

Research Terms of Reference

Profiles and Vulnerabilities of People Displaced Through Own Means (*outside organised evacuation mechanisms*)

UKR2603

Ukraine

March 2026
V1

REACH Informing
more effective
humanitarian action

1. Executive Summary

Country of intervention	Ukraine		
Type of Emergency	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural hazard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>specify</i>)
Type of Crisis	<input type="checkbox"/> Sudden onset	<input type="checkbox"/> Slow onset	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Protracted
Mandating Body/ Agency	None		
IMPACT Project Code			
Overall Research Timeframe (<i>from research design to final outputs / M&E</i>)	01/02/2026 to 31/07/2026		
Research Timeframe <i>Add planned deadlines (for first cycle if more than 1)</i>	1. Pilot / training: 23/03/2026		6. Outputs sent for validation: 20/07/2026
	2. Start collect data: 24/03/2026		7. Outputs published: 31/07/2026
	3. Data collected: 17/04/2026		8. Final presentation: 31/07/2026
	4. Data analysed: 31/05/2026		
	5. Data sent for validation: 31/05/2026		
Number of assessments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Single assessment (one cycle)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Multi assessment (more than one cycle)		
Humanitarian milestones <i>Specify what will the assessment inform and when</i> <i>e.g. The shelter cluster will use this data to draft its Revised Flash Appeal;</i>	Milestone		Deadline (can be tentative)
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Donor plan/strategy	31/07/2026
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Inter-cluster plan/strategy East Area ICWG Area Heads of Humanitarian Agencies (A-HOHA)	31/07/2026
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cluster plan/strategy: Protection Cluster East	31/07/2026
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NGO platform plan/strategy NGO East Area Manager Platform	31/07/2026
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify):	__/__/____
	Audience type		Dissemination

<p>Audience Type & Dissemination <i>Specify who will the assessment inform and how you will disseminate to inform the audience</i></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Programmatic <input type="checkbox"/> Operational <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Product Mailing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cluster Mailing (MHPSS TWG, Livelihoods WG) and presentation of findings at next cluster meeting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Presentation of findings (incl. to MHPSS TWG, Livelihoods WG, veteran-oriented (I)NGOs, Ministry of Veterans) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Website Dissemination (Relief Web & REACH Resource Centre) <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]</p>
<p>Stakeholder mapping <i>Has a detailed stakeholder mapping been conducted during research design to identify all actors that could contribute to and/or benefit from the research?</i></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes Consultations were held with national NGOs and INGOs that work on evacuation organisation and/or support IDPs in host hromadas</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>General Objective</p>	<p>To provide an exploratory analysis of the drivers, pathways and vulnerability dynamics of people displaced by their own means (as opposed to evacuation supported by state or humanitarian actors) during more recent years of the full-scale war in Ukraine, in order to inform evidence-based humanitarian programming and protection responses.</p>	
<p>Specific Objective(s)</p>	<p>1. To examine the decision-making processes, triggers, and motivations that lead civilians to leave their hromada of origin and choose to displace by their own means, instead of assisted evacuation.</p> <p>2. For people displaced by their own means, to reconstruct displacement pathways before, during, and after movement, including preparation practices, pathway selection, encountered difficulties, and integration processes, as well as coping strategies, upon reaching the safer areas.</p> <p>3. To assess the relations between the decision of being displaced by ones own means and vulnerability, including whether vulnerability influences the decision to displace in self-organised way, and whether this displacement alters vulnerability over time.</p>	
<p>Research Questions</p>	<p>1. Why and when do people decide to leave a hromada of origin by their own means, including with support of family, friends or neighbours (as opposed to evacuation movements supported by humanitarian or state actors)?</p> <p>1.1. How have people dealt with the war conditions before the displacement?</p> <p>1.2 What was the tipping point for them in deciding to leave? What was holding them back at home?</p> <p>1.3. What or who motivated people to displace on their own/not using evacuation? Were there internal or external pressures?</p>	

