UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

LIVES ON HOLD: INTENTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES OF REFUGEES, REFUGEE RETURNEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE FROM UKRAINE

REGIONAL INTENTIONS REPORT #6

Summary Findings

NOVEMBER 2024

Acknowledgements

Data used in this report was collected through a partnership between UNHCR and Ipsos SA in Switzerland, who implemented surveys with refugees, refugee returnees and internally displaced people from Ukraine.

We are grateful for the extensive involvement and support of UNHCR's partners, local authorities, civil society, international organizations, refugee volunteers and donors. This includes the contributions of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine to the survey with internally displaced people. Most importantly, UNHCR would like to acknowledge the resilience and strength of Ukrainian refugees, refugee returnees and internally displaced people in Ukraine, who continue to share with us their challenges, fears and hopes, and who directly contribute to promoting and supporting data collection activities.

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Cover photograph:

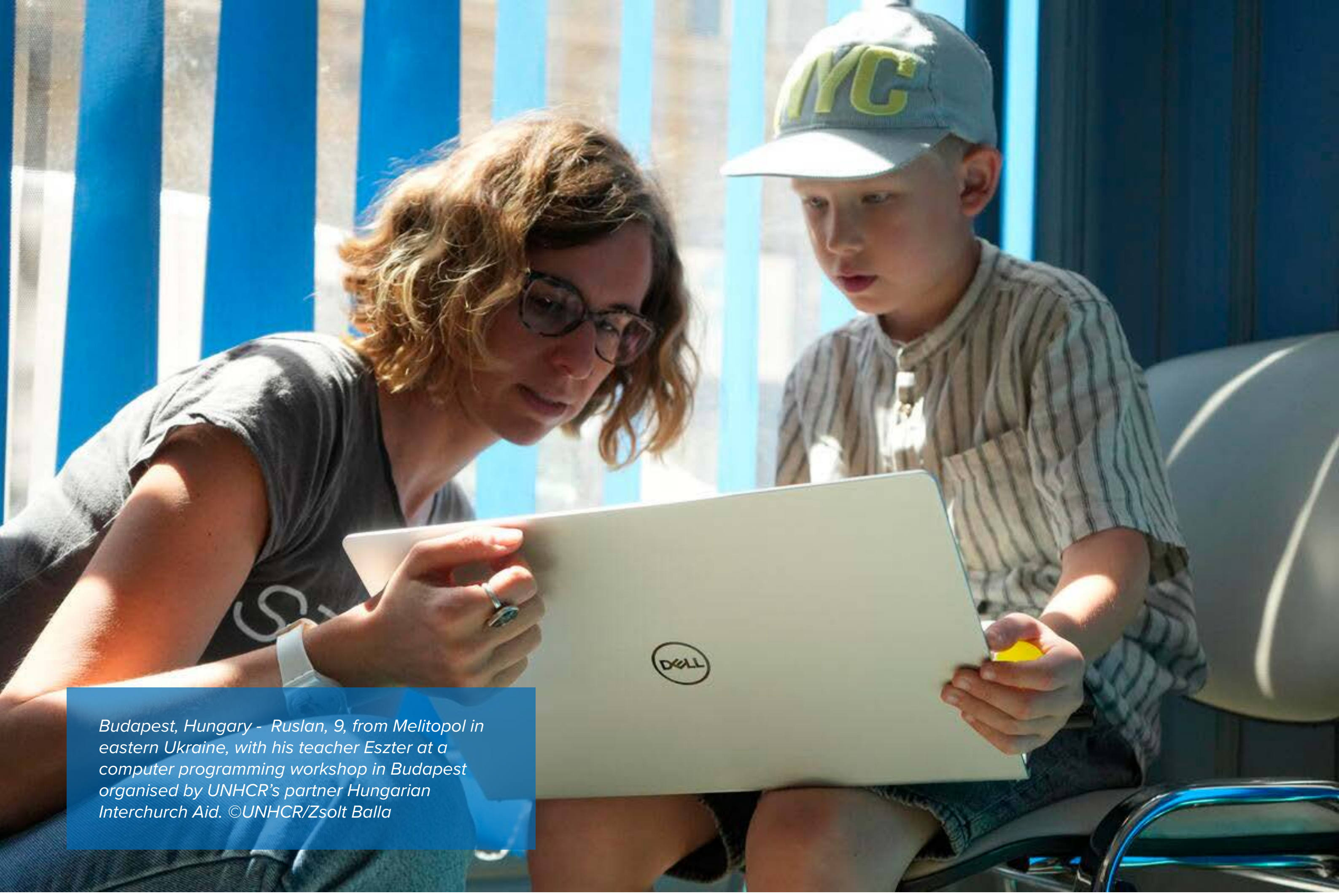
Warsaw, Poland – Following the full-scale invasion in 2022, Kristina and her children Roma, 12, Emanuel, 9 and Gizella, 4, fled from Donetsk, Ukraine to seek safety in Poland. They left a house which Kristina had only just purchased a few weeks prior. Since arriving in Poland, they often visit the Foundation Towards Dialogue, a place that serves as a semblance of a home where other Roma and Ukrainian families can meet and where their children can play. "Here, we share our worries and joys," says Kristina. "I feel safe here." © UNHCR/ Anna Liminowicz.

