

# **Destruction and Displacement in Ukraine**

## **The Cost to Civilians Two Years On**

February 2024



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Cover photo: Myriam Renaud/NRC

*Valentyna, 33, with her 4-year-old daughter, Tetyana, in an IDP centre in Mykolaiv.*

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# 1 Introduction

On February 24, 2024, it will be two years since the major escalation of war in Ukraine. The impact of the war has been devastating, with over 10,200 civilians confirmed killed and more than 19,300 injured, with under-reporting, it is likely the actual numbers of those killed and injured is significantly higher.<sup>1</sup> Nearly four million people, including roughly one million children, remain displaced within the country<sup>2</sup>, while over 6.3 million are refugees globally.<sup>3</sup> This equals roughly one-third of Ukraine's total population, who have been forcibly displaced by the war - within Ukraine or across borders.

The humanitarian needs in Ukraine are immense, multiplying, and spreading: About 40 per cent of Ukraine's population, over 14.6 million people, require some form of humanitarian assistance.<sup>4</sup> Since the escalation of the war on 24 February 2022, almost 1,500 attacks have hit health care facilities, costing 112 health workers their lives.<sup>5</sup> Educational facilities have also suffered, with more than 3,000 damaged or destroyed in the past two years. Beyond the visible physical impact, there exists a less visible yet equally harmful psychological trauma impacting millions within and beyond Ukraine's borders, persisting and continuing to affect individuals in the times ahead.<sup>6</sup>

This report is based on a study conducted to better understand the war's impact on people inside Ukraine, on both those who are currently internally displaced (IDPs) and those who are not displaced. This report also includes some responses from refugees from Ukraine in Poland and Moldova, however, it focuses on the results from inside Ukraine (the analysis of the results from Poland and Moldova are contained in a separate report). Using Upinion's digital engagement platform, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) gathered insights directly from individuals in Ukraine, Poland, and Moldova to inform their programming in all three countries. The study covered various topics, including displacement trends, the impact of prolonged displacement on coping mechanisms, resilience levels, and mental health.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.unocha.org/news/ukraine-ocha-calls-end-nearly-two-year-war>

<sup>2</sup><https://humanitarianaction.info/plan/1177/article/ukraine-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-2024-december-2023#page-title>

<sup>3</sup><https://reliefweb.int/report/poland/ukraine-situation-regional-refugee-response-plan-january-december-2024-enro>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.unocha.org/news/ukraine-ocha-calls-end-nearly-two-year-war>

<sup>5</sup><https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/russian-federations-war-having-appalling-impact-ukraines-children-under-secretary-general-tells-security-council>

<sup>6</sup><https://www.unocha.org/news/ukraine-ocha-calls-end-nearly-two-year-war>

It also explored living conditions in all areas of Ukraine, with specific attention to differences between displaced Ukrainians and those who are not.

The results of the data analysis are presented, offering insights into the displacement and experiences of people currently in Ukraine from all areas across the country, responses from refugees in Poland and Moldova are included in some sections where the questions related to their experiences in Ukraine. It is noted where responses from all target groups have been included.

# 2 Methodology

This chapter explains the research methods employed by Upinion, the approach for onboarding and engaging with respondents, demographic details of the respondent samples, as well as the study's limitations and potential bias of results.

## Upinion's platform

Upinion has developed a digital engagement platform that allows it to securely connect and stay in touch with marginalised and hard-to-reach people in crisis and displacement-affected contexts. Since 2020, Upinion has engaged with crisis-affected communities in over 20 countries and languages, discussing topics related to their needs, priorities, recommendations, and prospects. Upinion uses a two-way communication approach that allows it to engage with people on a longitudinal basis and to send tailored information to respondents about relevant services or initiatives in their area, thereby turning the conversations into an information exchange.

Upinion has the **ISO/IEC 27001 Certification**, which is the international best practice standard for Information Security Management Systems (ISMSs), and follows **GDPR regulations**.

## Onboarding respondents

To ensure broad and diverse outreach while addressing methodological challenges, Upinion implemented a recruitment approach combining online outreach via Facebook and WhatsApp with offline efforts involving local teams from NRC, its partners, and Upinion's own network. There were three main channels of outreach:

### 1 Facebook

To onboard respondents through Facebook, Upinion posted targeted<sup>7</sup> advertisements on Facebook, illustrating the aim of the conversation so that any individual from

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<sup>7</sup> The Facebook ads were targeted to respondents above the age of 18, living in different regions of Ukraine, Poland, and the Republic of Moldova. The texts were adapted based on preferences and interests of respondents.

Ukraine in the target countries with an internet connection and Facebook account would be able to participate. Respondents entered the conversation by clicking on the advertisement, after which they were directed to the correct conversation through a link. Here they received an explanation about the goal of the conversation and the Upinion platform and asked for their consent to participate in the conversation, after which the engagement would start.

Prior experience and statistics show that online recruitment of respondents from Ukraine solely through Facebook can be difficult, given the lower access to internet and electricity due to the war, as well as not everybody, and in particular the elderly population, possessing a mobile device or Facebook account.

## 2 NRC

NRC's own staff assisted in the onboarding of respondents by sharing links and QR codes directly leading to the Upinion platform and conversation in their networks, with (previous) project participants, and on their social media pages. Additionally, NRC arranged independent enumerators through their network, who also conducted phone and face-to-face interviews with those in eastern and southern areas. NRC was updated daily about the representativeness of the current sample to amend their outreach strategy in terms of the target group - elderly (60+), young (18-35), and males (if underrepresented).

## 3 Upinion

Upinion Ambassadors, individuals motivating participants to join the conversation in return for a small reimbursement through Upinion, shared links and QR codes to the conversation in Ukraine, Moldova, and Poland. Additionally, some Upinion Ambassadors performed offline outreach – through the use of tablets or other devices (mobile phone/laptop) that facilitated the participation for both people are illiterate and people who are not in the possession of such devices or internet service.

For an overview of the different numbers reached through the varying outreach efforts, see the table below.

*Table 1. Outreach efforts through Facebook, by Upinion enumerators and ambassadors, and NRC staff and enumerators*

Outreach	Number of respondents reached			Method
	Ukraine	Poland/Moldova	Total	
Facebook	761	762	1523	Online
Upinion ambassadors	234	25	268	Offline/online
NRC staff and enumerators	230	138	368	Offline/online

## Target group

Upinion and NRC reached out to the below listed target groups via online and offline outreach methods:

- Ukrainian refugees in Poland and Moldova since 24 February 2022
- Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians residing in any area of Ukraine, but not internally displaced (non-IDPs)
- Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians internally displaced from and in any area of Ukraine (IDPs)

Individuals who did not meet one of these criteria or were below the age of 18 were excluded from this study. During outreach in Ukraine, there was a particular focus on:

- Ukrainians (IDPs and non-IDPs) currently residing in areas in the east (Dnipro, Kharkiv, Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia) and south (Odesa, Mykolaiv, Kirovohrad, Kherson, Crimea). These areas are known to be currently experiencing high levels of political violence due to the war<sup>8</sup>
- People over the age of 60 inside Ukraine

The aim was to accurately capture the impact of the ongoing war, particularly in areas currently under regular attack, and to include the perspectives of the elderly, which are often challenging to gather solely through online outreach methods.

## Representativeness

The size of the sample in each of the three target countries (Poland, Moldova, and Ukraine) is large enough to draw general conclusions from when considering a margin of error of 5 per cent and confidence level of 95 per cent.<sup>9</sup> A combination of random and targeted sampling (corresponding with online and offline outreach) was used, which also contributes to reducing sample bias.

However, the difficulty to include men in all three target countries despite outreach efforts, and targeted outreach to the population of people over the age of 60 have skewed the samples when compared to national population statistics, rendering extrapolation to the entire Ukrainian population challenging.

In the demographics section it is indicated which characteristics of our sample resemble the actual population and hence which are likely indicative of wider trends.

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<sup>8</sup> See current political violence events in the different oblasts of Ukraine through <https://acleddata.com/ukraine-conflict-monitor/#dash>.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/calculating-sample-size/>.



## The conversation

The data collection took place from the 5th of January until the 4th of February 2024, and comprised 20-45 questions, varying based on the participants' experiences and their previous responses. The number and content of questions depended on whether the individuals resided in Ukraine, Poland, or the Republic of Moldova, and whether they were displaced within Ukraine or still living in their original area of residence. The main themes covered were movements related to displacement and return, the underlying reasons for these movements, impact of the war on experiences and access to services, livelihoods, basic needs, feelings of safety, and future plans. The conversation was available in Ukrainian and Russian languages.

It is important to note that when sensitive subjects were being discussed, explanations or messages were provided to the respondents to acknowledge the sensitivity of the question, to underscore that the question was asked to better understand their situation, and to remind them that they had the option to skip the question if they felt uncomfortable. For example, prior to discussing the impact of the war, including questions on damage to housing, injuries, and family loss, the following message was sent to all respondents (see *Box 2*). When asking questions on the impact of the war on experiences and access to services, the message additionally clarified that it pertained to their experiences in Ukraine and access to governmental services within the country. This clarification is crucial for accurately interpreting the study's findings in the sections on 'Impact of war'.

### *Box 1. Message before questions on impact of the war*

"The next set of questions are about the impact of the war directly on you and your immediate and extended family and may be sensitive. We will ask about different incidents that might have happened to you in Ukraine, and whether you received services to be able to deal with this in Ukraine. We are asking these questions to better understand how the war has impacted you as an individual and to understand what services are available to you for support. Just a reminder that you can always choose the option 'I prefer not to answer'."

At the end of the conversation, each respondent would automatically see a number of information messages regarding services and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in their area. The respondents were also asked to evaluate the usefulness of the messages.

## Data analysis

After the data collection period, the data were cleaned and subsequently analysed employing quantitative and qualitative methods. Cross tabulations and disaggregation by variables including age, gender, location, and state of displacement were consistently conducted, but only mentioned in the report when a relevant result was yielded. Percentage differences larger than 10 per cent are

deemed noteworthy when comparing different subsets of the sample. Questions answered by fewer than 20 respondents are generally not incorporated in the findings.

It is important to note that the "n-values" mentioned throughout the report always refer to the total number of respondents who answered the specific question. Therefore, this "n-value" varies throughout the report, depending on the subgroup of individuals responding to a question and being affected by the drop-out of respondents towards the end of the conversation.

The analysis of certain questions does not mention the respondents who skipped the question by selecting the 'I prefer not to answer' option. This omission may explain why certain percentages do not add up to 100 per cent. Furthermore, slight discrepancies in percentages may occur due to rounding of the answers.

## **Data limitations and challenges**

The methodology employed in this study has inherent limitations that must be considered when interpreting the findings presented in this report.

Firstly, as Upinion operates as a digital platform, it lacks the nuanced advantages of face-to-face interviews, particularly in providing in-depth explanations for questions and ensuring limited drop-out. Consequently, certain sensitive topics may not be addressed extensively, and participants may not receive the same level of 'aftercare' that could be provided in traditional interview settings. To address this limitation, Upinion has shared fact-checked information from organisations offering services, including psychosocial assistance resources, in addition to this, at the onset of the conversation Upinion shared links and numbers to NRC's complaints and feedback response mechanisms to ensure that any participants wishing to provide feedback to NRC were able to do so directly.

Additionally, this methodology relies on self-reporting, which introduces potential biases. To address this concern, control questions were incorporated to identify participants likely to complete the survey randomly, and efforts were made to eliminate double data entries.

Electricity shortages due to infrastructure damage and the energy crisis in Ukraine may have resulted in drop-out or the inability to start the conversations. If not consulted by one of the local enumerators doing offline outreach, the sample is also limited to people being able to read and write, who have internet access, and who obtain a Facebook account.

# 3 Respondents: demographic information

2,209 respondents started the conversation, of whom 1,856 completed the entire conversation. This drop-out rate of 16 per cent is considered on the low side with regard to research and outreach. In this report, all respondents, including those who did not fully complete it, are taken into consideration in the analysis given that their answers are still valid. The most relevant demographic details of the sample are set out below.