	<p>1.4. Was there an option of assisted evacuation by state or humanitarian actors available in their area of origin? If yes, did people have information about it? Why did they prefer to leave their home by their own means?</p> <p>2. How do people's pathways look during displacement by their own means and upon their arrival to the host community?</p> <p>2.1. How do people choose their path: transport, roads and destination? What is influencing their decisions?</p> <p>2.2. What are the main difficulties in their pathway?</p> <p>2.3. If any, what specific assistance and services do people try to access on their pathway? Why? Have they succeeded in accessing the services? What barriers did they encounter?</p> <p>2.4. What needs do people have on their pathway? If people do, how they manage to meet those needs?</p> <p>2.5. What coping mechanisms do people use on their pathway?</p> <p>2.6. Were there any unmet needs? What kind of help or support do people lack along the way?</p> <p>3. What are the relations between people's decision to displace by their own means and their vulnerability?</p> <p>3.1. What types of vulnerable people could be found among profiles of those displaced by their own means? Does their vulnerability exacerbate during the displacement or upon arrival in safer areas?</p> <p>3.2. Do people become specifically vulnerable during displacement by their own means or when they reach safer areas?</p> <p>3.3. Do these people actually feel vulnerable? Do they perceive themselves as IDPs/a part of the IDP community (if they are still displaced)?</p> <p>3.4. What kind of help or support do vulnerable people lack along the way (people with disabilities, people with children, single caregivers, older people, etc)? What should it have looked like?</p> <p>3.5. How can humanitarian actors reach out to vulnerable IDPs who displaced by their own means?</p>
<p>Geographic Coverage</p>	<p>Nation-wide, covering people displaced specifically from the front-line oblasts, with priority on high-risk areas and temporarily occupied hromadas.</p>
<p>Secondary data sources</p>	<p>Secondary data will include the following (for more details see section 3.3):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IOM, Vulnerability and mobility in front-line areas of Ukraine, February 2026 • IOM, Ukraine Internal Displacement Report: general population survey, January 2026 • Center for civilians in conflict, Evacuating under fire in Ukraine: Lessons on Promoting Protection During War-Induced Movements, January 2026 • Global Protection Cluster, Guidance on humanitarian evacuations of civilians in Ukraine with special considerations for children • Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 841, dated October 30, 2013, "On Approval of the Procedure for Conducting Evacuation in Case of Threat or Occurrence of Emergency Situations", November 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1307 of October 10, 2025, on amendments to certain resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine regarding the evacuation of the population from areas of active and potential hostilities and the provision of social protection for evacuees, October 2025 • Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, The Code of Civil Protection of Ukraine (Article 33), February 2026 • Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 854, dated July 29, 2022, "On the Establishment of the Coordination Headquarters for the Implementation of Evacuation Measures and Effective Response to Mass Population Displacement", January 2026 • Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, The Law of Ukraine "On the Legal Regime of Martial Law" (Article 8), May 2025 • Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 282, dated April 18, 2018, "On Approval of the Procedure for Identification of People with Disabilities and Other Low-Mobility Groups Living in the Zone of Emergency or of Possible Damage, and Organisation of their Accompaniment", September 2022 • Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 934, dated November 7, 2018, "On Approval of the Procedure for Mandatory Evacuation of Certain Categories of the Population in Case of the Introduction of Martial Law", November 2018 • Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 546, dated June 1, 2023, "On the Temporary Relocation (Evacuation) of Children and Individuals Residing in or Enrolled in Institutions of Various Types, Ownership Forms, and Subordination for Round-the-Clock Stay, and Their Return", March 2025 • Ministry of Community and Territorial Development of Ukraine, Order No. 376 of February 28, 2025, of the Ministry of Community and Territorial Development of Ukraine "On Approval of the List of Territories Where Combat Operations Are (Were) Conducted or Temporarily Occupied by the Russian Federation", January 2026 • United Nations, Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, September 2004 			
Population(s) <i>Select all that apply</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDPs in camp	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDPs in informal sites
	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDPs in host communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Population displaced through self-organised evacuation
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees in camp	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees in informal sites
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees in host communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees [Other, Specify]
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Host communities		
Stratification <i>Select type(s) and enter number of strata</i>	Geographical #: Population size per strata is known? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes x <input type="checkbox"/> No		Group #: Population size per strata is known? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes x <input type="checkbox"/> No	
			[Other Specify] #: Population size per strata is known? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes x <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Data collection tool(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Structured (Quantitative)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Semi-structured (Qualitative)
Sampling method			Data collection method	

Semi-structured data collection tool (s) # 1 <i>Individual interviews with self-evacuated IDPs</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purposive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Snowballing <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]	<input type="checkbox"/> Key informant interview (Target #):_____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Individual interview (Target #): 20-30 <input type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion (Target #):_____ <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify] (Target #):_____
Semi-structured data collection tool (s) # 2 <i>Key Informant Interviews with service providers</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purposive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Snowballing <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Key informant interview (Target #): 10-15 <input type="checkbox"/> Individual interview (Target #):_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion (Target #):_____ <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify] (Target #):_____
Target level of precision if probability sampling	NA – Qualitative data collection	NA
Disaggregation by gender and age <i>Are you planning to conduct sex/age disaggregated analysis?</i>	Gender	Age
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Data management platform(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IMPACT <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]	<input type="checkbox"/> UNHCR
Expected output type(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Situation overview #: __ X Report #: 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Profile #: __	<input type="checkbox"/> Presentation (Preliminary findings) #: __ <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation (Final) #: __ <input type="checkbox"/> Factsheet #: __
	<input type="checkbox"/> Interactive dashboard #: _ X Webmap #: 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Map #: __	<input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify] #: __
Access	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public (available on REACH resource centre and other humanitarian platforms) <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted (bilateral dissemination only upon agreed dissemination list, no publication on REACH or other platforms)	
Visibility <i>Specify which logos should be on outputs</i>	REACH Donor: Department of State (former BHA) Coordination Framework: N/A Partners: N/A	

2. Rationale

2.1 Background

Since the escalation of the Russian Federation’s full-scale invasion in February 2022, Ukraine has experienced one of the largest internal displacement crises in Europe. As of December 2025, approximately 3.7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) resided in the country.¹ Displacement flows primarily originate from eastern and southern oblasts – notably Donetsk,

¹ IOM, [Ukraine Internal Displacement Report: general population survey](#), January 2026

