

UKRAINE: Humanitarian Situation Monitoring

Briefing note: Humanitarian situation in newly accessible areas in Khersonska oblast

Context and Methodology

November 2022

To inform humanitarian actors, REACH has been conducting monthly **Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM)** since March 2022 across Ukraine, covering: (i) accessible or government-controlled areas (GCAs), including both conflict-affected¹, IDP-hosting² and newly accessible areas³, and (ii) hard-to-reach areas, including non-government controlled areas (NGCAs)⁴ and/or territories of active conflict⁵, and conflict-affected areas with no phone coverage⁶.

The **sixth round of HSM** specifically intended to inform strategic decision-making processes in alignment with the **Humanitarian Response Planning** timeline, as well as to allow humanitarian actors to get a better overview of how humanitarian needs have changed over time and get indicative information on the areas where a higher level of need or service access concerns have been registered.

Data collection for the sixth round was conducted between **September 5th and 16th** by adopting the 'Area of Knowledge' (AoK) methodology in both urban and rural NGCAs. The current briefing note provides key indicative findings on the assessed settlements in **Khersonska oblast**. **92 settlements** were assessed through a total of **194 interviews** with key informants (KIs)⁷. Out of these, **39 settlements were located on the right (west) bank of the Dnipro river** (these settlements were categorised as NGCAs at the time of data collection in September but are considered newly accessible areas (NAAs) as of November) and **53 settlements to the east of the river** (categorised as NGCAs). **The briefing note focuses on the 39 NAA settlements west of the river aiming to inform and support programmatic and operational response in these areas.**

The findings should be interpreted as indicative of the situation in the assessed settlements as of September 2022. While the recent Russian withdrawal from the areas on the west bank of Dnipro river led to a change in the humanitarian situation, this briefing note aims to provide a useful backdrop of information on the situation in these areas prior to the withdrawal, to inform partners currently aiming to set up a response.

Interpretation of findings

For the sixth round, the Data Aggregation Plan used the **average approach** to aggregate the settlement response by using a severity scale in cases of **single-choice** questions. All KI responses from the same settlement were aggregated to have one data point for each variable per settlement. The findings are presented at the settlement and/or oblast level. In case of a **multiple-choice** questions, the rule was to select all responses that have been reported/cited by at least one respondent if the number of respondents was smaller than 5, otherwise 2 out of 5 and more respondents.

In this brief, the data represents a percentage of settlements (towns or villages) for which KIs reported a specific answer to a survey question. These statistics **cannot be extrapolated to represent a proportion (%) of the population**, and thus should be interpreted as indicative rather than representative. Given the small and purposive sample, these results only provide a basic understanding of the situation in the assessed regions.

Furthermore, given that the KIs were selected based on whether they fulfilled the selection criteria, there was no minimum number of KIs set per settlement. Therefore, findings on individual settlements should be interpreted with caution as they are considered indicative.

Key highlights

- At the time of data collection (in September), the overall **humanitarian situation in settlements closer to the line of contact (west bank of Dnipro) was reported to be more dire**, with a higher level of need and severity of obstacles to basic services reported, compared to settlements east of the river.
- The worst levels of overall humanitarian need were reported in settlements close to the previous Line of Contact (LoC): **Davydiv Brid, Mala Oleksandrivka, Novodmyrivka, Starosillia, Vysokopillia, Potomkyne, Orlove, Myroliubivka, Petrivka.**
- In most settlements, KIs reported the **humanitarian situation had deteriorated** over the month prior to data collection in September.
- The **supply of basic utilities such as water, gas, and electricity was already reported as heavily disrupted** in many settlements at the time of data collection in September 2022. The situation likely further deteriorated following the additional destruction of key infrastructure ahead of or during the Russian withdrawal.
- **Disrupted access to finances** further hindered access to basic services, such as food, non-food items (NFIs), healthcare services, and heating, as KIs reported the **lack of money and high prices as the main barriers** to accessing these services.

Map 1: Assessment coverage in NAAs in Khersonska oblast



Footnotes

1. Conflict-affected areas are defined as oblasts identified by the Government of Ukraine as being conflict-affected.
2. IDP-hosting settlements were identified based on KIs in the assessed settlements reporting presence of displaced people in their settlement at the time of data collection.
3. Areas that have not been accessible since February 2022 based on the monitoring of Live Universal Awareness Map (LiveUA).
4. Non-government controlled areas before February 24th, 2022, including the Crimea, were not included in the geographic coverage.

