

## UNHCR's Protection Response

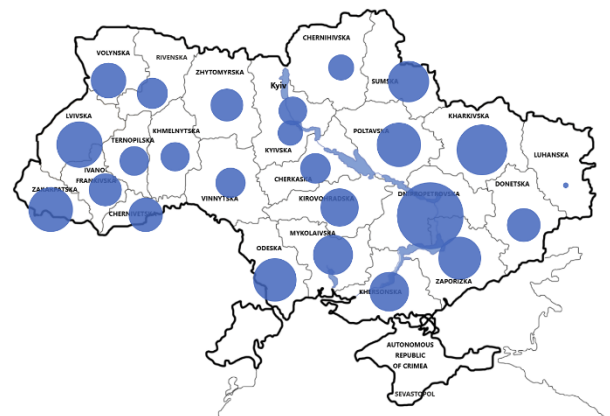
- The protection response by UNHCR and our partners provides tailored support to those most in need, aims to strengthen inclusive national systems and services, and encourages the participation of internally displaced people (IDPs) and returnees in decisions that affect them.
- Our protection response 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 supported community-based organizations and IDP Councils, and predominantly local NGO partners. In 2026, 12 out of 13 UNHCR funded partners are Ukrainian NGOs.



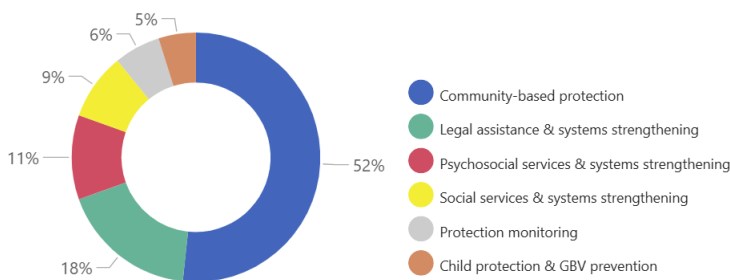
From legal, social and psycho-social support, to community-based protection and the strengthening of the national protection system. Watch here what UNHCR's protection work in Ukraine is about: [Protection is about people.](#)

- In the first quarter of 2026, **UNHCR's protection response reached 126,240 people**. Of those, 71 per cent are females, 32 per cent are older people above the age of 60 years, while 21 per cent are children. Over 15,200 people supported are living with a disability.
- Community-based protection was central to the protection response in quarter 1, while **38 per cent centred on service provision**, including legal, social and psycho-social services.
- UNHCR and partners promoted legal and policy developments through **44 advocacy and judicial interventions** aimed at improving access to rights and services for forcibly displaced and stateless people.

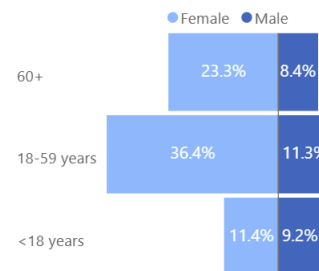
Number of people reached by oblast



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 2026, the **main Government counterparts** of UNHCR's protection programme are 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 works in concert with the Office of Ombudsman of the Verkhovna Rada on common strategic priorities.

## 2026 Advocacy & Response Highlights – Q1

### Advocacy to protect the most vulnerable in evacuation situations

The legal framework governing evacuations of civilian populations from endangered frontline areas is critical for the protection of civilians. In February 2026, the Parliament adopted Law No. 4779 aimed at strengthening the evacuation mechanism with a focus on safeguarding civilians in areas of active or possible hostilities. However, the amended law has several shortcomings. It creates legal ambiguity, is misaligned with operational realities and capacities especially regarding reception capacity for vulnerable people, fails to adapt the evacuation mechanism to the situation of older people who are most at risk, introduces measures that raise child protection risks, and lacks needed safeguards for the evacuation of the general population. UNHCR, based on the [Legal Brief](#) issued, is advocating with concerned Ministerial counterparts for needed adjustments to mitigate risks and create a more protective evacuation mechanism.