Introduction

More than two years since the beginning of the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, nearly 3.7 million people remain internally displaced within the country and 6.7 million refugees are recorded in Europe and other destination countries. To ensure the centrality of the voices of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) from Ukraine in discussions about their future, as well as to inform evidence-based policy responses in host countries and in Ukraine, UNHCR has been periodically conducting intentions surveys since 2022. These surveys collect data on refugees and IDPs profiles, the circumstances during their displacement, their intentions, and the factors influencing their decision-making.

Complementing previous reports,[1] this report presents **the summary findings from the latest survey**. The analysis is based on **interviews undertaken between July - August 2024** with close to **5,000 refugee households** across Europe,[2] around **4,700 IDP households in Ukraine** and over **1,500 refugee returnee households in Ukraine** (for an overall sample of more than **11,150 households**, out of which more than 3,980 households responded to previous rounds of this survey). The research used a mixed methodology combining phone and web-based surveys and using different sampling approaches for each population based on available data. Sampling and data collection was conducted by Ipsos SA. The full report with all detailed findings will be published separately

1. See UNHCR's Lives on Hold #1 (July 2022), Lives on Hold #2 (September 2022), Lives on Hold #3 (February 2023) and Lives on Hold #4 (July 2023) and Lives on Hold #5 (February 2024).
2. The survey targeted refugees in all countries of Europe except those currently residing in the Russian Federation.



Budapest, Hungary - Ruslan, 9, from Melitopol in eastern Ukraine, with his teacher Eszter at a computer programming workshop in Budapest organised by UNHCR's partner Hungarian Interchurch Aid. ©UNHCR/Zsolt Balla

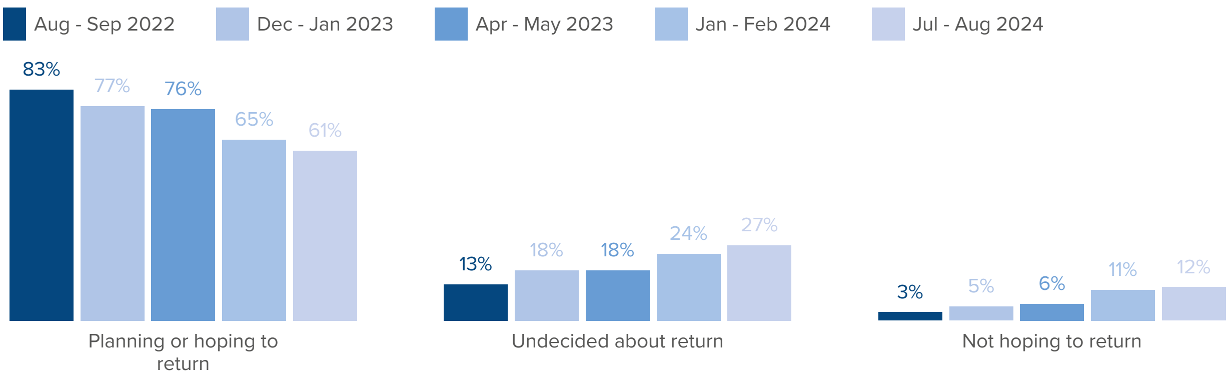
Refugees' intentions, hopes and plans

Uncertainty is growing among refugees as the war and their displacement continues, but the majority are still planning or hoping to return to Ukraine one day.

- Compared to results from six months ago, **the proportion of refugees planning to return to Ukraine in the next twelve months slightly decreased** (5 vs. 6 per cent) **as well as the proportion of those hoping to return one day** (57 vs. 59 per cent), in contrast to small increases in the proportion of those undecided about returning (27 vs. 24 per cent) and those who report no hope to return (12 vs. 11 per cent).
- Refugees originating **from the east, the north or from Kyiv city indicate lower-than-average hopes to return to Ukraine** (56, 53 and 46 per cent). There are also the regions of origin with a **higher decrease in the share of refugees planning or hoping to return** compared to previous results (-5, -8 and -9 percentage points).
- The decrease in return intentions is partly related to the increased length of displacement, as those **displaced between February - April 2022**—who are more likely to be from the east, the north or Kyiv city**—indicate lower hopes to return one day** than those displaced later in 2022 or in 2023 (54 vs. 62 and 66 per cent).