Kharkivska, Zaporizhzhska, Sumska, Khersonska and Luhanska – the residents of these regions continuously suffer from being near the front line and the occupation of territories^{2,3,4} Following the escalation, the state provided legal grounds for evacuation and introduced coordination mechanisms for evacuation measures and response to mass population movement, defined responsibilities across national and local authorities, NGOs, initiatives and volunteers. The government also established classification systems territories affected by hostilities and temporary occupation to guide evacuation planning and response.⁵

While a formal evacuation system is in place,⁶ it primarily regulates assisted evacuation, including organised transport, humanitarian corridors, and relocation to transit centres under declared mandatory evacuation orders. As such, it largely captures individuals who are visible to state and humanitarian actors through their engagement with organised mechanisms and service provision. At the same time, available evidence indicates that most civilians did not leave through assisted evacuation. IOM General Population Survey found, that 72% of displaced population.⁷ **This suggests that a substantial proportion of those evacuating may remain outside formal evacuation channels and, consequently, be less visible to institutional response systems. While it is possible that some individuals relying on self-organised evacuation do not require external assistance, this remains an untested assumption. Limited evidence exists to determine whether their reliance on personal resources reflects sufficient coping capacity, temporary self-reliance, or unmet protection and assistance needs that remain unreported.**

Thus, gaps in understanding of movement patterns and motivations of those people displaced by their own means have important protection implications, especially because of the connection between displacement and vulnerability: 37% of IDP households include people with disabilities, 56% include chronically ill members, and 42% include children.⁸ Family separation affects up to 42% of households from front-line raions. Housing remains the most persistent unmet need, reported by up to 44% of respondents, while financial and service access gaps remain widespread.⁹ Vulnerability is further shaped by mobility constraints: older people, people with disabilities, and low-income households face greater barriers to movement.^{10,11}

2.2 Intended impact

² IOM, [Vulnerability and mobility in front-line areas of Ukraine](#), February 2026

³ IOM, [Ukraine Internal Displacement Report: general population survey](#), January 2026

⁴ Ministry of Community and Territorial Development of Ukraine, [Order No. 376 of February 28, 2025, of the Ministry of Community and Territorial Development of Ukraine “On Approval of the List of Territories Where Combat Operations Are \(Were\) Conducted or Temporarily Occupied by the Russian Federation”](#), January 2026

⁵ Ministry of Community and Territorial Development of Ukraine, [Order No. 376 of February 28, 2025, of the Ministry of Community and Territorial Development of Ukraine “On Approval of the List of Territories Where Combat Operations Are \(Were\) Conducted or Temporarily Occupied by the Russian Federation”](#), January 2026

⁶ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, [The Code of Civil Protection of Ukraine \(Article 33\)](#), February 2026

⁷ IOM, [Vulnerability and mobility in front-line areas of Ukraine](#), February 2026

⁸ IOM, [Ukraine Internal Displacement Report: general population survey](#), January 2026

⁹ IOM, [Vulnerability and mobility in front-line areas of Ukraine](#), February 2026

¹⁰ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, [Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 282, dated April 18, 2018, “On Approval of the Procedure for Identification of People with Disabilities and Other Low-Mobility Groups Living in the Zone of Emergency or of Possible Damage, and Organization of their Accompaniment”](#), September 2022

¹¹ IOM, [Ukraine Internal Displacement Report: general population survey](#), January 2026

In this context, it is critical to examine whether certain vulnerability profiles are more or less prevalent among those displaced by their own means, and whether certain groups remain under-identified due to their limited interaction with formal assistance mechanisms. Without a clearer understanding of who displaces independently and under what conditions, there is a risk that protection responses may overlook specific needs that remain insufficiently visible within existing systems.

This assessment is an exploratory study intended to begin addressing key questions about people who displace by their own means— who they are, why they choose to displace by their own means rather than rely on assisted evacuation and how they navigate through displacement. It will focus on decision-making processes, vulnerability patterns, access to services, coping mechanisms and barriers to assistance throughout the displacement journey, including in receiving areas. The aim is to guide protection and displacement-related programming decisions by humanitarian response actors, NGOs and government, inform the implementation of Strategic Priorities 2 and 4 of the HNRP 2026 (Evacuations and Support to Vulnerable IDPs) and contribute to strategic planning under the upcoming 2027 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan.

3. Methodology

3.1 Methodology overview

A preliminary secondary data review and external consultations with Protection Cluster, NRC, and IOM, who are working on evacuation support and research, enabled the identification of key evidence gaps concerning displacement when undertaken by people's own means. Stakeholders emphasised the limited availability of systematic data explaining why civilians choose to displace by their own means, how their movement trajectories unfold, and how vulnerability profiles evolve across the displacement process. Secondary data sources, including IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix reports (2026), CIVIC's analysis of evacuation under fire (2026), Global Protection Cluster guidance on humanitarian evacuations (2024), and relevant Ukrainian legislative frameworks will further enable triangulation of findings.

The assessment will be conducted nationwide with the people displaced by their own means from front-line oblasts, with priority on high-risk areas and temporarily occupied territories. Special attention will be paid to the areas of most frequent origin of IDPs, namely Donetsk, Kharkiv, Zaporizka, Dnipropetrovska, Sumska, and Khersonska oblasts. This assessment will rely on a qualitative approach, combining Individual Interviews with people displaced by their own means and Key Informant Interviews with actors who are working with IDPs during their displacement and in receiving areas. As an exploratory study, the sampling strategy aims to capture a wide diversity of experiences. Individual interviews will provide detailed insight into personal experiences and pathways, while KIIs will help contextualise these stories within broader patterns and trends of displacement and assistance.

