

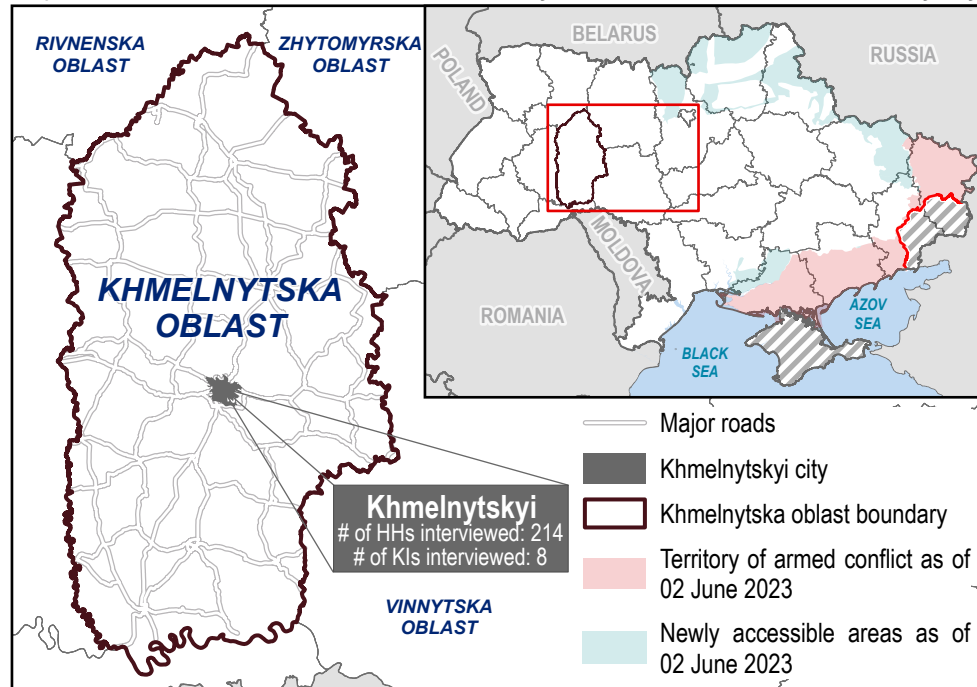
Arrival and Transit Monitoring: Situation Overview in Khmelnytskyi

June 2023 | Ukraine

CONTEXT & RATIONALE

As the capital of Khmelnytska Oblast in Western Ukraine, Khmelnytskyi has supported internally displaced persons (IDPs) as a hosting area and transit point, particularly for evacuees from conflict-affected areas. In recent months, the city, as well as Khmelnytska Oblast, has been susceptible to ongoing missile attacks targeting critical infrastructure which has also caused damage and destruction to residential buildings.¹ Given the volatile security context, coupled with diverse movement intentions of IDPs in the city, **Round 9 of REACH's Arrival and Transit Monitoring (ATM) assessment was conducted to provide a Situation Overview in Khmelnytskyi in June 2023.** This overview strives to inform the programmatic and operational response regarding population movement, as well as challenges that households faced in accessing humanitarian assistance upon arrival and long-term settlement.

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



KEY MESSAGES

- Khmelnytskyi remains a prominent point of arrival for evacuation trains from volatile security contexts. The number of registered IDPs has decreased since the beginning of the year, as **IDPs intend to resettle in other areas of the Oblast**. ATM findings show that only 13% of households reported Khmelnytskyi as their final destination.
- While evacuation trains have provided free transportation for households in need, findings showed **non-eligible individuals having arrived at Khmelnytskyi via evacuation train to receive IDP payments**. Such observations are a testament to the journey that non-displaced individuals are willing to make to receive additional financial support.
- As many assessed households relied on income in the form of assistance, **disruptions to various services in Khersonska Oblast following the damage to the Kakhovka Dam resulted in higher level of needs as evacuees reported having no income upon arrival**. In general, IDPs overall reported a higher level of needs for food items, hygiene products, and clothing in particular.
- **A general reduction in the provision of humanitarian aid, as well as a lack of sufficient information on where to access assistance, were reported as the two primary challenges in accessing support**. While volunteers play an active role in supporting IDPs upon arrival, KIs echoed a general lack of awareness of how to provide referrals for specific services to displaced populations.
- **Movement intentions continue to remain dependent on the status of the war and ongoing hostilities in areas of origin**. Conversely, KI observations suggest access to employment and accommodation as the primary factors influencing IDPs' long-term settlement in Khmelnytskyi. Despite this, the majority of KIs noted the city's unpreparedness to accommodate IDPs.

