

Impact of reduced humanitarian funding on affected populations

REACH Humanitarian Situation Monitoring

February 2025 | Ukraine

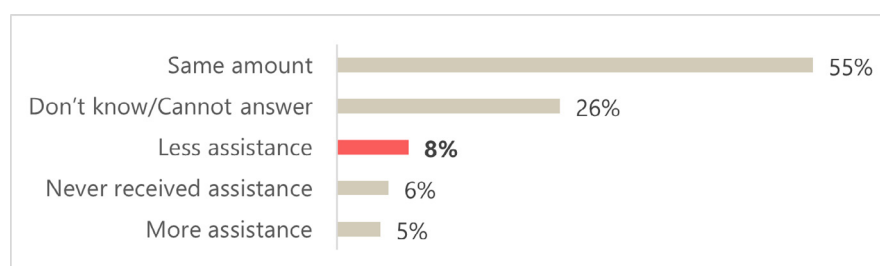
Key Messages

- **The prevalence and severity of humanitarian needs across settlements**, as measured by the Settlement Vulnerability Index (SVI) (see Endnote 5), **has not changed dramatically from December to February**, suggesting it may take more time to see the effects of reduced humanitarian funding.
- **Direct reports by KIs on reductions in levels of assistance received from December to February remained limited to a few settlements (8%). However, trend analysis suggests a more severe impact** (particularly in hygiene and food assistance), mainly in settlements further from the frontline. Reduction in certain types of assistance may be underestimated due to key informants' limited knowledge.
- If these findings are indicative of the impact a continued reduction in humanitarian funding may have, **vulnerable people further away from the frontline may be at risk of being underserved**. With constrained resources, humanitarian organisations may have already recentred their support to frontline areas, where needs are more acute.

24%

of assessed settlements of assessed settlements were identified as having the distribution of hygiene items discontinued between December and February. However, HSM identified that **10%** of assessed settlements newly received hygiene items/kits over the same period

Proportion of settlements where KIs reported a change to the levels of assistance reaching their community (by type of change)



Context & Rationale

With levels of humanitarian need remaining high, and a global trend of **reduction** to foreign aid, REACH's **Humanitarian Situation Monitor (HSM) provides regular data on humanitarian needs to inform prioritisation of assistance.**

Assessment Overview

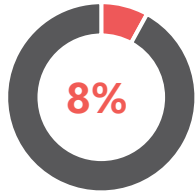
As part of HSM regular data collection every two months, **this output focuses on two main questions:**

1. Understanding the **immediate impact the reduction in assistance may have on humanitarian needs** in Ukraine;
2. **Anticipating trends a continued reduction in assistance may have**, to ensure humanitarian organisations can coordinate their limited resources to reach the most vulnerables.

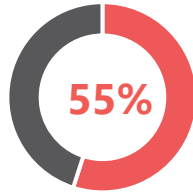
Between December 2024 and February 2025, HSM assessed 388 settlements 0-100km from the frontline and border with Russian Federation. Data collection for Round 20 (December) occurred between December 09-27, and data collection for Round 21 (February) occurred between February 10-21.

The HSM dashboard complements this analysis by providing comprehensive data on sectoral and multi-sectoral needs. [The dashboard is accessible online.](#)

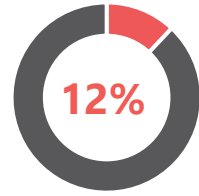
CHANGE IN ASSISTANCE RECEIVED



In **8%** of settlements, KIs reported a **perceived decrease in assistance received**, compared to December 2024.



