

IOM UKRAINE

UKRAINE RETURNS REPORT

GENERAL POPULATION SURVEY

ROUND 14
OCTOBER 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW	2
DEMOGRAPHICS	3
RETURN DYNAMICS	4
CROSSING BACK FROM ABROAD	6
RETURNEE NEEDS OVER TIME	7
WINTERIZATION	8
RETURN AS A DURABLE SOLUTION	9
HOUSING, LAND, PROPERTY (HLP)	11
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	12
BRIEF NOTE ON METHODOLOGY	13

Unless noted otherwise, data cited in this report were compiled from the full survey Round 14 of the General Population Survey, dated September, 2023. All numbers are rounded for ease of use. Data collection was facilitated by the Multicultural Insights research agency.

The full spectrum of results of Round 14 of IOM's General Population Survey is now presented in three complementary products: the **Population Snapshot**, the **Ukraine Internal Displacement Report**, and the **Ukraine Returns Report**. IOM now also prepares **oblast-specific briefs in key oblasts of displacement and return** for use by local actors and oblast authorities. Additional analysis is available upon request to dtmukraine@iom.int.

A NOTE ON THE DEFINITION OF RETURN

For the purposes of this report, the terms "return" and "returnee" are used without prejudice to status and refer to all people currently in their place of habitual residence after a period of displacement (minimum of two weeks since February 2022*), regardless of whether they returned to these locations spontaneously from abroad or from displacement within Ukraine. This definition excludes those who have come back to Ukraine from abroad but who have not returned to their places of habitual residence in country.

**This cut-off period has been shown as statistically most meaningful in terms of vulnerability following return as compared to the non-displaced population.*

KEY FINDINGS

As of 25 September 2023, IOM estimates that **4.6 million individuals in Ukraine have returned to their area of habitual residence following a period of displacement due to the large-scale invasion**. Sixty-five percent of all returnees are located in five regions – Kyiv city (23%) and Kyivska (18%), Kharkivska (12%), Dnipropetrovska (7%), and Odeska (5%) Oblasts.

On average, returnees experienced **4.5 months of displacement before returning to their place of habitual residence**. Most returned from displacement in **another oblast (47%) and 25 per cent returned from abroad**. The majority of returnees who returned from abroad (52%) indicated having returned to **resume a normal life** and because they missed home.

This report also monitors progress towards a durable solution among returnees in Ukraine, based on the **Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Durable Solutions criteria**. Security concerns, family separation, limited participation in public affairs, and difficulties in covering basic expenses were found to be significant obstacles to sustainable reintegration. **Safety concerns, family separation, and obstacles in accessing income-generating activities** in areas of return were more prevalent among returnees considering re-displacement, suggesting that the decision to relocate may be related to these factors. Notably, 19 per cent of all returnees reported it was very difficult for them to **participate in public affairs** and contribute to the **resolution of community issues**.

The majority of returnees (**88%**) expressed their intention to **remain in their return location (est. 4,000,000 individuals)**. Overall, only a small percentage (**4%**) of returnees were currently considering re-displacement. Among those returnees who were considering to leave, returnees showed a higher inclination to move abroad compared to IDPs (31% vs. 23%).

A significant share (**44%**) of those returnees considering relocation indicated that the upcoming winter was a significant factor for them considering movement. Separately, 23 per cent reported construction material as a key need for the winter. These findings may reflect shelter vulnerabilities in conflict-affected areas of returnees without the resources for repair or re-displacement.

Generators & power banks (49%), clothes and blankets, and heating appliances (24% each) ranked among the most commonly cited needs by returnees. These needs appear to be linked to anticipated power outages following potential attacks on energy infrastructure.

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IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

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OVERVIEW

Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been collecting data on internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, and the non-displaced population through a nationwide representative General Population Survey. Starting with Round 13, the survey was scaled up to provide reliable oblast-level data, with 20,000 randomized interviews conducted in each round, followed by 6,000 additional in-depth interviews with a representative sample of each population group. IOM is committed to utilizing the best population data available at the time of

each survey for extrapolation of population estimates. Since the start of the full-scale invasion, estimates of total population present in Ukraine have improved, impacting the comparability of population estimates between some rounds of IOM's survey. Round 14 population estimates are based on a new available UNFPA population baseline for Ukraine valid as of November 2023 (est. a total population of 33,000,000, excluding the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol), also utilized to underpin high level humanitarian coordination and planning by key UN actors and partners.

RETURN AND MOBILITY TRENDS

Map 1: Estimated number of returnees, by oblast

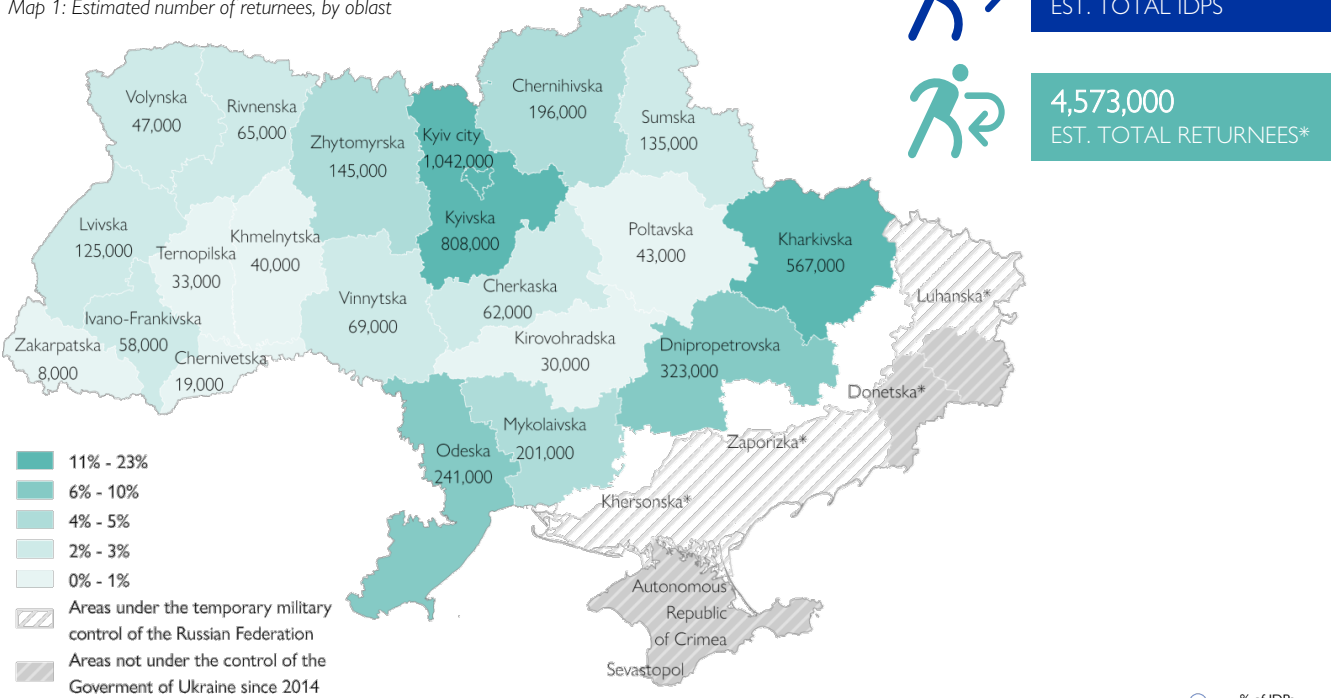
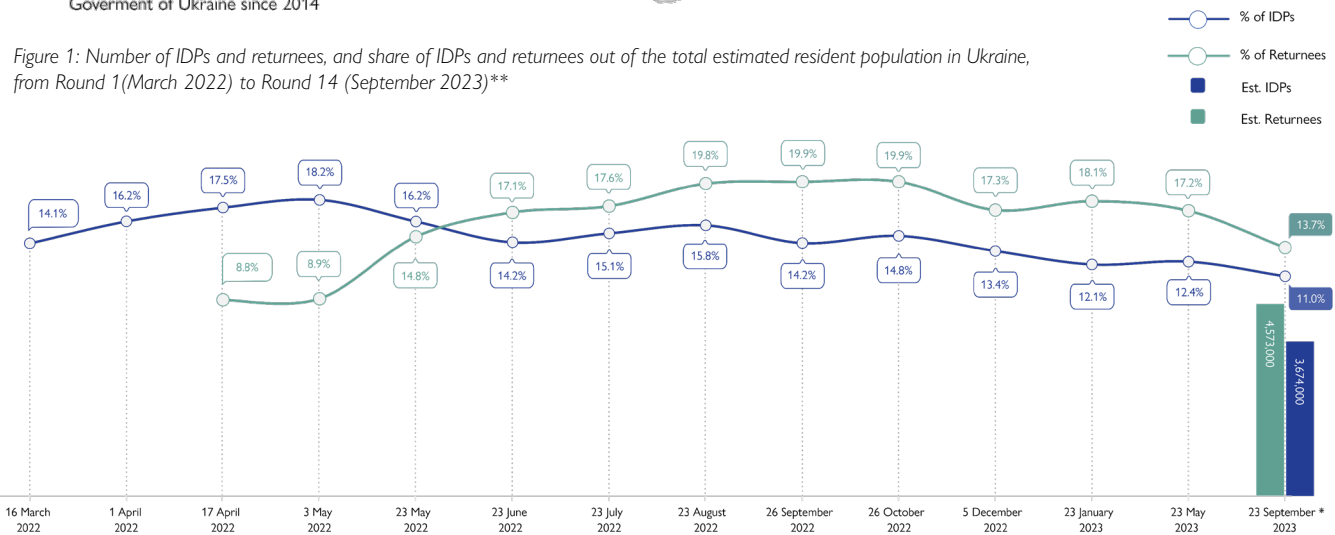