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

To inform the humanitarian response, REACH provided an indicative overview of the situation in Khmelnytskyi alongside Round 9 of REACH's ATM assessment.² Between **the 2nd to the 19th of June 2023, REACH enumerators interviewed 214 recently arrived³ IDP households (HHs) in Khmelnytskyi.** To accompany the data collected, **eight key informant (KI) interviews** were conducted with volunteers and representatives of local and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Through this overview, additional information about the barriers and challenges of IDP households, including those travelling with a person(s) with a vulnerability is presented.

POPULATION MOVEMENT AND DISPLACEMENT

Since the start of the full-scale war on February 2022, Khmelnytskyi City has been an IDP hosting area, evacuation point, and prominent transit settlement in Western Ukraine. Conversely, **recent findings indicate diverse displacement trends**, as IDPs chose to resettle elsewhere. Since January 2023, the number of registered IDPs in Khmelnytskyi Raion decreased by 14%, totalling 50,970 as of June 2023.⁴ In the previous month since data collection (May 2023), 5 out of 8 KIs also observed a decrease in the influx of IDPs, and others (5 KIs) noted IDPs transiting through the city, rather than intending to settle. Indeed, ATM findings show that of those assessed households, only 13% indicated that their decision was to remain within Khmelnytskyi, while no assessed households were returning to their area of origin in Khmelnytskyi at the time of the interview. Of the 75% who intended to travel to another city, most reported being in transit to Zaporizka Oblast (61%) and others in transit to other areas within Khmelnytska Oblast (21%). Overall, 5% of households from Zaporizka Oblast were returning to their area of origin, while an additional 5% were on their transit journey abroad. A smaller proportion of households (2%) were unsure of their movement intentions at the time of the interview.

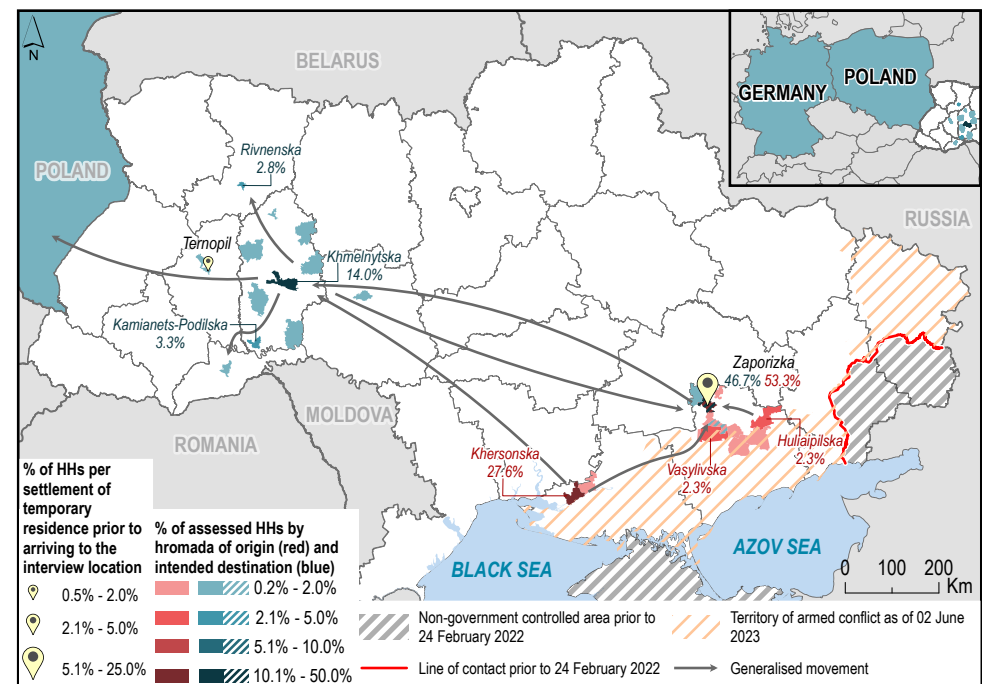
The overall lack of support for IDPs is a possible corroborating factor that may influence IDPs' decision to resettle outside of Khmelnytskyi City. One KI reported the city as "overcrowded", while others were particularly concerned with the absence of available accommodations. Overall three KIs indicated the city's shortage of shelters in the month prior to data collection, and another KI observed IDPs resettling in other villages where accommodations are more affordable.