- **Refugees originating from areas under temporary occupation are less likely to be planning to return in the short-term** (1 per cent), although the majority of them still hope to return one day (69 per cent).
- Hopes to return are **significantly higher among refugees who remained in countries neighbouring Ukraine** compared to those in other countries in Europe (69 vs. 52 per cent), particularly those hosted in **Moldova** (80 per cent), **Poland** (68 per cent) or **Romania** (67 per cent).

REFUGEES INTENTIONS TO RETURN



Refugees' return intentions are higher among female-headed and older people households, as well as those who have stronger ties with Ukraine (such as family or property in the country).

- Hopes to return one day to Ukraine are **higher among female-headed households** than among male-headed families (54 vs. 48 per cent), while **male-headed households are more likely to indicate no hope to return** (22 vs. 10 per cent).
- Compared to other profiles, households composed of only **older people (aged 60+) are more likely to report hopes to return one day** (71 vs. 54 per cent).
- Hopes to return are also **higher among households with dependents (children and/or older people)** compared to those without dependents (57 vs. 49 per cent).
- Respondents with **their spouse and/or children in Ukraine indicate higher plans to return in the next twelve months** (7 vs. 4 per cent) **and higher hopes to return one day than the rest** (62 vs. 55 per cent).
- Refugees who **own a property in their place of origin that it is not damaged are more likely to report plans to return in the next twelve months** (6 per cent), while those who **own a property that is damaged are more likely to report hopes to return one day** compared to those who do not know its status or those who do not own property (64 vs. 50 per cent).

The end of the war and hostilities, along with the end of Russia's occupation of territories, are the main reported enablers for the sustainable return of most refugees.

- Out of those not planning to return in the short-term, the **majority of refugees report they would likely return if the full-scale war and the occupation of territories came to an end in the next twelve months** (67 per cent), just slightly lower than previous results (70 per cent).
- The end of the war and of the occupation of territories as enablers for return are **significantly more important for refugees originating from regions closer to the frontline and/or from areas under temporary occupation** compared to the rest (71 vs. 60 per cent).
- In particular, **it is more frequently reported among refugees from regions such as Luhanska** (89 per cent), **Khersonska** (86 per cent), **Zaporizka** (78 per cent), **Donetska** (76 per cent) and **Mykolaivska** (72 per cent).

Apart from the end of the war and of the occupation of territories, access to work or livelihood opportunities in areas of return is the top reported enabler to return among refugees, followed by access to housing and access to basic services.

- In line with the results from six months ago, apart from the end of the war and of the occupation of territories, **refugees report that access to work opportunities as the second main factor that would influence their return decisions** (43 per cent). It is **more frequently reported among refugees participating in the labour force in host countries** (working or looking for work) compared to those outside the labour force (50 vs. 25 per cent).
- Access to work as an enabler for return is also **more frequently reported among refugees originating from the north or Kyiv city** (above 45 per cent), in contrast to those from **the east or the south** (below 40 per cent), where the end of the war and the occupation of territories has a more significant bearing on return decisions.
- **Access to their property or alternative housing is the third main factor that would influence refugees' return decisions** (21 per cent). It is **more frequently reported among those originating from the east or the south** (27 and 22 per cent)—in particular those **from areas under temporary occupation** (45 per cent)—which are regions of origin where refugees are **more likely to report property damaged** (32 per cent) **or not knowing the status of their property** (10 per cent) compared to all others (9 and 5 per cent).
- **Access to basic services (electricity, heating, water) is the fourth main factor that would influence refugees' return decisions** (19 per cent), with a higher percentage among those originating from Kyiv city or the west (26 and 24 per cent).

Refugees' return intentions also vary according to the degree of socio-economic integration in host countries.

- Refugees **participating in the labour force of host countries (working or looking for work) have lower hopes to return** compared to those outside the labour force (52 vs. 69 per cent).
- In contrast, those who are **full-time caregivers or retired are more likely to indicate plans to return in the next twelve months** compared to those working or looking for work (7 vs. 4 per cent).
- In the scenario that the war continues for the next twelve months, **a significant proportion of refugees indicate that they could be compelled to return even if this would not be their first choice, if they face challenges in accessing rights and services in host countries** (60 per cent). This relates in particular to uncertainty about legal status, lack of work opportunities or lack of adequate accommodation options.

In the short-term, out of those not planning to return to Ukraine, the vast majority of refugees intend to stay in their current host countries; among them, almost one-fifth are planning to transition from international protection status to other types of residence permit.