Figure 1: Number of IDPs and returnees, and share of IDPs and returnees out of the total estimated resident population in Ukraine, from Round 1 (March 2022) to Round 14 (September 2023)**



*For a definition of 'return' and 'returnee', please refer to page 1.

**Trends unaffected by the extrapolation are shown by the line chart and expressed in % of the total population in Ukraine. Estimated figures have been rounded to the nearest 1,000. Percentages in graphs have been rounded for visualization purposes. Decreases in the shares of displaced persons and returnees as a proportion of the total resident population in Ukraine observed from September 2022 may be explained by evolving population baseline; changes in phone network coverage and connectivity; and seasonal and other factors generating large movements of populations.

DEMOGRAPHICS

More than a half of returnees (56%) were female, a share similar to that of the displaced population (56%). Fifty-five per cent (55%) of returnees were aged 18-59, while 21 per cent were older people (aged 60 or older). There were approximately 621,000 school-aged children (5-17 years old) in households where all members were returnees.

Tables 1 and 2: Age and sex breakdown of the returnee population (only households containing members having experience of return)

Estimated group size	Female	Male	Total
Infants	3,000	2,000	5,000
1-4 years old	79,000	72,000	151,000
5-9 years old	111,000	150,000	261,000
10-17 years old	178,000	182,000	360,000
Adults 18-29	201,000	146,000	347,000
Adults 30-39	319,000	231,000	550,000
Adults 40-49	255,000	191,000	446,000
Adults 50-59	174,000	119,000	293,000
Elderly (60+)	397,000	244,000	641,000
Total	1,717,000	1,337,000	3,054,000*

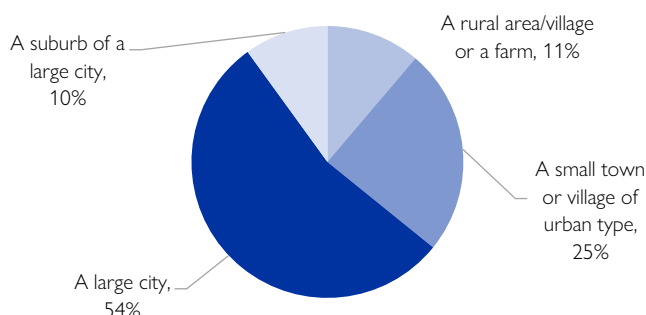
Estimated group size	Female	Male	Total
Infants	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
1-4 years old	4.6%	5.4%	4.9%
5-9 years old	6.5%	11.2%	8.5%
10-17 years old	10.3%	13.6%	11.7%
Adults 18-29	11.7%	10.9%	11.4%
Adults 30-39	18.6%	17.3%	18%
Adults 40-49	14.8%	14.3%	14.6%
Adults 50-59	10.2%	8.9%	9.6%
Elderly (60+)	23.1%	18.2%	21.1%
Total	56.2%	43.8%	100%

*The description of the characteristics of returnee household members is based solely on the data for those household members who, since 24 February 2022, were displaced from their place of habitual residence for at least 14 days due to the war, prior return (67% of all returnee households).

TYPE OF SETTLEMENT

The majority of returnees resided in large cities (54%), or in the suburbs of large cities (9%). Eleven per cent of returnee families returned to rural areas or rural villages (11%).

Figure 2: Percentage of returnee respondents by type of settlement



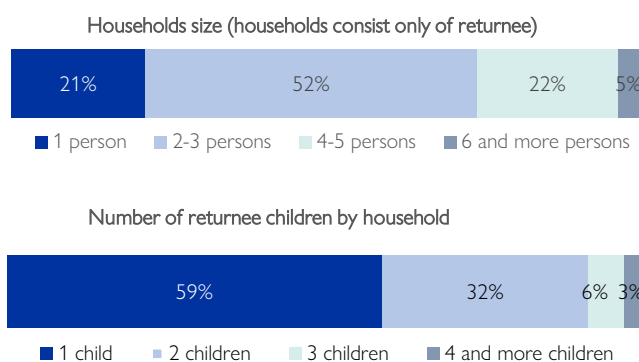
HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Returnee households reported having three household members on average. However, 27 per cent of returnee households had four or more members. The majority of returnee families had one child (62%) with a further 29 per cent reporting two children.

Figure 2: Returnee household size

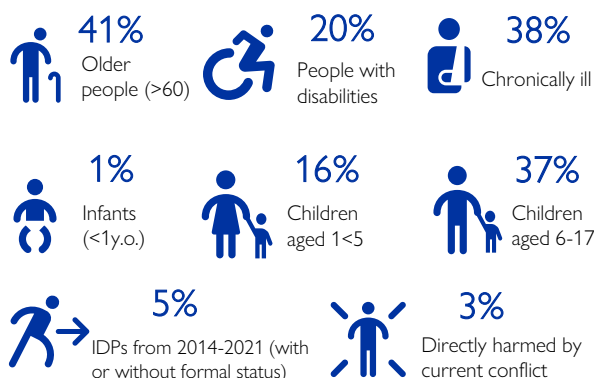


Figure 3: Household size of returnee households, and number of children among returnee households with children (households comprising solely of members having experience of return)



HOUSEHOLD VULNERABILITIES

Figure 4: Percentage of returnee households reporting vulnerable household members (only households containing members having experience of return)*



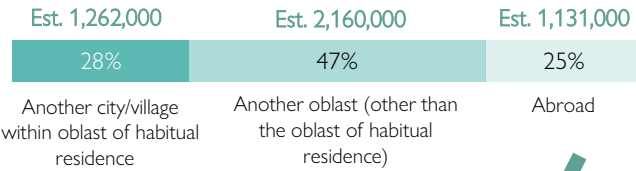
*The description of the characteristics of returnee household members is based solely on the data for those household members who, since 24 February 2022, were displaced from their place of habitual residence for at least 14 days due to the war, prior return (67% of all returnee households).

Notably, 41 per cent of returnee families contained at least one older person, aged 60 or above. A significant proportion of returnee households had at least one member who was chronically ill (38%), or were persons with disabilities (20%), and 16 per cent of households had a child under five or an infant.