"Few people have remained in Khmelnytskyi City in the last month due to the shortage of shelters. Those who arrive mostly go to acquaintances who are looking for, or have already found, accommodation for them."

- NGO Representative

While KIs have cited the city's unpreparedness to accommodate IDPs, Khmelnytskyi has continued to be a prominent transit stop for evacuation trains in Western Ukraine. Concerning the displacement journey of assessed IDPs, the vast majority of those interviewed in Khmelnytskyi were recently displaced for the first time since the start of the full-scale war in February 2022, as 91% of households left their areas of origin in June. ATM findings show that of those assessed, 99% of households travelled via evacuation train at one point during their journey to Khmelnytskyi. As shown in Map 2, over half of the assessed households (69%) arrived from Zaporizka, while 30% of households left their areas of origin in Khersonska Oblast. Damage to the Kakhovka Dam in Khersonska Oblast on 6 June, resulted in damages to areas close to the reservoir. As such, evacuation train routes from Kherson to Lviv with transit stops in Khmelnytskyi were organised to relocate those affected.⁵ As early as 8 June, the Khmelnytskyi Oblast Military Administration reported the arrival of trains to Khmelnytskyi, as the Oblast prepared to accommodate 10,000 evacuated individuals.⁶ As of 22 June, 147 IDPs from Khersonska Oblast arrived in Khmelnytskyi.⁷ Indeed, most households cited security concerns as primary push factors to leave their areas of origin, including a threat to personal or family safety (51%), or shelling in or near their settlement of origin (43%). Others reported that calls for evacuation were the primary reason prompting their displacement (29%).

Map 2: Reported Hromadas of origin, settlements of temporary residence and Hromadas of intended destination, % of households.



Pull factors and movement intentions

While only 13% of households intend to remain within Khmelnytskyi, most of those chose to settle for a variety of reasons. Pull factors primarily included the perceived availability of accommodations (67%), the general perception of safety (63%), and the presence of their relatives and friends in the city (63%). Of those, over half of the households indicated the intention of remaining in Khmelnytskyi City until there was no active conflict in their areas of origin (54%), or for more than one week and less than a month (23%). Concerning movement to areas outside of Khmelnytskyi City within Khmelnytska Oblast, 15% of assessed households intend to settle in other Hromadas. Of those, most decided to move to these areas for the perceived availability of accommodation (84%). The decision to remain in these Hromadas within Khmelnytska Oblast is highly dependent on the status of the ongoing war in their

home location. Of those, over half of the households (60%) intend to remain until there is no active conflict in their areas of origin (60%).

