

This factsheet provides an overview of data from Round 7 of the Conditions of Return Assessment (CoRA), which was conducted in February - March 2024 in 858 locations across 284 hromadas and 23 oblasts. For access to the full report and operational dataset, please contact DTMUkraine@iom.int.¹

CONTEXT

As of 27 December 2023, IOM estimates that around 3,689,000 people remained internally displaced in Ukraine while UNHCR indicates that further 5,974,800 people were displaced abroad.^{2,3} IOM estimates that, as of 27 December 2023, approximately 4,455,000 people have returned spontaneously to their place of habitual residence in Ukraine following a period of displacement of at least two weeks (internal displacement or cross-border). Of these, 26 per cent have returned from abroad.⁴

To inform targeted interventions aimed at alleviating the vulnerability that stems from poor structural and social conditions in areas of return, the Conditions of Return Assessment (CoRA) provides granular data on where returns are occurring, the ways in which those who have returned are most vulnerable and why.

Figure 1: Coverage of the Conditions of Return Assessment Round 7



RETURNS TO SEVERE CONDITIONS

A substantial portion of areas of return (104 hromadas, or 37% of assessed hromadas) witnessed the return of 40-60 per cent of people displaced from these hromadas since February 2022. Additionally, in 61 and 15 hromadas, respectively, 60-80 per cent and 80-100 per cent of formerly displaced people had returned. Significantly, Khersonska Oblast has shifted from the lowest proportionate recorded rate of return, to one of the highest since the previous round. The highest return rates were observed in Kyivska, Chernihivska, Dnipropetrovska and Mykolaivska Oblasts.

The majority of locations to which formerly displaced persons returned presented a score of 'Medium Severity', for all drivers of return. People appear to be returning to areas still deemed unsafe and with limited employment opportunities, indicating the significance of sentimental returns, and possible fatigue attached to protracted displacement, over two years since the February 2022 invasion. The protracted nature of displacement has been compounded by a lack of financial means, which have become more apparent following the recent impact of the changes to the [IDP living allowance](#).

Hromada- and settlement-level data is available upon request at DTMUkraine@iom.int.

Map 1: Rate of return in hromadas assessed in Round 7 of the Conditions of Returns Assessment



¹ The data included in the full report and operational dataset are classified as 'restricted' under the [OCHA Ukraine Information Sharing Protocol](#).

² International Organization for Migration (IOM), [Internal Displacement Report \(December 2023\)](#).

³ [UNHCR](#).

⁴ International Organization for Migration (IOM), [Returns Report \(December 2023\)](#).

KEY FINDINGS – DRIVERS OF SEVERITY



LIVELIHOODS

- Livelihood opportunities and employment conditions **are an important factor for returns**: a notable share of returnees faced challenging employment conditions upon return, with Key Informants (KIs) reporting up to 56 per cent of locations experiencing unemployment, whereby only some, few, or no residents seeking work could find suitable job opportunities. Of the affected locations, an estimated 26 per cent of returnees resided.
- In 73 per cent of assessed locations with **high severity livelihood conditions** – i.e. where agricultural activities had not resumed, where few residents could find work, and where only few shops were open – a maximum of 40 per cent of the displaced population had returned.
- Just over a third of all assessed locations (39%) were rated medium severity for livelihoods, primarily due to the slow recovery of the job market and industrial sector, leading to limited employment opportunities.
- The **ability to afford basic food and non-food items (NFIs)** remains a pressing concern in return locations. KIs in nearly a quarter of assessed locations (18%) reported that most or all residents in these locations had reduced the quality and/or quantity of basic items and food.



RESIDENTIAL DESTRUCTION

- Residential destruction was classified as high severity in 48 locations (6% of locations) across ten oblasts, half of which were located in Kharkivska and Khersonska Oblasts (25% each).
- Nearly half of these locations (46%) had also experienced missile strikes, shelling or other long-range attacks in the month preceding data collection, a decrease of 10 percentage points since the end of 2023.
- Over three-quarters (76%) of returnees resided in a location where up to 40 per cent of the residences were destroyed by the war, while 3 per cent of returnees (91,000 individuals) resided in a location where over 40 per cent of residential structures were destroyed by the war. This marks a decrease of 11 percentage points in the share of returnees reporting significant destruction of residential structures (over 40%).
- Despite an overall decrease in residential damage compared to Round 6, residential damage worsened in 15 locations (2% of assessed locations), with most cases recorded in Donetsk Oblast (27%). KIs attributed this to the escalation in active hostilities.
- In 29 locations (3% of assessed locations where residential homes were damaged), **damaged houses were not being rebuilt or repaired**. Thirty-eight per cent of these locations were located in Kharkivska Oblast.



UTILITIES AND SERVICES

- Up to **56 per cent** of returnees in assessed locations resided in locations where **damage to schools was reported, 44 per cent resided in locations where damage to health clinics was reported, and 41 per cent in locations where damage to road infrastructure** was reported.
- Electricity and water disruptions affected 10 and 8 per cent of locations, respectively. These locations currently host around 7 to 9 percent of total returns (191,000 and 238,000 respectively). Since the previous round, the share of assessed locations in which KIs reported water disruptions decreased by half, attributed to the increased assessment coverage, alongside possible improvements in the reconstruction of water supply networks.