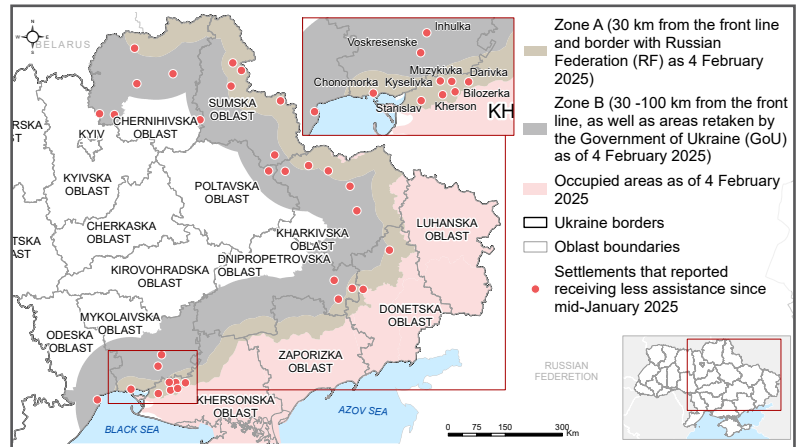
In **55%** of settlements, KIs reported **residents do not need more information on humanitarian assistance**. This is a slight decrease since December (**61%**), suggesting **the situation has not (yet) created large information gaps for affected population**.



In **12%** of settlements, KIs reported **most residents receive information on humanitarian assistance through international and national aid organizations**. This marks a decrease from an average of **20%** between July and December). Residents of only **1%** of settlements reportedly received no information at all, indicating **people can rely on alternative sources**.

Key informants in around one in ten assessed settlements (8%, 32/388) reported a perceived decrease in assistance received, compared to December 2024. There was no clear geographical trend in the profile of these 32 settlements, with affected settlements in the North, East and South and both close to and further away from the frontline/border. **However, the majority were rural settlements (23/32)** and mainly located in Khersonska (6 out of 24 settlements assessed in the oblast) Chernihivska (6/39), Sumska (5/54) and Kharkivska (5/65). The only assessed oblast where no KIs reported a reduction in assistance was Zaporizhzhia.

Map 1: settlements where KIs reported a perceived decrease in assistance received, compared to December 2024.



KIs indicated that reductions affected the full spectrum of humanitarian aid, from possibly life-saving food items and healthcare to education. When KIs reported assistance was reduced, **they generally reporting not receiving this type of assistance at all anymore, likely leading to gaps and heightened humanitarian needs in the future**.

Out of these 32 settlements...

KIs in **17** reported cuts in food items/kits, including **11** reporting not receiving food items/kits anymore¹.



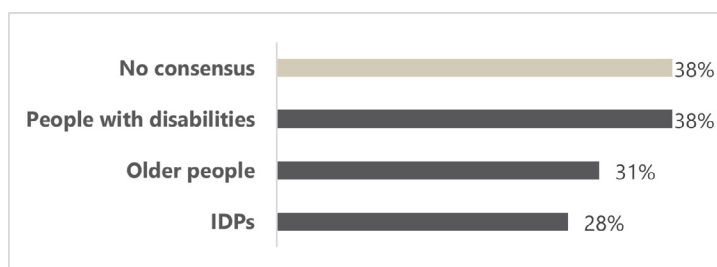
KIs in **8** reported cuts in essential hygiene items, including **6** reporting not receiving essential hygiene items/kits anymore².



KIs in **5** reported cuts in cash assistance. All **5** reporting not receiving cash assistance anymore³.



Population groups most affected



Among the 32 settlements key informants, there was **no clear consensus on which groups of people were most affected by the reduction in assistance**. While people with disabilities (12/32), older persons (10/32), and IDPs (9/32) were most often reported, **this suggests the impact is indiscriminate and further reduction would possibly affect all groups**.

MOST AFFECTED SECTORS AND GEOGRAPHIES

Beyond key informants' perception of reduction in assistance, HSM also analysed reported assistance received across settlements, and compared this to assistance reported as received in December. In some settlements, HSM identified discontinued assistance, while in others new distributions were identified. The most impacted sectors were:

- **Hygiene items/kits:** 21% of settlements reportedly received them in February, a 14 percentage-point decrease since December (35%). It was discontinued in 24% of settlements that received hygiene items/kits in December, while HSM identified only 10% of settlements newly receiving it.
- **Food items/kits:** 61% of settlements reportedly received them in February, a 6 percentage-point decrease since December (67%). It was discontinued in 20% of settlements that received food items/kits in December, though HSM identified 14% of settlements newly receiving it.

Change (in percentage-point) of settlements reportedly receiving food and hygiene assistance received between December and February (by oblast).