- **The vast majority of refugees indicate plans to stay in their current host countries for the immediate future** (87 per cent), with **a small proportion indicating plans to move to another country in the next six months** (2 per cent). The rest are undecided about their plans (11 per cent).
- Groups which are more likely to be planning to move to another country (2 per cent in the overall sample) include: **adults without dependents** (4 per cent); those in **neighbouring countries** (4 per cent); those **in collective centres** (7 per cent); and those **displaced in 2024** (5 per cent). The main reasons among refugees planning to move to other host countries are **access to work opportunities** (38 per cent), **access to accommodation options** (28 per cent) or **having family/ friends there** (27 per cent).
- While the majority of refugees hosted in Europe have international protection status (88 per cent, most of whom are beneficiaries of temporary protection), around **one-fifth of them report plans to apply for other types of residence permit within the next twelve months**, particularly those working or looking for work compared to those outside the labour force (24 vs. 8 per cent).

Around half of refugees have conducted short-term visits to Ukraine at least once since their displacement started, and the majority have done so in order to visit relatives, avail of health services and access work on a temporary basis.

- Compared to results from six months ago, **the proportion of refugees who have conducted short-term visits was relatively stable** (52 vs. 50 per cent). A lower proportion visited only once compared to the previous round of the survey (23 vs. 27 per cent) in contrast to a higher proportion having visited more than once (30 vs. 23 per cent), **indicating an increase in pendular movements**, as has also been corroborated in border monitoring.[3]
- **Visiting relatives continues to be the main reason for refugees' short-term visits to Ukraine** (52 per cent), followed by **access to healthcare** (33 per cent), **accessing work/checking on a business** on a temporary basis (28 per cent), **to obtain documentation** (21 per cent) or to **check conditions in areas of origin and/or check their property** (20 per cent).
- Among those not able to visit Ukraine, the most frequently reported reasons are **security concerns** (52 per cent) and **insufficient funds to cover the travel** (42 per cent). Refugees from areas under temporary occupation indicate this condition as the main barrier to visiting their places of origin (88 per cent). Males, particularly those of conscription age, are significantly less likely to have conducted short-term visits (less than 30 per cent).

3. See latest reports here.

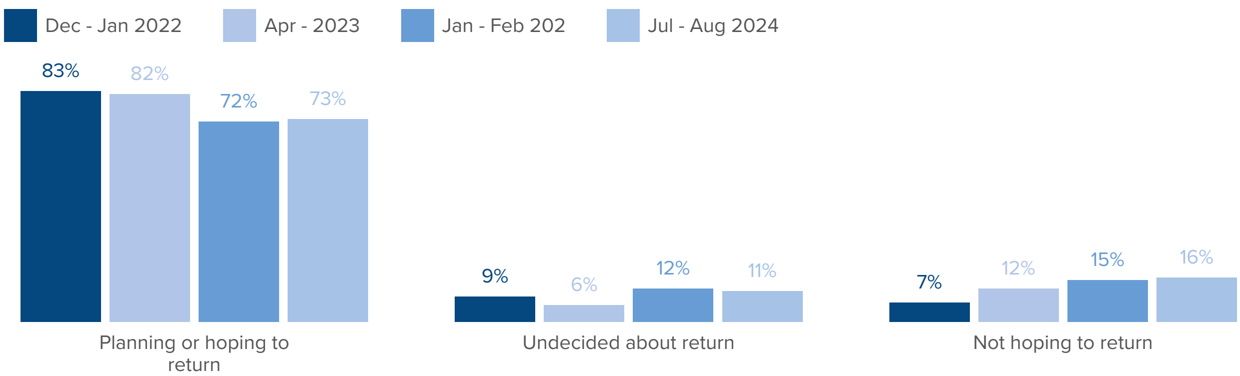
Mezhova, Ukraine - Oleksandr and Valeria along with their three young sons—Sasha, Artem, and Matvii—were forced to flee their home in Myrnohrad in Donetsk region following an escalation in hostilities. When mandatory evacuation orders were issued by authorities, they had no choice but to leave, taking only what they could carry. © UNHCR/Chadi Ouanes

IDPs' intentions and plans

Return intentions among IDPs remain largely stable, with close to three-quarters still planning or hoping to return one day.

- Compared to results from six months ago, the share of **IDPs still planning to return to places of origin in the next twelve months or those hoping to return one day remain largely the same** (4 and 69 per cent), while minimal differences observed in the share of those undecided (11 vs. 12 per cent) and those who report no hope to return (16 vs. 15 per cent).
- As in the case of refugees, the length of displacement also seems to influence return decisions among IDPs, as those **displaced between February - April 2022 indicate slightly lower hopes to return one day** than those displaced later in 2022 or in 2023 (67 vs. 73 and 72 per cent).
- Return intentions also vary according to the proximity between places of displacement and places of origin, as **IDPs that remained within the same region of origin have higher hopes to return** than those displaced to a different region (75 vs. 67 per cent).
- **IDPs originating from areas under temporary occupation are less likely to be planning to return in the short-term** (1 per cent), though the majority of them still hope to return one day (69 per cent).

