

UNHCR's Protection Response

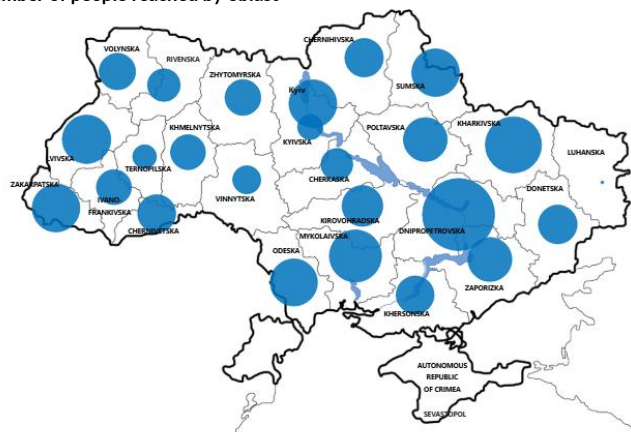
- The protection response by UNHCR and our partners provides tailored support to those most in need, aims to strengthen inclusive national systems and services, and encourages the participation of internally displaced people (IDPs) and returnees in decisions that affect them.
- Our protection response complements, reinforces and strengthens the capacity of national protection services to serve the growing population in need, in line with the Memoranda of Understanding with relevant Ministries and Oblast authorities.
- In implementing our protection response, we work directly with communities, including our network of some 550 community-based organizations and initiatives, some 100 IDP Councils and predominantly local NGO partners. In 2025, 13 out of 14 UNHCR funded partners were Ukrainian NGOs.



From legal, social and psycho-social support, to community-based protection and the strengthening of the national protection system. Watch here what UNHCR's protection work in Ukraine is about: [Protection is about people.](#)

- In 2025, **UNHCR's protection response reached 593,894 people**. Of those, 73 per cent are females, 33 per cent are older people above the age of 60 years, while 15 per cent are children. 52,000 people supported are living with a disability.
- UNHCR and partners promoted legal and policy developments through **134 advocacy and judicial interventions** aimed at improving access to rights and services for forcibly displaced and stateless people.
- Access to services was improved for **26,784 people living in collective sites**. Of those, over 36 per cent are older people and 7,000 are people living with a disability.

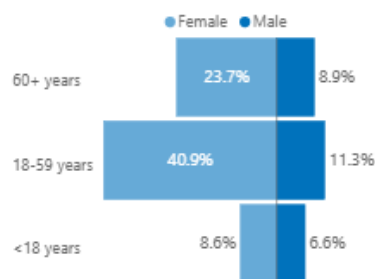
Number of people reached by oblast



Protection response overview



Protection response: age and sex breakdown



*Figures reflect results of the year-end validation.

Supporting a national system that protects

UNHCR's goal is to support and strengthen the national system protecting internally displaced and other war-affected people, returnees, asylum seekers, refugees as well as stateless people. To attain this goal, we work closely with Government counterparts at central and local levels and strengthen the role of communities who have stepped up since the onset of the war as first-line responders. Our work in support of a national system that protects contributes to the localization and greater sustainability of our protection response.

In 2025, the **main Government counterparts** of UNHCR's protection programme are the Office of the President, the Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity, its regional Departments of Social Protection and Centres for Social Service Provision, and the Pension Fund, the Ministry of Development of Communities and Territories, the Ministry of Justice and its Free Legal Aid Centres and Civil Registries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its consular services, the State Migration Service and the State Border Guard Service of the Ministry of Interior as well as the National MHPSS Coordination Centre established under the auspices of the First Lady. In addition, UNHCR maintains close cooperation with the Office of Ombudsman of the Verkhovna Rada.

2025 Response Highlights

Leaving no one behind in a harsh winter

So that no one is left behind in the cold winter season, UNHCR proactively identified people at risk of exclusion from winter programmes and [supported nearly 550 stateless or people at risk of statelessness](#) with much needed winter cash support. Among them vulnerable families with children or older people living in very difficult conditions. The support helped them to cover heating and basic winter needs.

I Belong

The full-scale war forced Petro, 66 years, to flee his home in Luhanska oblast. He not only lost his home, but also most of his belongings, including his documents. Having no documents and no proof of his identity or nationality, Petro could not obtain the needed identity document and was stranded in limbo and unable to restart his life in Lviv, where he lives now. At risk of statelessness, Petro was in a dire situation and unable to obtain any support. UNHCR's legal aid enabled him to confirm his nationality and obtain the documents needed. Petro also received wither cash support to cover his basic needs during the cold winter season.

