UKRAINE OPERATION FACTSHEET

NEXUS IN PRACTICE

In Myrhorod, Poltavska oblast, UNHCR together with the Ministry of Social Policy, renovated 'Slava Sanatorium', transforming it into a safe and dignified facility for accommodation and social service provision for older people, people with disabilities or in otherwise vulnerable conditions. © UNHCR/Tetiana Kuras

OVERVIEW

UNHCR's programmes are designed to **address immediate needs** that cannot be met through national systems overstretched by four years of war, while **simultaneously reinforcing national and local capacity**, thereby **promoting sustainability and national leadership.** UNHCR's overall strategy in Ukraine is grounded in a localized and humanitarian-development nexus approach, relying extensively on Ukraine's wealth of expertise and knowledge, capacity, and commitment to build back better. As of September 2025, UNHCR has four active Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with Government Ministries, the Pension Fund of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights and the Olena Zelenska Foundation, as well as with 20 Regional Oblast Administrations. **UNHCR prioritizes partnerships with local partners**, including national NGOs (13 out of 14 partner organizations are local), and supports a growing network of some 550 community-based organizations and local initiative groups.

UNHCR adopts a sustainability-oriented nexus approach from the start to enable a transition from humanitarian aid to long-term recovery and development, as part of a collective effort to promote durable solutions for people affected by war in Ukraine. Our response emphasizes access to civil, social and economic rights, inclusion in national systems, and equal participation in administrative and political initiatives related to social protection, housing, and employment, working closely with development actors and financial institutions. All efforts align with the **UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2025-2029 for Ukraine,** broadly guiding the UN's contribution to recovery needs. UNHCR also contributes to the development of policies and legal frameworks in Ukraine, advocating for inclusive reforms to support the integration and protection of displaced populations. These partnerships ensure UNHCR's expertise and experience from the extensive humanitarian response are used effectively to address emerging needs, inform legislative, policy and procedural reforms, and facilitate sustainable voluntary returns and equitable recovery at local level on behalf of refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced people (IDPs), returnees, and stateless people. UNHCR is appealing for **$169 million** to support these efforts under the UNSDCF.

RESTORING AGENCY: EMERGENCY CASH AS A VITAL BRIDGE TO NATIONAL SYSTEMS

Aerial attacks or sudden displacement, including evacuations, are inevitably a shock to people in war-affected areas, with trauma and loss of homes and communities exacerbating existing vulnerabilities after nearly four years of war. Registering as an IDP for national social assistance programmes can take time, particularly for individuals who lack the requisite personal documentation. UNHCR's cash programmes align with and complement national social assistance programmes, serving as a vital bridge to help people meet immediate critical needs following sudden shocks, until they are able to access national social assistance schemes and begin rebuilding their lives.

For Maryna, a mother of two and pregnant with her third child, evacuated from Bilopillia on 19 July 2024, a town in Ukraine's northeastern Sumska oblast, the emergency cash assistance and psychosocial support received at the transit centre in Sumy city helped bridge the gap while she could figure out her next move to the West of Ukraine:

"I did not want to evacuate at all, and right now I really miss my own house. But it is very scary to return due to constant shelling. Even Sumy city is not safe. I will try to go for a month with my children to the west of Ukraine, and then we will see if it is possible to return home."

Maryna and family, evacuated from northeastern Sumska oblast in July 2024. © UNHCR/Oleksii Barkov

SUPPORTING A NATIONAL SYSTEM THAT PROTECTS – FREE LEGAL AID

UNHCR works to strengthen Ukraine's national protection system by working with the Government and civil society. This includes a strong focus on providing free legal aid to war-affected people who would not otherwise be able to afford lawyers, while contributing to building the capacity of the national Free Legal Aid Centres (FLACs).

Displaced people frequently lose IDs, housing deeds, and medical records when fleeing. Many also need help applying for compensation for destroyed homes, obtaining disability certificates, or accessing other services and support. Legal aid is therefore an indispensable enabler of access to services and durable solutions for displaced and war-affected Ukrainians, as well as those who are stateless.

Liudmyla and Valerii were displaced from Luhanska oblast. © UNHCR/Alina Kovalenko

Liudmyla and Valerii fled their home in Luhanska oblast after the full-scale invasion began. Valerii received assistance in obtaining a disability certificate and being recognized as a war survivor, along with access to social benefits. "*With the legal help we received, Valerii's pension was increased by 30%. This allows us to pay for utilities where we live*," said Liudmyla. Read more here.