5. Areas that are experiencing on the ground hostilities at the time of sampling, as monitored by LiveUA, including all hromadas that are touching the contact line at the time of sampling.
6. While some of the hard-to-reach areas may have phone coverage at the time of data collection, following the 'do no harm' principle, REACH has not contacted KIs in areas that were in NGCAs or areas that were experiencing active on the ground conflict.
7. KIs were selected based on their recent knowledge of the settlements of interest: they were either displaced from a hard-to-reach settlement within 7 days prior to data collection or in regular contact with people still living in the settlement in 14 days prior to data collection. KI responses were aggregated at the settlement level.

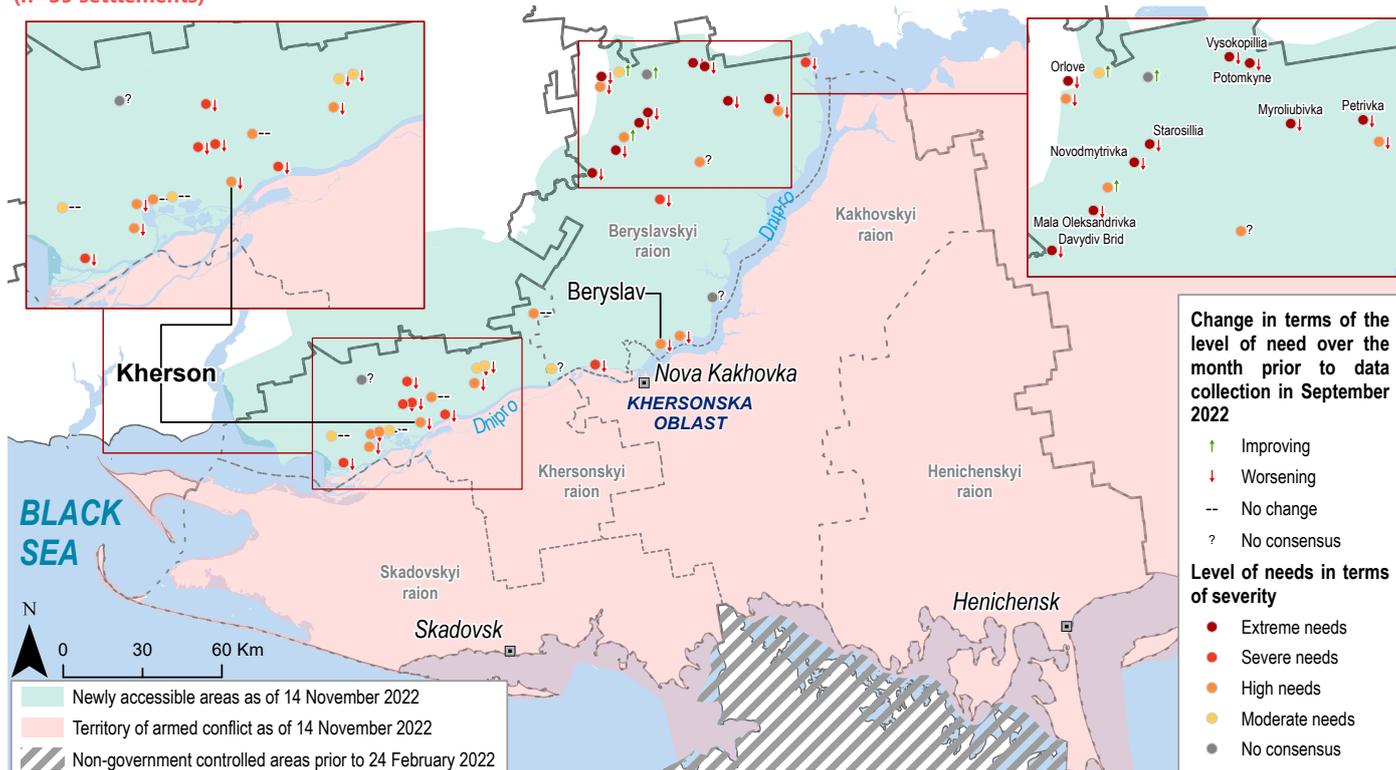
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Overall severity of needs, priority needs and main concerns

November 2022

Map 2: Overall severity of needs and change in terms of the level of needs reported by KIs in NAA settlements in Khersonska oblast (n=39 settlements)



