

UKRAINE: HUMANITARIAN SITUATION MONITORING

THE YEAR OF 2023 IN REVIEW

February 2024 | Ukraine

CONTEXT & RATIONALE

In February 2023, the war in Ukraine entered its second year and continued to negatively impact people's daily lives. As the war continues, humanitarian needs persist, coping capacities deplete and vulnerabilities increase, potentially leading to a deterioration of the overall humanitarian situation in particularly affected areas. Lacking access to basic goods and services, continuous protection concerns and damage to civilian and public infrastructure leave civilians vulnerable, especially in areas in closer to the front line.¹

Given the dynamic nature of the humanitarian situation in Ukraine, ongoing monitoring is essential to enable a comprehensive assessment of the needs and their severity among the affected populations, and to ensure that humanitarian response plans remain aligned with the situation on the ground. In line with the primary objective of REACH's Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM) of providing up-to-date multisectoral data on the evolution of community-level humanitarian needs to enable monitoring of change over time, **this trend analysis provides an overview of needs trends in 2023, with the aim of informing activities in 2024.**

The **analysis includes all seven 2023 HSM Rounds covering February to December 2023** (see Annex 1 on page 14 for more information). In order to ensure an accurate analysis, this assessment will only **cover the 255 settlements that have been assessed in all HSM Rounds in 2023** (Rounds 8-14). Considering the comparatively higher level of humanitarian needs in the areas closer to the front line observed throughout the past rounds of HSM, the current brief primarily focuses on the findings in Zones A and B* (see 'HSM Methodology Overview' on page 11). **Besides the regular HSM data on needs, concerns and service access barriers, this assessment also includes the analysis based on HSM's recently developed Settlement Vulnerability Index (SVI) framework.** The SVI is tailored to ascertain the severity of vulnerability at the settlements level through composite intersectoral and sectoral (Food Security and Livelihoods, Protection, Healthcare, Shelter and Non-Food Items, WASH, and Education) scores.

Given the sample size and methodology used, the **findings should be understood as indicative** and offering an approximate understanding of the humanitarian situation in the assessed settlements.

* **Zone A:** Areas within 30 km range from the frontline at the time of sampling, as monitored by LiveUA, and the state border with the Russian Federation. **Zone B:** Areas within 30-100km range from the frontline at the time of sampling, as monitored by LiveUA, Areas retaken by the GoU, and raions intersecting with these areas by 50% of the raion territory.

KEY MESSAGES

- **The humanitarian crisis persisted throughout 2023, particularly affecting the areas closer to the front line.** While some alleviation of the situation in terms of access to services and essential items was observed over the summer months, **the seasonal challenges and intensified attacks on infrastructure as winter months approached resulted in a deterioration of the situation towards the end of the year.**
- **Economic barriers were observed to have an increasing impact on access to services and items over 2023,** particularly in relation to access to housing, healthcare services, and food. If this trend continues, challenges related to the cost of items or services will likely continue to affect people's access to a variety of services in the long run and likely further deplete their economic coping capacities.
- In all HSM Rounds and across all sectors, **community-level needs and vulnerabilities have been highest in settlements closer to the front line and closer to the border with the Russian Federation (primarily concentrated in Kharkivska and Donetsk Oblasts).** This requires continued joint and inter-sectoral interventions in settlements in those areas, particularly in light of intensified attacks over the winter of 2023 - 2024.
- Throughout 2023, **returnees and people who had been directly harmed by the current violence** were increasingly identified as groups of people less able to meet their everyday needs, compared to other population groups, likely indicating growing challenges these and other vulnerable population groups face in coping with the effects of the prolonged crisis.



TIMELINE OF THE YEAR 2023 IN UKRAINE

During the second year of the war, the population, environment, and economy continued to be impacted by active hostilities and conflict incidents. In order to set the context for this HSM Trend Analysis, the timeline below displays some of the most important events and developments of 2023 in Ukraine.

Key dates

January



Continued attacks against critical civilian infrastructure across all areas under the control of the Government of Ukraine, causing civilian casualties, damaging critical infrastructure, and disrupting the daily lives of civilians.

February



HSM Round 8
Data collection: 7 - 28 February 2023

March - April



Onset of spring bringing warmer temperatures and alleviating some seasonal needs, such as solid fuel and winter non-food items.



HSM Round 9
Data collection: 20 March - 3 April 2023

May



New wave of regular mass missile attacks across all areas under the control of the Government of Ukraine.



HSM Round 10
Data collection: 15 - 29 May 2023



At the end of May, the 2022-2023 school year ended. Most school-aged children attended school online or in a blended learning modality, which resulted in more frequent disruptions to their learning experience.

June



On 6 June, the Kakhovka Dam breach happened, causing water shortages upstream and flooding of settlements and agricultural land downstream, triggering an environmental disaster.

July



HSM Round 11
Data collection: 26 June - 10 July 2023



On 17 July, the Black Sea Grain Initiative² was terminated, impacting Ukraine's ability to export grain through the Black Sea, negatively impacting global food security and Ukraine's economy.

July to September



Regular missile attacks against the grain terminals and infrastructure of the ports in the South.

August



HSM Round 12
Data collection: 7 - 21 August 2023

August - September



Intensified hostilities in Kupiansk and surrounding areas of Kharkivska Oblast triggering the announcement of partial evacuation of civilians from Kupianskyi raion.

October



HSM Round 13
Data collection: 26 September - 13 October 2023

November



Onset of winter conditions in many regions across Ukraine.

November - December



HSM Round 14
Data collection: 20 November - 4 December 2023



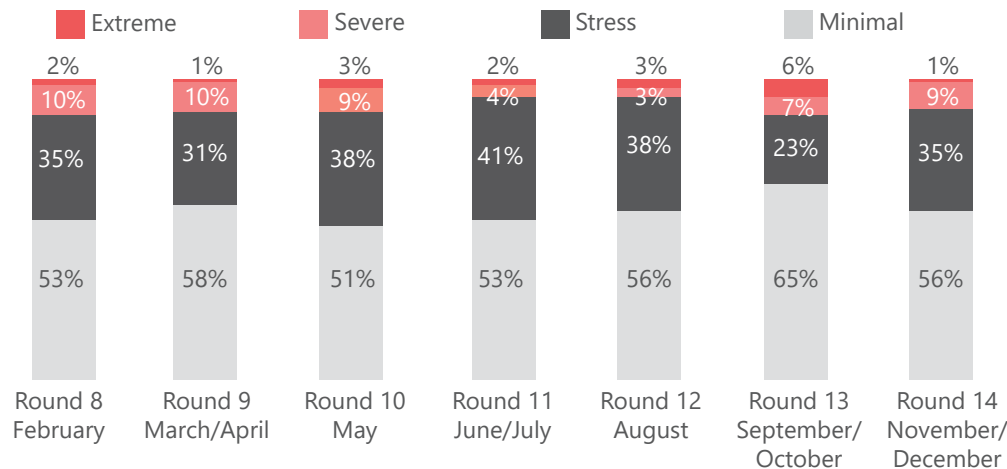
Winter attacks in many regions of Ukraine, including Kyiv.



OVERALL HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

Overall, throughout 2023, the level of vulnerability was comparatively higher in the assessed settlements closer to the front line. **An average of 7% (n=19/255) of all assessed settlements were found to have Severe overall vulnerability and 2% (n=6/255) of settlements Extreme overall vulnerability throughout HSM rounds 8-14 in 2023.** Notably, in none of these rounds did any assessed settlement display an Extreme+ overall vulnerability that would have implied the collapse of basic services or total inability to meet basic sectoral needs in the settlement. The settlements with overall heightened vulnerabilities were mostly concentrated in Donetsk and Kharkivska Oblasts. **Marinka, Avdiivka, Vuhledar, Velyka Novosilka, Zvanivka** (Donetska), and **Dvorichna** (Kharkivska Oblasts) were the only settlements that **scored an Extreme overall vulnerability in at least four HSM Rounds throughout 2023.**

Figure 1: % of assessed settlements in Zones A and B by overall SVI scores and by round (n=255)



10%

of the assessed settlements in November/December 2023 (HSM Round 14) displayed a **Severe or Extreme overall vulnerability**. Of those, only **Kupiansk** and **Avdiivka** were found to have Extreme scores.