The findings will be presented in an analytical report and accompanied by an illustrated web map in a StoryMap format to strengthen the advocacy potential of the assessment.

Individual Interviews (IIs) with the people displaced by their own means will focus on a detailed analysis of their motivations, displacement pathways, access to assistance/services, adaptation at the place of displacement/further movement/return, and their vulnerability profiles.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) will be conducted with governmental authorities, humanitarian actors, volunteers, and service providers involved in support and assistance to IDPs en route and in receiving areas. This will provide information

on the wider context of available services, barriers to access, coordination practices and vulnerability profiles of displaced people. KII will also help identify gaps between assisted evacuation procedures and the realities faced when IDPs displace by their own means, as well as highlight existing good practices in supporting people displaced by their own means.

Whenever possible, we will aim to use quantitative secondary data available to complement our future findings.

Key Definitions:

Internal Displacement: forced movements of persons or groups of persons from their leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border .The end of displacement is achieved when the persons concerned no longer have specific protection and assistance needs related to them having been displaced.¹² Currently in Ukraine context, majority of people displace as a result or to avoid effects of the war by their own means or with support of their family / neighbour networks, while some IDPs receive evacuation support by humanitarian or state actors to displace to safer areas.¹³

Internally displaced person (IDP): persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.¹⁴

Displacement through own means: refers to displacement movements undertaken independently by affected individuals or households, including with the support of family, friends, or informal networks, and without reliance on organised evacuation mechanisms provided by state or humanitarian actors.

Evacuation: relocation of civilians from areas where they face heightened risk due to the armed conflict or other forms of violence to locations where they are at lower risk and can be more effectively protected (also referred to as “assisted evacuation” or “organised evacuation”). In Ukraine context, evacuations of civilians are undertaken by state and humanitarian actors. Humanitarian evacuations refer to situations where humanitarian protection actors facilitate such relocations of civilians. People evacuated by state or humanitarian actors (so called “evacuees”) are internally displaced people (IDPs).

Returnee: a displaced person who has returned to their area of origin after at least 2 months of staying elsewhere to remain there permanently.¹⁵

Mandatory evacuation: a type of evacuation ordered by the government requiring the population to leave a designated settlement or area (usually within a high-risk area) due to security conditions, including armed conflict, whereby residents

¹² UNHCR, [When Displacement Ends: A Framework for Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons](#), June 2007

¹³ UNHCR, [Ukraine Protection Survey 2](#), December 2025

¹⁴ United Nations, [Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement](#), September 2004

¹⁵ UNHCR, [Returnees](#)

are relocated to relatively safer locations in accordance with the Procedure for Conducting Evacuation in Case of the Threat or Occurrence of Emergency Situations.¹⁶

Transit centre: a place intended for the short-term stay of evacuated persons during their transfer to places of temporary or permanent residence, where, in particular, registration, accommodation, meals, medical care, psychological support, legal assistance, determination of the need for basic social services, and organization of further transportation, and is located in a specially equipped facility adapted to the needs of people with limited mobility. *Evacuees may remain at the transit center for no more than three days from the time of registration, except in cases where documents need to be processed for them. The maximum length of stay for evacuees at the transit center may not exceed seven days.*¹⁷

Oblast: the highest administrative unit in Ukraine below the national level.

Rayon: second level of administrative unit in Ukraine, a part of an oblast.

Hromada: basic administrative unit in Ukraine, a part of a rayon.

Hromada of origin: hromada, where the individual was living and considered their place of permanent residence at the time of the full-scale invasion, irrespective of prior displacement history or place of birth.

Front-line oblasts: front-line oblasts include Dnipropetrovska, Donetsk, Zaporizka, Luhanska, Sumska, Khersonska and Kharkivska oblasts.

High-Risk Areas: areas which have the status of “active hostilities”, “possible active hostilities” defined according to the “List of Territories Where Combat Operations Are (Were) Conducted or Occupied by the Russian Federation” first published in 22.12.2022, updated as of 10.02.2026, where hostilities were conducted during 2022–2026. Oblasts where combat operations ended before the end of 2023 are excluded for the purpose of this assessment.¹⁸

Other areas of possible damage to the population: areas not formally designated as high-risk by state authorities, but where civilians may be exposed to security threats, including recurrent shelling, aerial attacks, proximity to front-line dynamics, or other conflict-related incidents not reflected in official listings.

Occupied territory (OT): hromadas, temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation in 2022-2026. Hromadas deoccupied before the end of 2023 are excluded for the purpose of this assessment.¹⁹

3.1 Population of interest

Timeline and Geographical area assessed:

The assessment will cover people displaced by their own means currently residing across Ukraine who left high-risk areas after December 2022. The study will intentionally exclude individuals whose most recent displacement occurred between 2014 and 2022 inclusive. Although displacement during this period is highly significant, it represents different operational and institutional phases of the conflict. As such, its inclusion may limit the study’s ability to generate findings that are directly

¹⁶ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 841, dated October 30, 2013, "[On Approval of the Procedure for Conducting Evacuation in Case of Threat or Occurrence of Emergency Situations](#)", November 2025

¹⁷ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 841, dated October 30, 2013, "[On Approval of the Procedure for Conducting Evacuation in Case of Threat or Occurrence of Emergency Situations](#)", November 2025

¹⁸ Ministry of Community and Territorial Development of Ukraine, [Order No. 376 of February 28, 2025, of the Ministry of Community and Territorial Development of Ukraine “On Approval of the List of Territories Where Combat Operations Are \(Were\) Conducted or Temporarily Occupied by the Russian Federation”](#), January 2026

¹⁹ Ibid.

applicable to current displacement dynamics and contemporary protection and assistance needs. Within the defined scope, particular emphasis will be placed on individuals displaced between January and December 2025, reflecting the study's focus on recent displacement patterns.