- In around a third of the assessed settlements in Khersonska oblast (30%, n=27/92), KIs identified that the level of overall need was either 'extreme' (corresponding to the 'loss of life or imminent risk of loss of life as a result of the lack of access to services, food, shelter or other life-saving assistance') or 'severe' (corresponding to 'very poor living conditions and most people finding it difficult to meet basic needs, leading to serious concerns about physical and mental wellbeing'). The settlements where KIs highlighted that the level of need was 'extreme' were located west of the Dnipro river (close to the previous LoC), particularly, Davydiv Brid, Mala Oleksandrivka, Novodmytrivka, Starosillia, Vysokopillia, Potomkyne, Orlove, Myroliubivka, and Petrivka.
- In most of the settlements west of the river (n=27/39), including the above-mentioned 9 settlements where the level of need was reportedly 'extreme', KIs reported that the humanitarian situation (and the level of overall need) had **deteriorated compared to the same time in the previous month**.

Most commonly reported concerns across the NAA settlements (39 total)

1	Disruptions to telecommunications	97% n=38	📞
2	Safety concerns	97% n=38	🛡️
3	Access to medicines	97% n=38	🏠
4	Access to financial services	95% n=37	💰
5	Access to documents/legal, administrative services	90% n=35	📄

Most commonly reported priority needs across the NAA settlements (39 total)

1	Medicine	72% n=28	🏠
2	Food	67% n=26	🍲
3	Financial resources	41% n=16	💰
4	Evacuation	33% n=13	🚶

Priority needs

- The need for **medicine** and **food** was a top priority in most of the assessed settlements west of the river, which is consistent with the reported lack of access to these items and wide-scale barriers people reportedly faced in meeting their basic needs.
- While '**evacuation**' (cited as an urgently needed support at the time of data collection in September) is likely less of a priority after these areas became NAAs, many persons may still be seeking to leave when possible.
- Notably, **employment** and **Internet/phone network** were more commonly cited as priority needs in settlements east of the river (NGCAs), rather than west (NAAs as of November). This correlates with the escalation of hostilities in the latter areas at the time of data collection, implying less stability and a higher level of need for other essential items or services.

Concerns

- In addition to the five most reported concerns across the assessed settlements west of the river, KIs in over **80%** of the settlements also reported **access to healthcare services**, **access to education**, and **a lack of specific services for people with disabilities** as main concerns in the settlement in the 14 days prior to data collection.

DAMAGE

- Hostilities directly affected most settlements west of the river: in **82% (n=32/39)** of settlements, KIs reported damage to infrastructure (including private housing) since 24 February 2022.
- In **seven** of these settlements (Davydiv Brid, Novodmytrivka, Potomkyne, Orlove, Novovorontsovka, Myroliubivka, Petrivka), **all or almost all of the infrastructure was reportedly damaged**.
- Most reported types of infrastructure that had been damaged in the assessed settlements west of the river included: **markets and grocery stores, roads, schools and education facilities, warehouses, bridges, government buildings and industrial facilities**. **Water infrastructure** (e.g., pipes, treatment facilities, buildings, etc.) was also reported to have been damaged in **11 out of 32** assessed settlements west of the river where damage was reported.

HOUSING AND WINTERISATION

- In **17 out of 39** settlements west of the river (currently NAAs), KIs reported that most people had **not had access to safe and adequate housing conditions** in the 14 days prior to data collection in September.
- In **8 out of the 17** settlements where KIs reported that most people had not had access to safe and adequate housing, the reported degree of barriers was **'extreme'**, and the most reported barrier was that housing and shelters were damaged.
- Across the assessed settlements west of the river (currently NAAs), the most reported sources of heating were **wood (74%, n=29/39)**, **gas (72%, n=28/39)**, **electricity (67%, n=26/39)**, and **coal (49%, n=19/39)**.
- The most reported barriers in terms of accessing heating during winter were the **lack of money, lack of fuel stock, and high prices**.

ACCESS TO FOOD AND NFIs

- In most of the assessed settlements west of the river (**n=29/39**), KIs reported that most people in the settlement had **not had access to enough food**.*
- In **11** out of these settlements, KIs reported that people faced **'extreme'** or **'severe'** degree of barriers in accessing enough food, and in **eight** settlements, the reported degree of barriers was **'high'**.
- Furthermore, in **26 out of 37** assessed settlements west of the river (currently NAAs), KIs reported that most people **had not had access to NFIs**.* In nearly half of these settlements (**n=12/26**), the degree of barriers in terms of accessing NFIs was reportedly **'extreme'** or **'severe'**.
- KIs reported similar barriers in terms of accessing food and NFIs, particularly the **lack of money** and **high prices**. This is in line with the high level of barriers reported in terms of accessing finances. In nearly all the assessed settlements west of the river (**n=37/39**), KIs reported that most people had **not had access to cash, ATMs, and banking services**.*
- In settlements with reported 'extreme' or 'severe' degree of barriers both in terms of accessing enough food and accessing NFIs, KIs commonly highlighted **closure of stores and movement restrictions** as the main access barriers.