PUBLIC LIFE

- KIs indicated concerns about community tensions in 26 per cent of assessed locations, affecting 47 per cent of returnees (1,286,000 individuals). These concerns most often derived from the allocation of humanitarian aid, social assistance or compensation schemes.
- KIs in, or near, frontline oblasts were more likely to report residents being very concerned about tensions within the community, with most reports recorded in Donetsk, Khersonska, Sumska, and Zaporizka Oblasts.
- KIs in 57 locations (7% of locations), reported that residents only leave their homes when required to, resulting in quiet, sparsely populated streets. The majority of these locations were located in Sumska Oblast (16 locations, 28%). The disruption to daily life can be attributed to the increased hostilities in the oblast, resulting in the emergence of mandatory evacuations.



SAFETY AND SECURITY

- Up to 21 per cent of assessed locations had been subject to missile strikes, shelling and long-range attacks in the month preceding the assessment, of which, an estimated 57 per cent of returnees (1,566,000 individuals) resided in these locations. In nearly two thirds of locations with high severity of safety and security conditions (37 out of 58), up to 40 per cent of the displaced population had returned. High returns to severe security conditions suggests the importance of other motivators in driving decisions to return.
- KIs reported that residents were aware of the presence of **mines and/or unexploded ordnance (UXOs) in 14 per cent** of the assessed locations, primarily located in Kharkivska, Sumska, and Donetsk Oblasts. Demining efforts were active in 65 per cent of assessed locations where the presence of mines or UXOs were reported.

METHODOLOGY

To provide granular and actionable data on the conditions and sustainability of returns in Ukraine, the Conditions of Return Assessment (CoRA) employs a **multisectoral location-level assessment (MSLA) methodology conducted with local authority key informants (KIs) at the settlement or city-raion level**.⁵ Each round of the assessment is 45 days in duration, reported quarterly. Round 7 covered the period from 1 February to 15 March 2024.

Between rounds, CORA has continuously expanded in coverage, building upon a systematic evidence base updated on a 45-day basis on where returns have occurred, and are yet to occur across the country. As displacement has become protracted in Ukraine, the increased coverage and movement from a bi-monthly assessment to quarterly, better aligns with humanitarian and recovery partner needs, centring longer-term solutions to displacement.

To capture the diversity of conditions that can be present within a hromada, a purposive sample of locations was selected based on criteria such as the size of the displaced and non-displaced population, and the presence of key infrastructure. In the case of cities, a KI is identified for each city-raion. **Once a hromada is assessed, it is included for re-assessment in every subsequent round, to understand how return mobility and conditions change over time.**

Population figures at the settlement level are cross-checked and triangulated with figures collected through IOM's Mobility and Needs Assessment (MaNA) to ensure harmonization and accuracy of population numbers across IOM assessments.⁶ Data is collected at the location level and subsequently aggregated by hromada. **All population figures at hromada level, as well as rates of return, presented in CoRA are sourced from Round 6 of MaNA (December 2023).** The reason for this substitution is the more extensive representativeness of MaNA population figures, which cover the entire hromadas and not only the subset of locations that is assessed for CoRA. Population figures at the national level are derived from Round 15 of IOM's General Population Survey (GPS, December 2023). Hromada-level pre-war population figures are sourced from the Ukrainian State Statistics Service (SSSU).

The criteria used to assess conditions of return are informed by the International Recommendations on IDP Statistics (IRIS) indicator framework and by the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions, and adapted to create a list of **critical or minimum conditions required for return to be a durable solution to displacement**. The indicators selected are divided into five thematic areas, or "drivers" of severity (Table 1).

SCORING SEVERITY

Each sectoral indicator is assigned a "severity score", that is, the **relative reported absence of critical physical and social living conditions that are conducive to sustainable reintegration**. For example, the assessment asks: "Which of the following best describes normal public life in the location now?"

Table 1: List of selected indicators on structural and social conditions

DRIVERS	INDICATORS
Livelihoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recovery of agriculture (where relevant) Recovery of large enterprises and industry (where relevant) Recovery of the public sector Recovery of small businesses, shops and markets Availability of employment Reduction in the quality or quantity of basic items and food used in household
Utilities and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to regular government services Access to criminal, legal and justice institutions Access to education Access to healthcare services Disruptions to electricity supply Disruptions to household water supply
Residential destruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential damage or destruction Rehabilitation and repair of residential damage or destruction
Safety and security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence of unexploded ordnance (UXO) or mines Active demining initiatives (where relevant) Concerns regarding of military and military activities Occurrence of missile strikes, shelling or other long-range attacks
Public life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intra-communal tensions related to displacement or social assistance Quality of daily public life

- Streets are busy with residents carrying out daily activities and it feels calm (**low severity**)
- Streets are busy with residents carrying out daily activities, but it feels tense (**medium severity**)
- Residents leave their homes only when they have to and streets are sparsely populated (**high severity**)

For each assessed location, the severity score for each indicator is aggregated as a simple average to provide a severity score for each driver. For each hromada, the severity scores for all assessed locations are aggregated, and weighted by the pre-war population of each location.

⁵ With the exception of Dnipropetrovska Oblast, where interviews were conducted with KIs who were not part of local government, so as to provide insights into a key area of return despite challenges in gaining access to regional authorities

⁶ KIs are asked to provide an estimate of the share of people who had been displaced from a location and have since returned in the form of a range (e.g., 40-60%). The maximum number of returnees is then estimated by multiplying the high end of the return rate range provided by the estimated number of individuals displaced from the same location.

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