Oblast	# of assessed settlements	Food items/kits	Hygiene items/kits
Chernihivska	39	-15	-13
Dnipropetrovska	58	-12	-19
Donetska	43	-5	-14
Kharkivska	65	5	-9
Khersonska	24	21	17
Mykolaivska	33	-3	-36
Odeska	35	-26	-37
Poltavska	11	-36	-36
Sumska	54	2	-4
Zaporizka	26	33	16
Overall	388	-6	-14

There were no large changes in other types of assistance, suggesting **decreases in assistance provided, if linked to reduced funding, are mostly limited to hygiene and food assistance.** However, it is also possible that it is still too early to fully assess the broader impact of decreased funding.

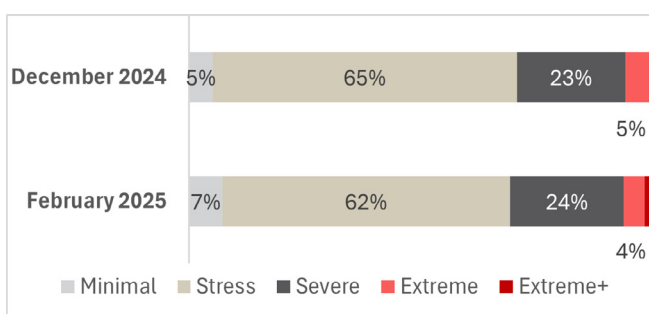
Regarding geographical trends: **compared to previous rounds, the HSM observed an increase of reported assistance received in frontline oblast, but a decrease in oblasts further away. This could suggest that, faced with reduced means, humanitarian organisations are reprioritizing their operations on the most vulnerable population⁴.** Food assistance was most reduced in Chernihivska, Odeska, and Poltavaska while it increased in frontline Khersonska and Zaporizka (and remained stable in frontline Donetska, Kharkivska and Sumska). A similar pattern can be observed for hygiene assistance. This shift may leave previously supported communities further from the frontline underserved.

CHANGE IN SEVERITY OF NEEDS

Between December and February, the prevalence and severity of needs (as measured by the Settlement Vulnerability Index)⁵ remained stable, indicating the reduction in humanitarian funds had not (yet) had a drastic impact on levels of need.

The only noticeable change was a slight increase in vulnerability to health needs (from 46% to 56% of settlements) caused by an increase in people reportedly unable to access healthcare services and/or medicines. Conversely, the prevalence of barriers such as "healthcare facilities being unavailable" and "shortage of specialists" decreased.

Level of vulnerability to multisectoral needs according to HSM Settlement Vulnerability Index (% age of settlements)



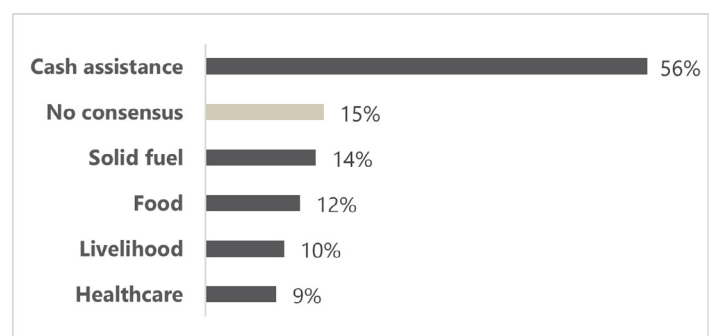
CHANGE IN THE PROFILE OF NEEDS

Reported challenges faced by residents remained stable between December and February, with no noticeable increase in any sector except for Health.

In particular, "access to information on humanitarian assistance" was reported as a challenge in similar proportion (41% of settlements in December and 43% in February), further suggesting the reduction in funding has not (yet) led to information needs.

Similarly, when asked about which sectoral assistance would be most useful to receive in their settlement, there has been little-to-no increase for all sectoral assistance between December and February (the greatest increase was for "cash assistance", from 52% to 56%).

Most useful type of assistance to be delivered as reported in February 2025 (% age of settlements)



HSM Methodology Overview

Data collection in Government-controlled areas took place in **December 2024 (Round 20) and February 2025 (Round 21)** through phone interviews with community key informants (CKIs). CKIs included representatives from local government, local NGOs, and local volunteers. **A total of 388 settlements were assessed**, divided into two geographic zones:

- **Zone A:** Settlements within 30 km of the frontline or the Russian Federation border at the time of sampling.
- **Zone B:** Settlements within 31–100 km of the frontline or the Russian Federation border at the time of sampling.

