

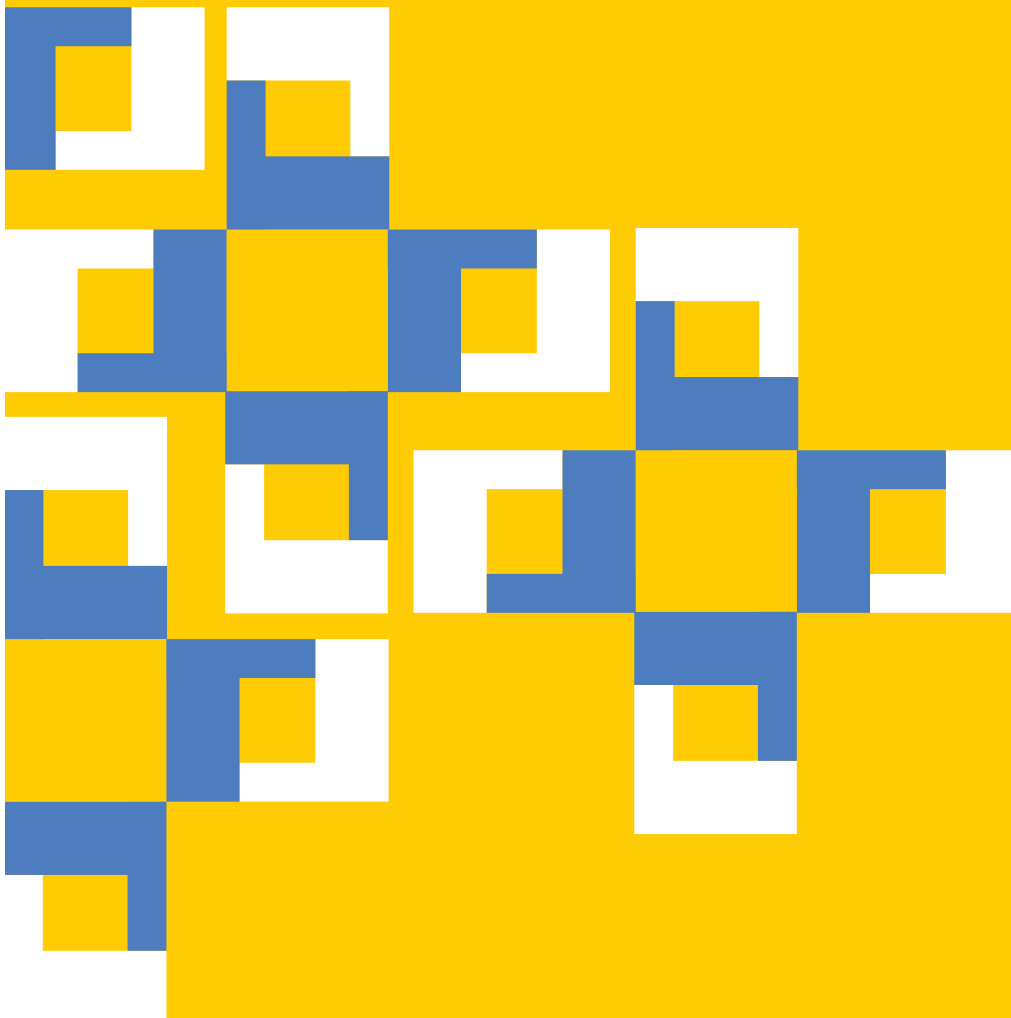
ISSUE No. 12.

JULY–SEPTEMBER 2024

# RESILIENCE AND COHESION OF UKRAINIAN SOCIETY DURING THE WAR

Periodic report based  
on monitoring materials from  
selected regions of Ukraine

2024



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KYIV 2024

**RESILIENCE AND COHESION OF UKRAINIAN SOCIETY DURING THE WAR.** Periodic report based on monitoring materials from selected regions of Ukraine. **ISSUE No. 12. JULY – SEPTEMBER 2024** / Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research. Kyiv. November 2024. 43 p.

This report was drafted by the team of the Ukrainian Independent Center for Political Research (UCIPR) as part of the activities of the National Platform for Resilience and Social Cohesion (National Platform). This civic initiative was launched in February 2018 (formerly known as the National Platform “Dialogue on Peace and Secure Reintegration”).

