

Displacement and vulnerability

Who are the most vulnerable internally displaced people in Ukraine?

July 2025 | Ukraine

Key findings

- **Internally displaced people (IDPs) face acute challenges accessing livelihood**, adding a compounding effect on their ability to meet their needs. IDPs are less often employed compared to the non-displaced population caused by displacement-specific barriers to employment, such as lack of childcare services for single-parent families whose partner was separated during displacement or mismatch between low salaries and additional expenses related to rent for IDPs. The inability to access sufficient livelihoods fuels re-displacement and inability to leave collective sites. Reductions in government assistance have not led to improved employment rates, exacerbating vulnerability.
- **While already a vulnerable group in itself, IDPs are not a single bloc and pre-existing vulnerabilities can add to these caused by displacement.** Women single-headed, rural and recently displaced households appeared more vulnerable to multisectoral needs than other IDP households. People hosted for free by relatives or friends may be particularly vulnerable to multisectoral needs, in addition to their precarious housing situation.
- **Certain groups also face specific sectoral needs:** single-headed female households, older individuals, people with disabilities, and rural households often face even more challenges accessing sufficient income, while urban IDP households face acute protection threats. Displacement-specific needs are often compounded by specific socio-demographic factors, suggesting dynamic categories are more adequate to identify the profile of vulnerable IDPs.

Overview of the brief

As Ukraine enters the fourth year of the full-scale invasion, one in ten Ukrainians - or 3.8 million - are estimated to be Internally Displaced People (IDPs) (IOM). The revised Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP) elevated support to the most vulnerable IDPs as one of its four priorities, alongside support to the most vulnerable who remain close to the frontline - many IDPs often displace within frontline oblasts.

It is therefore important to take stock of the patterns and profile of displacement as of 2025, what the needs of IDPs are and which ones are particularly vulnerable, to enable an evidence-based response.

This brief aims to inform humanitarian partners on who - and where - are the most vulnerable IDPs, what are their most urgent needs, and how to best support them. The analysis is based on data sources from REACH assessments and secondary data sources, and is designed in three parts:

1. Profile and patterns of displacement in Ukraine
2. Needs of displaced people in Ukraine
3. Specific vulnerable groups within displaced people

If you have questions on this brief, or would like to request additional information on REACH's work on displacement, please contact: maxence.martin@impact-initiatives.org.

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).

I. Profile and drivers of displacement in Ukraine

1.1. Profile of displacement

Area of origin: As of April 2025, **almost all IDPs in Governmental-Controlled Areas originate from frontline oblasts¹** (91%) and a majority (52%) from partially or fully occupied raions.

Area of displacement: **almost half of all IDPs (45%) displaced within or to other frontline oblasts, suggesting displacement does not always solve their protection needs.** This is especially true as recent IDPs are more likely to remain in frontline areas: 40% of IDPs that evacuated less than a year ago live in a frontline settlement, compared to 30% of IDPs that left their initial settlement more than a year ago. As of February 2025, the majority of registered IDPs were in the East (12% in Dnipropetrovska and Kharkivska oblast), as well as Kyivska oblast (8%) and Kyiv city (7%). However, the presence of IDPs was noted in all oblasts, including the West (mainly in Lvivska, 6%) and the South (5% in Zaporizka and 5% in Odeska oblasts), highlighting support to IDPs is relevant across all of Ukraine (IOM).

Movement intentions: **few IDPs reported immediate movement intentions**, with only 8% planning on leaving the settlement they are currently displaced in within the next three months (IOM). This suggests that **many IDPs will remain displaced for a longer period of time**, and that interim solutions supporting self-reliance and community integration are therefore essential to avoid unsafe returns in the short to medium-term. However, in March 2025 only 34% reported planning to integrate in their current communities, with 19% planning to return at some point - despite most being from frontline or occupied settlements, making return dangerous (IOM). This is especially true for IDPs displaced close to the frontline, as REACH qualitative interviews on the frontline highlighted they often remain close to their place of usual residence with hopes to come back quickly, once the security situation improves. Re-displacement also remains widespread, with 40% of IDPs having been re-displaced since their first displacement (IOM).