To ensure broad coverage of frontline settlements, REACH applied the following sampling criteria:

Zone A:

- All administrative centers (hromada, raion, and oblast).
- All settlements with over 1,000 residents (based on IOM Frontline Flow Monitoring, May 2024).
- If updated population figures were unavailable: all settlements with over 2,500 residents before February 2022.

Zone B:

- All administrative centers (hromada, raion, and oblast) with over 1,000 residents before February 2022.

Between 3 and 5 key informants (KIs) were interviewed per settlement, depending on its size. KI responses were aggregated to create one data point per settlement using the following approach:

- For single-choice questions, responses were averaged based on a severity scale.
- For multiple-choice questions, responses were included if reported by at least:
 - 1 out of 3 respondents (for settlements with 3 KIs).
 - 2 out of 5 respondents (for settlements with 5 KIs).

The statistics in this brief should not be interpreted as representative of the entire population. Given the small and non-random sample, the results provide an indicative understanding of conditions in the assessed areas rather than definitive trends.

Endnotes

¹ The 11 settlements where KIs reported discontinued food assistance were: Kulykivska and Sosnytsia (Chernihivska); Mezhova and Mykolaivka (Dnipropetrovska); Balakliia and Krasnokutsk (Kharkivska); Chornomorka and Voskresenske (Mykolaivska); Odesa (Odeska); Kotelva (Poltavska); and Hlukhiv (Sumska).

² The 6 settlements where KIs reported discontinued hygiene assistance were: Malomykhailivka and Mezhova (Dnipropetrovska); Udachne (Donetska); Bilozerka and Kyselivka (Khersonska); and Odesa (Odeska).

³ The 5 settlements where KIs reported discontinued cash assistance were: Chuhuiv (Kharkivska); Kherson and Muzykivka (Khersonska); Odesa (Odesa), and Putyvl (Sumska).

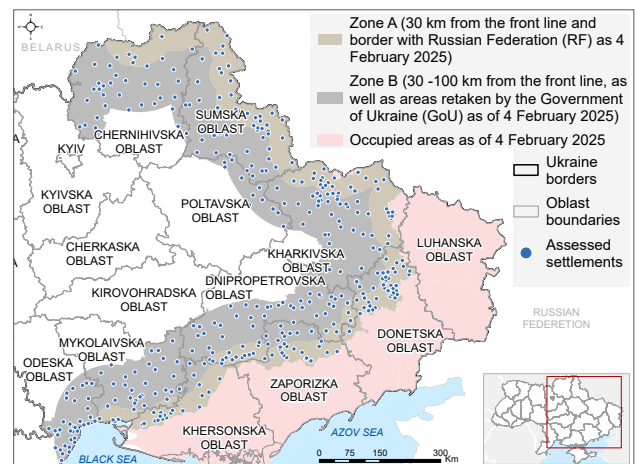
⁴ As highlighted in previous REACH outputs ([HSM 2025](#); [MSNA 2024](#)), while humanitarian needs are widespread across Ukraine, residents of frontline settlements have the most frequent and severe multi- and sectoral needs.

⁵ REACH HSM determines the vulnerability level of assessed settlements using the **Settlement Vulnerability Index (SVI)**. The SVI framework is based on HSM indicators and assesses both sectoral and multisectoral vulnerability at the settlement level. The SVI framework consists of two calculations:

- **Sectoral Vulnerability Scores:** each settlement is assigned six sectoral scores, calculated using the “maximum” rule: the highest score from any composite indicator within the sector determines the final score.
 - **Multisectoral SVI Score:** The multisectoral SVI score is the average of the six sectoral scores. If the average has a decimal of 0.5 or higher, it is rounded up to the nearest whole number.
- Scoring System:

Individual composite indicators receive scores from 1 (Minimal) to 5 (Extreme+), based on aggregated key informant responses for each settlement. The final SVI score is assigned a value between 1 and 4+ (Minimal to Extreme+).

Assessment Coverage



ABOUT REACH

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).