The National Platform’s activities are geared towards strengthening the national resilience of Ukraine. This could be done through establishing dialogue practices in society, providing the authorities with proposals for developing relevant policies, particularly those on resilience and social cohesion, as well as ensuring public awareness of these processes. The initiative has been implemented with the financial support of the European Union as part of “Sustaining the Resilience of Ukraine towards the Emerging Risks and Consequences of the War” project.

The report is based on data on events in 11 oblasts of Ukraine which are important for shaping a policy of national resilience. The project target oblasts were selected based on analysis of changes in cohesion of local populations due to the outbreak of military operations and include Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, Lviv, and Zakarpattia oblasts. For data collection, we distinguish between the temporarily occupied areas, frontline and deoccupied areas, and relatively rear areas.

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The product content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

The text of the report is available for download on the websites of the National Platform for Resilience and Social Cohesion <http://national-platform.org/> and UCIPR [www.ucipr.org.ua](http://www.ucipr.org.ua).

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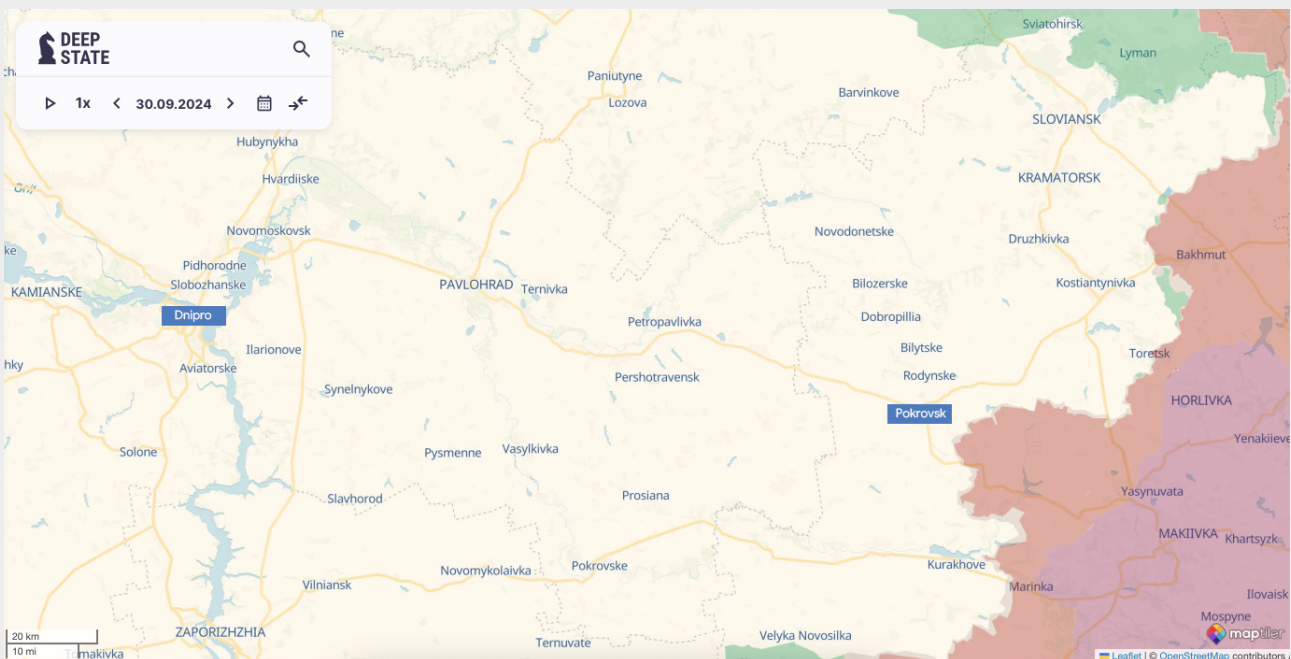
## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFU	Armed Forces of Ukraine
ASC	Administrative Services Centre
GAB	Guided Aerial Bomb
HPP	Hydroelectric Power Plant
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IE	Individual Entrepreneur
NPP	Nuclear Power Plant
OMA	Oblast Military Administration
OSA	Oblast State Administration
RF	Russian Federation
SPP	Solar Power Plant
TOA	Temporarily Occupied Area
TPP	Thermal Power Plant
TRSSC	Territorial Recruitment and Social Support Centre
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UN	United Nations Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