*Table 2. Distribution of respondents per country*

	Ukraine	Poland	The Republic of Moldova
Respondents that started the conversation	1,260	551	398
Respondents that completed the conversation	1,090	463	303

## Ukraine

### Gender

Overall, the gender ratio (male:female) of the sample of respondents living in Ukraine is 1: 2.4. **19 per cent** (n=1236) of all respondents in Ukraine were men, versus **80 per cent** women. **1 per cent** indicated to have a non-binary gender or to prefer not to answer the question. Compared to the male versus female distribution of the actual population in the country according to up-to-date data (46 per cent versus 54 per cent, respectively)<sup>10</sup>, Upinion's sample is skewed towards female representation.

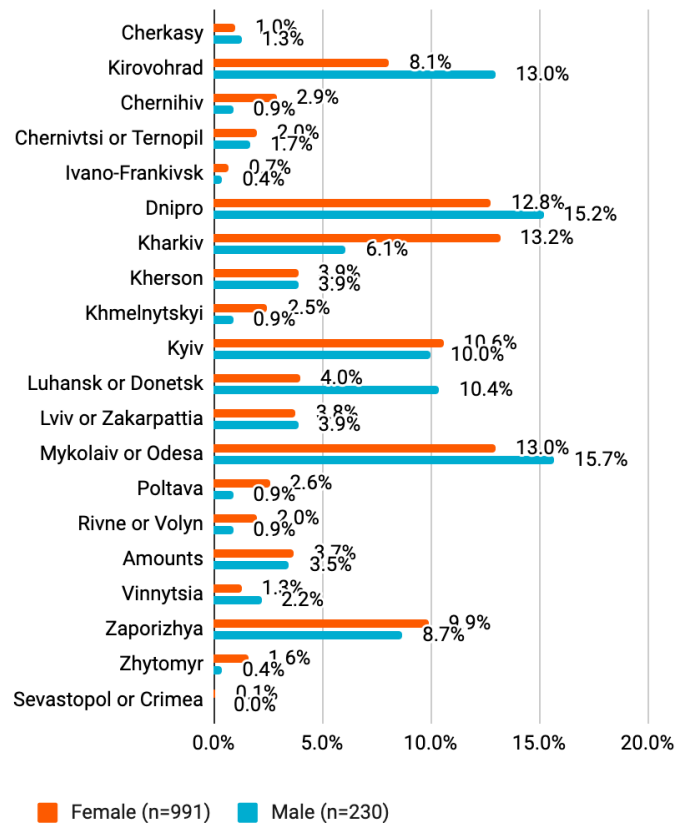
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<sup>10</sup><https://countrymeters.info/en/Ukraine>

The sample sizes of both men and women by themselves are sufficiently large to represent in general both the female and male population when considering margin of error of 5 per cent and confidence level 95 per cent. Moreover, the male and female respondent populations are distributed across the oblasts of Ukraine according to a rather even pattern, see chart below.

Considering the above, the data are not representative based on gender but can be considered to provide a good indication of overall trends.

Figure 1. Area of residency of female (n=991) and male (n=230) respondents in Ukraine



## Age

In the overall sample of people in Ukraine, the majority of respondents in Ukraine fell within the age range of 46 to 69 (**54 per cent**, n=1,260), while smaller proportions belonged to younger age categories (**31 per cent**) or were older than 70 (**15 per cent**). In comparison to the latest statistics (see below), the sample appears to be adequately representative in regard to the demographic 26-59 years old, and the age bracket 60+. For younger cohorts (18-25 years old), the data cannot directly be extrapolated to the wider population.

Table 3. Age distribution of respondents in Ukraine

Age range	N. of respondents	% of respondents of Upinion sample	Actual distribution of population in Ukraine <sup>11</sup>	Actual distribution of population in Ukraine based on other measurement <sup>12</sup>
18-25	59	3%	16% (15-24 years measured)	71% (15-64 measured)
26-59	615	49%	44% (25-54 measured)	
60 -69	394	31%	31% (55+ measured)	14% (65+ measured)
70+	185	15%		

## Area of residency

The respondents in our sample are mostly living in Dnipro, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Zaporizhzhia, and Kropyvnytskyi. See Table 4 below.

Table 4. Area of residency of respondents in Ukraine - all respondents (n=1,230)

Current oblast of residency	Percentage of respondents (n=1230)	Current oblast of residency	Percentage of respondents (n=1230)
Cherkasy	1.1%	Lviv	2.4%
Chernihiv	2.5%	Mykolaiv	5.9%
Chernivtsi	1.0%	Odesa	7.6%
Crimea	0.1%	Poltava	2.3%
Dnipro	13.3%	Rivne	0.7%
Donetsk	3.0%	Sevastopol	0.0%
Ivano-Frankivsk	0.7%	Sumy	3.7%
Kharkiv <sup>7</sup>	12.0%	Ternopil	0.9%
Kherson	4.0%	Vinnytsia	1.5%
Khmelnyskyi	2.3%	Volyn	1.1%
Kirovohrad	8.9%	Zakarpatska	1.5%
Kyiv	10.5%	Zaporizhzhia	9.6%
Luhansk	2.2%	Zhytomyr	1.4%

<sup>11</sup><https://dtm.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11461/files/reports/FINAL%20Ukraine%20Population%20Snapshot%20Report%20May%202023%20%282%29.pdf>

<sup>12</sup>[https://countrymeters.info/en/Ukraine#population\\_2023](https://countrymeters.info/en/Ukraine#population_2023).

To facilitate analysis and to capture significant differences in regions experiencing comparatively higher levels of violence (specifically the south and east)<sup>13</sup>, the oblasts are bundled together into the regions North, South, East, and West, as outlined in the table below.

*Table 5. Regional division utilised for analysis*

<b>Region</b>	<b>Oblasts</b>	<b>N. of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents of entire sample</b>	<b>Actual distribution of population in Ukraine<sup>14</sup></b>
<i>North</i>	Zhytomyr, Kyiv, Cherkasy, Chernihiv, Sumy	235	19%	23%
<i>East</i>	Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipro, Kharkiv, Poltava, Kirovohrad	632	51%	33%
<i>South</i>	Odesa, Mykolaiv, Kherson, Autonomic Republic of Crimea	216		12%
<i>West</i>	Volyn, Rivne, Lviv, Ternopil, Khmelnytskyi, Vinnytska, Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk, Zakarpatska	147	12%	32%
<b>Total</b>		1,230	100%	100%

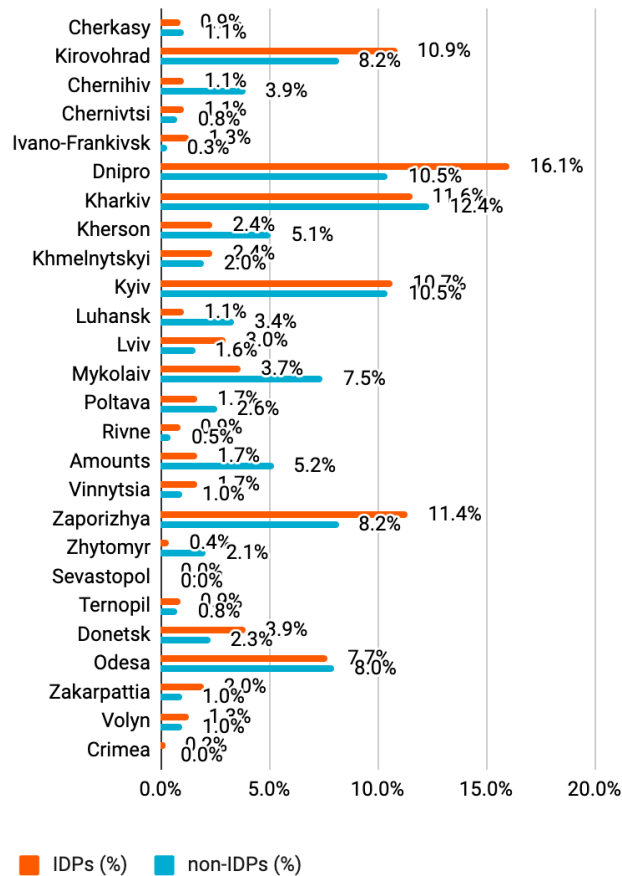
In comparison to May 2023 statistics reflecting the actual regional distribution of the population in Ukraine (as shown in the right column), the study sample over-represents the eastern regions while under-representing people from the western regions. Therefore, one should be cautious when extrapolating findings from the western regions to the larger population.

The sample reached for this study includes rather equal numbers of IDPs and non-IDPs per oblast (see bar chart below). As displacement numbers can vary quickly, it is challenging to define the level of representativeness for this characteristic, yet the distribution of displaced and non-displaced people in the sample ensures representation of their voices at an equal footing.

<sup>13</sup><https://acleddata.com/ukraine-conflict-monitor/#dash>

<sup>14</sup><https://dtm.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11461/files/reports/FINAL%20Ukraine%20Population%20Snapshot%20Report%20May%202023%20%282%29.pdf>

Figure 2. IDPs (n=542) versus non-IDPs (n=612) divided by oblast



## Poland

### Gender

In Poland, the sample comprised **18 per cent** men and **81 per cent** women (n=551), resulting in a gender ratio of 1: 2.3. This mirrors the gender ratio observed in the sample of respondents in Ukraine. Also, like Ukraine, **1 per cent** of participants identified as 'non-binary' or preferred not to answer the question. In terms of representativeness, there is a gender imbalance as Poland's refugee population comprises 63 per cent women and girls<sup>15</sup>, and the sample at 81 per cent is overrepresenting women.

### Age

Most respondents (**82 per cent**, n=551) fall within the age range of 36 to 69, distributed among the subcategories of 36-45 (**25 per cent**), 46-59 (**37 per cent**), and 60-

<sup>15</sup> See: <https://reliefweb.int/report/poland/ukraine-situation-regional-refugee-response-plan-january-december-2024-enro>

69 (**21 per cent**). A smaller proportion belonged to the age groups of 18 to 35 (**9 per cent**), while those above 70 years old constituted **7 per cent**. When examining the age distribution within the sample in contrast to the actual age distribution ranging from 18 to 60 and above among the Ukrainian refugee population in Poland, it becomes apparent that the younger demographic is underrepresented.<sup>16</sup>

However, the age distribution of female Ukrainian refugees in Poland shows that **76 per cent** (n=439) fall within the age range of 18 to 59, with the remaining **24 per cent** being aged 60 and above. Comparing these data with both available data by UNHCR as well as other sources<sup>17</sup>, shows that the female population reached in Poland is indicative of the wider female Ukrainian refugee population in Poland. This is not true for the surveyed male Ukrainian refugee population in Poland, given its overrepresentation of elderly males - **44 per cent** of the Upinion sample is aged 60 and above, versus 12 per cent when looking at the actual population.<sup>18</sup>

## The Republic of Moldova

### Gender

In line with the other target countries' samples, in the Republic of Moldova, the sample consisted of **17 per cent** men and **80 per cent** (n=398) women, resulting in a gender ratio of 1: 2.2. A total of **3 per cent** of respondents in Moldova identified as 'non-binary' or preferred not to answer the question. Compared to recent UNHCR data from Moldova<sup>19</sup>, the research sample is skewed towards women as **58 per cent** of the actual refugee population in the country consists of women.

### Age

The age distribution of the respondent sample in Moldova was slightly younger than the other target countries. The majority of respondents (**77 per cent**, n=398) fell within the age range of 26 to 59, with nearly equal proportions distributed among the subcategories of 26-35 (**24 per cent**), 36-45 (**30 per cent**), and 46-59 (**23 per cent**). A smaller group, comprising **12 per cent**, was aged 60-69, followed by **6 per cent** who indicated being older than 70. Only **2 per cent** of respondents were between 18 and 25 years old.

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<sup>16</sup><https://reliefweb.int/report/poland/ukraine-situation-regional-refugee-response-plan-january-december-2024-enro>.

<sup>17</sup> <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10781>;  
<https://reliefweb.int/report/poland/ukraine-situation-regional-refugee-response-plan-january-december-2024-enrobg>.

<sup>18</sup>:<https://reliefweb.int/report/poland/ukraine-situation-regional-refugee-response-plan-january-december-2024-enro>.

<sup>19</sup><https://reliefweb.int/report/poland/ukraine-situation-regional-refugee-response-plan-january-december-2024-enro>.



The distribution in the reached sample corresponds with the actual age distribution of the Ukrainian refugee population in Moldova for both genders, within a margin of 15 per cent, rendering the Upinion sample indicative of wider trends.<sup>20</sup> As not all relevant characteristics, including level of education, were included in the conversation to guarantee representativeness, caution is still needed to extrapolate findings of this report directly to the wider Ukrainian refugee population in Moldova.