RETURN DYNAMICS

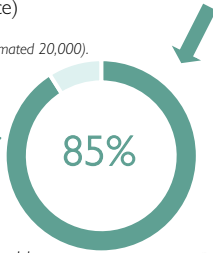
LAST PLACE OF DISPLACEMENT PRIOR RETURN

Figure 5: Displacement location of returnees, and share of returnees from abroad who returned from an EU country

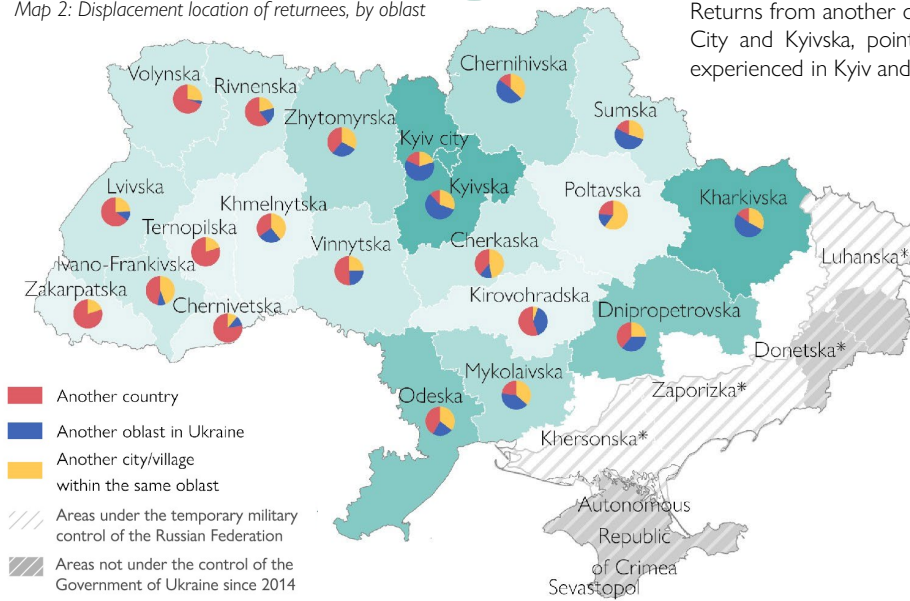


N.B.: *The subgroup of non-responders accounted for 1% (estimated 20,000).

Among returnees from abroad, 85 per cent returned from European Union countries.



Map 2: Displacement location of returnees, by oblast



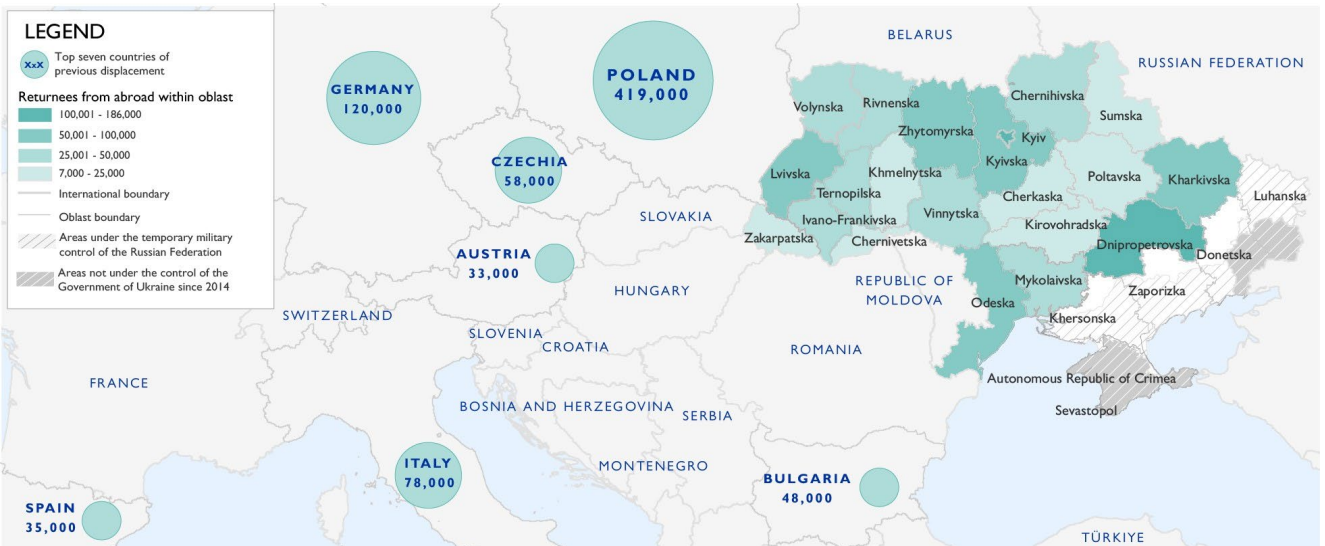
Nearly half of all returnees (47%) returned from another oblast within Ukraine as their most recent place of displacement, while the latest place of displacement was situated within their own oblast for 28 per cent of returnees. A further 25 per cent reported having returned from abroad. Additionally, over a quarter (28%) of all returnees stated that they had spent at least 14 days abroad since February 2022 because of the full-scale war.

Returnees from abroad – people most recently displaced abroad who returned to their place of habitual residence – were significantly more concentrated in western oblasts. Returns from within the same oblast (latest displacement location) were more prevalent in southern and central oblasts, notably Poltavaska, Cherkaska, Chernihivska, Mykolaivska and Odeska Oblasts. All of these oblasts contain territory which was previously occupied: the prevalence of intra-oblast displacement in these regions reflects a set of complex factors, including displacement to safer towns and cities within the same oblast, lack of resources, and fear of looting. Returns from another oblast in Ukraine were more prevalent in Kyiv City and Kyivska, pointing to the relative greater safety currently experienced in Kyiv and its surrounding region.

Returnees from abroad had primarily been displaced in Poland (38%), followed by Germany (11%), Italy (7%), Czechia (5%), Bulgaria (4%) and Spain (3%). For the first time since the launch of the General Population Survey, Spain was amongst the seven countries from which the highest number of returnees from abroad came back.

Among returnees who reported returning voluntarily from abroad to their place of habitual residence, the majority (88%) were female.

Map 3: Est. number of returnees from locations abroad, by oblast, and top seven countries from which returns have been reported



RETURN DYNAMICS

Table 3: Top 5 oblasts of return

Oblast	Share of returnees in Ukraine*	Est. returnees
Kyiv City	23%	1,042,000
Kyivska Oblast	18%	808,000
Kharkivska Oblast	12%	567,000
Dnipropetrovska Oblast	7%	323,000
Odeska Oblast	5%	241,000
Other oblasts	35%	1,592,000

Table 4: Top 5 oblasts of last displacement prior to return

Oblast**	Share of returnees in Ukraine*	Est. returnees
Lvivska Oblast	9%	418,000
Kyivska Oblast	8%	389,000
Kyiv City	8%	379,000
Vinnitska Oblast	7%	310,000
Kharkivska Oblast	6%	276,000
Other oblasts	62%	2,801,000

RETURN INTENTIONS

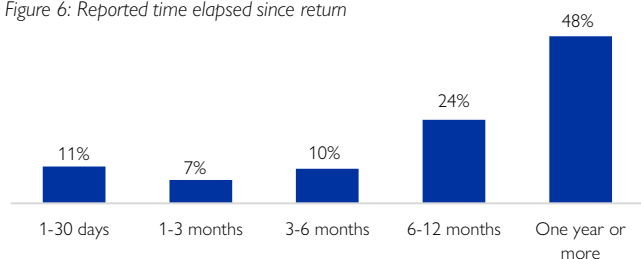
Est. **701,000** IDPs nation-wide are currently considering return to habitual residence

Amongst IDPs who considered leaving their current location (22% of IDPs, or 824,000 people), the vast majority **were thinking of returning to their area of origin (85% - est. 701,000 people)**. Of those considering return, **6 per cent were considering return within one month of the interview**, although it is worth noting that 60 per cent did not have a timeframe for return in mind.

TIME SINCE RETURN

326 days elapsed, on average, since return, following 580 days of war (as of September 2023)

Figure 6: Reported time elapsed since return



TIME IN DISPLACEMENT

138 average number of days in displacement before return (as of September 2023)

Returnees spent an average of four and a half months in displacement. Thirty-seven per cent (37%) of returnees reported **having been displaced for three months or longer**.