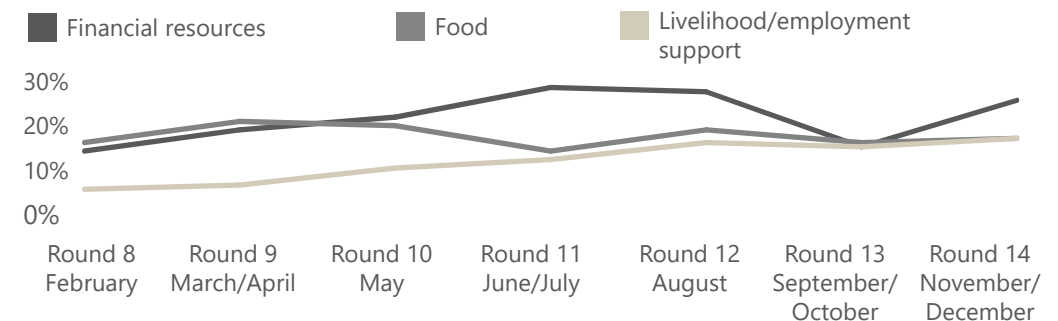
Settlements with high overall vulnerability scores most often have protection-related vulnerabilities. This sector displayed the **highest proportion of settlements with Extreme+, Extreme, and Severe vulnerability scores** in all HSM Rounds (8-14) in 2023, highlighting the notable vulnerability of the settlements in the protection sector due to exposure to and impact of hostilities.

The most commonly reported main concerns in the assessed settlements in Zones A and B, comparing February 2023 (Round 8) and November/December 2023 (Round 14) (n=255)



The difference in the main concerns reported over 2023 highlights the shifts in the main areas affecting people's daily lives, access to essential services, and items. Consequently, safety concerns growingly gained more prevalence towards the end of the year, as well as reports about **growing economic barriers to accessing basic goods and services** (see the sectoral snapshots for more details), likely indicated **depletion of the coping capacities in the second year of the war**. Findings suggest an increasing need for livelihood support, which was also identified as one of the main sectors with unmet needs in the MSNA 2023.³

Figure 2: % of assessed settlements in Zones A and B by top 3 priority needs* and by round (n=255)



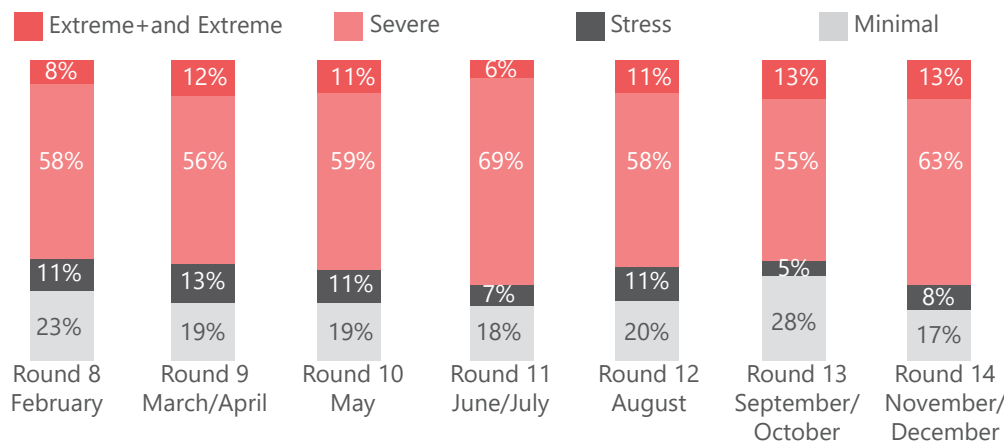
*Winterisation-related needs gained prevalence during winter months with the **highest proportions of settlements found to have fuel for heating as a priority need in 18% (n=47/255) of the assessed settlements in February (Round 8) and in 20% (n=50/255) in November/December (Round 14).**

PROTECTION

The humanitarian situation in Ukraine in 2023 was defined by continued **protection concerns**: hostilities, mass missile attacks, and contamination with landmines/UXOs continued to impact civilians' lives, especially in areas closer to the front line and the border with the Russian Federation.⁶

The **majority of assessed settlements in Zones A and B displayed heightened Protection sectoral vulnerability scores** (Severe, Extreme, and Extreme+) throughout 2023. The score is primarily based on reported safety and security concerns and movement restrictions in the assessed settlements. **25% (n=64/255) of the assessed settlements were found to have an Extreme or Extreme+ vulnerability in Protection in at least one HSM Round**, indicating an extreme or total inability of people to meet basic sectoral needs. Of these, **14 settlements with an Extreme+ score in at least one round were located within 30km from the front line in Donetsk (n=7/14)⁷ and Kharkivska (n=7/14)⁸ Oblasts** (for more information, see the maps on p.5). In November/December 2023 (Round 14), **Kupiansk** (Kharkivska), and **Avdiivka** (Donetska Oblast) exhibited Extreme+ vulnerability score in Protection, likely related to intense battles around these settlements.⁹

Figure 3: % of assessed settlements in Zones A and B by Protection sectoral vulnerability scores and by round (n=255)



The main drivers of heightened Protection vulnerabilities related to the safety and security concerns.

KIs most frequently reported the **threat of missile attacks, exposure to armed violence and shelling, lack of bomb shelters** and **contamination with landmines/UXOs** as protection concerns for people in the assessed settlements. Throughout 2023, the **threat of missile attacks remained the most commonly reported safety and security concern**. Likely due to frequent mass missile attacks against civilian

infrastructure in May 2023,¹⁰ KIs reported this in a growing number of settlements: in **64% (n=162/255)** of settlements in May 2023 (Round 10) and in **71% (n=182/255)** in June/July 2023 (Round 11), compared to **61% (n=155/255)** settlements before May 2023. HSM findings indicate similar patterns in autumn in anticipation of renewed attacks against civilian infrastructure as in winter 2022/2023. In line with this, the proportion of settlements where KIs reported the threat of missile attacks as a protection concern increased again in November/December 2023 (Round 14) with people in **70% (n=179/255)** of the settlements reportedly facing this concern.

Furthermore, **exposure to armed violence and shelling was also driving heightened vulnerabilities in Protection**. While at the beginning of the year, KIs in **24% (n=61/255)** of the settlements reported this concern, in summer KIs in a little more than a third of the settlements did so (Round 11 (June/July 2023): **35%, n=88/255**; Round 12 (August 2023): **35%, n=89/255**), likely related to the intensification of fighting in the summer.¹¹ Towards the end of the year, the proportion of settlements went down to **29% (n=73/255)**.

👤 Vulnerable population groups

The most commonly reported groups of people in the settlement that were less able to meet their everyday needs, compared to other population groups.¹²



Over the year, KIs in a growing number of settlements reported that returnees as a group had trouble meeting their everyday needs. This is connected with the **increased overall vulnerability in the second year of the war and growing flows of returnees to settlements in Zones A and B**.¹³ Returnees more often required protection assistance, had severe livelihood and healthcare needs, and struggled to access basic goods and services.¹⁴

✖ Movement restrictions

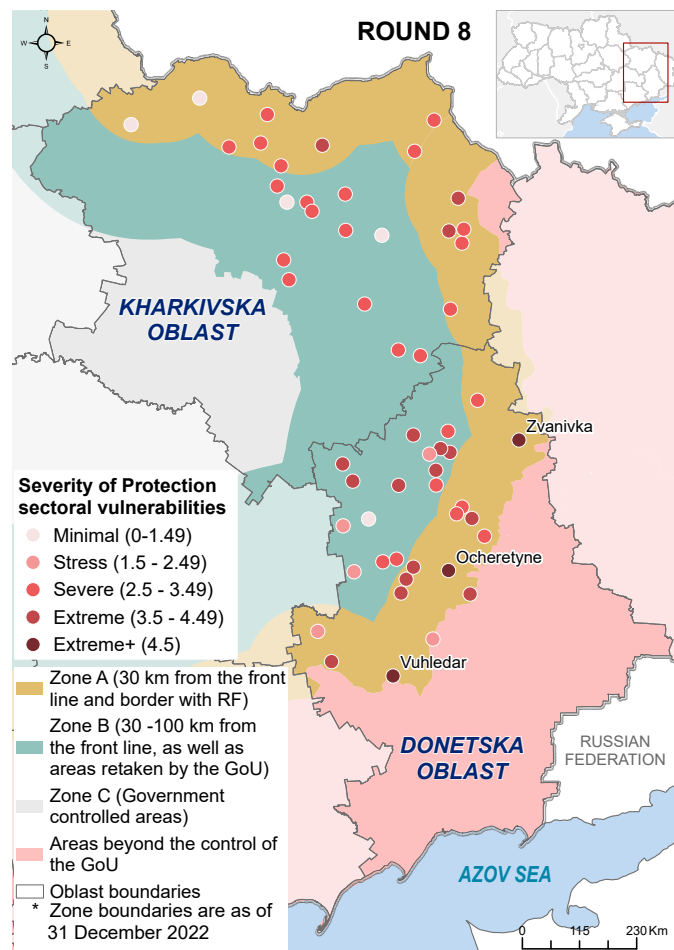
In 2023, movement restrictions due to administrative restrictions, such as block posts, check points or limitations imposed by local authorities, continued to pose an obstacle to people's movement into and out of the assessed settlements. The highest degree of restrictions throughout 2023 was consistently reported by KIs in **Zvanivka, Vuhledar, Avdiivka, and Marinka** (Donetska Oblast) **with the movement into/out of the settlement either being not possible or implying a lot of restrictions**.