### Social facilitators – a growing network providing social support to those most in need

War and displacement have disrupted families and social support networks causing risks, hardship, despair and loneliness for many. This is where social facilitators step in to support notably older people and people with disabilities in displacement or otherwise affected by the war. What started as a pilot initiative in late 2024 with 10 social facilitators in Mykolaiv Oblast, has grown into a community of 139 facilitators active in 13 Oblasts by the end of 2025 providing nearly 6,000 people with tangible support. In 2026, this network is growing to some 190 social facilitators providing support in 16 Oblasts. Social facilitators are closely coordinating with local social protection bodies and provide a bridge between people and the state social protection system. In 2026, the inclusion of social facilitation as a displacement-related social service in the catalogue of Resolution 1169 will be an advocacy priority.



#### **“A trusted and essential presence in my life”**

Social facilitators have become an essential and trusted part in people’s lives and increasingly form an important element in the local social protection system. They connect dots and reach people where the system can’t. UNHCR and its partner TTA, convened social facilitators in Mykolaiv and Kherson Oblasts to further strengthen the network and its connection and integration into the local social protection system. In Ternopil Oblast, UNHCR together with Rokada and in coordination with the Governor’s office is enhancing the social facilitators network with additional community-based MHPSS capacities specifically tailored for supporting older people in care facilities.

### Preventing and reducing statelessness

UNHCR in cooperation with its partner R2P and the Office of the Ombudsman launched a monitoring initiative in Rivne and Volyn oblasts proactively identifying people at risk of statelessness. During the two-months pilot period, 46 individuals facing documentation barriers were identified, including Roma community members, holders of USSR passports, and other insufficiently or undocumented people requiring identity verification, often through judicial procedures. Given the relevance of the initiative, it is expanded to other Oblasts to further reduce statelessness risks in Ukraine. The initiative also enabled the documentation of key obstacles and root causes of documentation challenges informing advocacy with concerned state authorities.

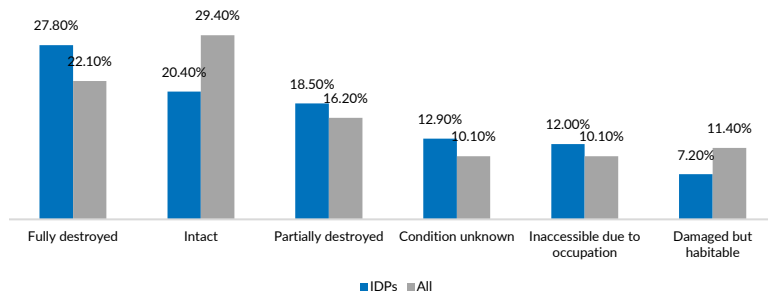
### Maintaining international protection on the agenda

In March 2026, UNHCR discussed with the State Migration Service of Ukraine and other relevant stakeholders the proposed chapter on international protection of the Migration Strategy currently under development. While numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees in Ukraine have been modest since the onset of the full-scale invasion, providing international protection to those who seek it remains relevant and responsibility even amid conditions of war. The cooperation with the State Migration Service extends beyond the development of the relevant chapters of the Migration Strategy and supports the alignment with the EU asylum acquis as part of Ukraine’s EU accession process.

## A Housing Policy that Protects

Displacement disrupts people’s lives as war forces them out of their homes. Flight, damage, destruction and the temporary occupation of parts of Ukraine’s territory has resulted in a very high housing vulnerability of internally displaced people exposing them to many risks. Among the displaced, older people face the highest housing vulnerability. At the same time, IDPs also face higher barriers to accessing compensation for damaged or destroyed properties, limiting their ability to afford alternative housing. For those from the temporarily occupied territories, access to compensation remains most constrained.

**Condition of home**  
Protection Surveys Rd1 and Rd2 - 2025



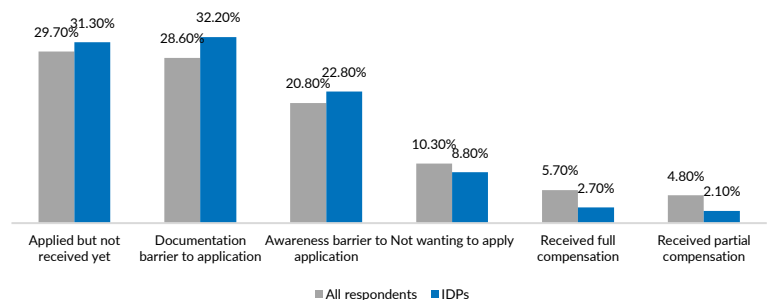
### High level of housing vulnerability among IDPs

UNHCR’s protection surveys of 2025 found that of the 80% home owners among respondents, 66% of IDPs report their house to be fully or partially destroyed, damaged or inaccessible due to the temporary occupation. IDPs have a higher housing vulnerability than others, and is especially high among older IDPs.