# SUMMARY

## The situation at the front line

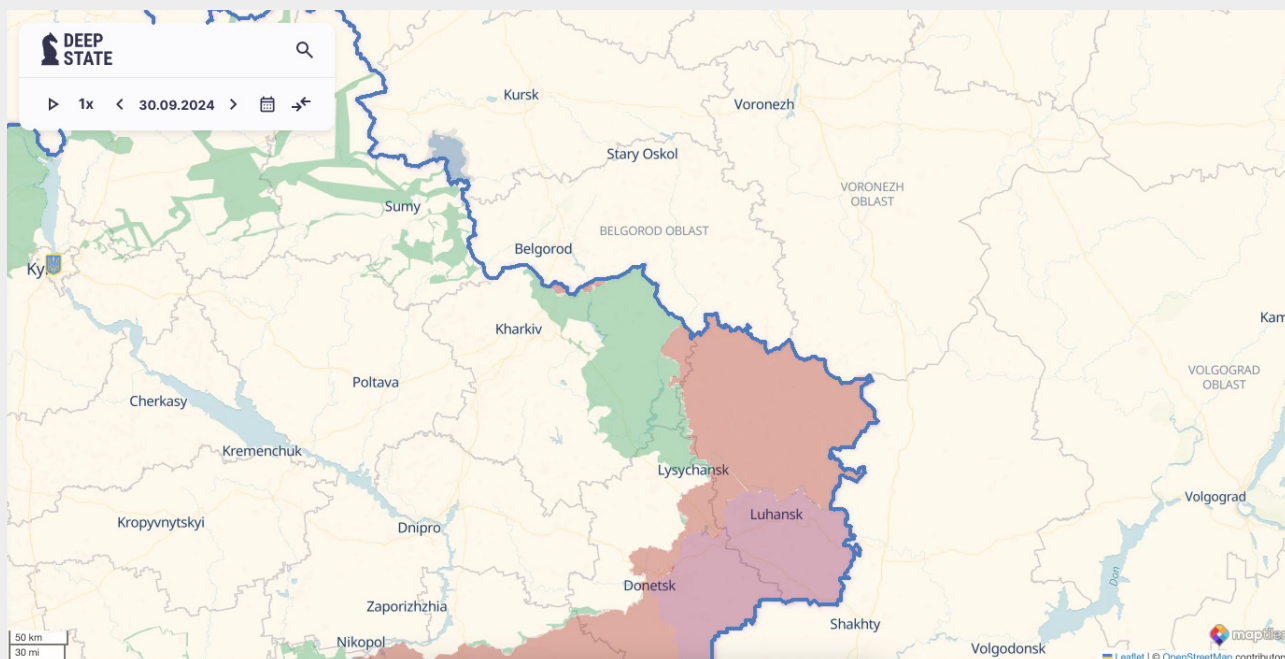
In the summer of 2024, hard battles continued. In September, the largest number of combat clashes in Ukraine was reported on the Pokrovsk front, Donetsk oblast, but the Defence Forces stabilized the situation and slowed the enemy's advance. However, the Russian forces managed to capture the town of Ukrainsk (since 25 September, [there were](#) no news about its defence in the reports of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine) and start moving towards Selidove to occupy a starting position for the offensive on Pokrovsk and Myrnohrad located nearby.



The main direction of Russia's attacks in Donetsk oblast in July–August 2024. Source: Deep State

Vuhledar was another direction in Donetsk oblast where Russian troops concentrated their offensive potential in the second half of September. The aggressor tried to do everything possible to cross Siverskyi Donets–Donbas canal and thus gain a new foothold.

In Kharkiv oblast, the occupiers continued their intense military activity to capture Vovchansk, Kupiansk, and Lyptsi.