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<sup>20</sup><https://reliefweb.int/report/poland/ukraine-situation-regional-refugee-response-plan-january-december-2024-enro>

# 4 Data findings

## Communities in Ukraine

This chapter presents the findings gathered from individuals currently living in Ukraine. It explores whether these individuals have experienced displacement, the reasons behind displaced people's return to their original area in Ukraine or their decision not to return, and dives deeper into understanding their livelihoods, basic needs, and the effects of the war on both those who have been internally displaced and those who haven't.

## Displacement patterns

### *Previous displacement outside of Ukraine*

To get insights into the different movement's individuals in our panel of respondents have made, respondents were first asked if they had been displaced to a different country outside of Ukraine between the onset of the war on February 24th, 2022, and now.<sup>21</sup>

**20 per cent** (n=1222) reported 'Yes', while **77 per cent** mentioned 'No'. Few participants (**3 per cent**) also mentioned they did not prefer to answer the question. There were no large differences found amongst gender, age, or current oblast of residency.

Respondents who reported being displaced outside of Ukraine were asked to specify the country to which they had been displaced. Out of the predefined list<sup>22</sup>, encompassing neighbouring countries and those acknowledged for hosting a substantial number of Ukrainian refugees, **21 per cent** (n=241) mentioned Poland as their destination. Notably **39 per cent** reported relocating to a country not included in the list<sup>23</sup>, and a noteworthy **22 per cent** chose not to provide an answer to the question.

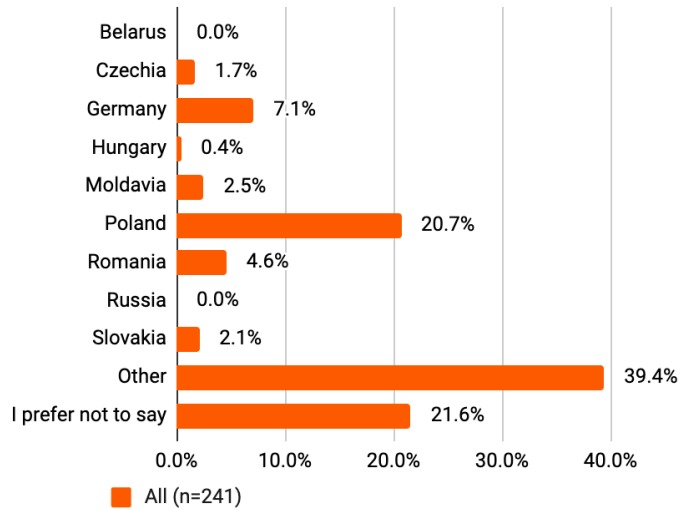
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<sup>21</sup> A brief explanation on displacement was provided to the participants, mentioning the following: With *displacement* we mean the forced removal of a person from their home or country, often due to an armed conflict.

<sup>22</sup> This list included: Belarus, Czechia, Germany, Hungary, Moldavia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, and the option to identify 'Other'.

<sup>23</sup> Countries that were not listed, but have hosted/host a high number of Ukrainian refugees are: Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Ireland, and Belgium. Hence, respondents could have been displaced to these countries. See <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1312584/ukrainian-refugees-by-country/>.

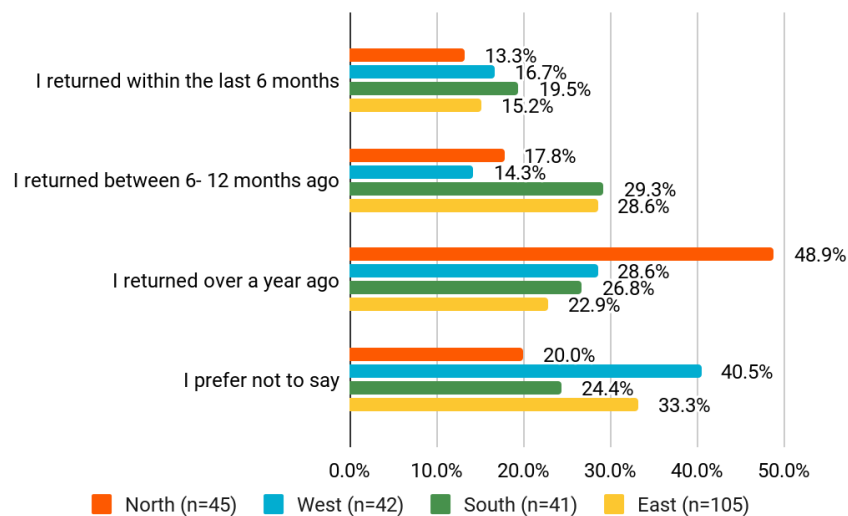
Figure 3. “Which country were you displaced to?” - all respondents previously displaced outside Ukraine (n=241)



In addition to this, the respondents who experienced displacement from Ukraine after February 2024 but have since returned were asked to indicate when they had come back to Ukraine. Among those who responded (n=162), **43 per cent** had returned more than a year ago, **35 per cent** had come back within the last 6 to 12 months, and **23 per cent** had returned within the last 6 months.

Breakdown by region highlights that it is mostly people currently in northern oblasts that already returned a year ago (**49 per cent**, n=45), while people currently in southern (**29 per cent**, n=41) and eastern (**29 per cent**, n=105) regions reported more they had returned 6 to 12 months ago. Most individuals who are now in western (**41 per cent**, n=42) and eastern (**33 per cent**, n=105) oblasts did not prefer to answer the question (**43 per cent**, n=21). See bar chart below.

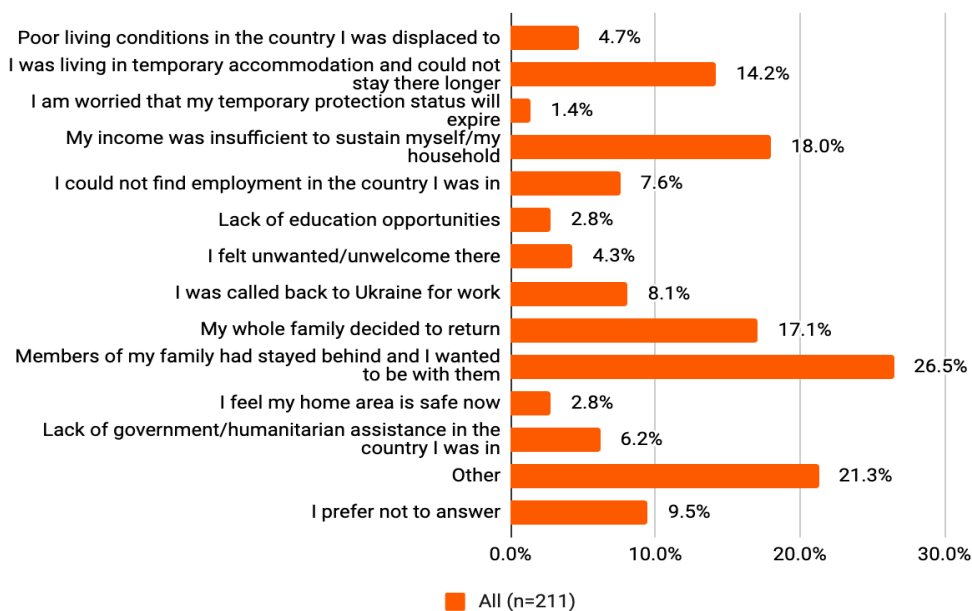
Figure 4. “When did you return to Ukraine?” - respondents in the North (n=45), West (n=42), South (n=41), or East (n=105)



Lastly, these individuals were asked to describe their reasons for why they had returned to Ukraine, using a multiple answer format. Frequently mentioned reasons included the desire to reunite with family members left behind (**27 per cent**, n=211), inadequate income to support themselves or their households (**18 per cent**), the collective decision of the family to return (**17 per cent**), residing in temporary accommodations with no option of staying (**14 per cent**), and other reasons not specified in the provided answer options (**21 per cent**).

It is noteworthy that the consideration that their ‘home area is safe now’ was only mentioned by few (**3 per cent**) as a reason for returning. Additionally, reasons such as poor living conditions, concerns about losing temporary protection, limited access to education, and feeling unwelcome in the country of displacement were also marginally mentioned as factors influencing the decision to return to Ukraine.

Figure 5. “What reasons best describe why you returned to Ukraine?” - multiple answers - all respondents previously displaced outside Ukraine (n=211)



Disaggregation of the data by age reveals that individuals aged 18-59 primarily reported making return visits to be with family members who had remained behind (**35 per cent**, n=127). This percentage is significantly higher than that for individuals aged above 60 (**15 per cent**, n=82), indicating a potentially higher level of immobility within this older age group. Those above 60 mostly indicated other reasons for their return besides those listed (**31 per cent**). See the bar chart below.

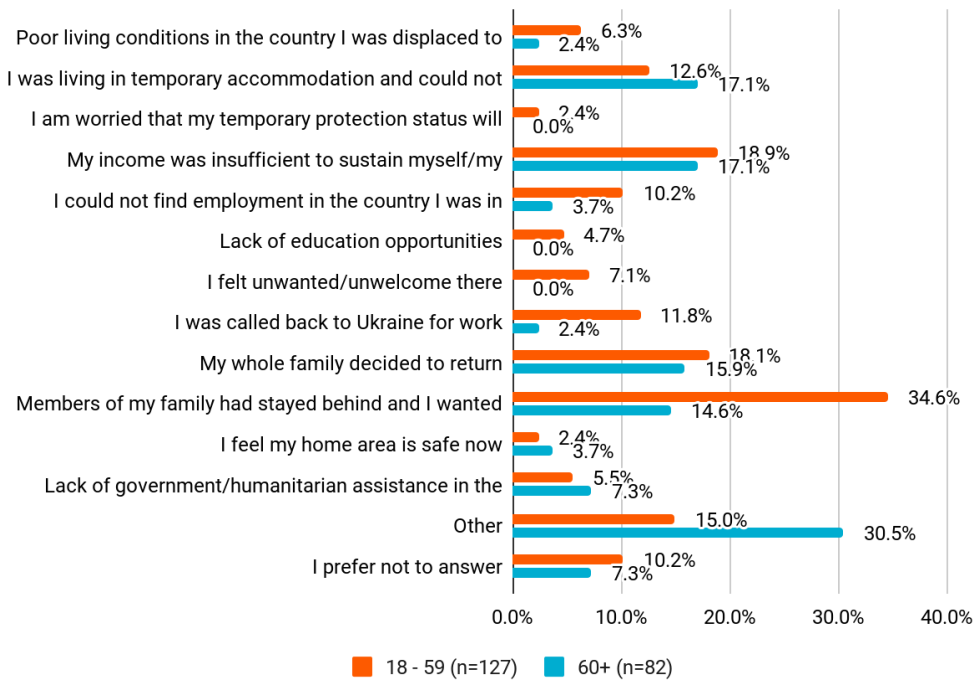


Photo: Myriam Renaud/NRC

Lyudmyla, 71, inside her house in Kotlyareve, Mykolaiv region, southern Ukraine. Lyudmyla and her husband never left their house after the full-scale invasion started. Their children fled at the beginning of the escalation.