### IDPs face high barriers to compensation

11% of respondents to the 2025 protection surveys received either full or partial compensation, and 30% are still waiting for an outcome of their application. However, 50% report a barrier to apply for compensation. These barriers are even higher among IDPs (55%).

**Access to compensation**  
Protection Surveys Rd1 and Rd2 - 2025



Large-scale displacement and broader war impact on the housing stock has created enormous challenges for people, communities and the Government alike. In confronting these challenges, UNHCR is advocating and working with the Government to devise a housing policy that protects the most vulnerable among the displaced and those returning, while providing tangible support to people in realizing their right to housing:

- Our expertise:** UNHCR alongside others provided expertise for the development of the law ‘On the Fundamental Principles of Housing Policy’ adopted in January 2026, paving the way toward the modernization of the housing policy, including for groups with high housing vulnerability such as IDPs. UNHCR will continue to work with the Ministry of Development of Communities and Territories in devising relevant secondary legislation, notably the law on social housing as well as the Housing Strategy. This ties in with UNHCR’s ongoing support to the Ministry for the development of the Unified IDP Housing Information and Analytical System (UIHAS) provided for by Law 4080.
- Our support:** UNHCR together with its national partners invests in the development of temporary IDP housing under Cabinet Minister Resolution 495 expanding the available municipal housing stock for the most vulnerable, continues to develop the catalogue of people-centred accommodation options, while assisting IDPs and returnees with legal aid and social services to realize their housing rights. UNHCR’s integrated protection & shelter approach has already helped thousands of people to [unlock compensation](#) and prepare for future reparations.
- Our advocacy:** A housing policy that protects needs to be tailored the prevailing displacement realities and associated housing vulnerabilities and be supported with needs-based state housing programmes. However, systemic barriers and exclusion risks exist and necessitate strategic advocacy. Current advocacy priorities centre on introducing a needs-based approach to state housing programmes enabling the prioritization of IDPs and returnees with highest housing vulnerability; on addressing the exclusion from compensation and barriers to alternatives to compensation for IDPs from the temporarily occupied territories; as well as on the adjustment of the rental subsidy under Resolution 1225 as well as the development of an affordable rent system to enable safer rental opportunities for vulnerable IDPs and returnees.

A housing policy that protects is essential for millions of IDPs and Ukrainian refugees attain a durable solution to their displacement. Such a housing policy needs to be people-centred and be supported by housing programmes that enable a needs-based prioritization. In this respect, an integrated approach between the housing and social protection policies will be indispensable.

As part of UNHCR’s social adaptation initiative undertaken in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity, people-centred solutions – comprising of accommodation and protection support – were identified. Depending on the needs and capacities of people, options vary and are tailored to their situation. Pursuing such people-centred approaches to accommodation solutions early on can help reduce risks of protracted displacement of the most vulnerable among the displaced population.