1.2. Drivers of displacement

Push factors: **displacement in Ukraine remains primarily driven by security concerns.** Many IDPs (88%) who were displaced only once reported a worsening security situation as the main reason for leaving (IOM). This has been confirmed by frontline assessments from REACH: most residents of frontline settlements willing to evacuate have already done so, and now people mostly evacuate after experiencing acute protection threats such as destroyed housing or intensified attacks. Drivers of re-displacement are slightly different: while insecurity remained a common push factor (41%), **re-displaced IDPs more often reported economic factors** such as the inability to earn income (18%) or find affordable housing (16%) in the settlement they were initially displaced to. This suggests that the absence of housing and livelihood support adds vulnerability to IDPs, who have to re-displace to find employment or housing (IOM).

Pull factors: **the most reported factors for IDPs to decide where to settle are the proximity to family and friends** (39%), followed by a favourable security situation (21%), access to housing (14%) and income opportunities (11%, IOM). Access to livelihood or housing emerges as minor pull factors, highlighting the need for support accessing them:

- Before displacement, so IDPs can plan where to be displaced to accordingly.
- Once they are displaced, since previous studies showed that existing social networks are important for vulnerable IDPs to meet their needs (IOM).

“ In 2022, there was a large flow of people, about 6.000 people a day, and now the flow is slow, by waves, and few people are evacuating. It's mostly people who did not want to evacuate before and stayed. [They are leaving because of] evacuation orders. [...] It's mostly people with limited mobility or the elderly.

- Representative of a local organisation, Zaporizka ”

II. Needs of displaced people in Ukraine

2.1. How do needs of IDPs compare to non-displaced people?

Challenges faced by IDPs: **IDPs face acute protection challenges** compared to non-displaced people, with livelihoods/income challenges remaining widespread. When asked about the main challenge they face, IDPs most frequently reported lack of income/money first, in similar proportions than non-displaced people. Around one third of IDPs reported protection challenges as the main challenge they face, compared to 18% of non-displaced.

This is confirmed by the **REACH CCIA** livelihood score, a composite framework designed to understand vulnerability to sectoral needs²: 18% of IDPs faced extreme livelihoods needs compared to 11% of non-displaced people, and 22% of IDPs faced extreme protection needs compared to 11% of non-displaced people. The difference in protection CCIA scores does not necessarily translate to acute needs, as it can be explained by the high prevalence of IDP in frontline areas - with the CCIA framework assigning a higher score based on distance from the frontline. For other sectors, the difference in percentage was minimal³ (REACH).

Table 1: Most important challenge faced by the household (n=8919, by displacement status), MSNA, July 2024

	IDPs (n=725)	Non Displaced (n=8194)
Salaried work	33%	30%
Lack of safety or protection	31%	18%
None	14%	36%

2.2. Livelihood needs of IDPs

Qualitative assessments highlighted that **IDPs were less likely to report being officially employed compared to host community members**, with most IDP households reporting relying on government social assistance as a primary source of income (REACH). This is confirmed by the 2024 MSNA: despite IDP and non-displaced households reporting similar reliance on salaried work as a primary source of income, IDP households were more likely to report relying on IDP benefits (58%), other government social benefits (28%) and casual of daily labour (17%) than non-displaced (0%, 13% and 16% respectively). IOM GPS also confirmed the lack of livelihoods opportunities as the third most commonly reported unmet goods/services needs of IDPs (35%, 7 percentage points more than non-displaced).

Reduction of IDP allowance: Livelihood challenges faced by IDPs are exacerbated by changes to IDP allowance payment introduced in March 2024 (UNHCR). While IDP benefits from the government were reported as a primary source of income by 52% of IDP households in 2024, the same proportion (52%) reported experiencing cuts to their IDP allowance (REACH)⁴. While the changes were meant to increase the employment of IDPs able to work, a comparison of the main reported sources of incomes by IDPs between July 2024 and January 2025 demonstrate no increase in the percentage of IDP households reporting salaried work as their main source of income, possibly meaning that willingness to work or reliance on benefits was not a barrier to employment, and hinting at a risk of IDP households relying on IDP payment losing their main source of income and leading to acute needs (REACH).