A SAFE PLACE TO CALL HOME

A safe, dignified home is a cornerstone of durable solutions, enabling displaced people to return, recover, and rebuild their lives. Access to affordable housing is also a key enabler of durable solutions for IDPs who may wish to return or settle permanently in host communities. UNHCR works closely with the government using a multi-pronged approach to promote durable housing solutions for IDPs and war-affected people throughout Ukraine. UNHCR contributes to the government's housing stock for those who have been displaced, while developing approaches that allow IDPs, war-affected people, or returnees to choose housing solutions best suited to their needs. This includes UNHCR's house repair programme to help rehabilitate war-damaged homes, the creation and refurbishment of temporary housing facilities, the repair of common spaces in multi-story apartment buildings to facilitate access to the government's compensation scheme eVidnovlennia (eRecovery), as well as the rehabilitation of sub-standard rural houses to contribute to housing stock for IDPs and war-affected people.

For people like Tetiana, living in buildings where common areas such as roofs, entrances, and staircases have been damaged, it is not possible to enrol in the government's compensation scheme eVidnovlennia (eRecovery).

To address this gap—and to ensure full coordination between the government's response and UNHCR's programmes—UNHCR and its partners have been repairing the common areas of multistorey buildings since 2023.

When the Russian Federation launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022, Tetiana's village of Pervomaiske in Mykolaivska oblast, southern Ukraine, was right on the frontline. For 11 months, Tetiana and her husband slept in the corridor of their apartment—the only place where they felt safe—as missiles flew above and fighting raged all around. While missiles hit nearby houses, their building was damaged but never directly hit.

After Ukraine retook the area and the fighting and frontline moved farther from Pervomaiske at the end of 2022, UNHCR and its partners stepped in to help repair the damage. "*After the roof was fixed, this allowed us to apply for compensation, and we are very grateful. We have fixed the windows ourselves now*," she says.

In addition to the repair works, the village has been supported by others with the restoration of water and gas supply, and the removal of debris. After this, people started to return to Pervomaiske. Read more here.

Tetiana in her village, Pervomaiske in Mykolaivska oblast. © UNHCR/Elisabeth Arnsdorf Haslund

STRENGTHENING SOCIAL PROTECTION & SERVICE PROVISION – RESTORING DIGNITY, HOPE, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE DISPLACED BY WAR

The massive scale of internal displacement has posed significant challenges to Ukraine's social protection system, and prompted further calls for long overdue reforms. Together with partners, UNHCR is helping to create a more resilient, inclusive and shock-responsive social protection system by (a) providing legal, psychosocial, and social services directly to those most at risk; (b) investing in community-based protection mechanisms offering basic social support and enhancing social integration and cohesion; and (c) contributing to the strengthening of the national social services system, working closely with the Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity.

The exceptional numbers of highly vulnerable IDPs, particularly older people and people with disabilities, requires a new approach to assisted living and social adaption as part of the ongoing reforms of the social protection system that leave no one behind. Hand in hand with support for sustainable housing solutions, UNHCR is working to transform places inhabited by IDPs such as collective sites, to be better socially adapted to the long-term needs of vulnerable individuals, including for assisted living. With tailored social adaptation plans, displaced people are supported to strengthen community bonds that facilitate their eventual inclusion into new communities. This is particularly important for older people who – prior to their displacement and for some destruction and occupation of their homes – lived independently in their houses, often with support of neighbours and family members living nearby.

In Myrhorod, Poltavska oblast, UNHCR together with the Ministry of Social Policy, renovated 'Slava Sanatorium', transforming it into a safe and dignified facility for accommodation and social service provision for older people, people with disabilities or in otherwise vulnerable conditions, displaced by the ongoing war in Ukraine. Beyond the physical rehabilitation of the centre, Slava Sanatorium is also part of a progressive pilot programme. In close cooperation with the Ministry of Social Policy, UNHCR and NGO partner Right to Protection are working to strengthen the capacity of social workers in the Sanatorium and community to facilitate social adaptation, which will enable IDPs who are currently residing in the sanatorium to live independently in the community. Read more here.

'Slava Sanatorium' in Myrhorod, Poltavska oblast. © UNHCR/Tetiana Kuras

ADVOCATING FOR INCLUSIVE LAW AND POLICY FOR IDPS, REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND STATELESS PEOPLE

One of UNHCR's strategic objectives in Ukraine is to promote inclusive and rights-based laws, policies and procedures in protection, housing and durable solutions areas through evidence-based advocacy and technical advice – leveraging reform processes.

Working closely with governmental and parliamentary stakeholders, UNHCR and partners' advocacy actively contributes to important change and progress, such as the creation of the Congress of IDP Councils, further strengthening this critical participatory instrument of IDPs; the introduction of a financing model for social services for older IDPs based on the principle of 'money follows people' based on Resolution 888; and several legislative acts that facilitate IDPs' access to compensation and housing solutions, such as Law 4080-IX on IDP housing or Law 4114-IX granting IDPs priority in receiving compensation for war-affected houses. A key advocacy effort has been centred on ensuring adequate state budget allocations for IDPs' access to compensation for housing damage, culminating in the adoption of Resolution No. 1432, which allocated UAH 15 billion. This is expected to benefit approximately 10,000 households that have lost their homes due to the war.

IDP Council Forum, 2024. © Stabilization Support Services