As continued evacuation trains from Zaporizhzhia arrived at Khmelnytskyi in June,⁸ one KI observed households having received assistance and then proceeded to return to their initial area of departure. Indeed, of those interviewed from Zaporizka Oblast, over half of the assessed households (55%, n=81) indicated that they left their area of origin and arrived in Khmelnytskyi via evacuation train to receive IDP payments and return to their homes in Zaporizka Oblast. While these households are not considered IDPs, and thus are technically not eligible for these payments, **it is a testament to the journey that non-displaced individuals are willing to make to receive additional financial support and return home.**

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Figure 1: Sex and age distribution of household members assessed in Khmelnytskyi.

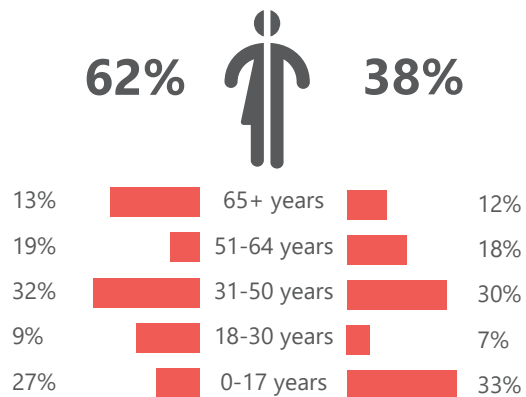


Figure 1 shows that of those households arrived in Khmelnytskyi, over half of the members (62%) were female, predominantly between the ages of 31-50 years, as well as a higher proportion of older women 65 years and older. The largest number of the adult male population is around 31-50 years men, particularly around conscription age is observed though male children 17 years and younger also constitute a higher percentage.

Households in Khmelnytskyi

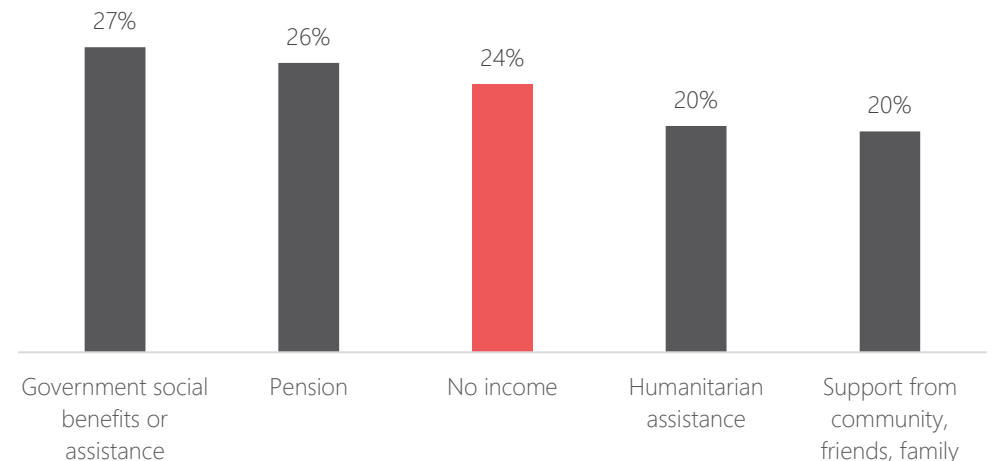
appeared to be travelling in smaller groups. While the average number of the travel party equalled to 1.93, this was slightly less when compared to the 2.12 average of household members for all assessed settlements in round 9 of ATM findings.

Concerning possible vulnerabilities, just over a quarter of households (26%) travelled with members that were women and children (0-17 years), and 22% of overall households were headed by a single parent. Roughly a third of households (33%) travelled with a member who had a chronic illness, while 18% had a member with a disability. Overall 21% of those assessed travelled with an older person (65+ years), and 13% of households were older persons that arrived in Khmelnytskyi on their own.