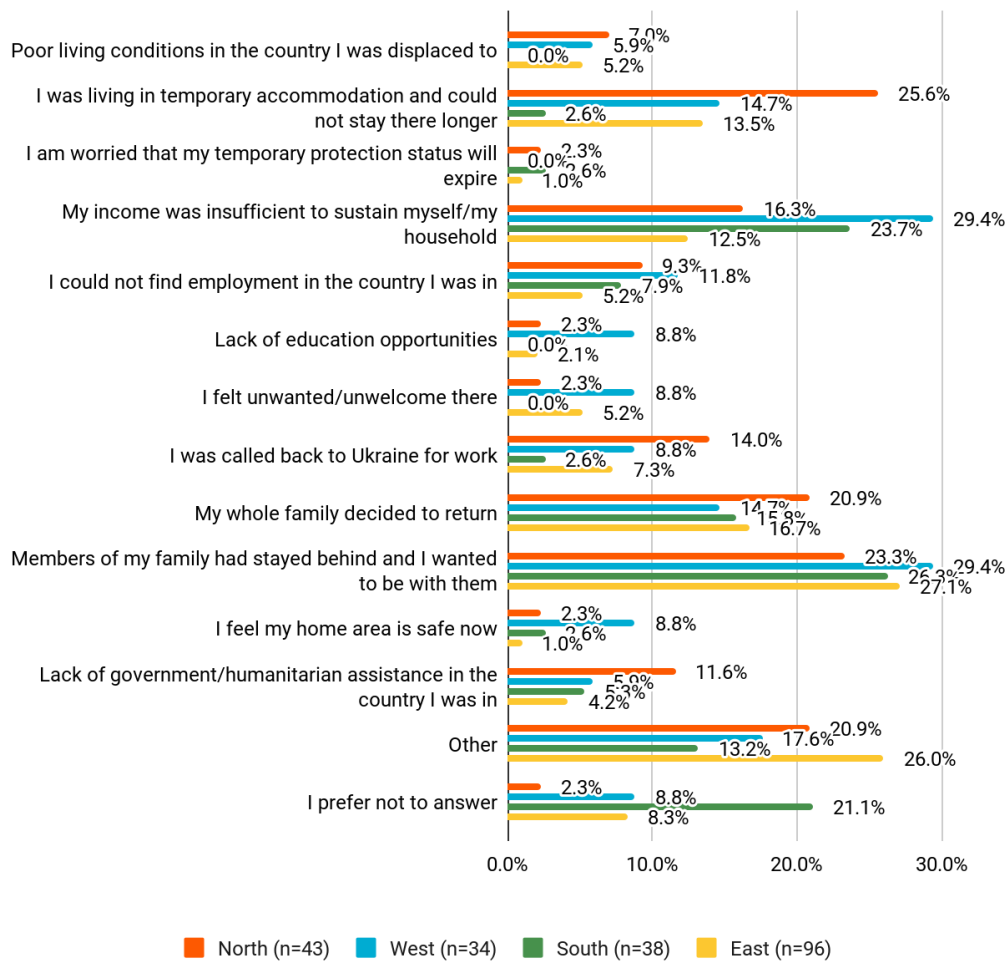
“The most difficult was not to know how our kids were. There was no connection. We sat just like that and thought ‘where are my children, grandchildren, how are they?’ And they were worried about us. They were angry that we didn’t leave. This was the scariest, yes.”

Figure 6. “What were your reasons for returning home?” - multiple answers - respondents aged 18 - 59 (n=127) and aged above 60 (n=82) who had gone on (a) short return visit(s).



Regional breakdown highlights that predominantly people in the northern oblasts report they were living in temporary accommodation before and could no longer stay there (26 per cent, n=43), compared to people in other regions. Particularly, people in western oblasts (29 per cent, n=34) and southern oblasts (24 per cent, n=38) reported that their income was insufficient to sustain themselves and/or their households. A large group of people in southern areas indicated they preferred not to answer the question (21 per cent, n=38). See the bar chart below.

Figure 7. “What reasons best describe why you returned to Ukraine?” - multiple answers - respondents in the North (n=43), West (n=34), South (n=38), East (n=96)



## Current displacement inside Ukraine (IDPs)

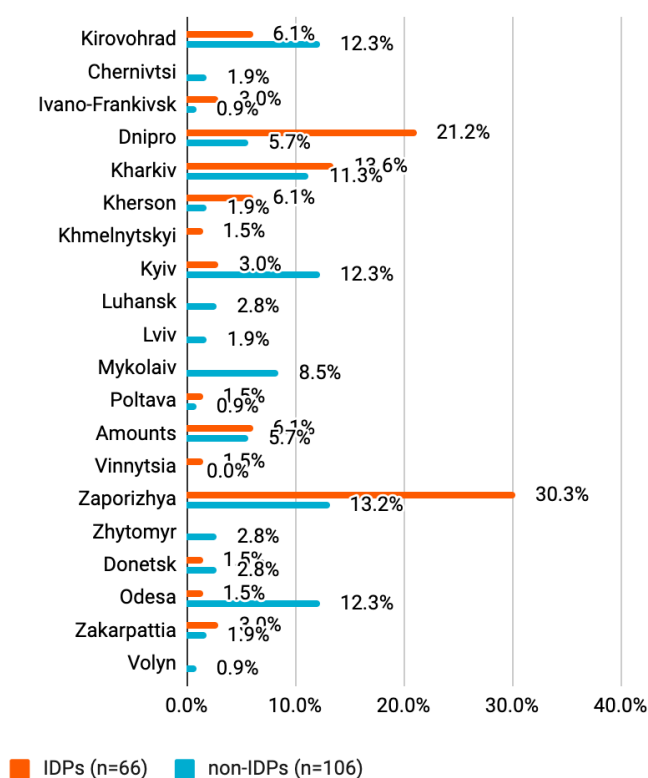
### Movement patterns

To get a better view on which respondents in the panel are currently *internally* displaced within Ukraine, they were asked: ‘At present, would you describe yourself as internally displaced in Ukraine?’<sup>24</sup>

Overall, **46 per cent** (n=1,184) affirmed with 'Yes,' while **52 per cent** indicated 'No.' A small percentage of overall participants (**3 per cent**) chose not to provide a response to the question.

Disaggregation of the data highlights that more male respondents (**54 per cent**, n=220) and those aged 18 to 25 (**69 per cent**, n=55) indicated to be internally displaced, compared to female respondents (**44 per cent**, n=953) or older individuals (**44 per cent**, n=1,124). Particularly a substantial group of individuals aged above 70 years old reported they have remained in the same place (**60 per cent**, n=176). See the bar chart below for a distribution of those aged 70+, both IDP and non-IDP, across their current oblast of residency.

Figure 8. Current area of residency for IDPs and non-IDPs aged above 70 - IDP aged 70+ (n=66) and non-IDPs aged 70+ (n=106)

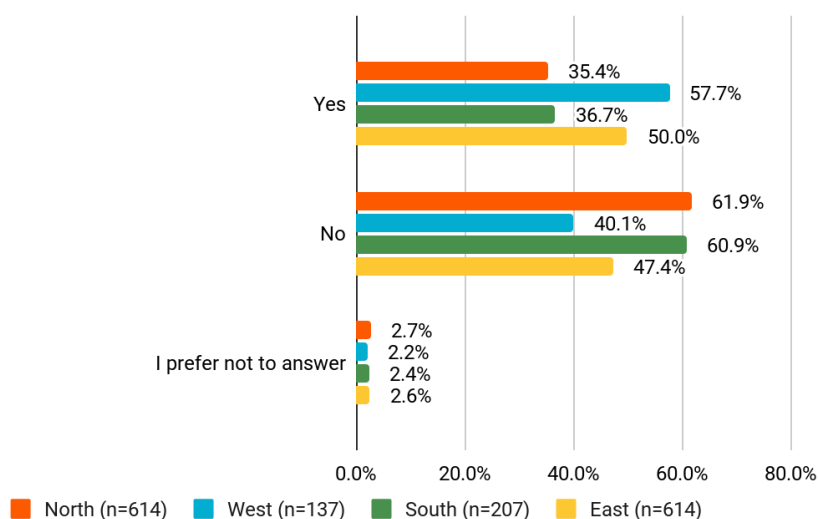


Regional breakdown of the data shows that relatively more IDPs in our sample reside currently in the western (**58 per cent**, n=137) or eastern (**50 per cent**, n=614) oblasts,

<sup>24</sup>Respondents were provided the following definition: “Internally displaced means you were forced to leave your home and move elsewhere within Ukraine.”

compared to oblasts in the other regions (**36 per cent**, n=433). See the bar chart below.

Figure 9. “At present, would you consider yourself as internally displaced in Ukraine?” - respondents in the North (n=614), West (n=137), South (n=207), and East (n=614)



When asked in which oblasts these respondents previously lived, results highlight that most IDPs initially lived in Donetsk (**24 per cent**, n=529), Luhansk (**21 per cent**), Zaporizhzhia (**15 per cent**), or Kharkiv (**12 per cent**), four oblasts in the east of Ukraine. Additionally, **6 per cent** of the respondents mentioned to have been displaced from Mykolaiv, an area of the south. Noteworthy is that relatively more males reported to be internally displaced from both Luhansk and Donetsk (**56 per cent**, n=119), compared to females displaced from that area (**43 per cent**, n=417).<sup>25</sup>

Comparing the oblasts in which people currently live with the oblasts in which people lived before displacement, it becomes evident that many who consider themselves internally displaced have remained in the same region. This means that most individuals are internally displaced somewhere in their original oblast of residency. For example, the majority of those currently residing in Donetsk (**95 per cent**, n=21) also reported living in Donetsk before displacement. Similarly, most individuals currently in Kharkiv (**67 per cent**, n=63) were previously residing in Kharkiv, and **93 per cent** (n=61) of those now in Zaporizhzhia originated from that same region.

The main other movement that can be seen in the data is individuals previously in Luhansk or Donetsk currently living in Kirovohrad (area in the south, **68 per cent**,

<sup>25</sup> This may be attributed to military-aged men leaving regions under Russian occupation, as they are frequently threatened and targeted by the Russian Federation, also to conscript or forcibly enlist them into the Russian military. See: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/20/russia-forces-ukrainians-occupied-areas-military>



n=59), Dnipro (area in the east, **77 per cent**, n=86), Kyiv (**52 per cent**, n=58), Odesa (area in the south, **41 per cent**, n=42), or Kharkiv (area in the east, **25 per cent**, n=63). Small movements are people who have gone from Kharkiv to Kirovohrad (**17 per cent**, n=59), or from Zaporizhzhia to Kyiv (**10 per cent**, n=58).

### Duration of displacement

When questioned about the duration of their current internal displacement, a majority of **57 per cent** (n=528) of internally displaced respondents reported being displaced for 18 to 24 months, underscoring their displacement from the initial months of the onset of the war. **16 per cent** mentioned they had been internally displaced for 12 to 18 months, followed by a smaller number of individuals who had been displaced for 6 to 12 months (**9 per cent**), or within the last 6 months (**6 per cent**). Important to note here is that some individuals also reported to have been internally displaced before 24 February 2022 (**9 per cent**) or they preferred not to answer the question (**3 per cent**).

Notably large shares of people currently residing in eastern oblasts (**64 per cent**, n=301) and western oblasts (**62 per cent**, n=78) mentioned their displacement already endured for 18 to 24 months, compared to oblasts in the other two regions (**39 per cent**, n=149). Especially individuals in northern (**37 per cent**, n=75) and southern (**46 per cent**, n=74) areas also reported shorter times of displacement.



*Photo: Myriam Renaud/NRC*

Anjela, 44, has been displaced in Mykolaiv along with her husband and children for almost two years.

“You know, we hoped so much. It was so hard, because we hoped. We thought we would go back there, we wanted to go home. And when we arrived, we saw that the house was gone. Our village is 95 per cent destroyed. Even now, it is still mined. There is nowhere for us to return.”

## Reasons for leaving home

Respondents who reported internal displacement in Ukraine at the time of data collection were provided with an additional set of questions that aimed to gather insights into the reasons for leaving their previous location, and for reasons driving their decisions not to return home, whether family members stayed and their reasons for doing so, as well as access to services in their area of displacement.

Firstly, internally displaced respondents were asked to specify their reasons for leaving the area where they lived before displacement, choosing from a pre-listed set of statements in a multiple-answer format. The findings show that most people do not feel safe due to the war (**49 per cent**, n=525), which was highlighted by more women (**54 per cent**, n=406) and people aged 36 to 45 (**62 per cent**, n=78) compared to men (**35 per cent**, n=116) and those aged younger (**48 per cent**, n=91) or older (**47 per cent**, n=355).

Second most cited reason was that people's home area came under heavy shelling/missile attacks (**42 per cent**), followed by 'it got under control of the Russian Federation' (**39 per cent**), or 'it got damaged or destroyed' (**39 per cent**). Difficulties in accessing infrastructure and services (**21 per cent**) or continuing employment (**19 per cent**) due to the war were also mentioned by one-fifth.

Being unable to access either government (**8 per cent**) or humanitarian (**9 per cent**) assistance was mentioned by few. See the bar chart below.