UTILITIES (WATER, GAS, ELECTRICITY)

- The **supply of basic utilities such as water, gas, and electricity was already reported as heavily disrupted** in many settlements at the time of data collection in September 2022. The situation is likely to have further deteriorated following the additional destruction of key infrastructure ahead of or during the Russian withdrawal.
- At least some disruptions (**'all the time', 'a few hours per day', or 'every few days'**) to utilities were reported in most settlements west of the river at the time of data collection in September 2022:
 -  **Water supply** was reportedly disrupted in **28 out of 39** settlements. In **six** of these settlements, the supply was reportedly disrupted **'all the time'**. These settlements were: **Davydiv Brid, Starosillia, Vysokopillia, Potomkyne, Petrivka, and Khreshchenivka**.
 -  **Electricity** was reportedly disrupted in **32 out of 39** settlements. In **12** of these settlements, the supply was reportedly disrupted **'all the time'**.**
 -  **Gas supply** was reportedly disrupted in **22 out of 39** settlements. In **18** of these settlements, the supply was reportedly disrupted **'all the time'**.**
- In over half of the assessed settlements west of the river (currently NAAs), KIs reported that people were **less able to access water** for cooking, drinking, personal hygiene, cleaning, laundry, and flushing the toilets. In addition, in **Davydiv Brid** and **Myroliubivka**, KIs reported that most people in the settlement had not had access to toilets.*

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

- **Phone network was reportedly disrupted 'all the time'*** in **79% (n=31/39)** of the assessed settlements west of the river (currently NAAs). The disruptions to phone network were commonplace across all the assessed settlements in Khersonska oblast, including the settlements east of the river (NGCAs).
- **Internet network coverage** was reportedly disrupted 'all the time'* in **16 out of 39** assessed settlements west of the river.

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE SERVICES

- In most of the assessed settlements west of the river (**n=30/39**), KIs reported that most people had **not had access to healthcare services/facilities**.* In around half of these settlements, the reported degree of barriers that people experienced in accessing healthcare was **'extreme'** or **'severe'**.
- Nearly the **full spectrum of healthcare services/facilities ranging from pharmacies, primary, secondary and specialist clinics** were reportedly inaccessible to people in the settlements where KIs reported that most people had not had access to healthcare services and that the degree of barriers was 'extreme' or 'severe'.
- In these settlements, the most reported barriers in terms of access to healthcare were the **non-availability of necessary services, shortage of medical personnel, and the non-availability of sought medicines in stores or pharmacies**. **Movement restrictions** were also reported as a common barrier in accessing healthcare services.

* Recall period - 14 days prior to data collection in September 2022.

** The settlements where 'all the time' disruptions to electricity were reported included: Novoboryslav, Davydiv Brid, Novodmytrivka, Starosillia, Vysokopillia, Potomkyne, Novobratske, Orlove, Novovorontsovka, Myroliubivka, Petrivka, and Khreshchenivka. Gas supply was also reportedly constantly disrupted in the same settlements (except for Orlove), as well as in Borozenske, Velyka Oleksandrivka, Mala Oleksandrivka, Novovasylivka, Tiahynka, Tomyna Balka, and Zelenivka.

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PROTECTION CONCERNS AND ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS