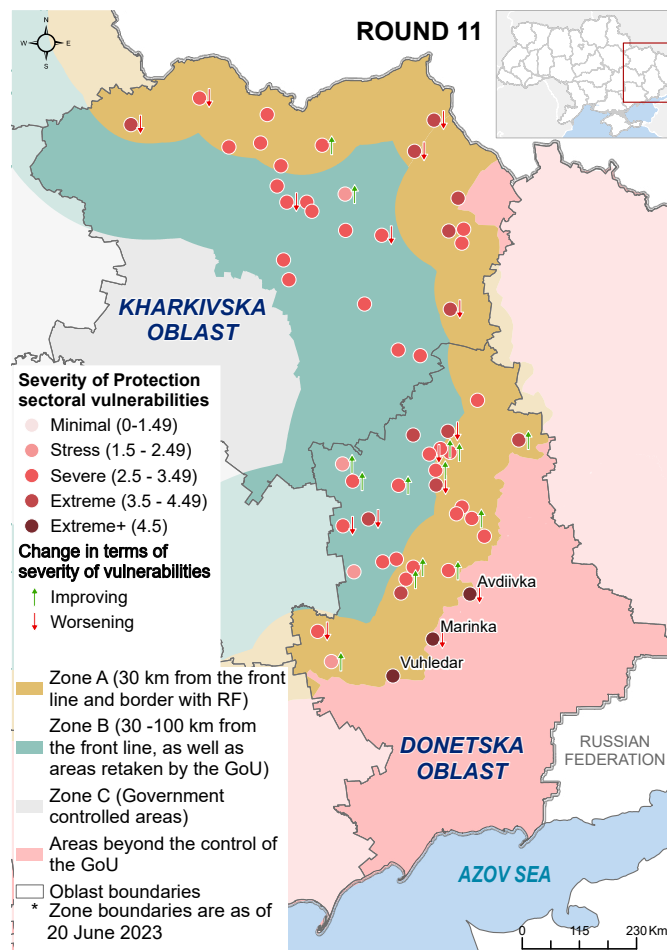
PROTECTION

The maps below show how Protection sectoral vulnerability scores evolved over 2023 in the assessed settlements in Kharkivska and Donetsk Oblasts. Comparing to February (HSM Round 8) and July (HSM Round 11), the proportion of settlements displaying Extreme Protection sectoral vulnerabilities decreased to only two settlements in November/December (HSM Round 14). Further, at the end of the year (HSM Round 14) Severe or Extreme Protection sectoral vulnerabilities were mostly limited to settlements in Zone A.

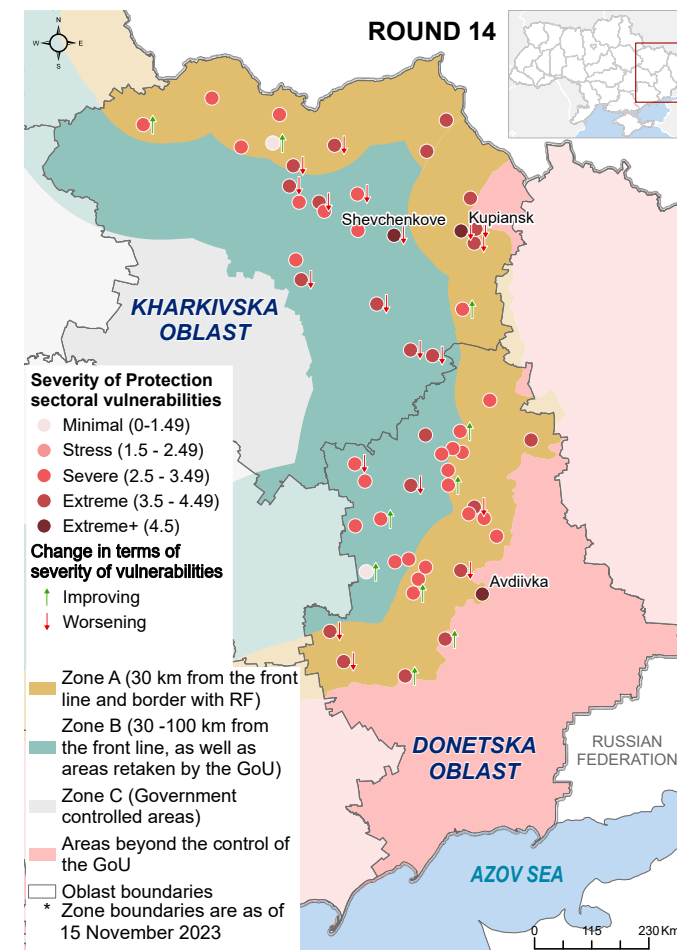
Map 1: Settlements in Kharkivska and Donetsk Oblast by Protection sectoral vulnerability scores in February 2023 (Round 8) (n=56/255)



Map 2: Settlements in Kharkivska and Donetsk Oblast by Protection sectoral vulnerability scores in July 2023 (Round 11) (n=56/255)



Map 3: Settlements in Kharkivska and Donetsk Oblast by Protection sectoral vulnerability scores in November 2023 (Round 14) (n=56/255)

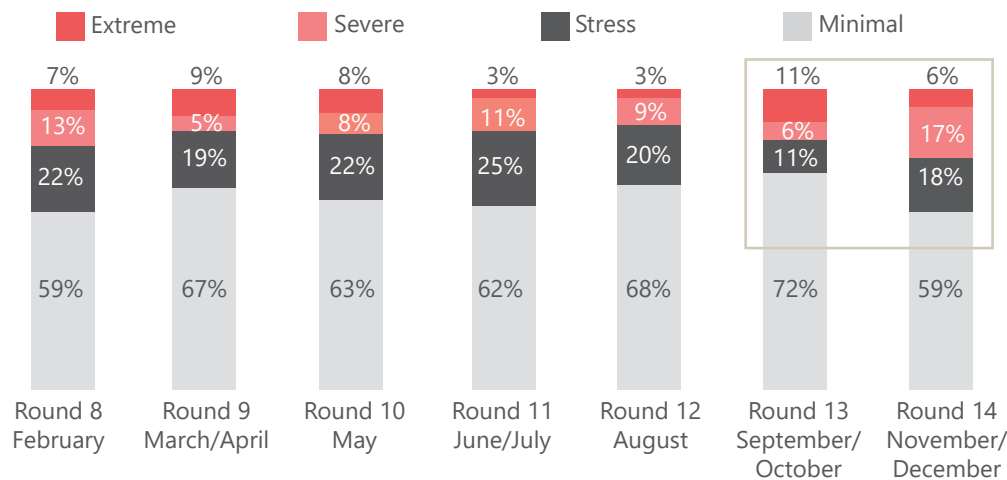


WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE (WASH)

Overall, access to water over 2023 appeared to be **primarily affected by the lasting effects of the Kakhovka dam breach, continued damage to critical infrastructure, and likely challenges to repair works due to the volatile security situation along the front line.**

Throughout 2023, on average **16% (n=41/255)** of the assessed settlements in Zones A and B were found to have heightened vulnerabilities in the WASH sector. **The situation appears to have worsened in November/December 2023 (Round 14) with 23% (n=58/255) of the settlements scoring Extreme or Severe in WASH**, accounting for the highest proportion observed in 2023. Notably, heightened vulnerabilities in these settlements are of Severe intensity, indicating moderate rather than extreme inability to meet basic sectoral needs.

Figure 4: % of assessed settlements in Zones A and B by WASH vulnerability scores and by round (n=255)¹⁵



The main drivers of heightened WASH vulnerabilities related to the access to water, as well as water supply disruptions.