Table 2: Primary sources of income reported by the household, (n=8919, by displacement status), MSNA, July 2024

	IDPs (n=725)		Non Displaced (n=8194)	
	Jul-24	Jan-25	Jul-24	Jan-25
Salaried work	58%	55%	56%	58%
IDP benefits	52%	53%	0%	2%

Barriers to employment: As lower employment rates for IDPs cannot be attributed to their lack of willingness to work, other barriers have been identified:

- **Mismatch between available jobs** in host communities and IDPs' qualifications.
- **Low salaries** for available jobs that fail to meet IDPs' expectations or cover the substantial expenses they incur through spending on rent.
- For men, **fears regarding conscription** possibly discouraging them from registering with employment centres or be hired in the formal labour market.
- While not unique to IDPs (REACH), the lack of **childcare support** such as kindergarten was reported as a barrier to employment for women and single-parent households. This is particularly relevant as IDP households were noted to be more often women-led and single-parent households than the general population (REACH).

2.3. Housing needs of IDPs

IDP households much more frequently reported renting their current housing (67%), compared to non-displaced people (6%)⁵. This led to **much more IDP households reporting rent as an expense** (60%) compared to non-displaced people (6%), with a reported median monthly rent of 5500 UAH - an unsustainable expense for most compared to the reported median income per capita of 6750 UAH for IDP households (REACH)⁶. Further qualitative assessments confirmed unaffordability of (rented) housing for IDPs, sometimes prompting return to unsafe areas (REACH). IOM GPS confirmed the lack of access to accommodation as the fourth most commonly reported unmet goods/services needs of IDPs (32%, which is 24 percentage points more than non-displaced). Notably, GPS noted a geographic pattern, with **the lack of accommodation being more pronounced in Kyiv City and the Western Oblasts**.

“ Humanitarian aid, unfortunately, is being reduced in the western region. I understand the need for the east, the south, because people live in the zone of active hostilities. But in our western region, we host people from the temporarily occupied territories, people who are already tired of explosions, people whose housing has been destroyed and damaged.

And they come here hoping to find some kind of safety. But at the same time, we can see from the statistics that most humanitarian aid and most organisations are moving to east and south. This is a little unfair as for those people who have moved here and cannot count on the same help.

- Representative of a local CSO, Ivano-Frankivska ”

2.4. Legal needs of IDPs

IDPs were more likely to report needing legal assistance (30%) than non-displaced people (11%), most often to access compensation for damaged property (14%) and property documentation (6%). **Few IDPs reported needing support to apply for IDP allowances** (8%, REACH), suggesting the current registration system is generally successful. Evidence from frontline settlements suggests some men of conscription age may be reluctant to evacuate or register for IDP status, driven by the perception this may lead to their conscription, possibly hinting that certain eligible IDPs that are not yet registered are doing it willingly (REACH).

“ There are more women evacuating, because men are afraid to leave because of mobilisation.

- Representative of a local organisation, Zaporizka ”

III. Specific vulnerable groups within displaced people

3.1. Gender, age, disability, urbanity housing situation and duration of displacement

IDPs are not a single, homogeneous bloc and encompass different vulnerable groups: **vulnerabilities from displacement intersect with other compounding factors**. It is therefore important to disaggregate by potentially compounding factors - such as gender, age, disability, urbanity, or duration of displacement - in order to better understand which IDPs are likely to be particularly vulnerable.

According to the [REACH CCIA](#) score, a composite framework designed to understand vulnerability to multisectoral needs based on the 2024 MSNA², **gender and urbanity have an impact on the likelihood of IDP households having more severe multisectoral needs**: 72% of women single-headed IDP households face extreme or extreme+ level of multisectoral needs, compared to 65% of men single-headed IDP households. Similarly, 72% of rural IDP households face extreme or extreme+ level of multisectoral needs, compared to 64% of urban households. The presence of people with registered disability in the household did not appear to have an impact, while older households were less likely to have higher needs - possibly driven by elderly IDP households reporting having received assistance in the past 3 months more frequently (58%) than non-elderly households (48%) ([REACH](#)).