Documentation challenges among Ukrainians in and from the temporarily occupied territories are on the rise and more people are facing such severe difficulties as Petro.



Preventing and reducing statelessness in 2025

In 2025, UNHCR continued its efforts to prevent and reduce statelessness in Ukraine. Together with partners, [UNHCR's legal aid programme supported over 2,750 stateless people, people with undetermined nationality and persons at risk of statelessness](#) in 15 oblasts through our legal aid programme. This resulted in 109 statelessness recognitions, 121 applications for statelessness determination, 443 birth certificates and 385 nationality confirmations or identity documents issued. Through court representation and administrative support, 67 people attained a durable solution through permanent residence or naturalization. Advocacy on preventing statelessness underscored UNHCR's hands on support to people at risk of statelessness, and continued to build on the outcomes of the [2024 Statelessness Forum](#) specifically focusing on addressing statelessness risks for Ukrainians in or from the temporarily occupied territories and for members of minorities.

Legal aid in 2025 – a lifeline for thousands

[178,000 legal consultations supported over 89,000 people country-wide](#), including IDPs, returnees, other war-affected people, asylum-seekers, refugees and stateless people and people at risk of statelessness. UNHCR's legal aid programme remains one of the largest in Ukraine, making up 48 per cent of the Protection Cluster's reach. Legal aid is a lifeline for many, restoring housing and property rights, identity and civil documents and enabling access to social protection, amongst others. While the majority of UNHCR's legal interventions remain primary legal aid, the need for secondary legal aid has increased. In 2025, [UNHCR provided secondary legal aid through administrative and judicial procedures to nearly 4,500 people – 78% more than in 2024](#). Documentation and housing-related issues, most notably access to compensation, are particularly complex, requiring more and more secondary legal aid. In 2025, UNHCR also expanded its legal facilitators network to over 80 paralegals expanding outreach and access to legal information.

Protecting asylum-seekers and refugees amid war

In 2025, UNHCR [supported 960 asylum-seekers and refugees from 41 countries](#). Of those, 30% are children and 40% female. Support included legal aid, social accompaniment for access to the state support system, psycho-social and other social assistance to the most vulnerable among them. In addition, UNHCR with partners and municipal authorities, expanded its community-based protection efforts aimed at facilitating their social integration through joint social events, such as the Charity Race – the Pulse of Kyiv – on 25 May 2025, gathering over 460 participants.

Advocating to address systemic barriers to social protection and housing

2025 advocacy priorities centred on the development of a coherent framework on internal displacement, on an inclusive and fair social protection system tailored to displacement realities and on housing rights. Working with governmental and parliamentary stakeholders, UNHCR and partners' advocacy contributed to important changes:

- **Toward a coherent IDP strategy** Consistent government and parliamentary engagement and advocacy led to the agreement in August 2025 to develop a new strategy on internal displacement addressing challenges emanating from a fragmented and hard-to-navigate system. By year-end, the draft strategy was near final.
- **Adapting social services to displacement:** Adoption and implementation of a set of displacement-specific social services, including social accommodation and nursing care, under Resolution 1169 as well as the state subvention providing UAH 1 billion for expanding inclusive accommodation for newly displaced people under Resolution 1160.
- **Improving pension equality:** Fairer access to pensions for IDPs, residents of the temporarily occupied territories and Ukrainians abroad was promoted by removing some of the long-standing limitations through Resolution 299 and introducing additional safeguards for accrued pensions. Pension equality challenges remain, and continued joint advocacy with the Ombudsman office and civil society partners is ongoing.
- **Fair access to compensation or alternatives:** By introducing the possibility for remote inspection of damaged or destroyed property (Resolution 815) for IDPs from areas under active hostility as well as housing vouchers for certain groups from the temporarily occupied territories (Resolution 1176) access to compensation and alternatives to compensation improved.