SOURCES OF INCOME

As shown in Figure 2, **the majority of surveyed households in Khmelnytskyi relied on various types of assistance and support as a source of income.** Most relied on government social benefits or assistance, as well as a pension. Concerningly, roughly a quarter of households (24%) reported receiving no income at the time of the interview. Of those households, the vast majority (76%) arrived from Khersonska Oblast. As such, the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam and evacuation efforts suggests the need for targeted support for households from these areas. Additionally, ATM findings show that a higher percentage of households interviewed in Khmelnytskyi are reported to rely on humanitarian assistance when compared to those in other assessed settlements. Corroborating factors may include households arriving via evacuation trains to receive IDP payments.

Figure 2: Top five sources of income, % of households.



HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

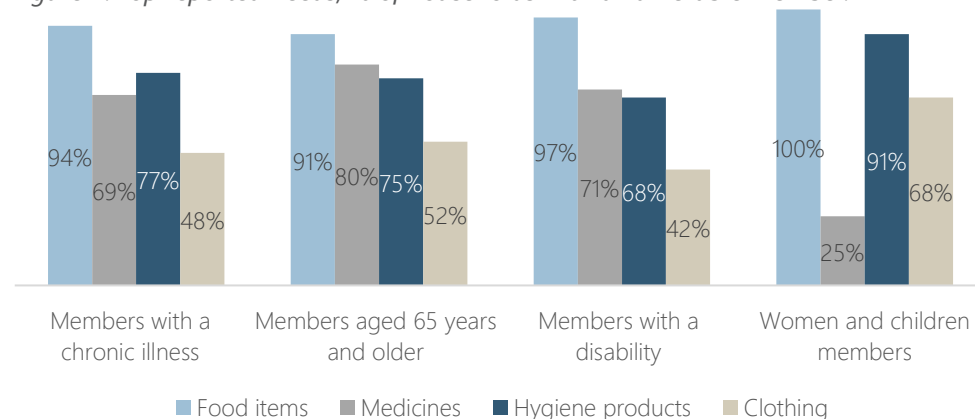
For those assessed households that arrived in Khmelnytskyi in June, high level of needs were prevalent. Overall, the vast majority of recently arrived households reported not always or most of the time being able to meet their needs (96%). Additionally, KIs indicated that the needs of households in Khmelnytskyi, particularly IDPs, were classified as “high” (2 KIs) or “moderate” (2 KIs).⁹ Despite this, one KI noted the needs were not critical for IDPs that found suitable employment opportunities and integrated in the community. However recent IDP arrivals can face additional challenges in meeting their everyday needs due to the rising cost of living. As shown in Figure 3, when asked what type of humanitarian assistance is most required, the overwhelming majority of households and KIs reported the need for food. One KI noted that the supply of food packages was decreasing, though the decline in food aid is mostly prevalent in other villages of the Oblast.

Figure 3: Top reported needs, % of households and number of KIs.

Humanitarian needs	% of households	# of KIs
Food items	95%	6/8
Hygiene products	75%	2/8
Clothing	53%	4/8

As shown in Figure 4, the top reported needs amongst households travelling with vulnerable members¹⁰ were prioritised in the following order: access to food items, medicines, hygiene products, and clothing. **In line with the findings of the overall households arrived, the vast majority of those within a vulnerable group needed food.** In some cases the needs were very apparent, as 100% of households travelling with women and children requested food, suggesting the imminent support required upon arrival. Of those with an older person, or a member that has self-reported chronic illness and/or disability, a higher level of needs for medicines were reported. One KI observed that households with at least one person with a disability are particularly susceptible to not accessing their basic needs and require additional assistance.

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



CHALLENGES ACCESSING HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Reduction in aid provisions