## People-centred IDP Accommodation Solutions (from the start)



<p>People <b>unable to live independently</b> requiring long-term care &amp; accompaniment (e.g. bed-ridden, very low mobility, certain intellectual disabilities)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social service provision, such as facility-based care, nursing care, assisted living</li> <li>• Family- and community-based care options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shelter: social infrastructure rehabilitation</li> <li>• Protection: social, psycho-social and legal services, capacity building and technical assistance to state social protection system; community-based protection</li> </ul>
<p>People in need of short/medium-term care &amp; accompaniment to <b>transition to independent living</b> (e.g. older person recovering from shock of displacement; people with rehabilitation needs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social service provision, such as assisted living; social adaptation</li> <li>• Family- and community-based care options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shelter: social infrastructure rehabilitation</li> <li>• Protection: social, psycho-social and legal services, capacity building and technical assistance to state social protection system; community-based protection</li> </ul>
<p>Most vulnerable profiles <b>able to live independently</b> (social/physical perspective yes; but <b>no financial prospects</b> to afford to rent/buy a home that is not sub-standard)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporary IDP housing (Res. 495); in some cases house repair</li> <li>• Community-based options (e.g. co-habitation) <i>(may become relevant for cases transitioning to independent living)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shelter: rehab/equipment of Temporary IDP Housing (Res. 495); IDP house repairs;</li> <li>• Protection: social, psycho-social and legal services, capacity building; community-based protection</li> </ul>
<p>Most vulnerable profiles <b>able to live independently (with financial prospects</b> to afford rent/buying a home if social benefits, compensation and/or employment is secured)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• House repair; rental support (RMI, rental subsidy, social rent); may be eligible for Temp. IDP housing (Res. 495)</li> <li>• Community-based options (e.g. co-habitation) <i>(may become relevant for cases transitioning to independent living)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shelter: IDP house repairs; Rental Market Initiative (RMI); rehab/equipment of Temporary IDP Housing (Res. 495);</li> <li>• Protection: social, psycho-social and legal services, capacity building; community-based protection</li> </ul>
<p>Others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May also be captured by house repair; rental support; Temp. IDP housing – depending on targeting and prioritization</li> <li>• Community-based options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shelter: IDP house repairs; RMI; rehab/equipment of Temporary IDP Housing (Res. 495);</li> <li>• Protection: service provision, community-based protection</li> </ul>

People-centred accommodation solutions offer more than a house; they offer a home. A home to those who have lost theirs because of the war. [Older people](#) from Ukraine’s temporarily occupied territories, particularly those with a specific need and living by themselves, exhibit the most significant housing need. Supporting them through tailored solutions is one of UNHCR’s priorities.



At Slava Sanatorium in Myrhorod, Poltava oblast, the Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity established a temporary social service centre for newly displaced people offering temporary accommodation with social services most in need among IDPs of old age or living with disability.

Together with the ‘Right to Protection’ and the Social Protection Team at the Sanatorium, UNHCR has facilitated the social adaptation of residents of the sanatorium facilitating access to accommodation solutions tailored to their situation.

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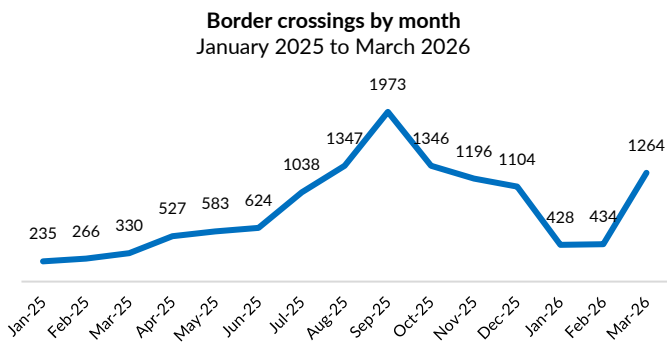
## Protection monitoring & return forecasting

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 April 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.

UNHCR with its partners Right to Protection and Helping to Leave is present at the Mokrany-Domanove border crossing in Volynska oblast where Ukrainians from the temporarily occupied territories are arriving after a long, risky and arduous travel. The duration of travel depends on the place of origin and is reported to last on average between 2 to 3 days. Travels from Crimea to Domanove can last up to 6 days.



“I was so afraid of the journey, but I could not stay any longer. Without help, it would not have been possible for me to leave.”

Lyudmila\*, arrived from Luhansk oblast at Domanove border crossing in 2025. She relies on a wheelchair and required continuous care upon arrival.

According to the local Department of Social Protection, some 12,700 people arrived through this corridor from January 2025 to March 2026. In the first quarter of 2026, over 2,100 people arrived – among those 5 per cent children – with a stark increase observed in March 2026.

Family reunification is the main reason why people are undertaking this journey, followed by documentation-related needs, concerns about their safety and future in the temporarily occupied territories, to access to medical services as well as pension rights.

### 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.