The primary geographic focus will be on people displaced from Dnipropetrovska, Donetsk, Zaporizka, Khersonska, Sumska, and Kharkivska oblasts, as defined in the state list of territories where hostilities took place in 2022-2026, as well as a small sample from occupied territories. The study will include respondents currently residing in different types of locations (urban and rural areas) to enable comparison between displacement contexts and settlement environments, rather than focusing on a single host oblast.

Population assessed:

The population of interest consists of people who were displaced by their own means. For the purpose of this assessment, people displaced by their own means are defined as individuals who left unsafe areas using their own or informal resources (e.g. family or neighbours' support networks) and did not use organised evacuation support provided by state or humanitarian actors, including reception at transit centres, or other assistance from governmental or humanitarian actors during the evacuation stage. They may have accessed assistance after reaching a safer location, including support for onward movement, however, priority will be given to respondents who relied least on formal evacuation support mechanisms and only at later stages after arrival to safer receiving areas.

The sample will predominantly consist of those people who have recently displaced (in 2025, especially following the introduction of Resolution No. 1307²⁰), complemented by some of those who were displaced in the period between 2023 and 2024. The sample will include people with various displacement experiences (IDPs, returnees and individuals who experienced secondary displacement), as well as people of different ages and genders and with varying vulnerability profiles (persons with disabilities, older persons, particularly those living alone, and large families and single-headed households).

Unit of measurement

Interviews with people displaced by their own means will be conducted at the individual level, while Key Informant Interviews will be conducted at the hromada level to assess the vulnerability of people displaced by their own means and accessibility of services in a particular receiving area.

3.2 Secondary data review

Table 1. Purposes for secondary data sources

Secondary source	Purpose of source
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²⁰ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, [Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1307 of October 10, 2025, on amendments to certain resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine regarding the evacuation of the population from areas of active and potential hostilities and the provision of social protection for evacuees](#), October 2025

<p>IOM, Vulnerability and mobility in front-line areas of Ukraine, February 2026</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide evidence on self-evacuation prevalence and mobility patterns. • Contextualize vulnerability profiles and unmet needs of recently displaced populations
<p>IOM, Ukraine Internal Displacement Report: general population survey, January 2026</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextualize national displacement trends and demographic characteristics. • Triangulate vulnerability and assistance access patterns among IDPs.
<p>Center for civilians in conflict, Evacuating under fire in Ukraine: Lessons on Promoting Protection During War-Induced Movements, January 2026</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain behavioural drivers of evacuation decisions. • Contextualize gaps in evacuation planning, communication, and coordination.
<p>Global Protection Cluster, Guidance on humanitarian evacuations of civilians in Ukraine with special considerations for children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify protection standards and responsibilities during evacuation. • Identify coordination and referral gaps affecting evacuees.
<p>Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 841, dated October 30, 2013, "On Approval of the Procedure for Conducting Evacuation in Case of Threat or Occurrence of Emergency Situations", November 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define legal framework and operational stages of organised evacuation. • Provide baseline for comparison with self-evacuation pathways.
<p>Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1307 of October 10, 2025, on amendments to certain resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine regarding the evacuation of the population from areas of active and potential hostilities and the provision of social protection for evacuees, October 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe reception procedures and services provided to evacuees. • Identify expected assistance entry points in formal systems.
<p>Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, The Code of Civil Protection of Ukraine (Article 33), February 2026</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide official definition and types of evacuation. • Establish legal distinction between evacuation modalities.
<p>Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 854, dated July 29, 2022, "On the Establishment of the Coordination Headquarters for the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline institutional coordination mechanisms for evacuation.

<p><u>Implementation of Evacuation Measures and Effective Response to Mass Population Displacement</u>, January 2026</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextualize governance structure of displacement response.
<p>Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, <u>The Law of Ukraine “On the Legal Regime of Martial Law” (Article 8)</u>, May 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify legal grounds for evacuation measures.
<p>Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, <u>Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 282, dated April 18, 2018, “On Approval of the Procedure for Identification of People with Disabilities and Other Low-Mobility Groups Living in the Zone of Emergency or of Possible Damage, and Organization of their Accompaniment”</u>, September 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify categories requiring assisted evacuation support.
<p>Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, <u>Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 934, dated November 7, 2018, “On Approval of the Procedure for Mandatory Evacuation of Certain Categories of the Population in Case of the Introduction of Martial Law”</u>, November 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify categories requiring assisted evacuation support.
<p>Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, <u>Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 546, dated June 1, 2023, “On the Temporary Relocation (Evacuation) of Children and Individuals Residing in or Enrolled in Institutions of Various Types, Ownership Forms, and Subordination for Round-the-Clock Stay, and Their Return”</u>, March 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify categories requiring assisted evacuation support.
<p>Ministry of Community and Territorial Development of Ukraine, <u>Order No. 376 of February 28, 2025, of the Ministry of Community and Territorial Development of Ukraine “On Approval of the List of Territories Where Combat Operations Are (Were) Conducted or Temporarily Occupied by the Russian Federation”</u>, January 2026</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define geographic scope of front-line and occupied areas. • Support sampling framework and territorial classification

3.3 Primary Data Collection

Primary data collection will include two components: Individual Interviews with people displaced by their own means and Key-Informant Interviews with representatives of institutions that are working with the evacuation processes and IDPs' support..