Russia-occupied areas in Kharkiv and Luhansk oblasts. Source: Deep State

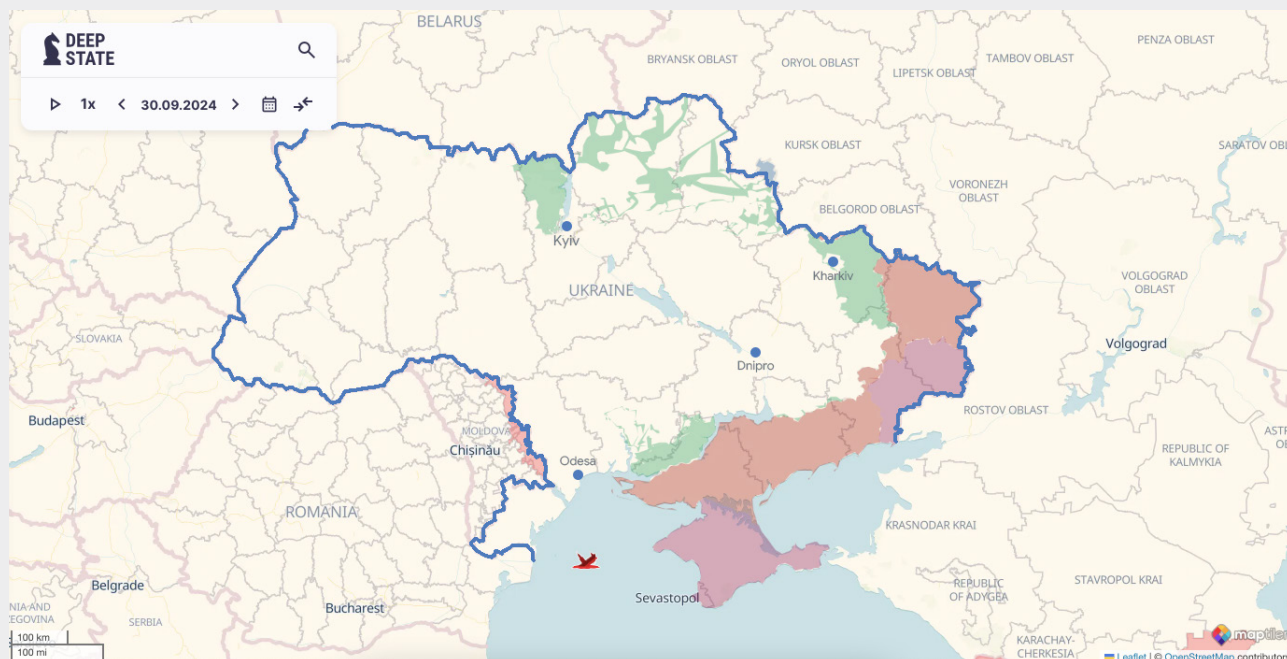
Despite a 2.5:1 numerical advantage of the enemy, the AFU **carried out** counteroffensive operations in August, fending off a direct threat from the village of Makiivka, Luhansk oblast, located close to Donetsk and Kharkiv oblasts.

On 6 August 2024, the Armed Forces of Ukraine entered the territory of Russia's **Kursk region**. Since then, fighting has continued in the region. Authorities of the Kursk, Bryansk, and Belgorod regions of Russia have launched a counter-terrorist operation on their territory. On 12 August, Kyiv confirmed for the first time that the AFU were conducting an offensive operation in Kursk region. The AFU Commander-in-Chief, Oleksandr Syrskyi, claimed that the AFU controlled more than 1,260 square kilometres of the territory and 93 population centres in Kursk region as of 20 August. This operation forced the Russians to reconsider their operational plans for establishing a "sanitary zone" in Ukraine and, in general, creating a new disposition for negotiations between Ukraine and Russia.

From July through September, the security situation in frontline oblasts significantly worsened; the number of attacks on frontline population centres and those located at a considerable distance from the area of active hostilities increased. Throughout the year, guided aerial bombs **have become** one of the most dangerous tools of Russia's war against Ukraine. Initially, they were used for attacks on the front line, with their range increased significantly over time. GABs were used to attack frontline cities, including Kharkiv and Sumy; and in September, the aggressor could reach even Zaporizhzhia, threatening the civilian population.