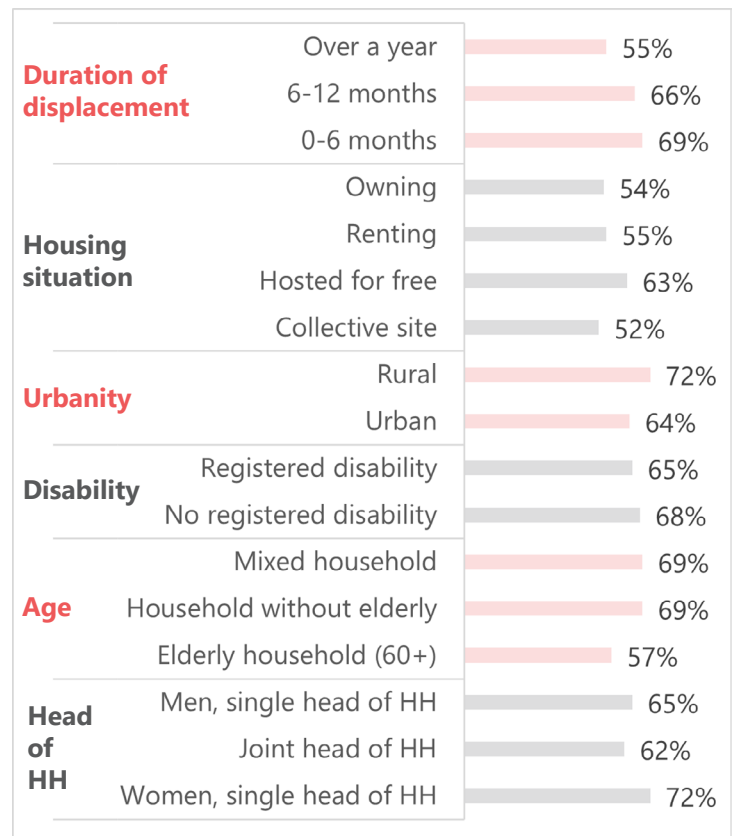
3.2. IDPs in collective sites

As of December 2024, an estimated 79,000 IDPs lived in collective sites in Ukraine. While a small population, they often have complex needs and are particularly vulnerable ([REACH](#)). **Vulnerable groups are overrepresented in collective sites**: 90% of sites reported the presence of older women, 81% reported older men, and 71% reported people with disabilities; with these groups often needing specific healthcare attention and accessible facilities ([REACH](#)).

Despite these challenges, collective sites are often insufficiently supported:

- While nearly all residents (90%) are staying long term (over 1.5 years), **a substantial proportion of collective sites have issues or lack equipment and facilities**, making them unsuitable in their current state as medium or long-term housing solutions. In particular, 49% of collective sites are not sufficiently accessible to people with disabilities, with 65% of collective sites having a shelter that is not accessible to people with disabilities and 13% not having a shelter at all, making residents particularly vulnerable to protection threats. Issues are often site-specific, calling for efforts to improve facilities and target renovations to be case-by-case ([REACH](#)).
- **Despite three quarters of collective sites (77%) needing some sort of repair/renovation, in only**

Graph 1: Proportion of IDP households with a CCIA score of "extreme" or "extreme+", by individual characteristics (n=8919)



16% did managers reported having received shelter support in the past three months, highlighting a remaining gap in the shelter response. For other types of assistance received: around half (51%) of managers reported distribution of humanitarian assistance in their collective site in the month prior to the data collection, most often cleaning materials, hygiene items and food products. However, sites located in the East and North reportedly received aid less frequently than in other regions: 78% of the collective sites in Sumska, 72% in Dnipropetrovska, and 71% in Donetsk oblasts reportedly did not receive any humanitarian aid in the 30 days prior to data collection ([REACH](#)). This may be due to humanitarian actors' reluctance to provide support to collective sites close to the frontline.

- To support operating costs, most (63%) of collective sites are supported by the Government of Ukraine, with few (13%) charging residents and even fewer (4%) relying on humanitarian actors. 15% of collective sites reported no compensation to support their operating costs. **This raises the issue of ensuring financial support is sustainable** to not only keep collective sites operating, but also cover needed repairs and improvements; especially as people living in collective sites often have no other alternatives ([REACH](#)).

DISPLACEMENT AND VULNERABILITY IN UKRAINE

Residents are often unable to leave collective sites due to lack of money. **The most reported barrier to leaving collective sites was the unaffordability of rent** (72% of residents), leading to 88% reporting planning to stay in the collective site in the medium-to-long term. Other personal factors were more rarely reported, such as the uncertainty of movement decisions (30%, [REACH](#)).

Vulnerable IDPs in collective sites either unable to work due to age or disability, or to find sources of income that cover their expenses, will continue to require support with appropriate referrals to necessary services and assistance.