Figure 10. "What statements best describe your reason for leaving the area in which you were living before you were displaced?" - multiple answers - all respondents currently internally displaced (n=525)



## Family members who stayed behind

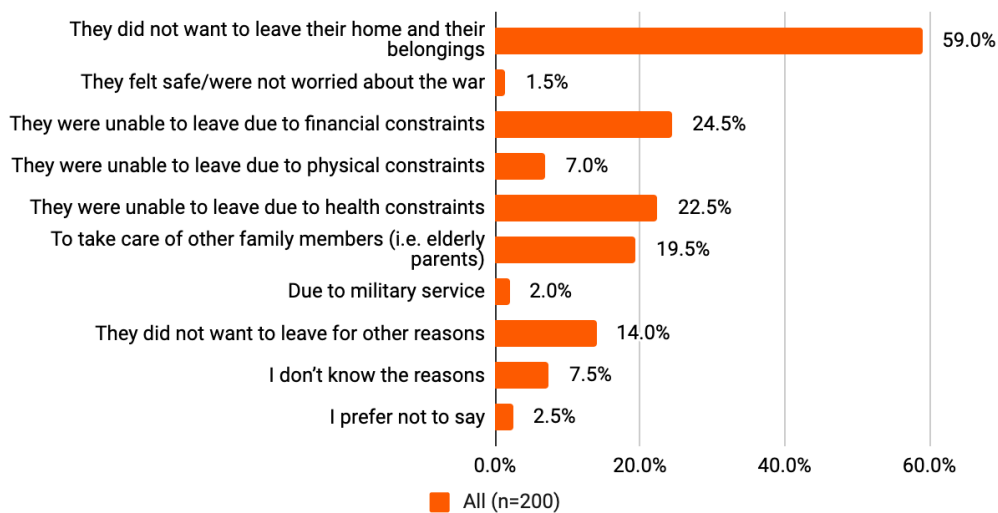
Following this, respondents were provided the question if any of their family members remained at their previous place of residence when they left. **38 per cent** (n=523) affirmed 'Yes,' while **58 per cent** stated that none of their family members

remained. Relatively more women (**41 per cent**, n=404) indicated they had left family members behind, than men (**29 per cent**, n=116).

When asking those who indicated their family members left behind about the reasons, the majority mentioned that they did not want to leave their home and their belongings (**59 per cent**, n=200). The inability for some family members to leave because of financial (**25 per cent**) or health (**23 per cent**) constraints, as well as care-taking responsibilities (**20 per cent**) were also mentioned by considerable groups of respondents. Notable here is that many more women (**27 per cent**, n=165) reported their family members stayed behind because of financial constraints, compared to men (**12 per cent**, n=34).

In line with previous findings, only a small percentage mentioned feelings of safety or lack of concern about the war (**2 per cent**). Interestingly, military service obligations (**2 per cent**) were also infrequently cited as reasons for why family members stayed behind.

*Figure 11. “What best describes the reasons those family members stayed behind?” - Multiple answers - all respondents leaving family members behind (n=200).*





*Photo: Myriam Renaud/NRC*

Lyudmila is 87. She was born in Odesa and has spent her whole life there. She never considered leaving when the war escalated in February 2022.

"I had no childhood because of the war. I was five years old in 1941 when the war started... It was hard to eat, my mum was alone. And in my old age, war again. What is this disgrace? My dream is to be alive when the war ends."

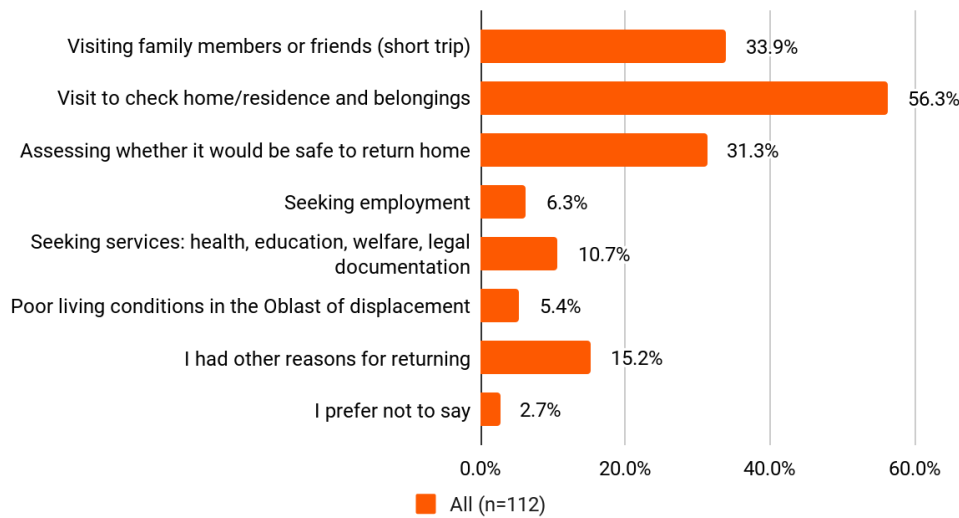
### Return visits

Furthermore, internally displaced individuals were queried regarding any return visits or short stays since their displacement. **76 per cent** (n=522) had not returned since their displacement, while **22 per cent** had made at least one return visit.

For those reporting a return visit to their homes, they were further queried about the reasons for this temporary return, using a multiple-answer format. The majority of **56 per cent** (n=112) emphasised that they returned to check on their residence and belongings. Following this, **34 per cent** expressed a desire to visit family members and friends, while **31 per cent** aimed to evaluate the safety of returning to their original location.

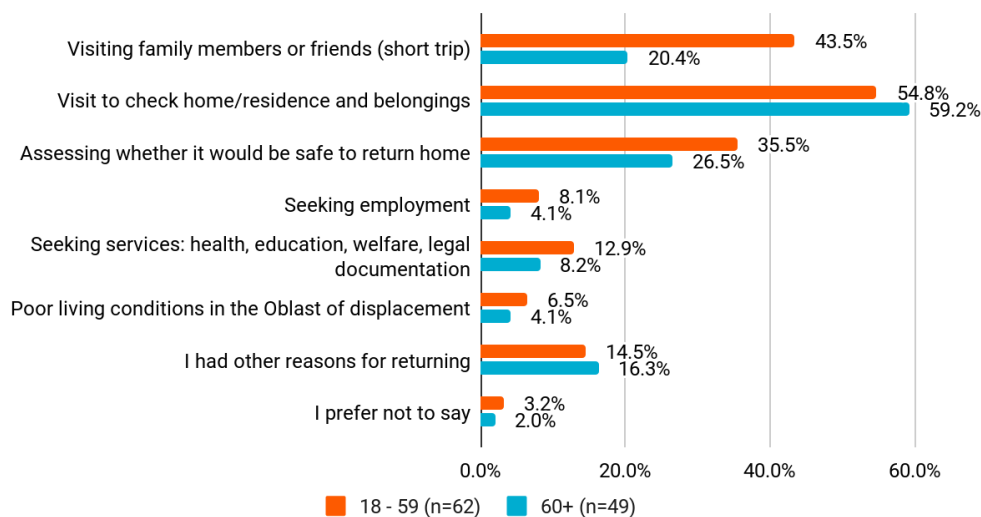
Few respondents mentioned seeking services (**11 per cent**) or employment (**6 per cent**) as factors contributing to their visits, as well as poor living conditions in the oblast of displacement (**5 per cent**). A small group of **15 per cent** cited 'other' reasons for their return, with more men highlighting this (**28 per cent**, n=25) than women (**12 per cent**, n=86).

Figure 12. “What were your reasons for returning home?” - multiple answers - all respondents gone on short visits (n=112)



Additional data disaggregation shows that mainly people aged 18 to 59 reported visiting family members or friends as a reason (**44 per cent**, n=62) compared to people aged above 60 (**20 per cent**, n=49). Although it is also reported as one of the main reasons for those aged 18 - 59, individuals above 60 more predominantly reported they went to check their home and belongings (**59 per cent**). See the bar chart below.

Figure 13. “What were your reasons for returning home?” - multiple answers - respondents aged 18-59 (n=62) and aged above 60 (n=49) who had gone on short return visits



Lastly, the respondents who had made a return visit to their homes were also queried on why they decided not to stay there for the long term. In line with previous

findings, half of the respondents mentioned that they do not feel safe in their original home because of the war (**50 per cent**, n=110). In line with this, **38 per cent** mentioned that their home area is still under heavy shelling or missile attacks. Almost one-third mentioned that their residence was damaged and they have nowhere to live in their home area.

Similarly consistent with the data previously outlined, smaller cohorts of respondents mentioned access to infrastructure and services (**16 per cent**) or limited employment opportunities (**17 per cent**). Additionally, only a few individuals mentioned the inability to access government (**6 per cent**) or humanitarian assistance (**6 per cent**).

Figure 14. “What were your reasons for choosing not to stay in your home area when you returned?” - multiple answers - all respondents gone on short visits (n=110)



Disaggregation reveals a higher proportion of female respondents (**53 per cent**, n=85) reporting that they did not stay due to feelings of unsafety, compared to male respondents (**42 per cent**, n=24). Male respondents predominantly cited their inability to stay due to home damage (**46 per cent**), a considerably larger percentage than their female counterparts (**24 per cent**).

#### Previous displacement inside of Ukraine (previous IDPs)

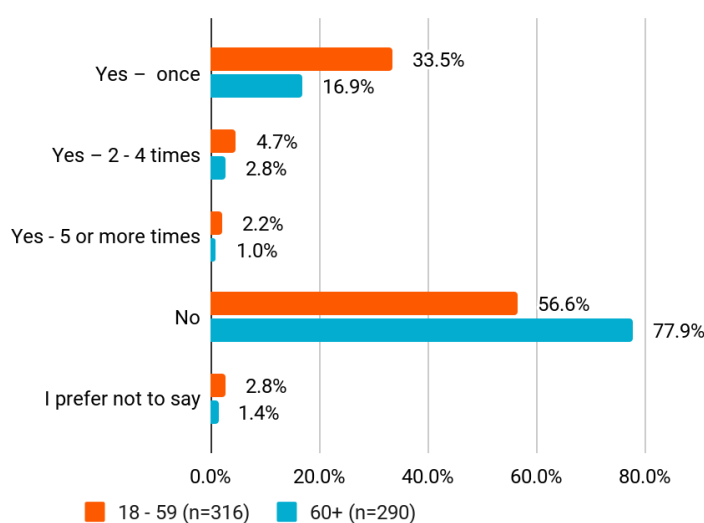
The respondents who indicated they are not *currently* internally displaced (non-IDPs), were asked whether they had ever been displaced within Ukraine by active conflict at any point **before** February 24th, 2022. The large majority of **88 per cent** (n=611) reported ‘No’. Following this, the second largest group (**10 per cent**) mentioned they had been displaced once, with relatively more individuals aged 26 to 35 (**20 per cent**, n=59) reporting this than older ones (**9 per cent**, n=532).<sup>26</sup> Only **2 per cent** mentioned they had been displaced more than once.

<sup>26</sup>The age group 18 to 25 has been omitted from the analysis due to the insufficient number of respondents in this category (n<20).

When being asked whether people had ever been internally displaced **after** February 24, 2022, **67 per cent** (n=609) mentioned ‘No’. This was followed by a quarter of respondents (**25 per cent**) indicating they had been displaced once. Small subgroups reported that they had been internally displaced 2 to 4 times (**4 per cent**) or 5 or more times (**2 per cent**).

Especially people aged 18 to 59 reported they had been displaced before, compared to people aged above 60. This particularly is the case after 24 February 2022, where a total of **40 per cent** (n=316) of people aged 18 to 59 indicated to have been displaced before, while only **21 per cent** (n=290) of the individuals aged above 60 reported this. See the bar chart below.

Figure 15. “Have you been displaced from your home at any point since February 24th 2022?” - respondents aged 18 - 59 (n=316) and aged above 60 (n=290)



Respondents who reported they had previously been displaced inside Ukraine, either before or after 24 February 2022, were asked for their reasons for returning to their area of origin. While doing so, they were first provided with a list of ‘push’ factors<sup>27</sup> that could highlight why they were (in)directly pushed back from their previous area of displacement to their area of origin.

Almost a quarter of respondents (**23 per cent**) noted that the joint decision of their entire family to return played a substantial role in influencing their choice. Interestingly, this factor was more prominently mentioned by male respondents (**31 per cent**, n=32) compared to female respondents (**22 per cent**, n=164).