IDPS INTENTIONS TO RETURN



Return intentions of IDPs are higher among female-headed and older people households, as well as those with stronger ties with their place of origin (such as family or property still there).

- Hopes to return one day are **higher among female-headed households** than male-headed ones (69 vs. 61 per cent), while **male-headed households are more likely to indicate no hope to return** (22 vs. 15 per cent).
- **Older respondents (aged 60+) are more likely to report plans to return in the next twelve months** (6 per cent) **and hopes to return one day** (72 per cent) compared to younger adults **aged 18 - 34** (2 and 61 per cent).
- Hopes to return are also **higher among households with dependents (children and/or older people)** compared to those without dependents (71 vs. 63 per cent).
- Respondents who report **having their spouse and/or children still in their place of origin indicate higher plans to return in the next twelve months** (7 vs. 3 per cent) **and higher hopes to return one day than the rest** (78 vs. 66 per cent).
- IDPs who **own a property in their place of origin that is not damaged are more likely to report plans to return in the next twelve months** (6 per cent), while those who **do not own a property are less likely to report hopes to return one day** compared to the rest (56 vs. 70 per cent).

The end of the war and hostilities, along with the end of Russia's occupation of territories inside Ukraine, are the main reported enablers for the return of most IDPs.

- The majority of **IDPs report they would likely return if the war and the occupation of territories came to an end in the next twelve months** (76 per cent), the same as in the previous round of the survey.
- The end of the war and the occupation of territories as enablers for return are **more important for IDPs originating from the east and south** (77 and 81 per cent).
- In particular, **it is more frequently reported among refugees from regions such as Zaporizka** (88 per cent), **Odeska** (84 per cent) and **Khersonska** (83 per cent).

Apart from the end of the war and occupation of territories, access to adequate housing is the top enabler for the return of IDPs, followed by access to work opportunities and to basic services.

- In line with results from six months ago, apart from the end of the war and of the occupation of territories, **access to their property or alternative housing is the second main factor that would influence return decisions among IDPs** (31 per cent). It is **more frequently reported among those originating from the east** (in particular from **Donetska** or **Luhanska**), related to the fact that **IDPs from the east report with a higher frequency having property damaged** (49 per cent) compared to other regions (36 per cent).
- **Access to work or livelihood opportunities is reported as the third main factor that would influence return decisions among IDPs** (21 per cent)**.** It is **significantly more frequent among IDPs participating in the labour force in places of displacement (working or looking for work)** compared to those outside the labour force (30 vs. 8 per cent).
- **Access to basic services (electricity, heating, water) is the third main factor that would influence IDPs' return decisions** (11 per cent).

IDPs' return intentions also vary according to the degree of local integration in places of displacement.

- IDPs **participating in the labour force in areas of displacement** (working **or looking for work) were less likely to be planning to return in the next twelve months** compared to those outside the labour force (3 vs. 5 per cent), as well as **less likely to be hoping to return one day** (67 vs. 71 per cent).
- IDPs who report their **current housing conditions are better than in their place of origin are also less likely to report hopes to return one day** (44 vs. 73 per cent).
- In the scenario that the full-scale war continues for the next twelve months, **a significant proportion of IDPs indicate that they could be compelled to return even if this would not be their first choice, if they face challenges in accessing rights in host communities** (22 per cent). This relates in particular to lack of work opportunities or lack of adequate accommodation options.

In the short-term, out of IDPs not planning to return to their places of origin, the vast majority are intending to stay in their current places of displacement, and only two per cent are considering leaving Ukraine.

- **The vast majority of IDPs indicate plans to stay in their current locations for the next six months** (83 per cent), with small proportions indicating plans to move to another location within Ukraine (5 per cent), and a minimal share planning to leave the country (2 per cent). Around **one-tenth** are undecided about their short-term plans.
- Groups that are more likely to be planning to move to another location or country (7 per cent in the overall the sample), include: **younger adults** aged 18 - 24 (13 per cent); **households without dependents** (8 per cent); **those hosted in Kyiv city or the west** (9 per cent); and those **displaced in 2023 or 2024** (10 per cent).

Less than half of IDPs have conducted short-term visits to places of origin at least once since their displacement began, and the majority have done so in order to check on or repair their properties, retrieve personal belongings and visit relatives or friends.