The findings indicate that the situation in terms of access to water requires monitoring to avoid further deterioration. Some deterioration was already observed in November/December 2023 (Round 14): **40% (n=103/255)** of the assessed settlements were found with water access constraints or concerns against **32% (n=82/255)** on average throughout 2023. In half of these settlements (**n=51/103**), 1-9% or more of the population reportedly had not been able to access water, and in the other half, the situation was concerning and required monitoring. Since autumn, the proportion of settlements with over a quarter of the people unable to access water increased: from **3% (n=8/255)** in August (Round 12) to an average of

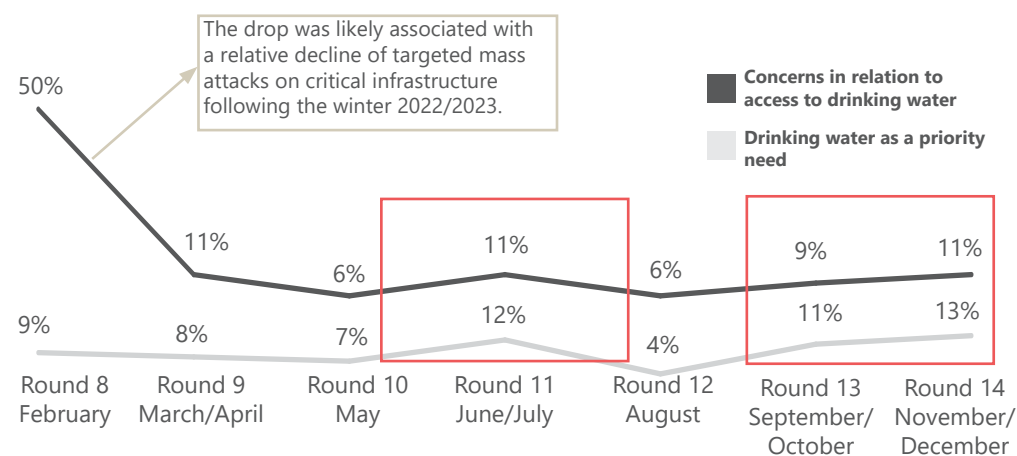
8% (n=22/255) throughout September - December (Rounds 13 and 14). Access to water also appeared to be driven by seasonality. **In August 2023 (Round 12) the reduction of water supply coverage appeared to be the most commonly reported barrier to accessing water** (reported by KIs in **25% (n=18/72)** of the settlements¹⁶).



In terms of barriers to accessing water, **breakdown/damages to the water network, water pumping stations, and water treatment stations, as well as the lack of electricity or back-up power were commonly identified as hindering such access throughout 2023.** These barriers were identified in a growing number of settlements in the second half of the year, starting from August 2023 (Round 12).

Starting from September, frequent water disruptions were also reported in a higher number of settlements. **Disruptions 'most of the time' were reported by KIs in 13% (n=33/255) and 11% (n=27/255) of the settlements in Zones A and B in September/October 2023 (Round 13) and November/December 2023 (Round 14), respectively, compared to the average 7% in the prior months.**

Figure 5: % of assessed settlements in Zones A and B with drinking water identified as a concern or priority need, by round (n=255)



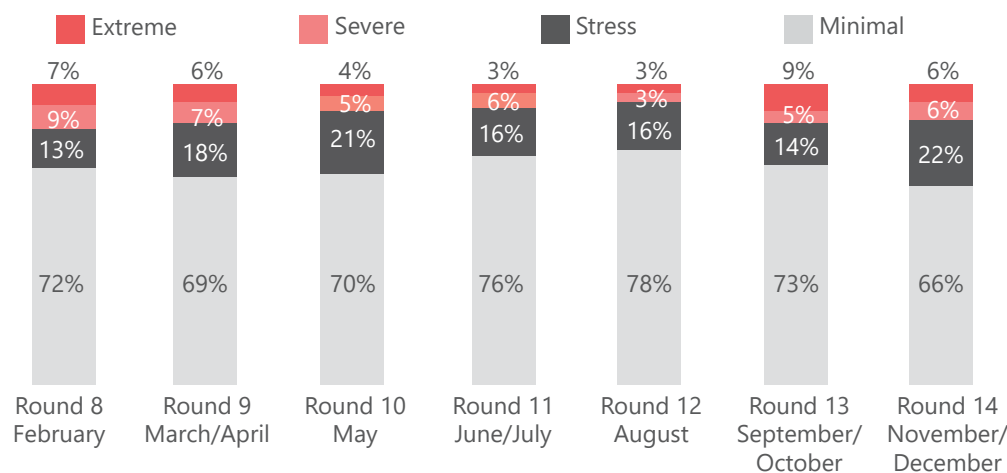
The shifts observed in terms of access to water barriers and concerns over 2023 suggest deterioration of the situation in certain areas (primarily within close proximity to the front line) and across seasons. This **necessitates continued monitoring, primarily in the settlements with heightened sectoral vulnerabilities, and highlights the need for rapid response** when relevant to avoid household gaps.



HEALTHCARE

Overall, **Healthcare sectoral vulnerability scores remained mostly stable throughout the year with some minor fluctuations: on average 11% (n=28/255) of the assessed settlements were found to have heightened (Severe or Extreme) vulnerabilities in each HSM Round.** This means that people in these settlement faced moderate or extreme inability to meet basic needs in relation to healthcare. On average, half of these settlements had an Extreme vulnerability score in the healthcare sector. **These settlements were mostly located in Donetsk and Kharkivska Oblasts.** As in most other sectors, HSM findings indicated smaller proportions with Extreme Healthcare sectoral vulnerabilities in the summer months (3% (n=7/255) in both June/July (Round 11) and August (Round 12)), followed by a notable increase in September/October 2023 (Round 13: 9% (n=22/255)). **Avdiivka and Vuhledar** (Donetska Oblast) were the only settlements with Extreme sectoral vulnerability score in 6 or more HSM Rounds.

Figure 6: % of assessed settlements in Zones A and B by Healthcare vulnerability scores and by round (n=255)

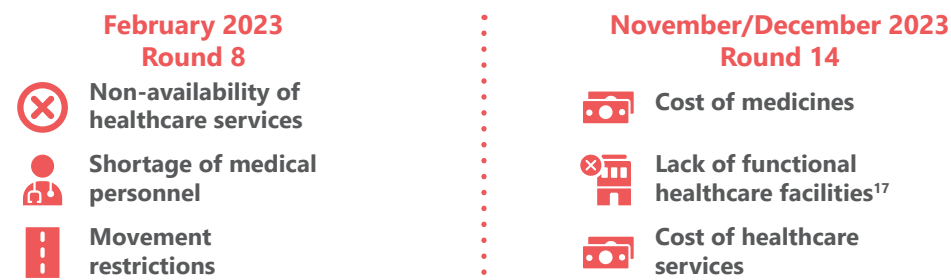


The main drivers of heightened Health vulnerabilities related to the limited access to healthcare services and medicines.

The proportion of assessed settlements with estimated 1-9% or more of people not having access to healthcare services in the 14 days prior to data collection remained mostly similar with only minor fluctuations during the year. In **Zvanivka, Vuhledar, and Avdiivka** (Donetska Oblast), KIs reported that more than 25% of the population had been unable to access the desired healthcare services throughout 2023 (in all HSM Rounds (8-14)).

The barriers to accessing healthcare services have shifted throughout 2023. **Towards the end of the year an increase in reports related to the financial barriers was observed.**

Most commonly reported barriers to accessing healthcare services in February (Round 8) and November/December (Round 14)¹⁸



As the war entered its second year, damage to healthcare infrastructures and a volatile security situation along with growing economic challenges particularly closer to the front line continued to pose major barriers for civilians to accessing healthcare services in their settlements.¹⁹

Throughout 2023, **family doctor and primary care facilities, hospital care, emergency care, and pharmacies were found to be the most commonly reported types of services/facilities that people had been unable to access** in the assessed settlements. Findings also indicate growing reports of unavailability of specialty hospital care: from **23% (n=24/106)** of settlements in February 2023 (Round 8) to **47% (n=52/111)** of settlements in November/December 2023 (Round 14).²⁰ According to the WHO, special medical care services such as cancer care were disrupted mostly in conflict-affected oblasts.²¹ Over the year, the proportion of settlements with reported **non-availability of laboratory and diagnostic services²²** also increased.

Access to medicines

On average, KIs reported **barriers to accessing medicines in the majority of settlements (55%, n=140/255)**. Similar to the situation regarding access to healthcare services, some alleviation of barriers was observed over the summer, but **growing reports of barriers were again observed in November/December 2023**. Over the summer, the most reported barriers to accessing medicines were **affordability (32%, n=83/255 settlements)**, and a **lack of pharmacies²³ (8%, n=21/255)**. **Reports on these barriers increased towards the end of the year; 37% (n=94/255) and 15% (n=38/255) respectively.** Especially in areas retaken by the GoU, restoring of pharmacies due to damage, lack of medicines, and contamination of landmines/UXOs is a slow process, causing a lack of functioning pharmacies in these areas.²⁴