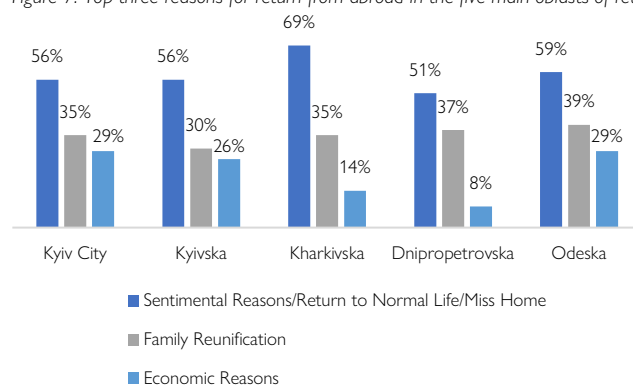
When comparing the top five oblasts of return, returnees whose latest place of displacement was located in Kharkivska Oblast had, on average, been displaced the longest (215 days) prior to return. The shortest average displacement duration in the last place of displacement was identified in Kyivska Oblast (98 days). Among all oblasts of return, the longest average time of displacement was experienced by those who returned to Mykolaivska Oblast (222 days).

Returnees whose last place of displacement had been abroad reported, on average, having been displaced longer (175 days) than individuals who were displaced within Ukraine prior to return (125).

REASONS FOR RETURN FROM ABROAD

Among respondents who returned from abroad, the majority cited motivations related to sentimental reasons/to resume a normal life (reported by 52% of respondents), followed by family reunification (36%), economic and livelihood reasons (19%) and perceptions of improved security in locations of return (11%). The reasons for return were broadly similar across the main oblasts of return, although lower proportions of returns in Kharkivska and Dnipropetrovska Oblasts were motivated by economic reasons, relative to other oblasts.

Figure 7: Top three reasons for return from abroad in the five main oblasts of return

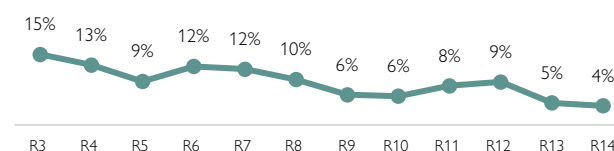


There were noticeable differences between male and female respondents: higher shares of men returned from abroad because they missed their home and to find economic opportunities, while women were more likely to report having returned for family reunification reasons.

RE-DISPLACEMENT INTENTIONS

Among all returnees, **88 per cent intended to stay in their current location in the immediate future**, while **4 per cent were considering leaving their homes again**. The share of returnees considering relocation has progressively decreased, from a high of 15 per cent identified in R3 (April 2022). A further 7 per cent, equivalent to est. 334,000 returnees, would consider leaving if the situation changed.

Figure 8: Share of returnees considering relocation from Round 3 (April 2022) to Round 14 (September 2023)



CROSSING BACK FROM ABROAD

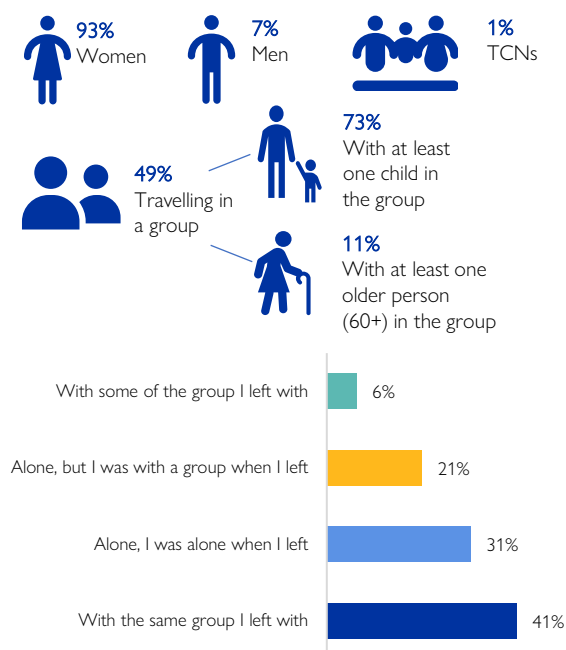
REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Since mid-April 2022, IOM DTM has conducted surveys with persons crossing back to Ukraine from neighbouring countries to improve the understanding of their profiles, displacement patterns, intentions, needs and reasons.* **In the third quarter of 2023, 8,339 adults were surveyed in border areas and transit places of Hungary, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Slovakia: about 99 per cent of them were Ukrainians, and 1 per cent were Third-Country Nationals (TCNs).** Additionally, 224 surveys were collected at border crossing points in Latvia with Ukrainians who intended to transit through the Russian Federation to non-governmental controlled areas in Ukraine. This section focuses on Ukrainians surveyed in the neighbouring countries (8,226), with results weighted by the number of border crossings into Ukraine from each country in the same period.

*For more information on the work of the DTM in Ukraine's neighboring countries, as well as for further analysis, please visit [Ukraine Crisis Response](#)

DEMOGRAPHICS AND GROUP COMPOSITION

Figure 9: Group composition of migrants crossing back to Ukraine



The majority of Ukrainian respondents were women (93%). On average, women were younger than men. Three quarters (74%) of female respondents were below 50 years old compared to 42 per cent of men. Approximately 52 per cent of respondents primarily resided in the country where the survey was conducted while being outside of Ukraine. On average, they stayed for a duration of 6 months before crossing back. The other countries where respondents spent the most time on average were Poland (30%), Germany (12%), and Hungary (9%). The top 5 nationalities among the 113 TCNs surveyed while crossing back were: India (49% of all TCNs), Nigeria (7%), Russian Federation (7%), France (6%), and Tajikistan (4%). Out of all TCNs, 68 per cent were men and 32 per cent were women.

ORIGINS AND DESTINATIONS

Table 5: top 7 oblasts of origin and intended oblast of destination among Ukrainians displaced abroad and returning to Ukraine

Oblast of origin	Share of respondents	Oblast of destination	Share of respondents
Kyiv City	19%	Odeska	22%
Dnipropetrovska	13%	Kyiv City	16%
Odeska	11%	Zakarpatska	13%
Zaporizka	10%	Dnipropetrovska	7%
Kharkivska	9%	Kharkivska	4%
Zakarpatska	4%	Vinnytska	4%
Lvivska	4%	Mykolaivska	4%
Other	30%	Other	30%

The proportion of respondents originating from each oblast in Ukraine varied widely among the respondents in neighbouring countries, however, overall, more than half (53%) of respondents resided in just **four** oblasts prior to being displaced from Ukraine: the city of **Kyiv (19%), Dnipropetrovska (13%), Odeska (11%), and Zaporizka (10%)**. Nearly all respondents (90%) expressed their intention to return to their oblast of origin upon re-entry to Ukraine. Among those planning to reach another oblast, reasons included concerns about security in their place of origin, having their family displaced to another area, knowledge of damage or destruction to their homes, or knowledge that their homes are occupied.

INTENTIONS

Figure 10: Intended length of visit when crossing back



Almost half of those surveyed crossing back (49%) were going to Ukraine for a short visit (one month or less), while 37 per cent expressed their intention to stay (more than a month), and 15 per cent remained uncertain about their plans. Among respondents, men were more likely to indicate their intention to stay (47%) compared to women (36%). **The main reason to go to Ukraine, whether for short visits or returns, was to meet family.** This reason was cited by 61 per cent of those on short visits and 10 per cent of those planning to return. Additionally, 27 per cent of those on short visits aimed to obtain or renew identity documents (such as biometric passports, diplomas, or driving licenses), while 27 per cent intended to attend medical appointments in Ukraine.

NEEDS

The four most reported immediate needs among individuals crossing back into Ukraine were financial support (25%), health services (18%), personal safety & security (13%), and general information (10%).