Table 2. Respondent types, target numbers of interviews and main areas of focus for every data collection component

Data Collection Component	Respondents	Target Number of Interviews	Main areas of focus
Individual Interviews	IDPs Returnees	Total: 20-30	<p><u>Personal view.</u></p> <p>Decision-making process and motivation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coping mechanisms before displacement. • Decision to evacuate by IDPs' own means • Tipping point to displacement. • External and internal influence in decision making process. <p>Displacement pathway: from the preparation stage to the integration in the host Hromada, when IDPs displace by their own means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation practices before displacement • Difficulties during displacement journey • Needs en route to safer areas. • Coping strategies. Access to services and information throughout the pathway. <p>Decision to displace by IDPs' own means and vulnerability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship between displacing by IDPs' own means and vulnerability. • Influence of displacement on vulnerability. • Support gaps for vulnerable categories along the displacement pathway.
Key Informant Interviews	Actors involved in evacuation processes Actors involved in the reception and support of internally displaced persons	Total: 10-15	<p><u>Systemic view.</u></p> <p>Decision-making and drivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the reasons why people displace through different pathways (by their own means vs assisted evacuation). • Barriers preventing use of evacuation mechanisms.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaps in evacuation system which may influence displacement decisions. <p>Displacement pathway, in situations when IDPs displace by their own means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common transport choices, routes, and destination patterns. • Main risks and difficulties faced before, during, and after displacement. • Typical needs during displacement and upon arrival. • Coping strategies of people displaced by their own means. • Entry points into assistance systems. Access to information and services throughout the pathway. <p>Decision to displace by IDP's own means and vulnerability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profiles of people most likely to displace by their own means and to get assistance with evacuation. <p>Relationship between vulnerability and displacement modality. Differences between people who displaced by their own means and assisted evacuation.</p>
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Individual Interviews with people displaced by their own means will be conducted by the IMPACT Field Team in March-April 2026. Approximately 20-30 IIs will be carried out with stakeholders. Some of the interviews will be conducted by the AO. Interviews will be conducted either face-to-face, online or by phone, depending on logistical capacity, convenience for participants and the security situation.

To engage participants in Individual Interviews (IIs), the Field Team and Assessment Team will coordinate with local NGOs, IDP Councils, evacuation volunteers, community centres, and service hubs working with displaced populations. A short screening form designed to identify individuals who meet the eligibility criteria for participation in the study will be disseminated through partners. The screening form will collect basic contact information (first name, e-mail and phone number) and include several eligibility verification questions, including: year of displacement, oblast of origin, whether the individual used organised evacuation transport or received evacuation-related assistance during displacement, current place of residence, and whether the person currently resides in Ukraine rather than abroad. These screening questions will allow the research team to exclude respondents who used evacuation mechanisms or who otherwise do not meet the study criteria. In addition, the screening form will collect several socio-demographic variables to support sample diversification and monitoring, including gender, age group, evacuation from occupied or non-occupied settlements, presence of disability or

chronic illness, and household composition (including presence of children). Purposive sampling will be applied to capture diverse displacement experiences and ensure balanced coverage across key demographic and vulnerability profiles. Snowball sampling will additionally be used to reach individuals who may not be connected to formal assistance structures. When using snowball recruitment, respondents will be explicitly asked to share contacts of people who may want to take part in the research in order to reduce the risk of overrepresentation of assistance-connected IDPs.

Each potential respondent will be reviewed individually to ensure that they meet the study criteria and contribute to a diverse set of experiences. To support sample management and monitoring, the Assessment Team will maintain a Data Collection Tracker throughout the recruitment and data collection process. The tracker will allow the team to continuously monitor sample composition and adjust recruitment efforts where necessary to maintain diversity and avoid overrepresentation of specific profiles.

The sample will prioritise recently displaced individuals, with approximately 75% of respondents having displaced in the 2025 to capture current dynamics, and 25% - during 2023 – 2024 period to be able to cover less recent experiences. In terms of geographic origin, approximately 90% of respondents will originate from front-line oblasts and 10% from occupied territories. Particular attention will be given to individuals from the top five oblasts of IDP origin: Donetsk, Kharkiv, Sumska, Zaporizka, Dnipropetrovska and Khersonska.