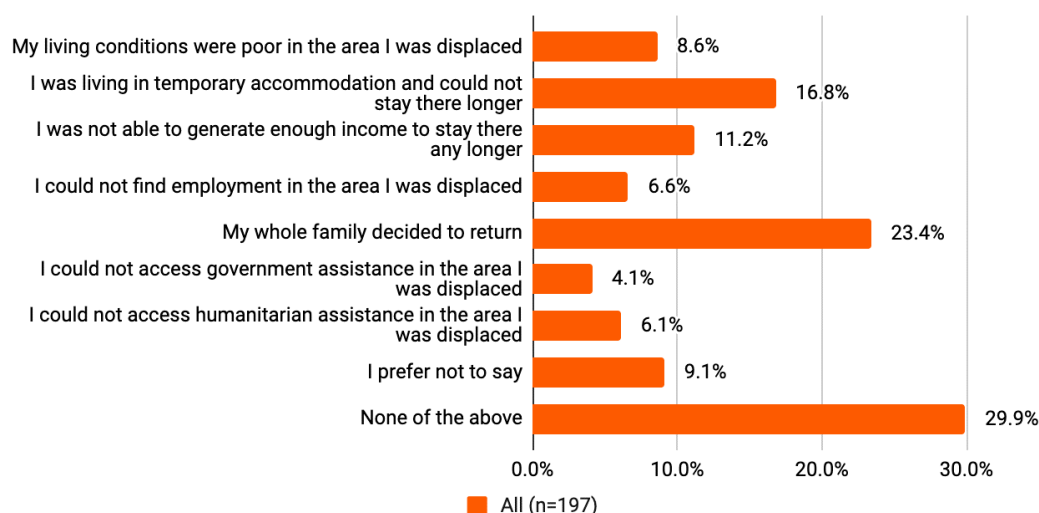
Furthermore, **17 per cent** of participants pointed to the inability to sustain residence in temporary accommodations as a significant factor. Notably, this aspect was more frequently cited by female respondents (**18 per cent**) than by their male

<sup>27</sup> In this context, push factors refer to the conditions, circumstances, or factors in a particular location that drive individuals or groups to leave or migrate away from that specific area.

counterparts (**6 per cent**). Almost a third (**30 per cent**, n=197) expressed the view that none of the listed factors adequately explained their decision to return to their original home area.

Factors such as unfavourable living conditions in the host community (**9 per cent**), difficulty in securing employment (**7 per cent**), and the unavailability of government assistance (**4 per cent**) were not identified as reasons prompting individuals to return to their home areas. See the bar chart below.

Figure 16. “Among the options in the list below, please select which statement(s) best describe your reasons for returning to your area of origin?” - multiple answers - all respondents previously internally displaced (n=197)



Similarly, the same respondents were provided with a list of ‘pull’ factors<sup>28</sup>, of which they could select which conditions might have played a role in attracting them back to their origin area.

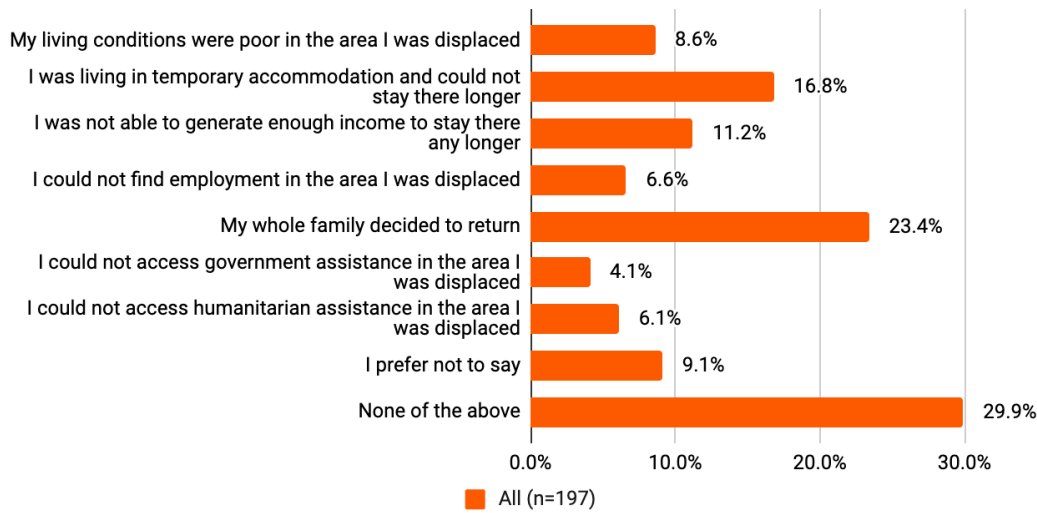
The majority cited the availability of free accommodation in their home area (**37 per cent**) as a primary pull factor for return. Gender disaggregation shows it was more mentioned by males (**52 per cent**, n=31), than by females (**35 per cent**, n=158). Other factors included returning for family members who remained at home (**18 per cent**) and the perception that their home area is now safe (**16 per cent**). Here too, a number of respondents (**24 per cent**, n=190) indicated that none of the previously listed pull factors adequately captured their reasons for returning.

It is noteworthy that access to assistance, whether from the government (**3 per cent**) or humanitarian organisations (**3 per cent**), along with the prospect of employment in the area of origin (**5 per cent**), were not emphasised by many respondents as pivotal factors influencing their decision to return. See the bar chart below.

<sup>28</sup> In this context, pull factors refer to the conditions, attributes, or opportunities in a location that attract individuals or groups to move to or settle in that specific area.



Figure 17. “Out of the list below, please select which statement or statements that best describe your reasons for returning to your area of origin?” - multiple answers - all respondents previously internally displaced (n=190)



## Impact of the war

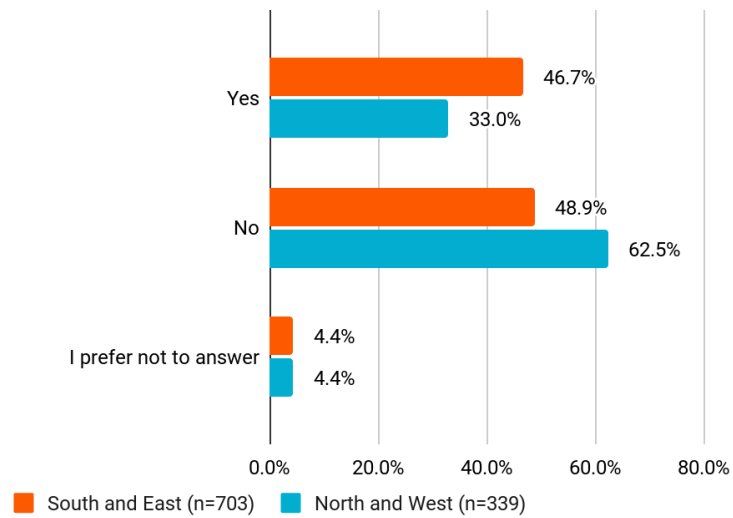
In addition to gaining insights into the various movements and displacement experiences of individuals currently living in Ukraine, this engagement also sought to comprehend the direct impact of the war on other aspects of their lives, personal experiences, and access to specific services during this challenging period.

### Damage of housing or residencies

Firstly, respondents were asked whether their house or residence has been damaged since 24 February 2022, as a result of shelling, artillery fire, missiles, UXOs, or other aspects of the war. **43 per cent** (n=1127) reported ‘Yes’, while **53 per cent** mentioned it was not. Few respondents (**4 per cent**) preferred not to answer the question.

Regional breakdown of the data shows that a higher proportion of people in the southern and eastern oblasts (**47 per cent**, n=703) report having damaged houses compared to those in northern and western areas (**33 per cent**, n=339). See the bar chart below.

Figure 18. “Since the start of the war in February 2022 - has your house/residence in Ukraine been damaged as a result of shelling, artillery fire, missiles, UXOs or other aspects of the war?” - respondents in the South and East (n=703) and in the North



Those who reported their house or residence had been damaged, were followed-up on with the question whether they were able to access any helpful services after this happened. The majority of **60 per cent** (n=481) reported they were unable to, including **39 per cent** who were unable to find available support and **21 per cent** did not seek it. In total, **40 per cent** indicated ‘Yes’ to the question, constituting **29 per cent** who mentioned it was provided by humanitarian agencies and **14 per cent** who received it from the Ukrainian government.<sup>29</sup>



A damaged residence in Kotlyareve. Photo: Myriam Renaud/NRC

<sup>29</sup>The combined percentages of 29% and 14% exceed 40%, as respondents had the option to select both receiving support from the Ukrainian government and humanitarian agencies.

## Physical injuries

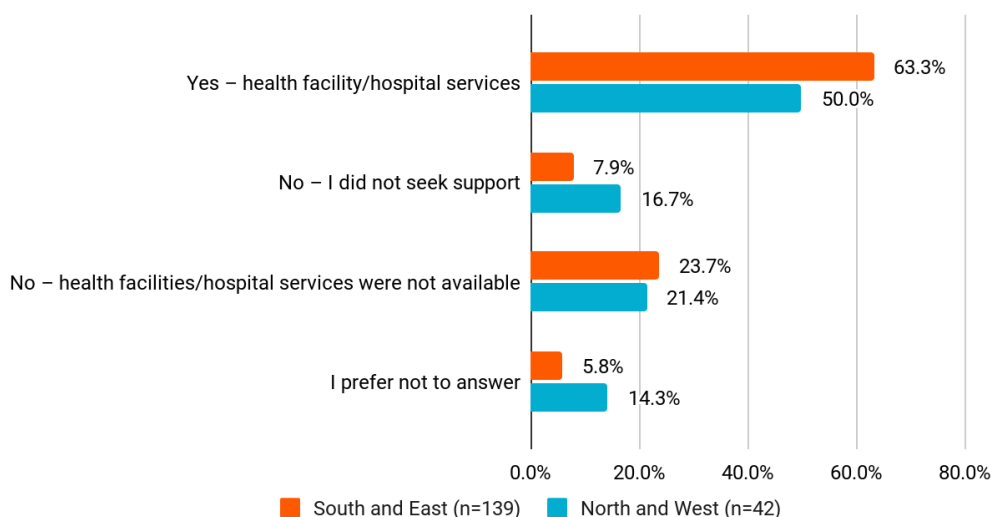
Additionally, respondents were questioned whether they or their direct family members had been injured since 24 February 2022, as a result of UXOs, artillery fire, missile attacks, and shelling in Ukraine.

**Twenty per cent** (n=1117) reported ‘Yes’, with **14 per cent** mentioning it injured family members and **6 per cent** indicating this affected themselves. **78 per cent** mentioned they or their family members remained unharmed. Disaggregation highlights that more people aged above 60 (**87 per cent**, n=598) reported they did **not** have any injuries, compared to those aged 18 to 59 (**70 per cent**, n=598).

Those reporting ‘Yes’, were prompted the question: ‘were you or your family members able to access healthcare services after the injury?’. **23 per cent** (n=209) were unable to, despite seeking support. Breakdown of the data reveals that more people aged 18 to 59 (**27 per cent**, n=151) reported there were no health facilities or hospital services available, compared to people aged above 60 (**16 per cent**, n=58). Overall, **9 per cent** did not seek healthcare services, and **62 per cent** were able to get support in health facilities or hospitals. **7 per cent** of respondents preferred not to answer the question.

Regional analysis highlights that people in southern and eastern regions reported relatively more (**63 per cent**, n=139) to have access to health facilities and hospital services, compared to those in northern and western regions (**50 per cent**, n=42). Equal groups, however, reported to not have access to health facilities and hospital services (**24 per cent** and **21 per cent**, respectively). See the bar chart below.

Figure 19. “Were you or your family able to access healthcare services after the injury?” - respondents in the South and East (n=139) and North and West (n=42)





*Missile debris in Posad-Pokrovske, Kherson Oblast, southern Ukraine. The village was obliterated by months of bombings. Photo: Myriam Renaud/Hans Lucas for NRC*

### **Loss of family members**

When being asked whether the onset of the war since 24 February 2022 also resulted in a loss of an immediate or extended family member, **37 per cent** (n=1110) reported they had (**15 per cent** reported an immediate family member and **22 per cent** an extended one). More people aged above 18 to 59 (**43 per cent**, n=592) reported they had lost a family member, compared to those aged above 60 (**30 per cent**, n=516).