- Compared to results from six months ago, **the proportion of IDPs who have conducted short-term visits to their place of origins lightly decreased** (45 vs. 47 per cent). The proportion indicating they haven't been able to visit remained stable (38 per cent).
- Short-term visits are **significantly less likely to occur among IDPs originating from areas currently under occupation** (5 vs. 65 per cent). They are more likely to occur among IDPs hosted in the East (52 per cent) and among those who displaced within their same region of origin (66 per cent).
- **Checking or repairing their properties continues to be the main reason for IDPs' short-term visits** (34 per cent), followed by getting personal supplies (29 per cent), visiting relatives/friends (26 per cent) and checking conditions to prepare for a possible return (23 per cent).
- Among those not able to visit their place of origin, the most frequently reported reasons are **security concerns** (57 per cent) and that their **places of origin are under current occupation** (51 per cent).

Kyiv, Ukraine - Mykola and Nataliia's home in Hostomel, Kyiv region, was destroyed at the start of the full-scale invasion in February 2022, forcing the family to flee to Poland for two years. In 2024, UNHCR provided the family with a 'core home', or pre-fabricated house, which was installed on their land earlier this year, enabling them to finally return home. © UNHCR/Oleksii Barkov

Refugee returnees' experiences

The vast majority of refugee returnees surveyed have been back in Ukraine for more than one year, and an increasing proportion have returned to a place different from their former homes.

- Almost **half of refugee returnees surveyed came back to Ukraine between May - December 2022,** coinciding with the Government of Ukraine's retaking control of some regions. Around 40 per cent came back in the first half of 2023, and only 9 per cent came back in 2024 (up to August).
- Close to **three-quarters of returns took place towards northern, eastern and southern regions of Ukraine (including Kyiv city)**. Recent returns are more frequent towards Kyiv city, Odeska region or western regions.
- Close **to one-third of all refugee returnees had returned to a different place than the one they were living in before the start of the full-scale war**, an increase compared to results from six months ago (32 vs. 25 per cent).
- Refugee returnees who came back to a different place than their area of origin were **mainly those originating from the east and the south,** in particular from places under temporary occupation in Luhanska, Donetska and Khersonska regions.
- Close to **half of refugee returnees were previously living in countries neighbouring Ukraine** (in particular in Poland with 36 per cent). Among the rest, the main countries from which refugees have returned are Germany, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Italy and Spain (34 per cent in total from these five countries).

In line with the top reasons reported by refuges planning to return in the short-term, the main reasons reported by refugee returnees included a desire to be back in their own cultural environment and to reunite with relatives.

- The main reasons for return coincide with those reported by refugees who are currently planning to return: the desire to be back in their own cultural environment (45 per cent) and to reunite with relatives (27 per cent).
- Additionally, refugees who returned during 2022 are more likely to indicate **improved security conditions or the retaking of occupied areas** as further reasons for return than those who returned later (21 vs. 10 per cent), while a higher proportion of recent returnees (in 2024) cite **access to healthcare** or **high cost of living in host countries** as further reasons for their return (16 and 14 per cent).

Refugee returnees are more likely to be households with specific needs or vulnerabilities compared to refugees remaining in host countries.

- While the majority of refugee returnee households comprise of women and children, as is the case of refugee households generally (82 and 79 per cent), there is a higher proportion of children (34 vs. 30 per cent) and older people among returnees (18 vs. 16 per cent).

- Households with dependents (children and/or older people) are over-represented among refugee returnees compared to refugees who remain in host countries (69 vs. 56 per cent), in particular households composed of only one adult with at least one dependent (37 vs. 28 per cent).
- Refugee returnee respondents are also **less likely to have higher levels of education** (bachelor's degree or above) compared to refugees (59 vs. 69 per cent).

Refugee returnees report that access to electricity and economic opportunities in areas of return are worse than what they expected before returning, and more than half reported not feeling safe in their current location.

- In line with results from six months ago, **a significant proportion of refugee returnees report that access to economic opportunities is worse than they expected** before returning (53 per cent). Concern about access to work opportunities is **more frequently indicated among those who returned to the south or the east** (60 and 61 per cent reporting worse conditions than expected).
- The majority of refugee returnees also report that **access to electricity is worse compared to what they had expected**, and this is significantly higher than in the previous round of the survey (64 vs. 14 per cent), largely related to impact of Russia's intensified attacks on critical infrastructure in 2024. Concern about access to electricity is **more frequently indicated among those who returned to Kyiv city, the centre or the south** of the country (73, 70 and 66 per cent reporting worse conditions than expected).
- Only around **one-third of refugee returnees report feeling safe in their current locations** (slightly lower than in previous rounds of the survey), with a higher proportion reporting feeling safe among those who returned to a different place compared to those who returned to their place of origin (50 vs. 28 per cent). Perceptions of safety were also **higher among those residing in western or central regions** (59 and 47 per cent) compared to those residing in the east (25 per cent).
- Among refugee returnees who indicated having been separated from relatives due to the war (75 per cent), the **majority had managed to reunite with all or some of their relatives upon their return** (86 per cent), although with a lower proportion among those who returned to a place different than the one they lived in before the war (**73 per cent**).
- The vast **majority of refugees who returned to their place of origin were able to go back to their previous property or dwelling** (96 per cent). Among those who returned to a different place, 45 per cent report their previous dwelling was damaged and 16 per cent were uncertain about its status, while 39 per cent reported their property was intact.