According to OCHA, an estimated 111.3 thousand IDPs and 19.8 thousand returnees have been reached by multi-sectoral humanitarian response activities from January to June 2023.¹¹ **While the influx of IDPs arriving in Khmelnytskyi appears to be decreasing, challenges concerning access to humanitarian support remain.** Roughly a third of assessed households (30%) indicated experiencing challenges accessing humanitarian assistance. Overall three KIs noted that the city appears to have reduced the amount of aid provisions within the last month. Additionally, assessed households interviewed upon arrival to Khmelnytskyi (25%) reported insufficient humanitarian assistance. While previous KIs noted a reduction in food packages, the demand for food assistance appears to have increased. OCHA reports only 11% of their intended target population of IDP households had been reached this year by the food security and livelihoods cluster in Khmelnytska Oblast.¹² As reported by the Regional Center for the Provision of Humanitarian Aid in Khmelnytskyi, the last distribution of the 2023 summer period provided food kits to over 8,000 IDPs, an increase of 1,500 recipients compared to the winter period.¹³ KIs reported a general reduction in clothing and shoes available for households upon arrival, which was one of the main reported primary needs by households in Khmelnytskyi.

“Earlier there was more humanitarian aid provided. Even if you consider volunteer organisations, it’s easy to see they received it in large amounts earlier, and now the amount of humanitarian aid is significantly lower.”

- NGO Representative

Insufficient information

In addition to the general concern regarding the reduction of humanitarian aid provisions, another challenge identified for households in Khmelnytskyi is the **insufficient information concerning where to access humanitarian assistance.** Overall, two KIs reiterated a general lack of information provided, particularly a lack of dissemination to the volunteers providing support specifically to IDPs. Additionally, of those who reported experiencing challenges accessing humanitarian assistance, over half of households (63%) were unaware of where to locate humanitarian assistance. One KI suggested that referral lists, including phone numbers and addresses of distribution points, service providers, etc. could help volunteers provide accurate and timely information for IDPs when they need it.

“...not everyone has enough information about where to get humanitarian aid—there is little information. We encountered a problem that there is no information on where to go for help.”

- NGO Volunteer

SUPPORT FOR LONG-TERM SETTLEMENT

Integration for IDPs

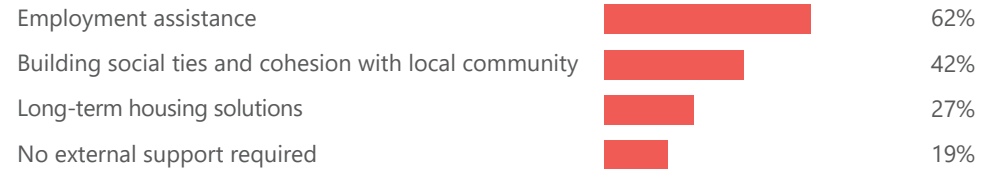
While two KIs anticipate long-term settlement for IDPs in Khmelnytskyi, others suggested that **any indication of IDPs' decision-making process on whether to integrate into the city is highly dependent on varying factors concerning the households' circumstances.** Firstly, two KIs suggested the decision is dependent on the status of the ongoing war and the conditions of their home in their area of origin. While the end of martial law is expected to see IDPs return to their area or origin, it is argued that those from conflict-affected areas are more likely to consider residing in the city permanently if their home is either destroyed or damaged. Secondly, three KIs have indicated that the decision to settle in Khmelnytskyi is highly dependent on whether they've acquired adequate accommodation and/ or employment opportunities. In particular, one KI noted that the resettlement of IDPs from Khersonska Oblast, particularly those with a farming background, has been prevalent as households decided to resume farming in smaller villages of Khmelnytska Oblast. One KI noted that this decision to integrate is dependent on the willingness of IDPs to seek employment in the city. Lastly, one KI suggested that due to the city becoming overcrowded, households will be more likely to remain if they can stay with relatives residing in the city, compared to IDPs residing in other temporary accommodations such as collective sites.

"They [IDPs] mostly stay until the end of martial law. That is, only those IDPs consider permanent resettlement in Khmelnytskyi City who have nowhere to return. Considering the number of offered rentals, there still are options."