Additionally, efforts will be made to ensure that the following socio-demographic characteristics are taken into account to further diversify the sample:

- Gender
- Age
- Vulnerability status (persons with disabilities, single caregivers, elderly persons – especially those living alone, large families)
- Displacement status (secondary displacement)
- Area of origin (urban vs. rural)
- Current area (urban vs. rural)

This approach will allow for comparison of displacement pathways and their aftermath across different vulnerability and geographic profiles.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) will be conducted simultaneously with Individual Interviews. Approximately 10-15 KIIs will be carried out with stakeholders engaged in two main categories relevant to the evacuation and displacement pathway: actors involved in evacuation processes and actors involved in the reception and support of internally displaced persons. Actors involved in evacuation processes can provide operational insights into how evacuations are organised, what challenges arise at the departure and transit stages, and how civilians make decisions about leaving high-risk areas. Actors involved in the reception and support of IDPs can provide perspectives on what happens after arrival, including access to services, administrative procedures, and challenges related to settlement and integration in host communities. Among potential informants, we consider the following:

Group 1 - actors related to the process of evacuation

- Transit Centres
- Evacuation volunteers, NGOs

Group 2 - actors related to adaptation and integration help upon displacement

- IDP Councils (both relocated and non-relocated)
- Local authorities (specifically the departments dealing with social protection and displacement-related administrative work and assistance)
- Community centres and humanitarian hubs

However, we are aware that some actors might simultaneously provide evacuation help and assistance upon displacements. Therefore, we allow for a certain degree of flexibility in selecting respondents for these groups.

KIIs will help contextualise individual experiences, assess available services and referral mechanisms, identify coordination gaps, and explore differences between those who received evacuation support and IDPs who displaced by their own means.

It is essential for this study to clearly exclude groups that do not meet the research criteria. Therefore, a table is provided below outlining the categories of individuals who are not included in the sample.

Table 3. Exclusion criteria for the research sample

Exclusion criteria	Description of exclusion criteria	Reason for exclusion
Exceptions based on time frame	Displaced before January 2023	The assessment concerns the current state of displacement. The evacuation process in 2022, caused by the start of a full-scale invasion, was unprecedented in scale, highly unregulated and did not reflect trends in displacement which occurred afterwards.
	Were actively displaced during a less than 2-month period, which includes: 1) Those displaced after January 2026 2) Those returnees who came back to the hromada of origin in less than 2 months after displacement	Too little time to assess the mechanisms for integrating people into the host community.
	Those who passed through transit centres ²¹	They received assisted support from the state, NGOs, humanitarian

²¹ With the understanding that if we lack a specific profile in the sampling, we can seek to identify IDPs through transit centers, providing they displaced by their own means and approached the transit center after arriving by themselves in the hosting community.

Exceptions related to evacuation support received and displacement pathway	Used evacuation transport (trains, buses, cars etc.)	organisations, and therefore do not meet the criteria for being displaced by their own means.
	Used organised evacuation transport provided by the state or humanitarian actors (trains, buses, cars etc.)	
	Those who did not make a decision regarding their displacement – minors, people residing in specialised institutions.	Did not influence (directly) the decision to displace.

Sampling

1) Individual interviews with people displaced through self-organised evacuation

Tables 4-5. Quota distribution of II's participants

Quota 1.		
By the time of displacement	During January 2023 – December 2024	January 2025 – January 2026
Percentage of sample	25%	75%

Quota 2.		
By the type hromada of origin	High-risk areas (<i>or other areas of damage to the population</i>)	Occupied Territories
Percentage of sample	90%	10%

Diversity criteria (monitored across quotas):

- **Rural/urban:** at least 5 people from a rural area, and 4 people displaced to a rural area
- **Gender:** at least 5 men.
- **Age:** at least 5 people aged 60 and older.
- **Vulnerability presence:** at least 2 people with disabilities, 3 single caregivers
- **Displacement status:** at least 2 returnees, 2 secondary displaced.

Profile of possible participants of KIIs and target number of those interviews:

- At least 5 authority representatives/ IDP Councils.
- At least 3 NGO`s representatives.
- At least 2 INGO`s representatives.
- At least 5 actors involved in the evacuation process.
- At least 5 actors who provide services during evacuation.

Data Processing & Analysis

The secondary data will be collected and reviewed by the Assessment Team (Assessment Officer and Senior Assessment Officer). Any new relevant reports, factsheets, briefings and other information will be added to the stock of secondary data and will be used to triangulate the results of the data collection.

Enumerators will receive training on qualitative data collection, as well as the specific tools used in this assessment. A pilot data collection of the qualitative components will follow the training. The data collection tools may be adjusted based on the insights from the pilot.

Qualitative data collection will be audio-recorded (dependent on respondents' consent), and the interviewers (Field Team enumerators) will take notes during data collection. Enumerators will transcribe these notes, using recordings to consolidate them, as soon as possible after the discussions. Collected data will be anonymised. The transcripts will be translated automatically, with translation verified and edited by the Field Team.

The coding system will be exported as a data saturation grid built via MAXQDA to highlight the key themes, areas of consensus, and areas of disagreement. The qualitative analysis will follow a thematic analysis approach. Interview transcripts will be coded using a predefined coding framework derived from the research questions and thematic blocks of the data collection tools. During the analysis process, additional inductive codes may be added if new themes emerge from respondents' narratives. The coding structure will allow the research team to systematically identify patterns across interviews and reconstruct key stages of the self-organised evacuation pathway.