While close to half of refugee returnees are currently working, less than one-quarter reported being able to cover all or most of their basic needs.

- Close **to half of refugee returnee respondents are currently working**, with the remainder being unemployed (12 per cent) or not economically active (35 per cent, mainly retirees and full-time caregivers). Those currently residing in Kyiv city are more likely to be working (60 per cent).
- Out of those currently working (50 per cent), **around one-third report their employment is of a lower level compared to the one they had before**, while **10 per cent indicate their employment is of a higher level**, with the latter more likely to be females as well as those with higher education levels.
- **Less than one-quarter of refugee returnees reported being able to cover all or most of their basic needs,** while this was the case for 35 per cent of refugee returnees currently residing in Kyiv city. There are differences among households where the respondent is currently working, with 27 per cent reporting being able to cover all or most of their needs, compared to households where the respondent is unemployed or not economically active (18 per cent).

The majority of refugee returnees plan to stay in their current location in the short term, with less than one-tenth planning to move in the next six months, and close to one-fifth undecided.

- **The vast majority of refugee returnees indicate plans to stay in their current locations for the next six months** (74 per cent), with a small proportion reporting plans to leave Ukraine again (5 per cent), and only a minority planning to move within Ukraine (2 per cent). Around a fifth is not sure about their short-term plans.
- The proportion of refugee returnees planning to move is higher among those who **returned in 2024** (25 per cent), among those **now living in the west** (12 per cent) and among those **without dependents** (12 per cent) The main reasons for refugee returnees who are planning to move are **security risks in current locations** (53 per cent), **access to basic services** such as electricity, heating and water (26 per cent) and **to access to work opportunities** (22 per cent).

Odessa, Ukraine - When the full-scale war began in 2022, Yuliia, Viktor and their family fled from Kherson to Germany so Viktor could receive urgent dialysis. After his treatment, the family decided to return to in Kherson. Following a missile strike in July 2023 which left their home badly damaged, the family was forced to flee once more, this time to Odessa. © UNHCR

Mezhova, Ukraine - Following intensified hostilities in eastern regions of Ukraine, Nina was among thousands of people who fled or were evacuated from frontline communities in recent months. © UNHCR/Chadi Ouanes

Key recommendations

1 As safety and security concerns currently prevent most refugees and IDPs from returning to their places of origin in Ukraine, host countries and host communities require continued support to foster refugees and IDPs self-reliance and ensure access to social protection and assistance for the most vulnerable.

- Labor market inclusion efforts should be continued and strengthened, including interventions targeting the removal of primary barriers (i.e. lack of local language proficiency for refugees, lack of decent work opportunities, a mismatch in skills, qualifications recognition, among others) as well as to ensure their profiles are better matched with market opportunities to reduce underemployment. This would also build refugees and IDPs' skills and experience which would benefit them personally and contribute to Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction.
- A special emphasis is needed to address the needs of the most vulnerable —including single caregivers, older people or people with disabilities— as they are less likely to be able to participate in the labour market and therefore more likely to experience challenges in meeting their basic needs or finding affordable housing options. Their inclusion in national social protection systems should continue to be a priority, combined with targeted interventions to address their specific needs.
- Reductions or cuts to subsidized housing options should be handled with care, as many refugees and IDPs are still dependent on these.[4] Temporary and longer-term housing solutions, including financial support for host families, should also remain priorities.
- Among refugees, addressing barriers to accessing healthcare in host countries should also remain a priority, as this is becoming a more frequent reason for short-term visits, as well as for returns to Ukraine.

4. See UNHCR et. al. (2024), Helping Hands: The Role of Housing Support and Employment Facilitation in Economic Vulnerability of Refugees from Ukraine.

2 Refugees and IDPs should be continually supported to make free and informed decisions on their future.

- Providing refugees and IDPs with objective and up-to-date information on topics they have indicated to be of key relevance for return decisions should be a priority, including access to job opportunities, housing, basic services and available assistance in areas of origin / return. For this reason, UNHCR launched the *Ukraine is Home* platform earlier this year, which provides objective information on key topics of importance for those contemplating a return.
- Refugees from Ukraine require access to timely, comprehensive information and counselling in order to make informed decisions regarding their options to access legal status in host countries. The most vulnerable—including single caregivers and older people, as well as marginalized groups including minorities, people with disabilities and those who are not digitally literate—should be provided with additional support to ensure they also have effective access to information about their options.[5]

3 Refugees who have taken the decision to return should be supported in their pursuit to find job opportunities, and to access compensation and assistance to repair damaged homes or affordable housing options, as well as basic services, and be fully included in Ukraine's recovery efforts.