Community-based protection: providing basic social support and contributing to social cohesion

A particular focus of UNHCR's work in Ukraine is to connect community-based protection mechanisms with the state social system. **In 2025, UNHCR's social facilitator and CBO networks provided basic social support to over 64,000 people reinforcing local social protection systems.** In December 2025, UNHCR and partners, convened 220 participants from the Ministry of Social Policy, regional and local social protection bodies and community-based organizations and social facilitators to further connect these systems and as a result strengthen the social protection of displaced and other war-affected people. Community-led initiatives reached an additional 202,000 people with activities aimed at building resilience and contributing to social cohesion in communities to which displaced people fled or returned to. This included joint social and cultural activities, language and communication courses or mediation tailored to women, men, older people, children, youth, people with disabilities, minorities and other marginalized groups.



Psychological support brings warmth and strength
Oleksandr, 74, and his wife were in their home in Dobropilia, Donetska oblast, when a Russian air attack struck on 7 March 2025. "We froze. We didn't think we would make it to the shelter in time, so we hid in the corridor," Oleksandr recalls. Once the explosions were over, they saw their neighbor's house in flames. Oleksandr's wife has since been unable to go outside without breaking into tears. The couple received psychological support through UNHCR's programme. "Psychological support is vital in moments like these", Oleksandr said. "It brought warmth and strength."

Stepping up on mental health support

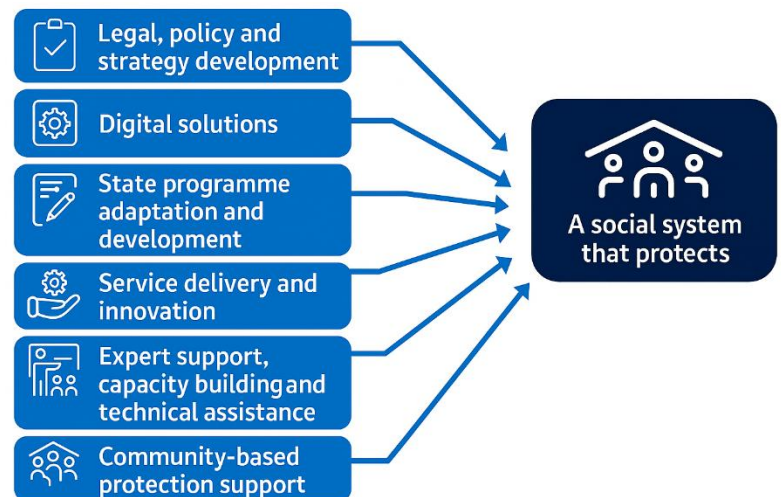
UNHCR provides mental health and psycho-social support (MHPSS) to people in frontline areas, in evacuation situations and throughout displacement as well as in other emergency settings, such as following missile strikes. Services are tailored to those at particular risk, notably older persons, persons with disabilities, GBV survivors, children and adolescents, or single caregivers. **In 2025, over 28,200 people were supported with focused psychological interventions in emergency situations, and over 33,500 people with community- and family-level interventions** strengthening their resilience, social connectedness, and positive coping. UNHCR also invests in capacities of providers and trained nearly 4,700 specialists and non-specialists on scalable interventions, including EASE and Problem Management Plus (PM+), as well as on community-based MHPSS. In 2025, UNHCR began to step up its MHPSS programming, with clear methodological approaches and robust quality assurance in place.

A social system that protects: UNHCR's work in 2025

With nearly 10 million Ukrainians forcibly displaced within the country and abroad, the social protection system must adapt to the realities of displacement. It needs to be shock-responsive – ensuring early access to support during evacuations, when protection needs are most acute – and inclusive, enabling displaced people to recover and pursue durable solutions.

To this end, in 2025 UNHCR strengthened its cooperation with the Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity, as well as with regional and local social protection authorities and service providers.

Working across six interconnected areas and spanning the decentralized social protection system, the cooperation seeks to support the systemic adaptation and reform of social protection in response to displacement. In particular, it aims to ensure that the system is tailored to the specific needs of older persons and persons with disabilities affected by displacement due to the specific risks they face.