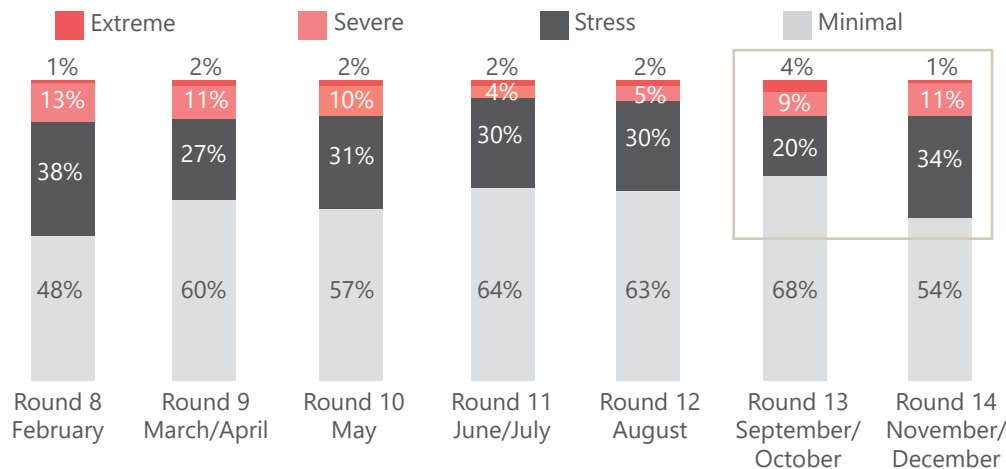


SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS (SNFI)

Overall, shelter and NFI-related vulnerabilities over 2023 appear to be driven by the seasonality, combined with the continued effects of extensive attacks²⁵ on infrastructure and housing. Increased proportions of settlements were found to have heightened SNFI vulnerability scores (Severe and Extreme) in Zones A and B over winter months: **13% (n=32/255)** in November/December (Round 14), similar to February 2023 (Round 8: **14%, n=35/255**). Over the summer, as winter-specific needs and concerns decreased, the proportion of settlements with heightened SNFI vulnerabilities also dropped down to **6% (n=14/255)** in June/July 2023 (Round 11).

Notably, heightened vulnerabilities in these settlements are of Severe intensity, indicating moderate rather than extreme inability to meet basic sectoral needs. The only **settlements with Extreme SNFI vulnerability score in November/December 2023 (Round 14)** were **Kupiansk** (Kharkivska Oblast), **Avdiivka**, and **Vuhledar** (Donetska Oblast).

Figure 7: % of assessed settlements in Zones A and B by SNFI vulnerability scores and by round (Round 8 -14, February - December 2023) (n=255)



The main drivers of heightened SNFI vulnerabilities related to access to safe and adequate housing and damage to civilian housing.

While the situation in relation to access to housing was reportedly under control in more settlements over the summer, this is likely related to the seasonality of the shelter needs rather than an improvement in the situation. The findings indicate notable shifts in people's access to safe and adequate housing following the summer months.

In **September/October 2023 (Round 13)** an increased number of settlements in **Zones A and B were found to have more than 50% of the population unable to access safe and adequate housing**. Following the 2023/2024 winter attacks, further deterioration of the situation is likely to be observed in early 2024.

Furthermore, **the types of barriers to safe and adequate housing most commonly reported by KIs shifted over 2023, taking on a more economic dimension towards the end of the year**. While the share of settlements where lack of rental properties or unaffordability of rent was identified as a barrier to accessing housing was lower than at the beginning of 2023, in November/December 2023 was a relative increase observed in reports of rent unaffordability (from **4% (n=4/96)** of settlements in September/October (Round 13) to **10% (12/115)** in November/December (Round 14)).

IDPs were more frequently reported as a group facing barriers related to the unaffordability of rental accommodation from August (Round 12) onwards, while other barriers hindering their access to housing were less commonly reported in the assessed settlements²⁶ over 2023.

NFI Access to non-food items (NFI)

Overall, while the proportion of settlements with a reported lack of access to NFIs²⁷ has been small throughout all the rounds (**13% (n=32/255)** on average), some shifts were observed across seasons. Following the relatively low reports of NFI accessibility concerns over the summer, **the proportion of settlements with reported lack of access to NFIs increased again starting from September/October 2023 (Round 13)**. This is likely related to the growing needs for winterisation NFIs (clothes, winter blankets, solid fuel, etc.) as the colder months approached.

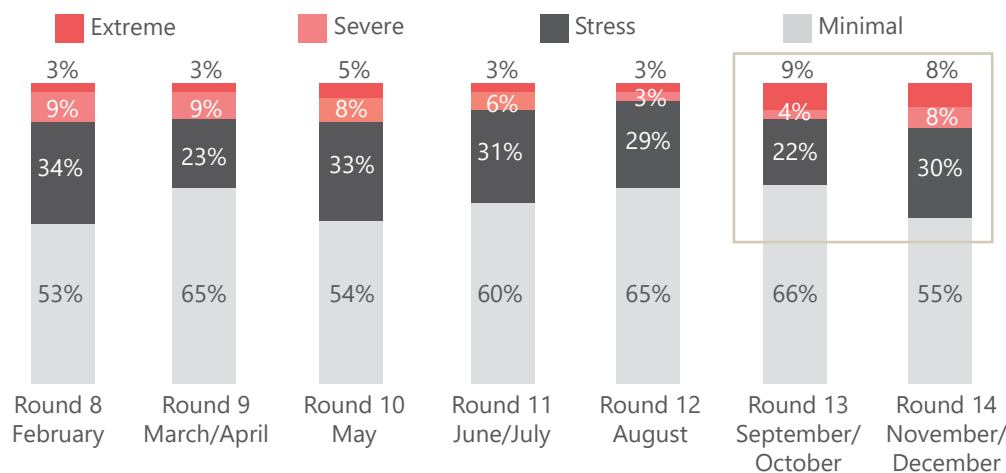
A consistently increasing proportion of settlements reported a lack of functional stores as a barrier to accessing NFIs following the summer months, with **74% (n=23/31)** and **71% (n=24/34)** of settlements in September/October (Round 13) and November/December (Round 14) respectively, compared to **46% (n=10/22)** in August (Round 12). Meanwhile the lack of money was less commonly reported by KIs as a barrier to accessing NFIs.



FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS

Throughout the past year, on average **11% (n=29/255)** of the assessed settlements in Zones A and B were found to have heightened vulnerabilities in the Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) sector. Similar to other sectors assessed, while a slight alleviation of vulnerabilities was observed over the summer months, **the situation seems to have worsened in November/December 2023 with 16% (n=40/255) of the settlements scoring Extreme or Severe in the FSL sector**, accounting for the highest share throughout 2023.

Figure 8: % of assessed settlements in Zones A and B by FSL vulnerability scores and by round (Round 8 -14, February - December 2023) (n=255)



The main drivers of heightened FSL vulnerabilities related to the access to food, financial services, and markets.

Access to food

Consistent with the overall vulnerabilities within the sector, some improvement was observed in people's access to sufficient food closer to the summer season, with the lowest share of settlements with at least some people unable to access sufficient food (**10%, n=24/255**) found in August 2023 (Round 12). Nevertheless, the trend changed towards the end of the year, and in September - December 2023 KIs in an average of **8% (n=20/255)** of the settlements indicated that over a quarter of the population in their settlements had been unable to access sufficient food (similar to March/April 2023). Nearly all these settlements were in Donetsk and Kharkivska Oblasts.

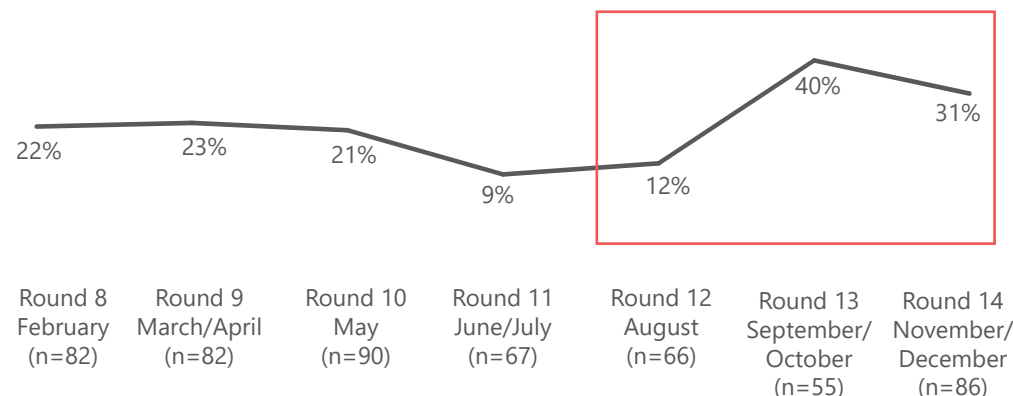
Overall, **the proportion of settlements with a lack of functional stores and high prices reported as barriers to accessing sufficient food also increased after the summer.**

Access to markets

The proportion of settlements in Zones A and B where at least some people were unable to access markets to purchase goods was higher over the winter months (**19% (n=49/255)** in February and **18% (n=47/255)** in November/December 2023). Over the summer months, this decreased to an average of **11% (n=29/255)**.