Other respondents did not experience family loss (**59 per cent**), or they preferred not to answer the question (**5 per cent**).

Of those having to experience this, **60 per cent** did not seek any support, with considerably more men (**79 per cent**, n=73) reporting this compared to women (**55 per cent**, n=324). **20 per cent** (n=400) could not find or access support, despite looking for it. In contrast, this was more mentioned by female respondents (**21 per cent**) than by male respondents (**11 per cent**). Only **15 per cent** of all people who experienced this got support, either through healthcare providers (**6 per cent**) or through humanitarian organisations (**9 per cent**).



*Photo: Myriam Renaud/NRC*

Anjela, 44, holds a photo of her father, Volodymir, who was killed in Mykolaiv by a missile strike in April 2022.

"I lost my father, I lost my grandfather and we lost everything we had."

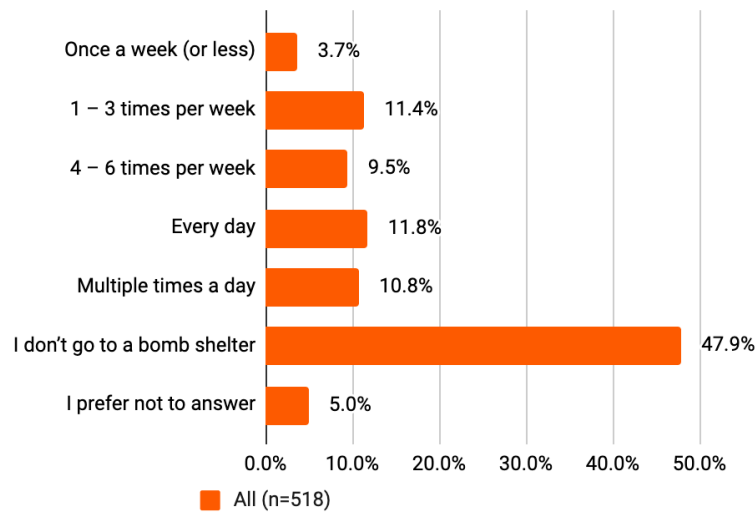
### **Access to bomb shelters**

When gauging whether individuals had access to bomb shelters, half of the respondents (**51 per cent**, n=1105) reported they did not have access. More people aged above 60 (**54 per cent**, n=219) reported they do not go to a bomb shelter, compared to those aged 18 to 59 (**43 per cent**, n=299). Overall, **47 per cent** mentioned they had access to a bomb shelter, either at home (**12 per cent**) or a building/place nearby (**35 per cent**).

Breaking down the data by region additionally highlights that more people living in the South and East (**54 per cent**, n=692) have no access to bomb shelters, compared to those living in the North and West (**43 per cent**, n=332).

When those with access to any type of bomb shelter were being asked how often they took shelter, most respondents (**48 per cent**, n=518) mentioned they go there daily or weekly, with more individuals living in southern oblasts (**57 per cent**, n=93) reporting this, compared to those living in other regions (**46 per cent**, n=193). See the bar chart below for the overall numbers.

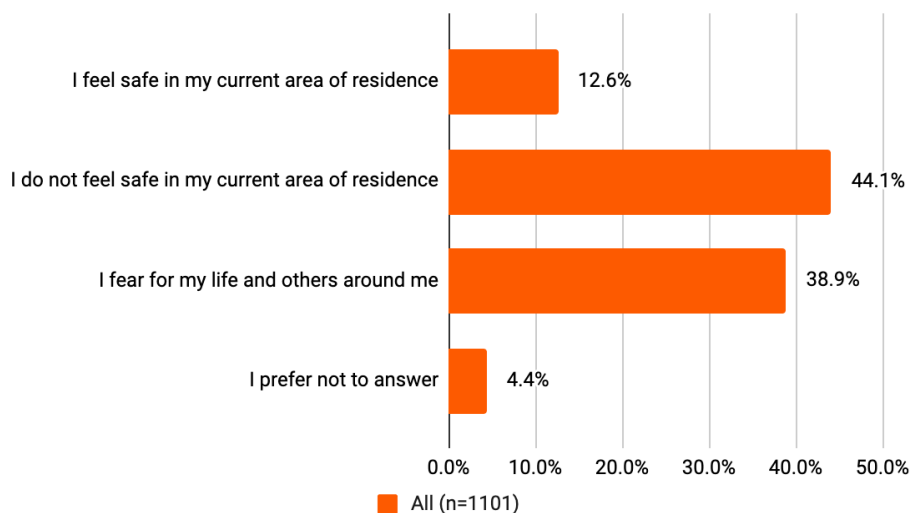
Figure 20. “Approximately, how often do you need to take shelter?” - all respondents with access to a bombing shelter (n=518)



### Feelings of safety in current area living

Respondents were then asked about their feelings of safety in their current area of residency in Ukraine. A notably high **44 per cent** (n=1101) reported they do not feel safe in their current area of residence and **39 per cent** mentioned they fear for their life and others around them. Hence, the large majority (**83 per cent**) report a feeling of lack of safety. Only 13 per cent mentioned they feel safe in their current area of residence. See the bar chart below.

Figure 21. “What statement best describes your feelings about the current area where you are living?” - all respondents (n=1101)

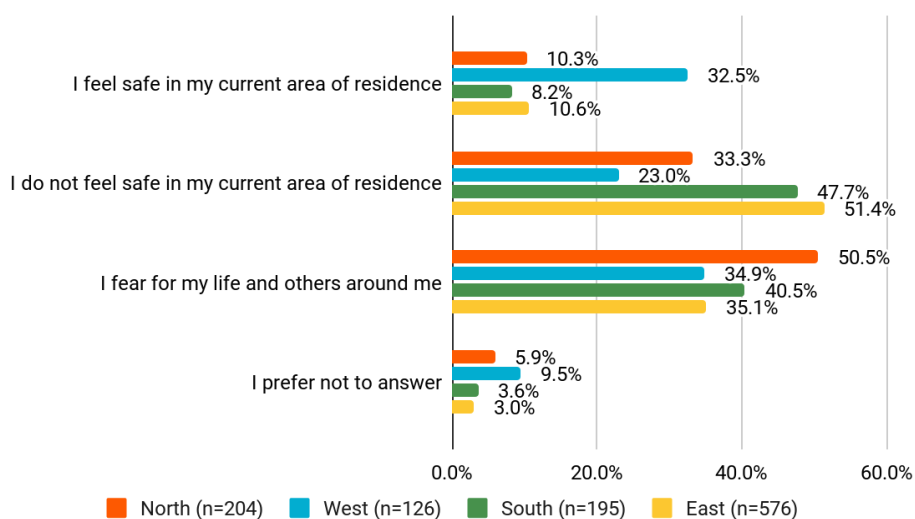


Disaggregation highlights it is mostly male respondents (**60 per cent**, n=209) and younger individuals aged 18 - 35 (**60 per cent**, n=160) highlighting that they do not feel safe compared to females (**40 per cent**, n=882) and those in the older age groups (around **40 per cent**). Conversely, relatively more females (**44 per cent**) and relatively older individuals (around **41 per cent**) report that they fear for their lives and others around them, compared to males (**20 per cent**) and younger individuals (**29 per cent**).

Breakdown of the data by region reveals that relatively more people in both southern (**48 per cent**, n=195) and eastern (**51 per cent**, n=576) oblasts do not feel safe in their current area of residency, compared to those in northern (**33 per cent**, n=204) and western (**23 per cent**, n=126) oblasts. Further disaggregation highlights that especially individuals in Donetsk (area in the east, **77 per cent**, n=30) and Kirovohrad (area in the south, **69 per cent**, n=104) report feeling unsafe.

Particularly people residing in northern oblasts indicate they fear for their life and others around them (**51 per cent**), compared to those in other oblasts. Considerably more individuals residing in western oblasts report feeling safe in their current area of residency. See the bar chart below.

Figure 22. “What statement best describes your feelings about the current area where you are living?” - respondents in the North (n=204), West (n=126), South (n=195), East (n=576)



## Livelihoods

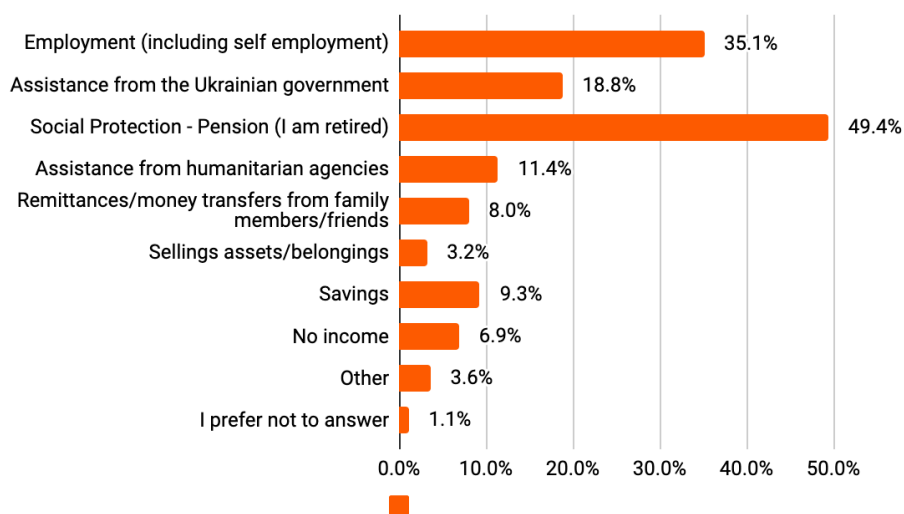
### Sources of income

When being asked for people’s main sources of income, almost half of the respondents (**49 per cent**, n=1098) reported having social protection, since they are retired. The large majority (**84 per cent**, n=541) of these respondents were aged above 60.

Among other respondents, the majority of whom fall within the age range of 26 to 59 (**77 per cent**, n=384), having employment was cited as their primary source of income (**35 per cent**). Employment was also mentioned by more male respondents (**46 per cent**, n=208) compared to female respondents (**33 per cent**, n=880).

Among individuals aged 18 to 25 (n=50) there was a greater variety in main sources of income: **34 per cent** reported relying on employment, **30 per cent** on assistance from the Ukrainian government, and **18 per cent** had other unlisted sources of income.

Figure 23. “What have been the main sources of income in your household?” - multiple answers - all respondents (n=1098)



Regional breakdown of the data highlights that especially those in western (**22 per cent**, n=126), eastern (**23 per cent**, n=574), and southern (**16 per cent**, n=195) oblasts report receiving assistance from the Ukrainian government as a main source of income, compared to only **7 per cent** of people in the northern oblasts.

### Retirement

Those who indicated they are retired, were asked a follow-up question on whether they had to return to work at any point since February 2022. While **79 per cent** (n=540) mentioned they did not, **18 per cent** reported ‘Yes’. **3 per cent** preferred to not answer the question.

To gauge whether returning to working had to do anything with contributing to war efforts, respondents were asked about their motivation for returning to work. The vast majority (**68 per cent**, n=97) stated it was due to their inability to sustain



themselves and their households financially.<sup>30</sup> Another **16 per cent** expressed a desire to resume work without specifying a particular reason. Few respondents mentioned returning to work to support the war effort (**7 per cent**) or to assist in repair and construction efforts (**5 per cent**). **7 per cent** percent felt that none of these reasons accurately described their decision to return to work, while **2 per cent** chose not to answer the question.

### Change of profession due to war

All respondents were asked if they were working before February 2022. Those who reported they obtained employment before February 2022 were asked if they had to change profession since the onset of the war. The majority of **65 per cent** (n=810) reported they did not have to. **27 per cent** mentioned ‘Yes, due to the war’, while **5 per cent** mentioned they had to change profession because of other reasons.

Those who indicated they had to change profession due to the war, mostly mentioned it was because there is limited work now in their previous profession (**39 per cent**) or to have other, non-specified, reasons (**41 per cent**). An additional **17 per cent** mentioned that the war had made their previous profession unsafe.



Photo: Myriam Renaud/NRC

Olha and Sasha, both in their 40s, live in Liubomyrivka, a village in Mykolaiv region, southern Ukraine. They used to be agricultural employees in Posad Prokrovske.