3.2. Vulnerability to livelihood needs

Vulnerability to livelihood needs was previously identified to be particularly prevalent for IDP households. But not all households face the same severity of needs:

- The **lack of income/money** was particularly reported as the main challenge their household face by **single-headed women households, rural households, people living in collective sites or hosted for free by relatives/friends, and households with only unemployed working-age members** ([REACH](#)).
- **For single-headed women households, the lack of income/money is likely driven by the previously reported challenge of lack of childcare support** as a barrier to employment. Supporting childcare is therefore an effective way of supporting employment for IDPs - and more generally, the general population.
- The presence of **older people** in the household, **disability, duration of displacement or distance from the frontline did not appear to have an impact** on the proportion of IDP households **reporting the lack of income/money as the main challenge they face**, possibly indicating IDPs are vulnerable to livelihood needs regardless of their location and duration of displacement ([REACH](#)). However, we can not draw definitive conclusions for duration of displacement due to the small samples for recently displaced households (only 51 interviewed IDP households were displaced in the six months prior to data collection).

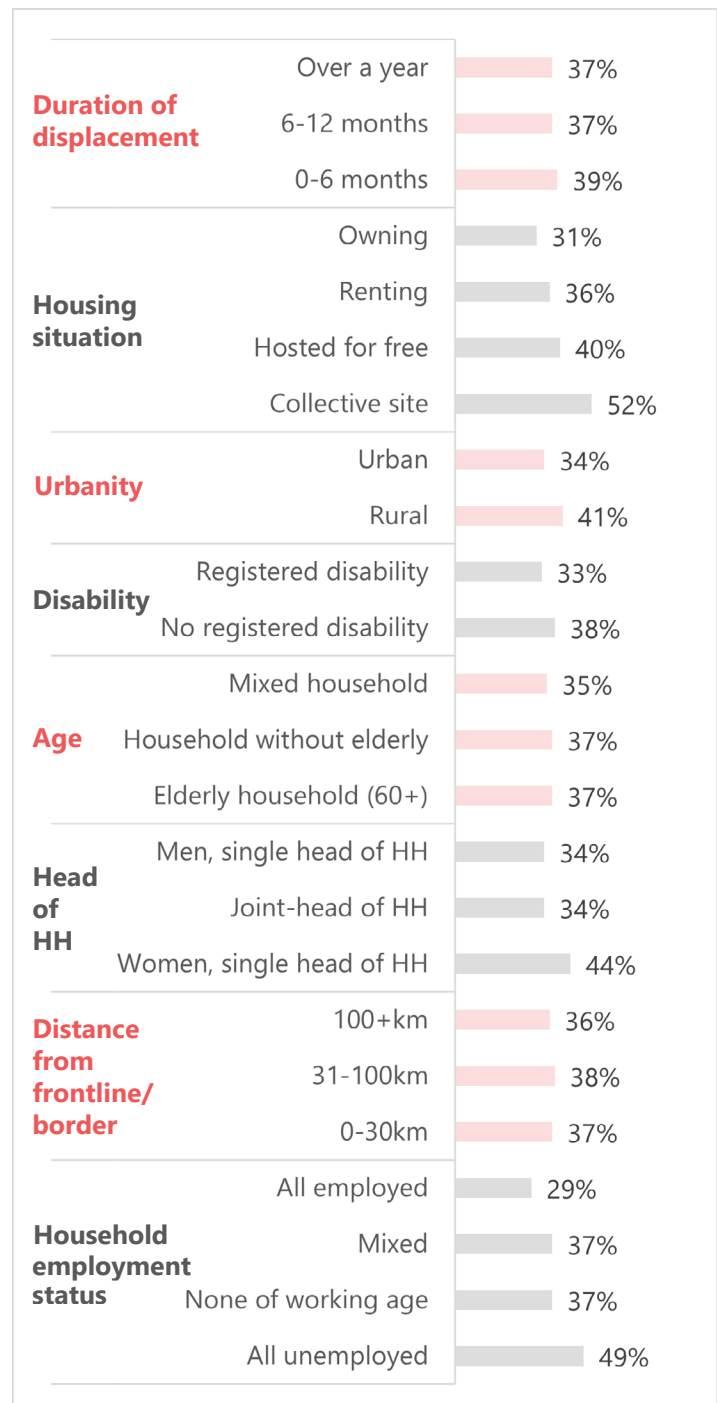
These differences follow patterns previously identified in the general population, with livelihoods opportunities being more scarce in rural areas ([REACH](#)). Conversely, urban households were generally more exposed to protection threats such as missiles and drone attacks.