In terms of barriers²⁸, **KIs in a growing number of settlements reported the non-availability of markets in the area as a barrier to accessing goods towards the end of the year.** This shift comes to highlight again the persisting challenges to market functionality due to volatile security situation, exposure to hostilities, and damage to infrastructure primarily in the front-line areas. Increased reports of market non-availability are also likely linked to the seasonal barriers affecting operations of markets (e.g., electricity disruptions, barriers to accessing heating, additional challenges to ensure supply of items, etc.). Notably, in November/December 2023 (Round 14), **the most common barriers to accessing markets were that they operated at limited times or were too far away.**²⁹

Figure 9: % of assessed settlements in Zones A and B with non-availability of markets as a barrier to accessing markets to purchase goods, by round



Access to financial services

27%
n=69/255

Average % of settlements with the majority of people reportedly unable to access financial services

Over 2023, the most commonly reported barrier to accessing financial services was the lack of functioning financial institutions, reported by KIs in **84% (n=64/76)** of the settlements where the majority of people were unable to access financial services in November/December (Round 14).



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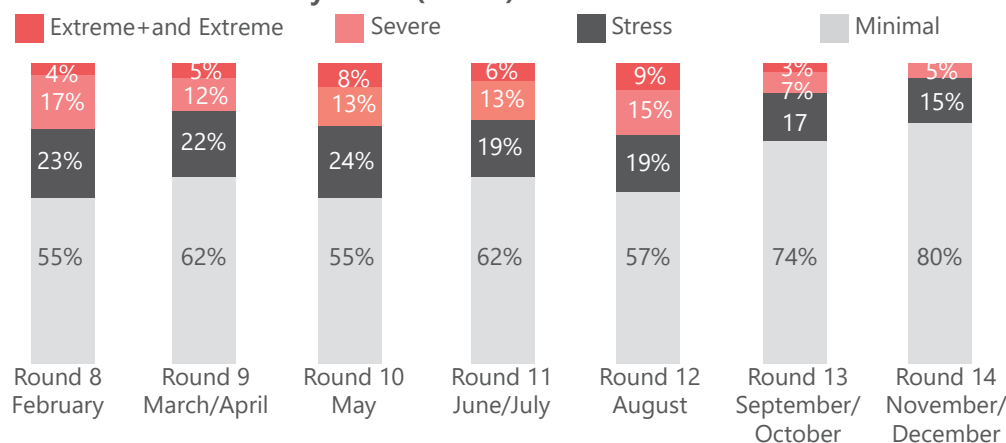
Informing
more effective
humanitarian action

EDUCATION

HSM findings still indicate education-related challenges that continued to negatively impact the learning of Ukrainian children in 2023. September marked the return of many school-aged children to in-person studying after 17 months of war and disrupted online learning in Zones A and B.³⁰

Throughout 2023, **the Education sectoral vulnerability scores remained stable with an average 12% (n=33/255) of settlements displaying Severe, 4% (n=9/255) Extreme, and 1% (n=3/255) Extreme+ vulnerabilities**, indicating moderate or extreme inability to meet basic education-related needs. As seen in Figure 10 below, from August on, a decreasing number of settlements displayed heightened vulnerability in education. While **in September/October 2023 (Round 13)** there were **four** settlements with **Extreme** educational vulnerability scores (**Blahodatne** (Mykolaivska Oblast), **Oleksandrivka**, **Shabelkivka**, and **Zvanivka** (Donetska)), and **three** with **Extreme+ (Dvorichna** (Kharkivska), **Udachne**, and **Novodonetske** (Donetska)), **in November/December 2023 (Round 14), no assessed settlement had such heightened sectoral vulnerabilities**. In this Round, only **13** settlements³¹ displayed Severe vulnerability in education, indicating moderate inability to meet sectoral needs.

Figure 10: % of assessed settlements in Zones A and B by sectoral vulnerability scores in Education and by round (n=255)

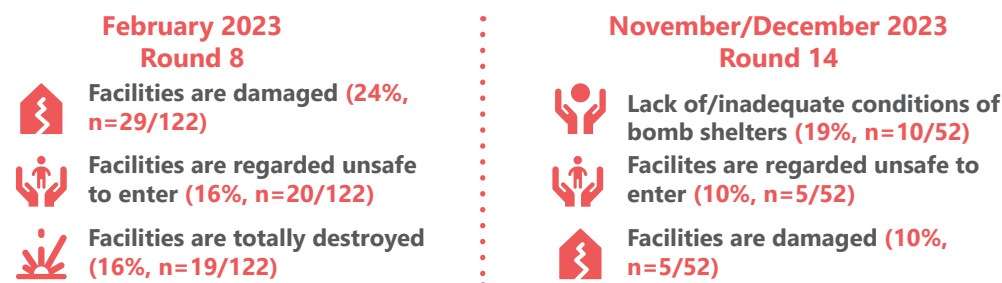


The main drivers of heightened Education vulnerabilities related to the non-availability of educational facilities for educational purposes, as well as internet network disruptions.

In the second half of the 2022-2023 school year (overlapping with HSM Rounds 8-10) and during summer break (HSM Rounds 11 - 12), KIs in an average of **17% (n=43/255)** of assessed settlements reported that over half of the educational facilities were not operational or suitable for educational purposes. The limited availability of educational facilities was particularly affecting children's access to education in the front-line areas. Concurrently, REACH's MSNA 2023 findings show that due to security concerns, 98% of school-aged children in the East and 87% in the South reportedly attended school by remote or blended learning during the 2022-2023 school year.³²

Notably, in August 2023 (Round 12), there was a spike in the number of settlements (20%, n=51/255), where KIs reported that all or almost all facilities were not used for educational purposes, likely related to the increased attention to the state of educational facilities in light of the new school year. The start of the 2023-2024 school year marked the return of many school-aged children to in-person learning for the first time since February 2022.³³ HSM findings indicated increased availability of educational facilities for educational purposes: from **50% (n=128/255)** of settlements in Zones A and B in August 2023 (Round 12) to **73% (n=185/255)** in September/October 2023 (Round 13) and **80% (n=203/255)** in November/December 2023 (Round 14).

Most commonly reported reasons for non-availability of educational facilities in February (Round 8) and November/December (Round 14)



Regarding the reasons for the non-availability of educational facilities, slight differences were observed between the end of the 2022-2023 school year and the new school year (2023-2024). Since February 2023 (Round 8), KIs in an increasing number of settlements identified **damage to educational facilities as a reason for their non-availability for educational purposes**. With the beginning of the new school year, **lack of/inadequate conditions of bomb shelters became the most commonly reported reason for the non-availability of facilities in September/October 2023 (Round 13: reported by KIs in 17%, n=12/69 settlements)³⁴**. The number of settlements dropped to **10 out of 52³⁵** in November/December 2023 (Round 14). It is worth mentioning that since 2022, according to an order by the Ministry of Education of Ukraine, all educational facilities must provide a bomb shelter to be operational.³⁶



ENDNOTES

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¹ OCHA, [Ukraine Humanitarian Response Plan 2024](#), January 2024.

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² The Black Sea Grain Initiative was an agreement among Ukraine, the Russian Federation, Turkey, and the United Nations to ensure the safe export of grain through to Black Sea to countries around the globe. The agreement was reached on 22 July 2022 in Turkey.

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³ REACH Initiative, [2023 MSNA Bulletin: Ukraine](#), November 2023.

⁴ REACH Initiative, [2023 MSNA Bulletin: Ukraine](#), November 2023.

⁵ REACH Initiative, [2023 MSNA Bulletin: Ukraine](#), November 2023.

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⁶ Protection Cluster, [Protection Monitoring Findings 1 January - 31 December 2023](#), January 2024.

⁷ Ocheretyne, Marinka, Avdiivka, Lyman, Vuhledar, Velyka Novosilka, and Zvanivka (Donetska Oblast, all located within 30km from the front line).

⁸ Tsyrukun, Shevchenkove, Kurylivka, Kupiansk, Vilkhuvatka, Izium, and Donetsk (Kharkivska Oblast).

⁹ Kyiv Independent, [Exploring Ukraine's most important battles of 2023](#), 30 December 2023.

¹⁰ The Guardian, [Russia - Ukraine war live](#), May 2023.

¹¹ The Financial Times, [The hard lessons from Ukraine's summer offensive](#), August 2023.

¹² Increasing trend over the year, in February (Round 8), KIs in only 9% (n=23/255) and in one (n=1/255) of the assessed settlements reported people who had been directly harmed by the current violence and returnees as vulnerable population groups, respectively

¹³ International Organisation of Migration, [Displacement Tracking Matrix](#).

¹⁴ OCHA, [Ukraine Humanitarian Response Plan 2024](#), January 2024.

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¹⁵ The frame in the graph below is intended to guide the reader to highlight important figures and trends. Similar frames can be found in other graphs too.