- Places where a higher proportion of refugees have returned (and/or indicate plans to return in the short-term) should be prioritized for recovery and development initiatives to support their reintegration.
- Local development and recovery plans should consider the voice of refugee returnees, in particular the challenges reported regarding access to jobs, housing and basis services, taking into account the capacities of local authorities, civil society and the private sector.

4 Whilst large-scale returns are not anticipated in the near future and ahead of the current winter season, the importance of addressing the main barriers for voluntary, dignified and sustainable returns, as reported by refugees and IDPs in this survey, cannot be overstated.

- Early recovery, reconstruction and development plans should prioritize initiatives that address the main barriers to return as reported by refugees and IDPs in this survey.
- Supporting access to housing solutions should remain a priority for the Government of Ukraine and the international community, including compensation programmes, for people whose homes have been damaged or destroyed due to the war, along with reconstruction of damaged and destroyed social and civilian infrastructure and investment in the local economy and jobs.

5. See UNHCR (2024), Displacement Patterns, Protection Risks and Needs of Refugees from Ukraine - Regional Protection Analysis #4.

Results at a glance

INTENTIONS TO RETURN AMONG REFUGEES AND IDPS

	Plan to return in next twelve months	Hope to return one day	Undecided about return	No plan or hope to return
REFUGEES	5%	57%	27%	12%
IDPS	4%	69%	11%	16%

ADDITIONAL FACTORS THAT WOULD INFLUENCE RETURN DECISIONS IF THE WAR AND OCCUPATION ENDS

	Work opportunities in areas of return	Access to their property or alternative housing	Access to basic services in areas of return	Access to health / education in areas of return
REFUGEES	43%	21%	19%	12%
IDPS	21%	31%	11%	6%

PLANS FOR THE NEXT 6 MONTHS (OUT OF THOSE NOT PLANNING TO RETURN)

	Plan to stay in current location	Plan to move to another country	Plan to change location within current country	Don't know
REFUGEES	87%	2%	5%	11%
IDPS	83%	1%	5%	10%

SHORT-TERM VISITS TO UKRAINE / PLACE OF ORIGIN BY REFUGEES AND IDPS

	Visited only once	Visited more than once	Have not been able to visit	Have not considered the need to visit
REFUGEES	23%	30%	30%	18%
IDPS	15%	30%	38%	17%

MAIN REASONS FOR SHORT-TERM VISITS TO UKRAINE / PLACE OF ORIGIN

	Visiting relatives	Access to healthcare	To work temporarily	To obtain documentation	To get personal supplies	To check conditions / property
REFUGEES	52%	33%	28%	21%	8%	20%
IDPS	26%	5%	12%	6%	29%	51%

REFUGEE RETURNEES EXPERIENCES

REFUGEE RETURNEES	Returned during 2022	51%
	Returned to a place different than their place of origin	32%
	Was residing in a country neighboring Ukraine before return	48%
	Were able to reunite with relatives separated due to displacement	86%
	Report that access to electricity is worse than expected before return	61%
	Report that access to work opportunities is worse than expected before return	53%
	Report feeling safe in current location	35%
	Plans to leave Ukraine again	5%

HOUSEHOLD PROFILES

	Refugees	IDPs	Refugees Rturrnees
Respondents with bachelor or above education	69%	48%	59%
Households composed of a single carer with dependents	28%	18%	37%
Separated from spouse or children after displacement	31%	10%	53%
Households composed of only older persons	15%	25%	18%

PLACES OF ORIGIN AND DISPLACEMENT

	Originally from the East and South of Ukraine	Originating from areas under occupation	Displaced in Feb-Apr 2022	Dwelling in place of origin damaged or unknown status
REFUGEES	59%	14%	64%	30%
IDPS	90%	34%	40%	58%
REFUGEE RETURNEES	55%	11%	82%	19%

KEY SOCIO ECONOMIC INDICATORS

	Employed or self-employed	Receiving social protection benefits	Income is enough to cover all or most basic needs	In private accommodation (inc. subsidized)
REFUGEES	45%	68%	39%	47%
IDPS	43%	71%	17%	58%
REFUGEE RETURNEES	49%	62%	23%	84%

LIVES ON HOLD: REFUGEES, REFUGEE RETURNEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED FROM UKRAINE

SUMMARY FINDINGS

November 2024

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