Therefore, while IDP households are generally more vulnerable than non-displaced households, patterns of vulnerabilities within IDP households for livelihood needs align with vulnerability identified in the general population.

“ For the most part, the categories that remain in the collective sites are those who have disabilities, older people, and those who are unable to work, rent and pay for housing on their own, provide for their basic needs, for food and medical care.

- Representative of a local organisation, Zaporizka ”

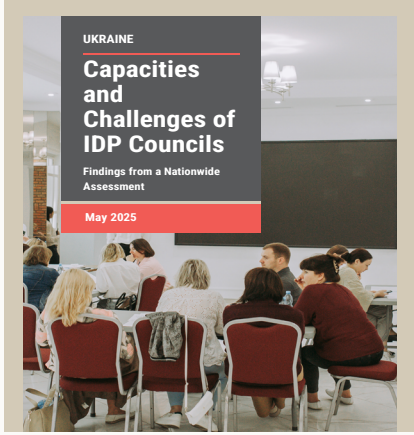
Graph 2: Proportion of IDP households reporting lack of income/money as their main challenge, by individual characteristics (n=8919)



To go further

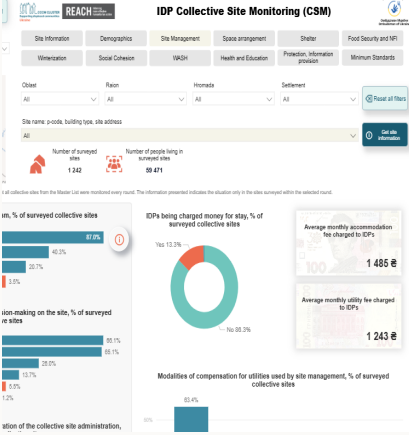
REACH monitors and frequently reports on the profile and needs of displaced people as part of its other research cycles. Partners that are interested in further analyses on IDPs, displacement trends and durable solutions are encouraged to access the following resources:

Capacities and Challenges of IDP councils - report



UKRAINE
Capacities and Challenges of IDP Councils
Findings from a Nationwide Assessment
May 2025

Collective Site Monitoring - dashboard



REACH IDP Collective Site Monitoring (CSM)

Site Information, Demographics, Site Management, Socio-arrangement, Shelter, Food Security and NFIs, Wastewater, Social Cohesion, WASH, Health and Education, Protection, Information, Minimum Standards

Site name, p-code, building type, site address

Number of surveyed sites: 1342
Number of people living in surveyed sites: 59 471

in, % of surveyed collective sites: 45.5%, 35.7%, 15.1%

in, % of surveyed re sites: 99.1%, 99.1%, 11.7%, 12%

in, % of surveyed re sites: 13.2%, 89.3%

Average monthly accommodation fee charged to IDPs: 1 485 €

Average monthly utility fee charged to IDPs: 1 243 €

Modalities of compensation for utilities used by site management, % of surveyed collective sites: 65.4%

Unsafe returns to frontline areas - report

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Unsafe returns: what makes refugees return to Ukraine and settle in the frontline areas of the country?
Longitudinal Survey of Ukrainian Returnees, Round 28 – August 2024