¹⁶ Settlements with above-'minimal' level of need in relation to accessing water: settlements where at least 1-9% of the population had been unable to access water in the 14 days prior to data collection, or where KIs indicated that while people had unhindered access to water, the situation was concerning and required monitoring. The mentioned 18 settlements were primarily located in Dnipropetrovska Oblast (Kryvorizkyi, Nikopolskyi, and Synelnykivskyi raions), as well as Donetska (Pokrovskyi and Bakhmutskyi raions), Kharkivska (Kupianskyi raion), Zaporizka (Zaporizkyi raion).

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¹⁷ 'Lack of functional healthcare facilities' as a respond option was only included into the HSM questionnaire in March (Round 9), therefore there is no data on HSM Round 8 (February).

¹⁸ Barriers to accessing health care were reported by KIs in settlements where at least 1-9% of the population had been unable to access the desired healthcare services, of where KIs indicated that while people had unhindered access to healthcare services, the situation was concerning

and required monitoring.

¹⁹ Data-Friendly Space, [Ukraine Situation Analysis](#), 25 October 2023.

²⁰ Types of healthcare facilities/services were reported by KIs in settlements where at least 1-9% of the population had been unable to access the desired healthcare services, of where KIs indicated that while people had unhindered access to healthcare services, the situation was concerning and required monitoring.

²¹ Health Cluster Ukraine, Ukraine Health Cluster Bulletin No.4 (June 2023), 21 July 2023.

²² 'Laboratory and diagnostic services' as a respond option was only included into the HSM questionnaire in March (Round 9), therefore there is no data on this from HSM Round 8 (February).

²³ 'Lack of pharmacies' as a response option was only included into the HSM questionnaire in March/April 2023 (Round 9), therefore there is no data on this from HSM Round 8 (February).

²⁴ ACAPS, [Ukraine: Impact of the conflict on the healthcare system](#), 22 September 2023.

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²⁵ Atlantic Council, [Russia resumes bombing campaign of Ukraine's civilian energy infrastructure](#), 22 September 2023.

²⁶ Subset of settlements with above-minimal level of need in relation to accessing safe and adequate housing in the 14 days prior to data collection.

²⁷ NFIs may include basic hygiene items, cleaning products, bedding materials, clothes, kitchen and cooking items, household and other NFIs.

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²⁸ Starting from Round 13 (September/October 2023), the following response options were added to the question: 'Markets are too far away', 'Not safe/insecurity in or near the markets', 'Markets operate at limited times', 'Certain population groups face difficulties in accessing markets due to their social or physical characteristics (e.g., discrimination, exclusion, feeling unwelcome)', therefore these options could not have been reported in earlier rounds.

²⁹ The response options 'Markets operate at limited times' and 'Markets are too far away' were included in the HSM questionnaire in September/October 2023 (Round 13), therefore there is no data on this in prior HSM rounds.

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³⁰ France24, [Under sirens, threats, Ukraine's children go back to school](#), 1 September 2023.

³¹ Kherson, Novoraisk (Khersonska), Odesa (Odeska), Pervomaiske, Horokhivske, Berezhuvate (Mykolaivska), Borodianka (Kyivska), Mala Tokmachka, Vozdvyzhivka, Ternuvate (Zaporizka), Pokrovsk (Donetska), Nikopol, and Marhanets (Dnipropetrovska Oblasts).

³² REACH, [MSNA 2023 data set](#), September 2023.

³³ France24, [Under sirens, threats, Ukraine's children go back to school](#), 1 September 2023.

³⁴ Shabelkivka (Donetska), Hostomel, Piskivka, Ivankiv (Kyivska), Bashtanka, Horokhivske, Halytsynove, Ochakiv, Sukhyi Yelanets (Mykolaivska), Konotop (Sumska), Tiahynka (Khersonska), and Olyshivka (Chernihivska Oblasts).

³⁵ Marhanets, Nikopol (Dnipropetrovska), Novi Petrivtsi (Kyivska), Berezhuvate, Horokhivske, Mykolaiv (Mykolaivska), Odesa (Odeska), Chupakhivka (Sumska), Velyka Oleksandrivka, and Novoraisk (Khersonska Oblasts).

³⁶ Ukraine Ministry of Education, [Recommendation by the Ministry of Education](#), July 2023.



HSM METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

For the Humanitarian Situation Monitoring, REACH collects its data through phone interviews with **community key informants (CKIs)**: representatives from local government, local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and specific population groups (older persons, people with disabilities, children, women, internally displaced people (IDPs), returnees, and others). To get more information on the different HSM Rounds conducted in 2023, please see Annex 1.

For a more accurate analysis, the assessed settlements were grouped into three geographic zones within the GCAs:

- **Zone A:** Areas within 30 km range from the frontline at the time of sampling, as monitored by LiveUA, and the state border with the Russian Federation.
- **Zone B:** Areas within 30-100km range from the frontline at the time of sampling, as monitored by LiveUA, Areas retaken by the GoU, and raions intersecting with these areas by 50% of the raion territory.
- **Zone C:** Remaining GCAs.

‘Administrative centre’ approach was applied in all zones:

- **All administrative centres** (including hromada, raion, and oblast centres) were sampled in **Zones A and B**.
- Only in the case of Chernihivska Oblast, where no settlements were included that were categorised as administrative centres within Zone A, with settlements being selected purposively among non-administrative-centre settlements.
- In comparison to the previous Rounds (Round 8 - 10), 26 settlements with a significance similar to administrative centres were added to the sample of Zones A and B.
- To avoid over-representation of settlements from specific oblasts in the overall sample of Zone B, rural settlements (administrative centres) were purposively sampled in these oblasts (Dnipropetrovska, Odeska).
- In **Zone C**, as it covers a wider area and a larger number of settlements, only **three administrative centres were purposively sampled in each oblast**.
- Settlements with a pre-war population size of less than 1,000 people were excluded from the sample.

To account for a possible higher variation in needs in units with a larger population, the number of KIs per settlement differed for the following **3 categories**:

- **3 KIs** in every selected settlement with a population size of 1,000-9,999*,
- **5 KIs** in every settlement with a population size of 10,000 – 99,999*,
- **7 KIs** in every selected settlement with a population size of over 100,000*.

* Population size prior to the start of the war in February 2022.

All KI responses from the same settlement were aggregated to have one data point for each variable per settlement. The **Data Aggregation Plan** used the **average approach** to aggregate the settlement responses by using a severity scale in cases of **single-choice** questions. In case of **multiple-choice** questions, the rule was to select all responses that have been reported by at least 1 out of 3 respondents, 2 out of 5 respondents, and 3 out of 7 respondents in the settlements per the relevant categories, as presented above.

The statistics presented in this brief **cannot be extrapolated to represent a proportion (%) of the population, and thus should be interpreted as indicative** rather than representative. Given the small and unrepresentative sample, these results only provide an indicative understanding of the situation in the assessed areas.

SETTLEMENT VULNERABILITY INDEX (SVI) FRAMEWORK

REACH Ukraine developed this framework based on HSM indicators to determine the severity of vulnerability at the settlement level. The data utilised in the SVI's score calculation is reported by KIs referring to the situation in the whole settlement, thus does not capture specific household inputs and potential nuances within individual household situations. Accounting for the different approaches, indicators used, and objectives, the current framework should not be understood as comparable with other similar frameworks, including by REACH.

The SVI framework requires the calculation of individual composite scores for each sector, followed by a calculation of an inter-sectoral composite score as the final Settlement Vulnerability Index. **This is a pilot version of the framework, and it will undergo further adjustments following consultations with humanitarian partners based on these initial results.** The final version will be made available on the REACH Resource Centre for reference and use.

The framework is composed of HSM indicators across six sectors: Food Security and Livelihoods, Shelter and Non-food items (NFIs), Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), Healthcare, Protection, and Education. The indicators incorporated in the calculation of sectoral scores were selected based on the information they capture regarding people's access to basic services and essential items. The indicators not incorporated in the score will still be used as part of the analysis and reporting as a way to present a comprehensive overview of the situation in the assessed settlements.