“Now the land is mined. So we cannot work anymore. We live only on the IDP allowance, and it is not enough to provide for both of us. Before this invasion, we had a garden and vegetables, but last year, we could not grow anything, because of mines,” Sasha explains.

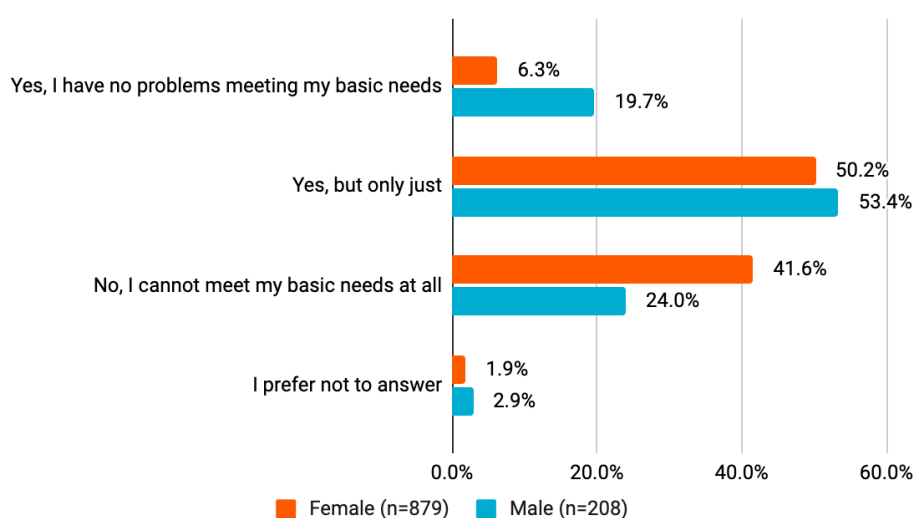
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<sup>30</sup>It is important to highlight that while this suggests the war can impact people's livelihoods and forces them back to work after retirement, the direct correlation between these variables should be approached with caution. This is because we lack evidence to determine the percentage of people who returned to work regardless of the war.

## Basic needs

When prompted if their type of income is enough to meet a household's basic needs (i.e. food, water, clothing, shelter, and/or healthcare), **39 per cent** (n=1,097) mentioned they cannot meet their basic needs at all. This was much higher among women (42 per cent, n=879) compared to men (24 per cent, n=208). An additional **51 per cent** could only *just* meet their needs. Only **9 per cent** indicated they had no problems in meeting their needs at all. Conversely, more males reported this (**20 per cent**) than females (**6 per cent**). See the bar chart below.

Figure 24. "Is your income enough to meet your household's basic needs (food, water, clothing, shelter, sanitation, education, and healthcare)?" - female (n=879) and male (n=208) respondents

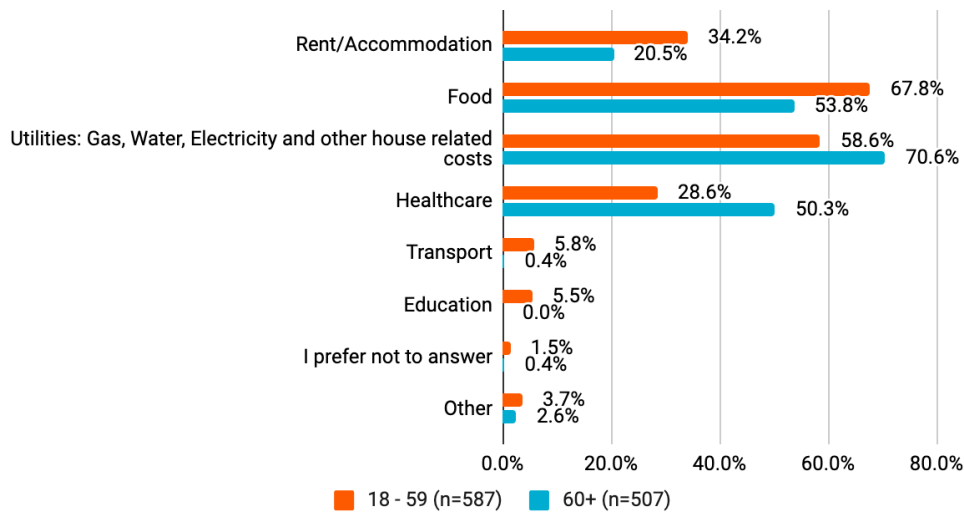


## Main expenditures

To get a better understanding of the biggest expenditure of individuals in Ukraine, respondents were additionally asked to identify their *two* biggest monthly expenses, using a multiple answer format. The findings highlight that people mostly spend their income on utilities such as gas, water, and electricity (**64 per cent**, n=1,096) and food (**61 per cent**). Other expenditures mentioned were healthcare (**39 per cent**) and rent/accommodation (**28 per cent**). Costs on transport (**3 per cent**) or education (**3 per cent**) were only mentioned by few.

Individuals aged 60 years or older reported relatively more spending on utilities, such as gas, water, and electricity (**71 per cent**, n=507), as well as healthcare (**50 per cent**), compared to those aged 18 to 59 (**59 per cent** and **29 per cent**, respectively, n=587). In addition to utilities, the younger group also significantly reported spending more on food (**68 per cent**) and accommodation (**34 per cent**). See the bar chart below.

Figure 25. “Please select your two biggest monthly expenditures from the below list” - multiple answers - respondents aged 18 - 59 (n=587) and aged above 60 (n=507)



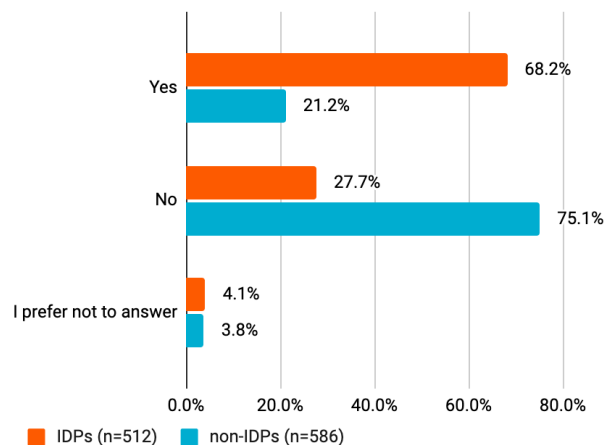
## Experiences of IDPs versus non-IDPs

When comparing the data on feelings of safety, access to government services, as well as on livelihoods, access to basic needs, and general needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) versus people who did not consider themselves internally displaced (non-IDPs), several interesting patterns can be observed.

### Impact of the war

When examining how the war had impacted IDPs versus non-IDPs differently, data reveals that considerably more IDPs (**68 per cent**) than non-IDPs (**21 per cent**) reported to have experienced damage to their house/residence as a direct result of the war starting on 24 February 2022. Reported access to support was rather similar for both IDPs and non-IDPs.

Figure 26. “Since the start of the war in February 2022 - has your house/residence in Ukraine been damaged as a result of shelling, artillery fire, missiles, UXOs or other aspects of war?” - IDP (n=512) and non-IDP (n=586) respondents



## Livelihoods

The main difference in primary sources of income for IDPs versus non-IDPs is that non-IDPs hardly rely on assistance from the Ukrainian government (**3 per cent**, n=571), while over one-third of IDPs reported this as their main source of income (**38 per cent**, n=500). IDPs also rely slightly more on aid from humanitarian organisations (**16 per cent**), but not significantly more (**7 per cent**). See the bar chart below.

Figure 27. “What have been the main sources of income in your household?” - multiple answers - IDP (n=500) and non-IDP (n=571) respondents



Regarding the biggest expenditures for both IDPs and non-IDPs, a larger share of IDPs (**53 per cent**, n=500) say rent/accommodation constitutes the largest expenditure, much more than for non-IDPs (**6 per cent**, n=569). Non-IDPs (**75 per cent**) indicate utilities (gas/water/electricity) are their biggest expenditure compared to IDPs (**51 per cent**).

When asked whether retired respondents had to return to work since February 2022, slightly more non-IDPs (**22 per cent**, n=288) than IDPs (**13 per cent**, n=242) indicated they did indeed return to work after retirement, mostly due to the inability to support themselves/their household without working. Additionally, amongst those who reported they were working before the start of the war in February 2022, a larger share of IDPs (**37 per cent**, n=353) indicated they had to change profession due to the war, more than non-IDPs (**20 per cent**, n=438).

While still marginal, **5 per cent** (n=132) of IDPs indicated that this was because they work in agriculture and mine contamination prevented them from working, versus none of the non-IDP respondents. Non-IDPs (**45 per cent**, n=87) more often report that there is limited/reduced work in their previous profession due to the war, compared to IDPs (**34 per cent**).

# 5 Conclusion and recommendations

NRC, with Upinion, conducted a conversation with 2,209 respondents, Ukrainians inside Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees displaced to Moldova and Poland. Inside Ukraine the group consisted of both non-displaced, and internally displaced persons across Ukraine. While acknowledging the inherent limitations of the study, the findings shed light on the experiences of a large group of people affected by the war in Ukraine, and their experiences with regard to the impact of the war, livelihoods, and access to services and humanitarian aid.

## Displacement movements

Overall, the findings underscore the enduring and pervasive impact of the conflict on individuals from Ukraine. The duration of displacement inside Ukraine, lasting for 18 to 24 months or longer for most of the respondents, highlights the protracted crisis for both internally displaced persons.

The most frequently reported reasons by both previous or currently displaced individuals, show that individuals have fled due to unsafety, shelling, and missile attacks. Damage to housing also seems to be an obvious factor, given the high percentage of currently internally displaced Ukrainians reporting damage to their houses.

The decision to leave family members behind, who are often bound to their home area by factors such as attachment to home, financial constraints, and caregiving responsibilities, adds another layer of complexity to these experiences. Return visits, though relatively infrequent especially for internally displaced people within Ukraine are primarily driven by familial ties and essential needs for services, yet safety concerns remain a large barrier to permanent return, especially among younger individuals.

## Impact of the war

The prevalence of housing damage, injuries, and loss of family members underscores the severity of the current situation faced by individuals in Ukraine. Notably, a considerable proportion of respondents reported damage to their residences. Furthermore, the loss of family members emerged as a tragic consequence of the conflict, with many respondents not even seeking, or being unable to access support services after the fact.

## Livelihoods

Considerable groups of respondents in Ukraine reported they were not, or only just, able to meet their basic needs. While employment emerges as the primary source of income for individuals in Ukraine, considerable numbers of respondents also rely on social protection, humanitarian aid, and savings to meet their basic needs. Moreover, the labour market has clearly suffered from the conflict. The transition back to work for pension recipients highlights the financial strain experienced by many, with economic stability remaining a key concern.

## Safety

A sense of unsafety exists among nearly all respondents in Ukraine, and people across the north, south, and east of the country consistently reported that they do not feel safe or fear for their own and others' lives.

## Recommendations

The findings of this report point to a population that continues and will continue to need humanitarian assistance. Many have survived the unimaginable and after two years of relentless conflict have exhausted their resources, in addition to dealing with both the physical and mental consequences of prolonged displacement and years of destruction. In order to respond to the immense needs across Ukraine, this year, and in the years to come, there are several actions the international community and member states must take to fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law and to ensure all Ukrainian civilians are protected now, and in the future.

NRC calls on member states and the international community to:

- Ensure continued, sustained and multi-year humanitarian funding for Ukraine, including fully funding the 2024 humanitarian response plan.
- Ensure the strong coordination and complementarity of different funding streams including development, bilateral and humanitarian funding.

- Re-prioritise diplomatic efforts to engage both parties to the conflict to ensure the protection of civilians in conflict, with a focus on advocating for urgent access to civilians in Russian occupied areas of Ukraine.
- Reinforce the protection of international humanitarian law in Ukraine and strongly condemn any and all attacks on civilian infrastructure, civilian populations or humanitarian actors and services.
- Entrench and support the protection of all humanitarian principles, in particular neutrality, in Ukraine, which are essential for all humanitarian actors to be able to safely reach populations in need.
- Make all necessary effort to include the perspectives, voices and experiences of Ukrainian civilians, civil society and NGOs in decision making fora.



*Photo: Myriam Renaud/NRC*

Portrait of Liubov, 47, in Liubomyrivka, Mykolaiv region, southern Ukraine. Liubov and her husband Vitaliy came back to their village in May 2023, after one year of being displaced.