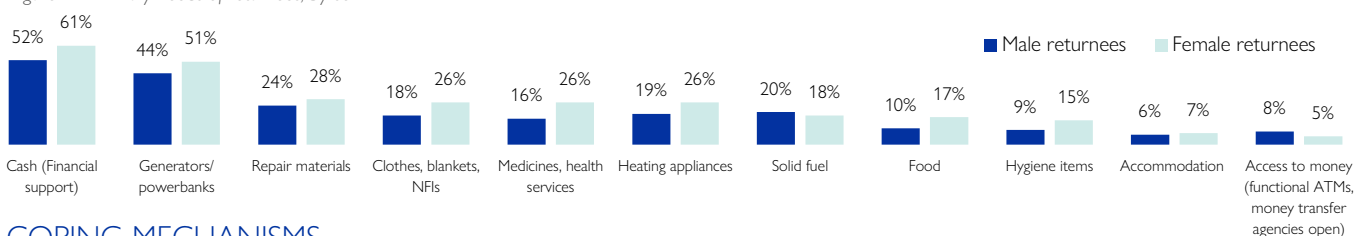
Additionally, 10 per cent of participants reported experiencing instances of unfair treatment or discrimination while living abroad.

RETURNEE NEEDS OVER TIME

Households that return from displacement continue to have displacement-related vulnerabilities and needs. The most critical need of returnees is financial assistance (cash support), with more than half (58%) expressing such a need.

Priority needs reflect possible winter-related vulnerabilities present among the returnee population. Returnees were notably more likely to identify the need for generators and power-banks than those who had not been displaced, perhaps reflecting the volume of returns to areas heavily impacted by attacks on energy infrastructure. Indeed, Odeska (62%), Mykolaiivska (56%) and Donetsk (53%) Oblasts were the regions where the need for power banks was most prevalent. Returnees were also more likely to report a need for clothes, blankets and other NFIs, as well as heating appliances, compared with the non-displaced population. The need for solid fuel was lowest among returnees, compared to other groups, which might reflect the fact that over half of all returnees reside in a large city.

Figure 11: Primary needs of returnees, by sex



COPING MECHANISMS

Figure 12: Share of returnees who reported adopting coping mechanism to meet basic needs in the last 30 days, from Round 9 (August 2023) to Round 14 (September 2023)

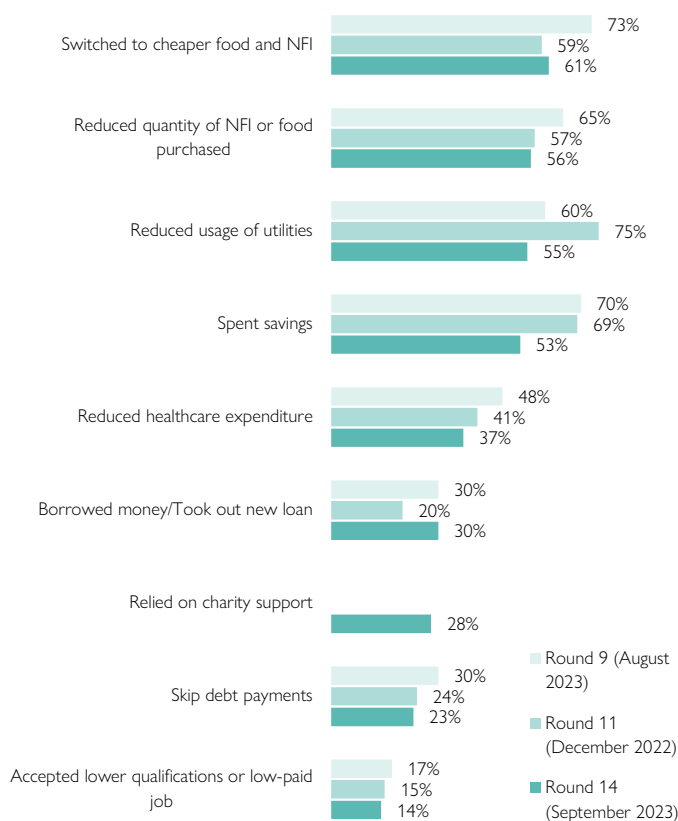


Table 6: Share of respondents indicating needs, by displacement status

Need Category	IDPs	Returnees	Non-displaced
Cash (Financial support)	74%	58%	59%
Generators and power-banks	57%	49%	34%
Repair materials	20%	27%	26%
Clothes, blankets, and other NFIs	46%	24%	18%
Heating appliances	36%	24%	17%
Solid fuel for heating	23%	19%	25%
Food	27%	15%	14%
Medicines and health services	39%	13%	27%
Hygiene items	32%	13%	10%
Accommodation	18%	7%	4%
Access to money (functional ATMs, money transfer agencies open)	10%	6%	7%

Coping mechanisms are strategies employed by households unable to meet basic needs. The presence of coping mechanisms may indicate a prevalence of vulnerabilities and increased exposure to risk. Reduced quality and quantity of food and non-food items as well as reduced usage of utilities were among the most common coping strategies used among returnees in the thirty days prior to the interview.

When compared to IDP (48%) and non-displaced (46%) households, a larger share of returnee households (53%) indicated having exhausted their savings.

Female returnees were significantly more likely than male respondents to report changes in household consumption (food, non-food and utilities), and less likely to believe that the current household income was sufficient to cover basic needs (62% compared with 72% of male returnee respondents). Conversely, male returnees were marginally more likely to report selling household goods or assets and selling or renting an owned apartment or house as a coping strategy. Male returnees were notably more likely to report a reliance on charity support (36% compared with 26% of female returnees).

Returnees in large cities (72%) or their suburbs (66%) were significantly more likely to report sufficient income to cover basic needs than those in small towns (58%) or rural areas (54%). Returnees in rural areas were also more likely to report having taken a loan or borrowed money in the last 30 days to meet basic needs (38%, compared with 26% of returnees in large cities). Reliance on charity support was also most commonly reported by returnees in rural areas (44% compared with 22% of returnees in large cities).

SECTOR SPOTLIGHT: WINTERISATION

With the winter season approaching, the needs of affected populations will shift. Heating, home insulation and availability of solid fuel will come into greater focus as the cold weather takes hold. Round 14 of the General Population Survey added multiple indicators to better capture needs for winter.

WINTER PREPAREDNESS AND RELOCATION

The vast majority of returnee respondents (91%) indicated that their home was adequately set up for winter. The share of returnees who reported their homes as being suitable to live during winter was higher in Kyiv (95%) and West (94%) macro-regions compared to South (86%) and East (89%) macro-regions.

In 15 of 20 oblasts in Ukraine, a significantly smaller share of returnee respondents reported their homes as suitable than non-displaced respondents – by up to fifteen percentage points (Khersonska) and ten percentage points (in Donetsk and Mykolaivska Oblasts). This suggests that returnee households face higher exposure to shocks driven by harsh winter conditions.

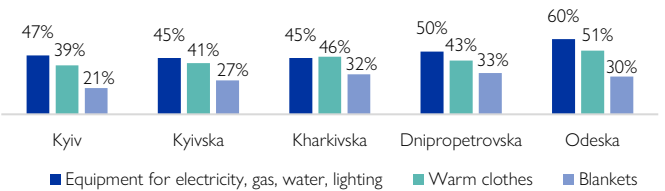
Unsurprisingly, and similarly to displaced persons, returnees living in rural areas were less likely to reside in housing reported as suitable for winter (83%) than those living in large cities and suburbs (93%).

The upcoming winter season remains a concern to returnee populations, with 44 per cent of returnees who were considering relocation indicating that the upcoming winter was a significant factor for their planning to leave – 6 percentage points more than the share of IDPs (38%). However, 25 per cent of returnees present in Kyiv City reported that the upcoming winter was a significant motivating factor, a finding consistent with the fact that a higher share of returnees in Kyiv were more adequately equipped to face winter, but highlighting shelter vulnerabilities of returnees who might not have the resources for repair or displacement in other oblasts, particularly Odeska Oblast (60%) and Kharkivska Oblast (57%).

Asked about the remaining needs to prepare their household for winter, returnees noted that improvements or repairs would be needed to ensure preparedness for winter, in particular by having additional walls built (46%), windows installed (44%) and roofs fixed (39%) - a possible nod to residential destruction and damage caused by the war.

Returnees reported primarily needing power, heating, lighting and water equipment and supply (47% of returnees surveyed) and warm clothes (44%) to improve their family's resilience during the winter. In contrast to IDPs (49%), a smaller rate of returnees (27%) reported needing blankets, while a relatively higher share (23%, compared to 16% of IDPs) related the need for construction materials, primarily in southern (Mykolaivska, Khersonska) and eastern (Donetska) oblasts .

