not predict whether they could maintain this stock beyond 7 days. It should also be noted that due to a lack of electricity, refrigeration is not possible. Only one of the three retailers felt it was possible to keep a 7-day stock of hygiene items, though again could not predict whether this would remain true. The other retailer reportedly did not have a 7-day stock of hygiene items due to a perceived lack of demand for such items. Both retailers in Orikhiv felt the market could meet local demand at the time of interview. However, they suggested that as market disruptions mean that they cannot guarantee their supply in the future, in-kind assistance remains important.

Access to Cash and Markets

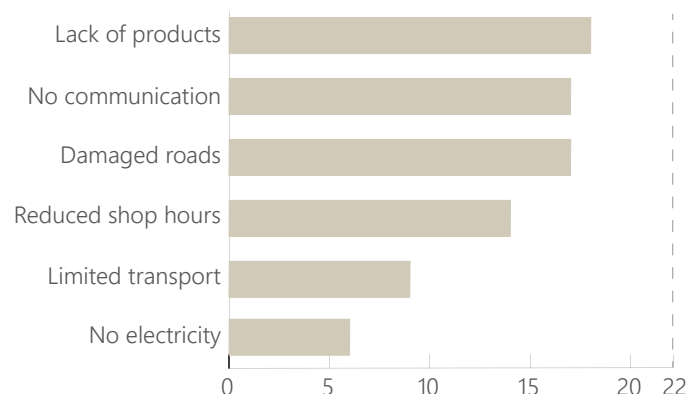
The question of accessibility for consumers in Orikhiv can be split in two parts: accessibility to markets and cash within Orikhiv, and accessibility from Orikhiv to markets and cash in Zaporizhzhia. Of the 34 consumers interviewed, 23 were 60 years or older; this is generally consistent with population estimates in frontline areas consisting of significant numbers of older people and/or physically disabled people. According to multiple consumers, **a few items can be purchased in Orikhiv** (milk, eggs, some hygiene items), a few other items are available in other nearby settlements like Preobrazhenka, **but most items must be purchased in Zaporizhzhia**. Those with private vehicles and financial means travel to Zaporizhzhia themselves, and those unable to go themselves request items and cash to be brought from Zaporizhzhia.

Accessibility in Orikhiv

Of the 22 consumers accessing the market in Orikhiv, 20 said that prices had increased in the past 2-4 weeks, and **all 22 said they could not afford all the items they needed**. In addition to prohibitive cost, **regular shelling was reported as the main security-related barrier** to accessing markets for all 22 consumers and both retailers. No other security barriers were mentioned by consumers, but one retailer also named checkpoints, fear of violence, and the presence of armed actors as barriers. The other retailer in Orikhiv reported that the presence of military in fact increased his feelings of safety, and that was the only reason he kept his shop open. The military are also customers of the shops in Orikhiv. One consumer stated that he did not use the main shop in Orikhiv because it was expensive and “more for the military.”

Regarding infrastructural barriers to accessing cash in Orikhiv, retailers reported that **there are no banks or ATMs functioning** within the settlement. Residents must go to neighboring settlements or Zaporizhzhia to access these services. Despite this, **32 of the 34 total consumers interviewed reported accessing cash primarily from ATMs**. Twenty-eight consumers also accessed cash through friends or family, supporting the anecdotal statements that friends and neighbors bring cash and items from Zaporizhzhia to those in Orikhiv who cannot go to Zaporizhzhia themselves. UkrPoshta reportedly visits weekly, but no consumer chose the post office as a primary source of cash. Additional reported infrastructural barriers to accessing both cash and markets from Orikhiv can be found on **Graph 2**.

Graph 2: Infrastructural barriers in Orikhiv



Accessibility to Zaporizhzhia

Of the 12 consumers accessing the market in Zaporizhzhia, 10 said that prices had increased in the past 2-4 weeks, but half could still afford what they needed. Multiple consumers mentioned that prices were lower in Zaporizhzhia than Orikhiv. In addition, though 6 (of 12) consumers cited fear of shelling as a barrier to accessing the market in Zaporizhzhia, the other 6 said there were no security factors affecting their access. For those without their own vehicles, there is a minibus that runs multiple times a day between Orikhiv and Zaporizhzhia. However, consumers reported that the cost is high (150 UAH each way) and paying for a private taxi is even more expensive (400-500 UAH). Other barriers mentioned by consumers included damaged roads (4 of 12), limited transport (3 of 12) and lack of communication (2 of 12), though 7 (of 12) consumers regularly accessing the market in Zaporizhzhia said they faced no infrastructural barriers.

Conclusion

To conclude, while some items can be purchased in Orikhiv or the adjacent settlement of Preobrazhenka, the data suggests that consumers are largely reliant on markets in Zaporizhzhia city. Cash cannot be accessed directly in Orikhiv, but could be used to purchase items locally, pay for transportation to Zaporizhzhia, or pay other community members in exchange for items brought back from Zaporizhzhia. Local residents in Orikhiv may not all have equal access to Zaporizhzhia markets.

Furthermore, all movement within Orikhivska hromada comes with risk of personal safety, and humanitarian partners should weigh the risk transfer involved with different modalities. When providing MPCA to cover basic needs, beneficiaries may take more risk in accessing markets to purchase core commodities. In providing in-kind assistance, distributions may also involve risk for either beneficiaries or local partners involved in last mile delivery, including door-to-door.

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

This assessment was initiated by the Cash Working Group's Task Team on Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) Feasibility in order to assess market functionality and accessibility in hard-to-reach areas, including those within 30km of the frontline, newly accessible areas, and areas experiencing acute emergency

situations where regular programming may be difficult. Data was collected by two members of the Task Team: Caritas Ukraine and Polish Humanitarian Action. Structured key informant interviews took place over the phone between 2 and 13 October.

Findings should be considered indicative of the situation.



ENDNOTES

¹ Figures and humanitarian situation reported by hromada authorities and shared bilaterally by OCHA in November 2023.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ REACH, “[Joint Market Monitoring Initiative \(JMMI\)](#),” Sep 2023.

⁵ REACH, “[Cold Spot Risk Assessment: Winterisation 2023/24](#),” Aug 2023.

⁶ Kyiv Independent “[Deputy PM: Ukraine to announce mandatory evacuation of children from parts of Zaporizhzhia Oblast](#),” Aug 2023.