‘Severity’ signifies the intensity of vulnerabilities in the settlement, using a scale that ranges from 1 (minimal/none) to 4+ (Extreme and Risk of Catastrophic/Sectoral Collapse). The levels of sectoral vulnerability imply:

- **None/minimal:** Essential basic sectoral needs are met in the settlement,
- **Stress:** Borderline inability to meet basic sectoral needs in the settlement,
- **Severe:** Moderate inability to meet basic sectoral needs in the settlement,
- **Extreme:** Extreme inability to meet basic sectoral needs in the settlement,
- **Extreme+:** Collapse of basic services and/or total inability to meet basic sectoral needs in the settlement,

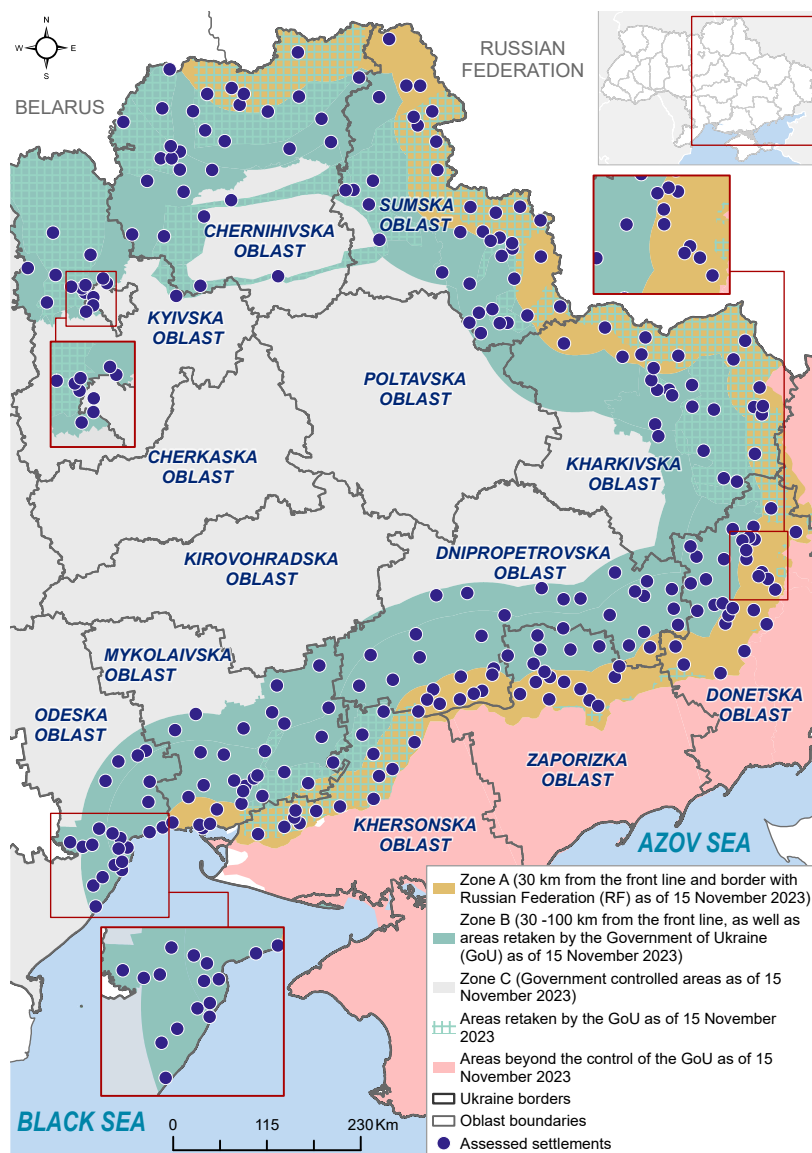
Both sectoral and inter-sectoral composite scores were calculated using the arithmetic mean (average) of scores and were rounded up if the score has a decimal of 0.5 or higher to assign it to a value (1-4+, Minimal to Extreme+). The sectoral score is calculated based on the sectoral indicators incorporated in the framework (see Annex), and the inter-sectoral score is calculated based on the sectoral scores calculated in the previous step. If an indicator cannot be recoded to 1-4+ values, it is by default given a value of 1 (Minimal). In cases where only part of the conditions satisfies for a given level of vulnerability for the selected indicator / combination of indicators as specified in the SVI Framework, those cases will be classified with one lower level (e.g., ‘Severe’ instead of ‘Extreme’). Please refer to the Framework for more details.

The approach of calculating the ‘average’ score has its limitations primarily in relation to limited sensitivity to outliers (e.g., if a particularly strong indicator is showing a severe situation by itself, or if one of the sectors indicates a severe vulnerability of the settlement by itself). To account for this, the sectoral scores are to be reviewed as a second level of the analysis to identify settlements where only a single or limited number of sectors is/are showing a severe situation and due to the average approach the settlements are classified in a lower-level vulnerability group. Where relevant, the scores for individual indicators/indicator combinations will also be reviewed for a comprehensive understanding of what drives higher levels of settlement vulnerabilities.

Due to the included data being indicative in the scoring process, the resulting scores cannot be considered representative of the conditions within settlements and offer an approximate understanding of the humanitarian situation.



ASSESSMENT COVERAGE



REACH Ukraine HSM recently introduced its new **Dashboard for Government-controlled areas in Ukraine**. It displays key findings and trends, which can be filtered by time periods, areas and levels of needs.

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).

ANNEX 1: OVERVIEW OF HSM ROUNDS 8 - 14

HSM Round	Data collection dates	Number of settlements covered, according to Zones	Number of Community Key Informant interviews conducted
HSM Round 8	7 - 28 February 2023	Total number of settlements covered: 317 Settlements covered in Zone A: 92 out of 317 Settlements covered in Zone B: 165 out of 317 Settlements covered in Zone C: 60 out of 317	1197 Key Informant interviews conducted
HSM Round 9	20 March - 3 April 2023	Total number of settlements covered: 317 Settlements covered in Zone A: 97 out of 317 Settlements covered in Zone B: 160 out of 317 Settlements covered in Zone C: 60 out of 317	1199 Key Informant interviews conducted
HSM Round 10	15 - 29 May 2023	Total number of settlements covered: 317 Settlements covered in Zone A: 97 out of 317 Settlements covered in Zone B: 160 out of 317 Settlements covered in Zone C: 60 out of 317	1197 Key Informant interviews conducted
HSM Round 11	26 June - 10 July 2023	Total number of settlements covered: 341 Settlements covered in Zone A: 108 out of 341 Settlements covered in Zone B: 173 out of 341 Settlements covered in Zone C: 60 out of 341	1324 Key Informant interviews conducted
HSM Round 12	7 - 21 August 2023	Total number of settlements covered: 341 Settlements covered in Zone A: 109 out of 341 Settlements covered in Zone B: 172 out of 341 Settlements covered in Zone C: 60 out of 341	1305 Key Informant interviews conducted
HSM Round 13	26 September - 13 October 2023	Total number of settlements covered: 342 Settlements covered in Zone A: 110 out of 342 Settlements covered in Zone B: 172 out of 342 Settlements covered in Zone C: 60 out of 342	1310 Key Informant interviews conducted
HSM Round 14	20 November - 4 December 2023	Total number of settlements covered: 342 Settlements covered in Zone A: 110 out of 342 Settlements covered in Zone B: 172 out of 342 Settlements covered in Zone C: 60 out of 342	1313 Key Informant interviews conducted



ANNEX 2: Sectoral indicators incorporated in the SVI Framework

Sector	Indicator
Food Security & Livelihoods	% of settlements by the level of need in relation to accessing sufficient food in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% of settlements by the level of need in relation to accessing markets to purchase goods in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% of settlements by main barriers for people to access markets in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% of settlements by main barriers to accessing food items in the 14 days prior to data collection
Shelter & Non-Food items	% of settlements by the level of need in relation to accessing safe and adequate housing in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% of settlements by main barriers for people to access safe and adequate housing in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% of settlements by main barriers for displaced persons to access safe and adequate housing in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% of settlements by main sources of energy most people used for heating during winter
	% of settlements by main barriers people faced in accessing heating during winter
	% of settlements by the proportion of civilian housing damaged in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% settlements by MOST people having access to non-food items (NFIs) in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% of settlements by main barriers people faced in accessing NFIs in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% of settlements by frequency of disruptions to electricity supply in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% settlements by frequency of disruptions to gas supply in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% settlements by frequency of disruptions to phone network in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% settlements by frequency of disruptions to internet coverage in the 14 days prior to data collection

Sector	Indicator
Health	% of settlements by the level of need in relation to healthcare services in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% of settlements by main barriers people faced to access healthcare services in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% of settlements by types of healthcare/facilities people were unable to access in the 14 days prior to data collection (used only for the 'Extreme' classification)
	% of settlements by types of healthcare/facilities people were unable to access in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% of settlements by main barriers people faced to access medicines in the 14 days prior to data collection
Protection	% of settlements by main safety and security concerns faced by people in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% of settlements by the degree of restrictions on movement into or out of the settlement
Education	% of settlements by the proportion of education facilities NOT available for educational purposes in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% settlements by frequency of disruptions to internet coverage in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% of settlements by main reasons for educational facilities being unavailable for educational purposes
WASH	% settlements by frequency of disruptions to water supply in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% of settlements by the level of need in relation to accessing water in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% of settlements by main barriers people faced in accessing water in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% of settlements by the level of need in relation to accessing improved sanitation facilities in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% of settlements by main barriers people faced in accessing functional toilets in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% of settlements by main barriers people faced in accessing water in the 14 days prior to data collection
	% of settlements by main barriers people faced in accessing water in the 14 days prior to data collection