Figure 13: Top three needs of returnees for the winter in the five oblasts of return, by share of returnees reporting the need in each oblast



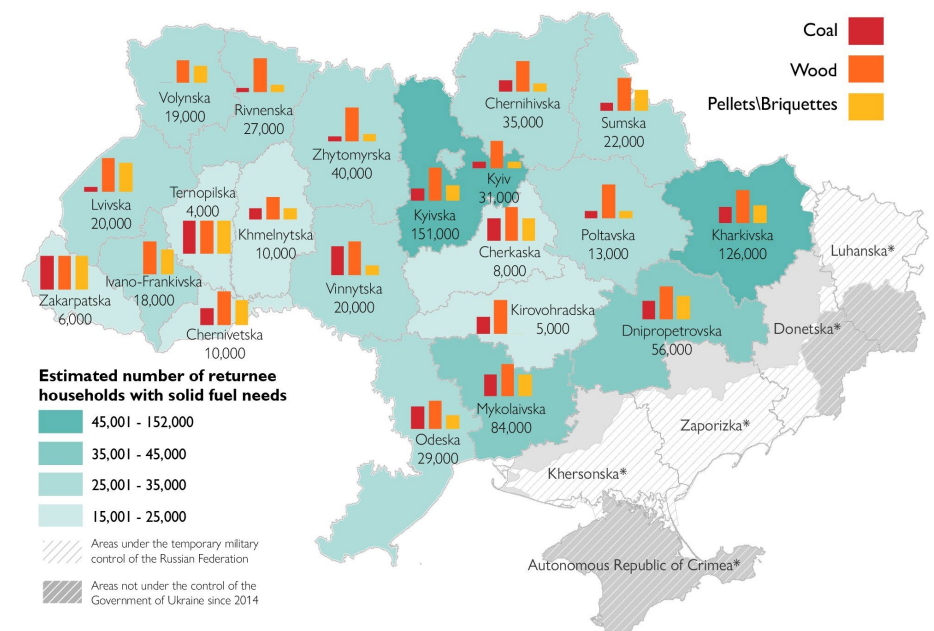
HEATING FUEL

Amongst respondents who reported lacking solid fuel for heating (23% of IDPs, 19% of returnees and 25% of non-displaced), almost all IDP (95%), returnee (95%) and non-displaced (94%) respondents specified using wood to heat their home. Pellets or briquettes (mentioned by 52% of IDPs, 53% of returnees and 50% of non-IDPs) are another notable heating source, while coal is used by a relatively smaller share of respondents requiring heating fuel.

Fuels used by surveyed households to heat their homes varied greatly from one macro-region to the next. Only 9 per cent of respondents living in Kyiv city, for instance, used coal as heating fuel, compared to 71 per cent of respondents in the South macro-region. Returnee homes in the South (59%) and East (58%) macro-regions were more likely to be heated through pellets and briquettes.

The oblasts where the largest numbers of returnees reported lacking solid fuel for heating were Kyivska (151,000), Kharkivska (126,000) and Mykolaivska (84,000) Oblasts. Majority of returnees (69%) reported not having enough funds to cover fuel costs throughout winter. Mykolaivska (83%), Donetsk (82%), Kharkivska (81%) and Khersonska (77%) hosted the largest shares of returnees without enough savings to pay for fuel. Although slightly lower, the share of non-displaced respondents who could not afford fuel for winter is also significant (66%).

Map 4: Est. number of returnee households with solid fuel needs for heating and main solid fuels needed, by oblast



RETURN AS A DURABLE SOLUTION: THE IASC CRITERIA

Supporting returnees in achieving durable solutions to displacement necessitates a comprehensive analysis of their needs, vulnerabilities, and the challenges they face in their specific context. This section offers an initial overview of these challenges based on the eight criteria established by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons. IOM has developed a set of questions that provide a preliminary assessment of these criteria in the Ukrainian context. The section focuses on two subgroups: returnees who reported currently considering re-displacement (or relocation) and those intending to stay in their habitual place of residence, who can be considered on a **return as a durable solutions pathway**.

Est. 4M (88%) returnees are on a durable solutions pathway in Ukraine, actively reintegrating and intending to stay.

NOTE: As a key follow up to the *Data for Solutions* Symposium organized by IOM under the aegis of the United Nations Resident Coordinator's office in Ukraine (RCO), a Roadmap to a Joint Analytical Framework on Durable Solutions to Internal displacement in Ukraine is under development. Once the joint framework is developed, IOM shall include the collectively agreed-upon indicators in the General Population Survey. See Symposium report and recommendations [here](#).

This round of the General Population Survey included indicators relating to housing, land, and property (HLP) as well as participation in public affairs, adapted to the Ukrainian context, key results of which may be found on page 10.

The primary concerns for all returnees revolved around safety and security, family reunification, participation in public affairs and basic expenses. In comparison, issues with services and food accessibility and access to documentation were less prevalent. Reservations relating to family separation, instances of safety and security incidents and access to livelihoods were significantly more pronounced amongst returnees considering re-displacement, suggesting that decision-making on re-displacement or relocation may primarily be related to these factors. These concerns were less pronounced among those who did not intend to relocate, which could explain their decision not to consider relocation.

Figure 14: Returnee self-assessment according to IASC DS framework criteria (national level)



*N.B. Includes those respondents who experienced family separation during the war (47% of the entire sample and 63% of those who considering relocation).

Respondents were asked to rate their ability to access services and goods, as well as to participate in their community's life on a scale from 0 (not easy at all to access) to 10 (very easy to access), or the perceived frequency of security incidents on a scale ranging from 0 (never) to 10 (always). Family unity was assessed using two separate questions to identify the share of displaced households experiencing separation from other members due to the war and further assess if they were reunited. For analysis and reporting purposes, for all indicators, responses have been grouped into three categories translating responses to low (points from 10 to 6), medium (point 5), and high (points from 4 to 1) challenges met by respondents (or low/medium/high frequency of security incidents for the safety and security indicator).

RETURN AS A DURABLE SOLUTION: THE IASC CRITERIA

This section offers an in-depth analysis of the collected data pertaining to each criterion outlined in the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions* for **all returnee respondents**.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

 64% of all returnees reported frequently experiencing security incidents related to the ongoing war.

Respondents who returned to the East and South macro-regions reported a higher occurrence of serious security incidents (68% and 67% respectively). The highest share of returnees reporting experiencing serious security incidents was identified in Zaporizka (85%) Oblast. The other oblasts with the highest share of returnee respondents noting security incidents were Khersonska (77%), Chernihivska (76%), Khmelnytska (75%), and Donetska (70%) Oblasts.

Among all returnees, female respondents more frequently reported difficulties with security compared to male respondents (66% and 59% respectively). This may be attributed to a fear of reporting incidents. Similarly, returnees living in large cities, suburbs, and urban villages reported experiencing a higher frequency of security incidents (65%, 66%, and 64% respectively) compared with returnees living in rural areas (55%).

ACCESS TO LIVELIHOODS

Fifteen per cent (15%) of returnees indicated facing obstacles with meeting essential expenses, compared to 27 per cent of IDP respondents. Returnees in Centre and East macro-regions (22% and 20% respectively) more frequently reported the inability to cover basic expenses. Among oblasts, Khersonska and Kirovohradska reported the highest shares of returnees who reported being unable to cover basic expenses (31% each).

Returnees in rural areas (26%) were more likely to express difficulty in meeting basic expenses compared those in more urbanized areas such as a large city (12%). Conversely, female and male returnees reported a similar perception of difficulty covering basic expenses (14% for male respondents and 16% for female respondents).

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

Of all returnees, 48 per cent were separated from their families due to the war, while in displacement. At the time of the survey, almost half of them had not yet been reunited with any of their family members (21%). Notably, returnees who considered leaving their place of residence (33%) were more likely than those who had not considered leaving (62%) to report that they had not been reunited with any of their family members.

The eastern region of the country reported the lowest rate of reunification for returnees compared to other regions (53% has been reunited with all of their family). Conversely, returnees in Kyiv City (69%) and the western and northern regions (68% each) reported the highest rate of reunification with all family members. Among oblasts, returnees based in Ivano-Frankivska reported the lowest rate of those who have been reunited with all of their family members (25%). This was followed by Kharkivska (43%) and Mykolaivska (49%) Oblasts.