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PROTECTION

- Housing, Land and Property (HLP), Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support (MHPSS), and search and rescue services appear to be the key areas of concern, according to the top protection concerns reported across the assessed settlements in Khersonska oblast, including settlements west of the river (currently NAAs, but NGCAs at the time of data collection in September). The following safety concerns were particularly reported in the settlements west of the river:
 - **Threat of missile attack (85%, n=33/39),**
 - **Exposure to armed violence/shelling (85%, n=33/39),**
 - **Looting of private property (85%, n=33/39),**
 - **Housing and/or land used for military purposes (74%, n=29/39),**
 - **Restricted population movement (72%, n=28/39),**
 - **Abduction or forced disappearance (64%, n=25/39).**
 - **Property unlawfully occupied by others (64%, n=25/39).**
 - **Damage or destroyed property (64%, n=25/39).**
- In addition, **presence of landmines/ unexploded ordnances (UXOs)** was reported as a safety concern in **62% (n=24/39)** of the assessed settlements, which may further hinder the humanitarian access to these NAAs.
- Noteworthy, in over half of the settlements west of the river (**56%, n=22/39**), KIs also reported safety concerns in relation to **trauma or psychosocial distress**.
- In **30 out of 39** settlements west of the river, KIs reported being aware of **groups of people experiencing safety concerns** in the 14 days prior to data collection. The groups experiencing more safety concerns than others included:
 - **Men of conscription age (19 of 30 settlements where KIs reported presence of groups facing safety concerns),**
 - **Older persons (n=19/30),**
 - **People with physical disabilities (n=16/30).**

Vulnerable population groups

In addition to the population groups that were facing safety concerns, KIs also reported that some groups of people in the settlement were able to meet their everyday needs to a lesser extent, including:

- **Older persons** (reported by KIs in **36 out of 39** settlements west of the river),
- **People with physical disabilities (n=31/39),**
- **People with chronic illnesses (n=21/39),**
- **People with mental health issues (n=13/39),**
- **Pregnant and lactating women (n=10/39).**

INFORMATION NEEDS

The following types of information on humanitarian assistance were most reported by KIs in NAAs (**n=39 settlements**):

How to get money/ financial support		82% (n=32)
How to get healthcare/ medical attention		69% (n=27)
How to get food		64% (n=25)
How to register for assistance from the Ukrainian government or humanitarian agencies		59% (n=23)
Information about relocation or evacuation		59% (n=23)

In addition, KIs also reported the need for information about **how to access the Government's social benefits and assistance, news on what was happening in other parts of Ukraine** (relating to ongoing hostilities), information about **how to find missing people**, and **how to recover personal documents**.

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS AND SERVICE ACCESS CONCERNS IN KHERSON CITY

KHERSON CITY

As part of the data collection, **25** interviews with KIs (who recently left the city or were in regular contact with friends/relatives there, as presented in the Introduction section on page 1 of this brief) were conducted to assess the situation in Kherson city.

Overall humanitarian needs and damage to infrastructure

- The overall level of need was reportedly **'high'** in Kherson, corresponding to the survey option **'people were still able to meet their basic needs but living conditions were very poor in the settlement'**. As in most of the assessed settlements in Khersonska oblast, the level of need was reported to have **worsened since the previous month**.
- Although the total **scale of damage to infrastructure** since 24 February 2022 was reportedly **less than 25%**, the following types of infrastructure were identified by KIs to have been damaged: **schools and education facilities, markets and grocery stores, government buildings, industrial facilities, and bridges**.
- KIs further reported that most people in the city had **not had access to enough food, NFIs, or access to cash, ATMs, or banking services** in the 14 days prior to data collection.
- Consequently, **food, medicine, employment, and financial resources** were reported as the top priority needs in the city.

Access to utilities and winterisation

- Limited access to finances further hindered access to basic services, such as heating during winter: KIs identified the **lack of money and high prices** as the main barriers, along with general **disruptions to heating**. Wood, gas, electricity, and centralised heating were reported as the sources of energy

used by most people for heating purposes during winter.

- At the time of data collection in September, **water supply and electricity were reportedly disrupted 'every few days'**.
- According to the KIs, people were less able to access water for nearly the full spectrum of services/purposes, including water for **drinking, cooking, personal hygiene, cleaning, laundry, and flushing the toilets**.
- **Phone and internet network** connectivity were reportedly disrupted **'all the time'** and **'often (8-12 hours a day)'**, respectively.

Protection and accountability to affected populations

- KIs reported safety concerns that people in the city experienced both related to hostilities (such as **exposure to armed violence/shelling, threat of missile attacks, presence of landmines/UXOs**), MHPSS (such as **trauma or psychosocial distress**), HLP (such as **damaged or destroyed property, looting of private property, unlawful occupation of property by others, housing and/or land used for military purposes**), search and rescue (e.g., **abduction or forced disappearance**), as well as restricted population movement.
- At the time of data collection, **older persons** and **men of conscription age** were identified by KIs as groups of people facing more safety concerns than others. Along with the **older persons, people with physical disabilities** and **chronical illnesses** were also highlighted as being less able to meet their everyday needs.
- The information needs identified by KIs from Kherson city were similar to the information needs in the rest of the assessed settlements west of the river ('Information needs' section).