Individual Interviews (IIs) will primarily support the reconstruction of lived experiences and displacement pathways of self-organised evacuated people. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) will complement these perspectives by providing systemic insights from actors involved at different stages of the evacuation and displacement process. This structure will allow the research team to triangulate individual experiences with institutional perspectives and identify both common patterns and divergences between lived experiences and system-level observations. Where relevant, the analysis will also explore differences across respondent profiles (e.g. vulnerability status, geographic origin, time of evacuation, and displacement trajectories) to better understand how different factors influence evacuation pathways and subsequent displacement experiences.

Qualitative data analysis will be performed according to the Data Analysis Plan (see section 6). All data cleaning and analysis will be reviewed by the IMPACT HQ Research Department.

3.4 Limitations

- Data collected through this assessment will be indicative of the situation at the time of data collection. Given the dynamic nature of hostilities, displacement patterns, and evacuation regulations in Ukraine, findings may be affected by subsequent changes in security conditions, policy amendments, or shifts in humanitarian response mechanisms.
- As recruitment of respondents for individual interviews will be conducted with the support of local NGOs and humanitarian partners, the sample is likely to include individuals who have already interacted with civil society or assistance actors. IDPs who displaced by their own means who have not sought support, remain unregistered, or deliberately avoid formal systems may be underrepresented. This may result in findings that reflect relatively higher levels of service awareness or access than experienced by the broader IDP population who displaced by their own means
- Certain groups may be more difficult to reach due to recruitment and communication barriers. People currently residing in remote or rural areas, older people (especially living alone), people with disabilities, and individuals with limited digital access may be underrepresented. As a result, some vulnerability profiles may not be fully captured.
- Given the sensitive nature of wartime experiences, respondents may be reluctant to disclose information related to trauma, informal coping strategies, distrust toward authorities, irregular movement pathways, or protection incidents. Social desirability bias may also influence how participants describe their decision-making processes or interactions with state institutions.
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with authorities, humanitarian actors, and service providers will provide insights into evacuation procedures, coordination mechanisms, and assistance gaps from an institutional perspective. However, these stakeholders may present systems and interventions in a favourable light, potentially underreporting operational challenges, coordination failures, or service limitations. Also, KII's may not know the specifics of displacement journey when IDPs seek safety by their own means, while they are mostly working with the organised evacuation or do not specify information about the displacement modality of their beneficiaries.

4. Key ethical considerations and related risks

The proposed research design meets / does not meet the following criteria:

<i>The proposed research design...</i>	Yes/ No	Details if no (including mitigation)
... Has been coordinated with relevant stakeholders to avoid unnecessary duplication of data collection efforts?	Yes	
... Respects respondents, their rights and dignity (<i>specifically by: seeking informed consent, designing length of survey/ discussion while being considerate of participants' time, ensuring accurate reporting of information provided</i>)?	Yes	
... Does not expose data collectors to any risks as a direct result of participation in data collection?	Yes	

... Does not expose respondents / their communities to any risks as a direct result of participation in data collection?	Yes	
... Does not involve collecting information on specific topics which may be stressful and/ or re-traumatising for research participants (both respondents and data collectors)?	No	Enumerators will receive training on interviewing crisis-affected populations. Data collection tools will be designed using sensitive, non-leading wording and will avoid requesting detailed accounts of traumatic events. Participation will be fully voluntary, informed consent will be obtained prior to each interview, and respondents may refuse to answer any question or terminate the discussion at any time without consequence. Interviews will be conducted in a respectful and non-intrusive manner, and immediately paused or stopped if distress is observed.
... Does not involve data collection with minors i.e. anyone less than 18 years old?	Yes	
... Does not involve data collection with other vulnerable groups e.g. persons with disabilities, victims/ survivors of protection incidents, etc.?	No	Interviews with vulnerable participants (e.g. persons with disabilities, older persons, or individuals with heightened protection risks) will be conducted in a safe and private setting, using adapted and accessible communication approaches. Enumerators will be trained on respectful engagement, non-discriminatory practices, and safeguarding principles. All data will be anonymised, and no personally identifiable information will be included in analysis or outputs.
... Follows IMPACT SOPs for management of personally identifiable information ?	Yes	

5. Roles and responsibilities

Task Description	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed
Research design	Assessment Officer, Senior Assessment Officer	Assessment Team Lead	Research Quality Assurance Unit	Donor
Supervising data collection	Assessment Officer, Senior Field Officer	Field Coordinator	Assessment Team Lead, HQ	NA

Data processing (checking, cleaning)	Assessment Officer	Senior Assessment Officer	Research Department Assessment Team Lead, HQ Research Department	NA
	Assessment Officer, Senior Assessment Officer	Assessment Team Lead	HQ Research Department	NA
Output production	Assessment Officer, Senior Assessment Officer	Assessment Team Lead	HQ Research Department	Donor
Dissemination	Assessment Officer, Senior Assessment Officer	Assessment Team Lead	HQ Communication Department	Donor
Monitoring & Evaluation	Senior Assessment Officer	Assessment Team Lead	HQ Communication Department	Donor
Lessons learned	Assessment Officer	Senior Assessment Officer	Assessment Team Lead, Field Team, HQ Research Department	NA

Responsible: the person(s) who executes the task

Accountable: the person who validates the completion of the task and is accountable of the final output or milestone

Consulted: the person(s) who must be consulted when the task is implemented

Informed: the person(s) who need to be informed when the task is completed

6. Data Analysis Plan

Data Analysis Plan : upon request