*The analysis and survey reflect seven out of the eight IASC Durable Solutions criteria, as it was deemed that timing was not yet fit for assessing the returnee population access to effective remedies and justice (Criterion #8).

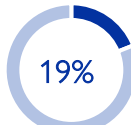
ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING

Overall, only 4 per cent of all returnees reported experiencing difficulties in accessing basic services (clean water, sanitation, health care, schooling). The highest share among returnees was identified in the South macro-region (9%).

Additionally, 4 per cent of all the returnees said they had problems accessing food for themselves and their families. Here, the highest share among returnees was identified in the East macro-region (7%).

A minor share (7%) of all returnees reported problems associated with accessing adequate accommodation, with the issue being most prevalent in South macro-region (12%). Notably, returnee respondents who intended to leave reported a higher frequency of difficulty when accessing all three indicators, compared to returnees with other intentions.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

 19% of all returnees reported it was very difficult for them to participate in public affairs and in resolving community issues activities in their location.

The share of those who reported difficulty participating in public affairs was higher among returnees considering relocation (24% compared to 19% who planned to remain in their return location).

Among all returnees, the highest proportion of respondents claiming problems with participating in public affairs was most prominent among those residing in East and South macro-regions (22% and 21% respectively). This trend was most evident in Donetska (40%) and Khersonska (39%) Oblasts.

Slight differences were found between male and female returnees who reported experiencing serious difficulties with involvement in public affairs, with females reporting higher incidents compared to men (20% female reporting difficult, compared to 16% males).

Differences were also noted when analyzing by settlement type, with those located further from the urban centre increasingly finding it more difficult to participate (23% reporting exclusion in small towns, compared to 16% in large cities). Barriers to participation challenge reintegration, encouraging some returnees to relocate as a result.

DOCUMENTATION

Two per cent (2%) of returnees indicated problems associated with accessing documentation. Notably, this proportion of respondents reporting documentation difficulties was doubled among returnees intending to leave (4%).

A higher share of returnees among respondents residing in South macro-region mentioned problems accessing documentation (4%). This issue was mentioned to a higher extent by returnees residing in rural areas (4% of returnees interviewed).

Among oblasts, returnees in Khersonska reported the greatest difficulty with accessing important documents (12%). This was followed by Vinnytska (8%) and Donetska (8%) Oblasts.

DURABLE SOLUTIONS SPOTLIGHT: PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

ENGAGEMENT

A greater share of returnees (62%) reported facing little to no challenges in **engaging in public affairs and social events** in comparison to IDP and non-IDP respondents. However, 19 per cent of returnees still cited challenges to participation (Figure 15).

While the majority of returnees did not face obstacles to participate in public affairs, only a small share actually did engage in public affairs, as shown in Figure 17. Regardless of the type of engagement (environmental protection, education, sports and culture, etc), over 80 per cent of respondents reported not at all participating (this was also true of IDP and non-displaced respondents). However, returnees reported greater participation across all types of engagement. Schooling and education were the sector with the highest level of engagement (7% of returnees stated great engagement in this sector). By contrast, returnees were least likely to report being engaged in sports, arts or cultural activities (2%).

The intention to leave or remain within the current location of residence appears to impact returnees' rate of participation in public affairs: 24 per cent of returnees considering re-displacement reported facing significant challenges to participate in public affairs, a substantially lower share than returnees who planned to integrate in their return location (19%). This could be due to returnees considering themselves as temporary residents, and therefore waiting to establish longer-term involvement in their final destination.

Figure 15: Share of respondents reporting high difficulty participating in public affairs in their current location, by respondent profile



A lack of participation in public affairs was most commonly reported by returnees on the durable solutions pathway currently residing in the eastern and southern oblasts of Ukraine. Specifically, Donetsk Oblast had the highest proportion of non-participation, with 40 per cent of surveyed returnees reporting a low self-assessed ability to participate in public affairs. This was followed by Khersonska (39%), and Chernivetska (29%). Conversely, returnees in Centre and West macro-regions (73% each) reported the greatest ability to participate in public affairs. Similarly, the three oblasts where the highest shares of returnees reporting high participation were Volynska (93%), Rivnenska (86%), and Ternopilska (78%) Oblasts, all located in West macro-region.

Among returnee respondents, women identified as slightly less able to participate in public affairs than men (60% of female respondents able to participate overall, compared to 66% of male respondents).

The self-assessed ability to participate in public affairs appears to be impacted by the respondents' settlement type. Sixteen per cent located in large cities found it difficult to participate, in comparison to 22 per cent of those located in highly rural areas. Returnees located in small towns and villages accounted for the plurality of those unable to engage in public affairs at 23 per cent.

Figure 16: Share of respondents reporting participating in public affairs, by current settlement type



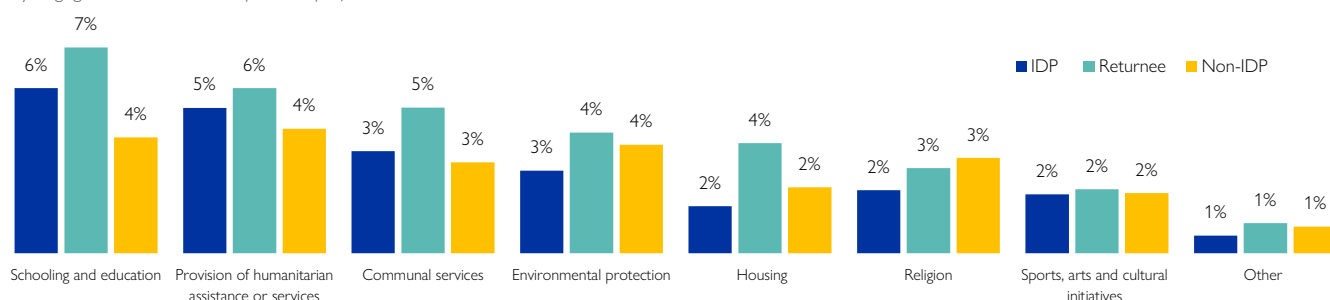
PERCEIVED INFLUENCE



Nearly two fifths of returnees reported that they had no influence on their community's decision-making

Nearly two-fifths of returnees on the durable solutions pathway (39%) reported low self-assessed influence in decision-making within their community, although this share was lower than IDPs (54%) and non-displaced (50%) respondents. For returnees, organizations or groups which returnees reported having the lowest influence in are international organizations (3%), followed by the church (5%).

Figure 17: Share of respondents indicating being highly engaged in public affairs, by engagement sector and respondent profile



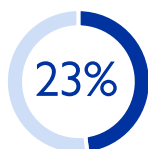
TRUST AMONG POPULATION GROUPS

Consistent with IDP and non-IDP population groups, family members and relatives were cited as the most-trustworthy, with 86 per cent of returnees trusting family members 'to a great extent'. This was followed by friends, considered as the second most-trustworthy group (53%). Similarly, across all population groups, the least trustworthy group was the Church, with 28 per cent of returnees claiming complete mistrust, followed by IDPs and non-IDPs (24% each claiming no trust). Complete lack of or very little trust in the Church among returnees was most common in Kyiv (55%) and Centre (55%) macro-regions. Mistrust in local authorities was also high among returnees: 21 per cent stated having no trust at all- with highest shares reported in North (25%) and South (23%) macro-regions.

DURABLE SOLUTIONS SPOTLIGHT: HOUSING, LAND, AND PROPERTY (HLP)

HOUSING RESTORATION AND COMPENSATION NEEDS

Monitoring returnees' access to housing, land a property rights and availability of housing restoration mechanism is crucial in supporting returnees achieve durable, sustainable return solutions.



23% of returnees self-reported that their households owned a house/apartment that was damaged or destroyed since the full-scale invasion of February 2022.

The share of returnees who indicated owning a house or apartment which was damaged or destroyed during the war was significantly lower share than IDPs (47%) but much larger proportion than non-displaced residents (8%). Khersonska (69%), Mykolaivska (48%), Kharkivska (46%) and Donetsk (40%) Oblasts hosted the largest percentages of returnees who reported owning destroyed or damaged housing, demonstrating the importance of housing compensation and rehabilitation planning to achieve durable solutions and address housing-related vulnerabilities of returnees.