- NGO Representative

Despite the decision to settle and integrate appears to be mostly dependent on varying factors, **the majority of KIs (6 out of 8) observed the city's unpreparedness for the settlement of IDPs long-term.** Primary concerns pertain to the lack of employment opportunities, particularly for the younger generation, and access to accommodation. Of those households intending to settle in Khmelnytskyi, 62% reported requiring employment assistance, which can include support in locating vacancies, training for requalification, etc. While four KIs have also reiterated these challenges for IDPs accessing employment opportunities, a variety of barriers are suggested to be prevalent, resulting in a lack of willingness for IDPs to seek opportunities. A general lack of vacancies in Khmelnytskyi are reported by KIs. Conversely, KIs noted that wages for certain opportunities have deterred IDPs from accepting job offers. Additionally, KIs have noted certain employers that are reluctant to employ IDPs as they require permanent workers, and fear that IDPs will only work temporarily. According to the director of the Khmelnytskyi Regional Employment Centre, 269 IDPs held unemployment status at the end of June 2023.¹⁴ Among them, most were women (84%), and over half (59%) were 35-55 years of age.¹⁵

Figure 5: Reported external support required for integration, % of IDP households intending to settle in Khmelnytskyi.



Additionally, 27% of households intending to remain in Khmelnytskyi reported requiring long-term housing solutions. This support was also reiterated by three KIs, which indicated challenges for IDPs particularly due to high rental prices in the city. According to REACH's Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMIMI) in June, the average monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Khmelnytska Oblast was reported to be the fourth most expensive Oblast to rent totalling at 7,286 per month.¹⁶ Lastly, three KIs cited tensions amongst IDPs and non-displaced populations within the city which can lead to further barriers for IDP integration. Particular areas of concern are related to the use of the Russian language within the community, as well as reported cases of public intoxication. Overall, ATM findings show that 42% of households intending to settle in Khmelnytskyi requested support to build social ties and cohesion within the local community.

"Everything hinges on accommodation and registration as an IDP. Money is given, but it's around UAH 2,000. If a household consists of three people, for example, it's hard to find a shelter in Khmelnytskyi City. It's also difficult to find a job. There are jobs, but they are low-paid—not enough for accommodation. The rent is twice as high as the salary is."

- NGO Representative

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).

ENDNOTES

PAGE 1

¹ [English translation] Khmelnytskyi Oblast Military Administration, [Telegram announcement](#), 13 May 2023.

PAGE 2

² REACH, [Arrival and Transit Monitoring: Round 9 Factsheet](#), June 2023.

³ “Recently arrived” refers to the households that have arrived at the settlement of the interview location 14 days or less prior to the date of the interview.

⁴ International Organization for Migration (IOM), [Registered IDP Area Baseline Assessment - Round 25](#), June 2023.

⁵ [English translation] Ministry of Reintegration, [Evacuation routes from Kherson Region](#), 10 June 2023.

⁶ [English translation] Suspilne Media, [“There are few centimeters left before the house is completely flooded”: the first evacuees from the Kherson region arrived in Khmelnytskyi](#), 8 June 2023.

⁷ [English translation] Suspilne Media, [Help for newly evacuated people: how Khmelnytskyi welcome refugees from Kherson and Zaporizhzhia](#), 22 June 2023.

PAGE 3

⁸ Ibid.

PAGE 4

⁹ KIs were asked to categorise the level of need in the city through the following: ‘extreme’, ‘severe’, ‘high’, ‘moderate’ or ‘limited/ no needs’.

¹⁰ As defined in this assessment, self-reported vulnerabilities include pregnant and lactating women, persons with a disability, persons with a chronic illness, older persons (65+ years of age), and women with children.

¹¹ OCHA, [Ukraine 2023 Humanitarian Response: Cluster Reach](#), 31 August 2023.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ [English translation] Suspilne Media, [Humanitarian aid gives people a sense of support from the community](#), 24 September 2023.

PAGE 5

¹⁴ [English translation] Suspilne Media, [For half a year, the Khmelnytskyi Regional Employment Center employed every third immigrant](#), 31 August 2023.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ REACH, [Joint market monitoring initiative - Round 15](#), June 2023.