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- Over three years of conflict, many surveyed refugees have returned to Ukraine, with a striking proportion returning to frontline areas. Within the IMPACT longitudinal study monitoring the situation of Ukrainian refugees, a 2024, among all surveyed returnees to Ukraine, 27% have settled in frontline areas, usually in their original or within the same oblast. Notably, 5% of returnees now reside in frontline areas where active hostilities are on the ground.
- Family reunification was reported as the main reason for return, particularly among respondents who returned to frontline areas of Ukraine (52%). The majority (71%) of respondents in frontline areas, who experience family separation, were able to reunite with their family members upon return, particularly with partners (52 parents (7%), driven by emotional reasons or caregiving needs. However, returning closer to the frontline separates 8% of these respondents left their mostly adult children abroad, making up 46% of all family a that occurred upon returning to frontline areas.
- Employment stood at 62% among respondents, who returned to frontline areas, and remained an important barrier, with many requiring their pre-displacement roles. Though broader challenges related to childcare labour conditions persist. Unlike refugees abroad, who often face professional downgrading, returnees to I areas have largely maintained employment profiles aligned with their qualifications. However, managerial e this group have declined from 12% to 7%, and 29% of former sales and service workers remain unemployed possible disruptions in local labour markets near the frontline. In these areas, schools mostly operate online safety concerns, additionally limiting work opportunities for parents and, especially, single caregivers hours (8h with one adult and one or more children aged up to 18), or flexible working arrangements to mitigate this barrier.
- Over the past year, the livelihood situation has worsened for all returnees to Ukraine, with those returning to frontline areas being one of the hardest hit. Half (50%) of all surveyed returnees to Ukraine have adopted mechanisms, and 23% have reduced food consumption due to insufficient income – figures that have risen to these levels during 2023-2024. Still, refugees returning to frontline areas were more likely to report reduced spending on essential items due to insufficient income (53%) compared to those returning to safer areas (4 higher self-reported acute needs (57% compared to 46%).
- Worsening safety conditions over 2024, drive growing uncertainty among movement intentions of returnees to frontline areas. Since late 2023, improved safety has been cited far less frequently as a reason returning (dropping to 5%), while socioeconomic factors – such as access to medical services (13%), education and financial stability abroad (9%) – have become more prominent. Simultaneously, uncertainty about risen sharply, increasing to 30% by August 2024 from 19% in February, reflecting the persistent instability o conditions. These findings underscore the urgent need for improved safety measures and infrastructure to returnees' living conditions and ensure sustainable reintegration.

Methodology and limitations

This analysis is based on data collected in previous assessments conducted by REACH: [Collective Site Monitoring \(CSM, December 2024\)](#), [Rapid Needs Assessments \(2025\)](#), the [Multi-Sector Needs Assessment \(MSNA, August 2024\)](#), and secondary data from humanitarian organisations operating in Ukraine such as [IOM General Population Survey \(April 2025\)](#). For the MSNA, to allow comparison between IDP and non-displaced households, CCIA scores² analysis, and disaggregate by new criteria, the [general population dataset](#) was used. While MSNA findings are representative for the general population, they are indicative for the IDP population. Data from other REACH assessments (conducted through focus group discussions and key informants interviews) are also indicative only.

Endnotes

¹ **Frontline oblasts** are defined by the Government of Ukraine and [include](#) as of July 2025 Chernihivska, Dnipropetrovska, Kharkivska, Khersonska, Luhanska, Mykolaivska, Sumska and Zaporizka oblasts.

² The **Contextualized Composite Indicator Analysis (CCIA)** is a Ukraine-specific framework developed by REACH Ukraine. It measures the magnitude and complexity of humanitarian needs across sectors through Sectoral Composites Scores. Needs are analyzed in the Education, Food Security, Health, Livelihoods, Protection, Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs), and WASH sectors. The CCIA categorizes each household based on the severity of its needs into five categories: None/minimal (1), Stress (2), Severe (3), Extreme (4), and Extreme+ (4+). The household's sectoral severity is determined by a composite indicator for each sector. A final CCIA score is determined for each household based on the highest sectoral severity score.

³ The **absence of difference in other sectoral needs** could be partially explained by IDPs reporting much more often having received aid recently than non-displaced people.

22% of IDP households reported having received assistance in the 30 days prior to data collection (3% of non-displaced), and a further 23% received assistance 1-3 months prior to data collection (4% for non-displaced, [REACH](#)).

⁴ In September 2024, IOM estimated that **"nearly two-fifths (39%) of IDPs reported losing access to the allowance following the law amendment in March 2024"** ([IOM](#)). The difference in figures between IOM and REACH can be explained by the unit of analysis: IOM interviewed individuals, and reported on individual loss of IDP allowances; while REACH interviewed households and reported on loss of IDP allowance for any member in the household (even if other IDP household member kept receiving IDP allowances).

⁵ Similarly, **IDP households were much more likely to report being hosted for free by relatives/friends (26%) compared to non-displaced households (2%)**. However, this less secure housing arrangement did not lead to IDP households being hosted for free reporting more frequently being at risk of eviction (10%) compared to IDP households owning their housing (7%) or renting (12%).

⁶ For reference, the median income of non-displaced households was 6350 UAH.

This brief was published with the support of:



HAVEN
Humanitarian Action through Volunteers, Enablers & Networks






Supported by:



UKaid
from the British people



Co-funded by
the European Union