MECHANISMS TO RESTORE HOUSING



30% Of returnees whose homes were damaged or destroyed since the full-scale invasion of February 2022 confirmed receiving assistance, including new housing, repairs to existing housing, compensation, or other forms of assistance.

On 10 May 2023, the Ukrainian state launched the housing restoration “eVidnovlenia” programme to provide financial assistance from the state for the repair and compensation of housing units affected as a result of the war. Eighty per cent of returnees who owned damaged or destroyed housing reported being aware of the programme. Amongst oblasts with the largest numbers of returnees, a lower share of returnees in Dnipropetrovska (66%) were aware of the programme compared to other oblasts. Further, returnees living in small towns or urban-type villages were slightly less aware of the eVidnovlenia initiative (10 percentage points difference).

In total, 37 per cent of returnees (a share similar to IDPs) attempted to apply for the programme, most of whom indicated being originally from East macro-region and the city of Kyiv. Seventeen per cent of returnees who applied reported that they had received compensation (compared to 6% of IDPs)*. As highlighted in Figure 24 and Figure 25, the main factors behind returnees' not applying for the mechanism or receiving compensation lied mainly with issues regarding their application, because they did not qualify, or because they made repairs to their homes themselves. While a minimal share of returnees (6%) indicated that the location of their home in areas under temporary military control of the RF was the key reason why they did not apply to the programme or receive compensation, this may be explained by the fact that assessments were not conducted in such areas, with actual figures possibly being higher.

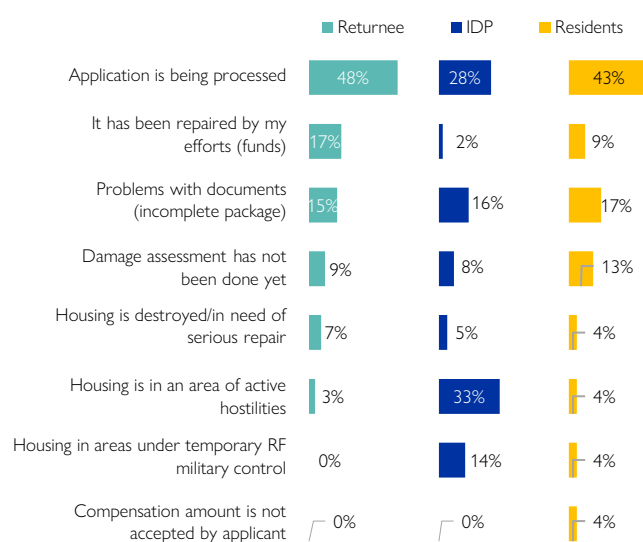
*The response rate represents respondents' perception of receiving assistance, including counselling assistance. These figures are based on individual perceptions and actual applicant and recipient rates may be different.

BARRIERS TO HOUSING COMPENSATION

The plurality of returnees had not received housing compensation mechanisms primarily because of issues relating to their application (still in process, in complete documentation, application rejected) or they repaired their house themselves.

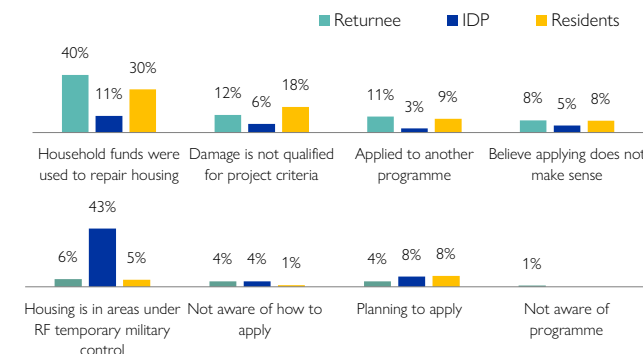
The vast majority (90%) of returnees indicated having official documents confirming ownership of damaged or destroyed housing. Yet, 15 per cent of returnees stated that their claims to residential house damage compensation had not been resolved due to documentation issues, including incomplete document packages or invalid documents, and 12 per cent of returnees reported that their application had been rejected.

Figure 24: Reason for not receiving housing compensation, by respondent profile



The main reasons for which returnees did not apply for the state compensation programme for affected housing were returnees making repairs to their homes themselves with their own funds, damage to their homes not qualifying, and respondent having applied to a different programme. These were similar to reasons given by non-displaced respondents but diverged from reasons provided by IDPs.

Figure 25: Reason for not participating in the housing compensation mechanism, by respondent profile



ESTIMATED POPULATION BY DISPLACEMENT STATUS

<i>Oblast</i>	Estimated <i>de facto</i> IDPs present	Estimated returnee pop. present
Cherkaska	121,000	62,000
Chernihivska	68,000	196,000
Chernivetska	68,000	19,000
Dnipropetrovska	498,000	323,000
Ivano-Frankivska	88,000	58,000
Kharkivska	494,000	567,000
Khmelnyska	70,000	40,000
Kirovohradska	83,000	30,000
Kyiv	363,000	1,042,000
Kyivska	285,000	808,000
Lvivska	160,000	125,000
Mykolaivska	111,000	201,000
Odeska	240,000	241,000
Poltavska	206,000	43,000
Rivnenska	37,000	65,000
Sumska	78,000	135,000
Ternopilska	57,000	33,000
Vinnyska	110,000	69,000
Volynska	29,000	47,000
Zakarpatska	85,000	8,000
Zhytomyrska	72,000	145,000
<i>Donetska*</i>	<i>88,000</i>	<i>120,000</i>
<i>Zaporizka*</i>	<i>220,000</i>	<i>113,000</i>
<i>Luhanska*</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
<i>Khersonska*</i>	<i>23,000</i>	<i>68,000</i>
Residence location unknown (in Ukraine)**	20,000	15,000
Total population	3,674,000	4,573,000

* Estimates in Donetska, Zaporizka, Luhanska and Khersonska Oblasts (blue text) are likely under-represented due to limited coverage of government-controlled areas only, as well as the limited number of respondents reached through the random digit dial.

** Respondents currently on short term trips outside of places of current residence (away from residence, away from location of displacement)

A BRIEF NOTE ON THE METHODOLOGY

The data presented in this report was commissioned by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and collected by Multicultural Insights through phone-based interviews with 20,000 randomly selected respondents per round using the computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) method, and a random digit dial (RDD) approach, with an overall sample error of 0.69% [CL95%]. Round 14 of data collection was completed between 3 and 25 September 2023. The survey included all of Ukraine, excluding the Crimean Peninsula and the areas of Donetska, Luhanska, Khersonska, and Zaporizka Oblasts under the temporary military control of the Russian Federation where phone coverage by Ukrainian operators is not available. All interviews were anonymous, and respondents were asked for consent before starting the interview. A total of 51 interviewers were employed in this work. The team consisted of male and female interviewers and the interviews were conducted in Ukrainian (87%) and Russian languages (13%), with language selection by preference of each respondent.

Limitations: The exact proportion of the excluded populations is unknown, and certain considerations are to be made when interpreting results. Those currently residing outside the territory of Ukraine were not interviewed, following active exclusion. Population estimates assume that minors (those under 18 years old) are accompanied by their adult parents or guardians. The sample frame is limited to adults that use mobile phones. It is unknown if all phone networks were fully functional across the entire territory of Ukraine for the entire period of the survey; therefore, some numbers may have had a higher probability of receiving calls than others. Residents of areas with a high level of civilian infrastructure damage may have a lower representation among the sample – one may assume the needs in the report are skewed towards under-reporting. People residing in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (ARC) or the NGCA Donetsk and Luhansk were not among the people surveyed/ were not included in the survey. For further details on the methodology and sampling design, please refer to the full Methodological Note (publication forthcoming).

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The information contained in this report is for general information purposes only. The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the report do not imply expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries. Unless noted otherwise, data cited in this report were compiled from Round 14 of the General Population Survey, dated as of September 25, 2023. All numbers are rounded for ease of use. Data collection was facilitated by Multicultural Insights.



IOM UKRAINE