- **Law, policy and strategy development:** UNHCR played an instrumental role in advocating for and supporting the development of the now-finalized draft Strategy on Internal Displacement, its accompanying Action Plan, and the envisaged coordination mechanism. This work complements the draft IDP law currently pending in Parliament, which was also supported by UNHCR.
- **Digital solutions:** In collaboration with the Ministry, UNHCR conceptualized and provided technical expertise for the development of the business process underpinning the “IDP Pathway” – an integrated digital user journey designed to facilitate IDPs’ access to available support throughout displacement.
- **State programmes:** UNHCR supported the design and rollout of new state programmes to strengthen assistance for newly displaced people, particularly those with care needs. This included the expansion of social services and the establishment of a state subvention to increase access to safe and dignified accommodation and housing for IDPs.
- **Service delivery and innovation:** Together with the Ministry, UNHCR piloted an innovative social adaptation model – a case management approach aimed at advancing durable solutions – in two state sanatoria in Lvivska and Poltavska oblasts. The pilot supported over 80 vulnerable IDPs in achieving durable solutions and informed the development of a state standard for this social service, tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of IDPs.
- **Capacity sharing:** Through training, peer exchanges, mentoring, and technical assistance, UNHCR strengthened the sub-national social protection system across all regions of Ukraine, while learning from the regular engagements with the social protection bodies. These efforts enhance the delivery of key services tailored to vulnerable IDPs and facilitate access to social benefits and insurance.
- **Community-based protection support:** To reinforce the local social protection system, UNHCR further strengthened community-based protection mechanisms, enabling the delivery of basic social support through social facilitators and community-based organizations.



Joint missions with the Deputy Minister of Social Policy, Family and Unity, Tetiana Kiriienko, have enabled a common understanding of the situation of displaced populations; of capacities, challenges and constraints of the local social protection system as well as systemic barriers; and of the relevance of community-based protection mechanisms, such as social facilitators, reinforcing the local systems.

Here, in Mykolaiv, the Deputy Minister together with UNHCR staff from the Odesa field office and the country office meet with local authorities running the territorial centre for social service provision and the integrated ‘third age university’ offering a range of support tailored to older people and people with disabilities.

Protection monitoring & return forecasting

UNHCR and its partners' protection and solutions monitoring has the following components:


- **Monitoring of the protection situation** of IDPs, returnees and other war-affected people in Ukraine, through the new bi-annual [protection survey](#) implemented in partnership with the Office of the Ombudsman of Ukraine and as part of the Protection Cluster. In addition, UNHCR and partners undertake legal monitoring to inform the provision of legal assistance and advocacy efforts.
- **Border monitoring** at 30 international border crossing points between Ukraine and Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova. If needed, border monitors provide support to people directly at the borders. UNHCR has also regular monitoring presence in Domanove for arrivals from the temporarily occupied territories. Reports are available [here](#).
- **Monitoring of intentions and perspectives of refugees from Ukraine, refugee returnees and IDPs** to inform people-centered planning, provision of information through the *Ukraine is Home* platform, and support to returnees as they pursue a durable solution. Access the latest survey results [here](#) with curated [micro-data](#) also available. New data will be released in March 2026.
- **Forecasting returns of displaced people** inform strategic and operational planning for future return scenarios. The return forecasting focused on Ukrainian refugees (see [policy brief 2](#)) will be complemented by an agent-based model for returns of IDPs.


The monitoring outcomes inform UNHCR's planning and programme and help identify those most in need. The outcomes are also shared through relevant coordination platforms to inform the wider humanitarian and recovery response.


On International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2025, UNHCR together with the Ombudsman of Ukraine issued the second Ukraine Protection Survey alerting on the particular risks and vulnerabilities of IDPs and calling on the Government to action.

- IDPs face distinct social, economic and housing vulnerabilities and exclusion risks across different services, including social, digital and financial services. Addressing internal displacement in an effective and systemic manner requires a coherent IDP policy with a functional governmental coordination structure and well-tailored state support programmes.
- Older people with low mobility, remain at high risk in evacuation situations. Despite improvements to the evacuation mechanism in 2025, notably the amendments of Resolution 1307, it needs further adjustments to address the specific situation of older people.
- IDPs, notably those with specific needs, face physical, material and digital barriers across different sectors. A barrier-free environment needs to be barrier-free for all, and consider the compounded barriers of IDPs with specific needs.



Develop a coherent IDP policy 

Adapt the evacuation mechanism to the needs of older people with low mobility 

Ensure a barrier-free environment for all 

DONORS

UNHCR is grateful for the essential support provided by our top government donors and for the generous contributions from individuals and the private sector, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with softly earmarked and unearmarked funds.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Visit Ukraine's **Operational Data Portal** for more information products [here](#).
- Visit **UNHCR Ukraine's Website** [here](#).

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Contact **UNHCR's Hotline 0-800-307-711** for feedback and advice on assistance and services.