In the summer, military operations in Kherson oblast gained new features. The occupiers changed their tactics which sparked a significant increase in attacks on civilians, including with the use of drones. Russian troops carried out safari-like attacks on civilians. They targeted not only individuals, but also ambulance and rescue service workers. On the morning of 4 September, the Russians once again attacked Ukraine with missiles. **Lviv** was among the targets. 7 people were reported dead and about 50 were taken to hospital; more than 70 residential buildings in the city centre were damaged.

The attackers systematically destroyed transport and port infrastructure facilities in Odesa. Since the outbreak of the full-scale invasion, the Russians have fired 33 times on the ports in the cities of Odesa, Pivdenne (formerly known as Yuzhne until 2024), Chornomorsk, Izmail, and Reni.



Map of Russia-occupied areas of Ukraine as of 30 September 2024. Source: Deep State. Deoccupied areas are shown in green, the bridgehead of the AFU in Kursk region is shown in blue

## Temporarily occupied areas

From July through September, Russia-installed authorities continued to integrate the captured Ukrainian areas into their state-wide system of governance through allocating new funds “for their development”, simultaneously substituting local collaborators with “real Russians” from the Russian Federation.

The occupiers continued the policy of pressure, intimidation, and terror against locals, and toughened filtration measures in the frontline areas. The Russian invaders also confiscated housing from those who were forced to leave their homes, because not all owners could register their property in the Russian Property Register.

Since 1 July, residents of Russia-occupied areas of Ukraine could no longer obtain Russian citizenship according to the simplified procedure that was in effect since 11 July 2022, in accordance with the Decree by Vladimir Putin. From 1 January 2025 onwards, those without Russian passports will receive the status of foreigners or stateless persons.

The occupiers continued to unlawfully take over Ukrainian businesses and resources. In September, the export of coal from Russia-seized mines of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts was launched via Mariupol Sea Trade Port, the largest in the Sea of Azov.

Among the new trends were the toughened measures to mobilise locals into the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, in particular through deploying mobile mobilisation offices and placing advertising posters with calls to join the Russian army.

The invaders focused on simulating the development of the occupied areas, despite a critical lack of water supply and gradual curtailment of housing reconstruction programmes. They launched mortgage construction projects that do not solve the urgent needs of local populations and pose serious humanitarian and social challenges, since most of the occupied population centres are either completely destroyed or are not planned to be rebuilt.

The occupying authorities made every effort to ‘Russify’ all processes in the occupied areas. First and foremost, the emphasis was placed on propaganda and compliance with Russian education standards. A lot of effort was spent to organise the work with young people, including the holding of various cultural, scientific, and educational events each of which contained a propaganda element. Militarism and a cult of respect for the occupiers and collaborators were propagated in schools. The opening of classes of the Russian National Guard



troops to train future officers (cadet classes) and the inclusion of new subjects, such as “Moral Foundations of Family Life”, in school curricula were aimed at militarisation and ideological indoctrination of the youths with the ideas of the “Russian World”. The Russians continued to take away children from TOAs under the pretext of organising their ‘rehabilitation’ in Russia-annexed Crimea and various regions of the RF.

Price regulation by the Russian government was imposed in the occupied areas in an attempt to control the economic situation and to ensure support for Russia’s actions among the populations.

## Frontline and deoccupied areas

In the summer and early autumn, the security situation in frontline communities significantly deteriorated, primarily due to an increase in the number of attacks on population centres.

The significant number of population centres were severely damaged which resulted in the loss of housing, infrastructure, and basic services. Nevertheless, people often refused to evacuate for fear of finding no jobs and housing in other communities, especially with government benefits for displaced persons being curtailed.

Preparations for the heating season amid the war have become a critically important task for the frontline areas where boiler houses and heating systems remained poorly prepared due to ongoing shelling. To provide heat to the populations, local authorities actively sought international assistance, having added a request for gas-piston cogeneration units and charging stations for critical infrastructure facilities.

Mobilisation into the AFU remained problematic. As the war put pressure on the labour market, businesses (including strategic ones) faced the problem of significant understaffing.

The absence of an adequate response of authorities to numerous publications in the media about corruption and embezzlement of funds, primarily those allocated for infrastructure recovery, fuelled distrust in authorities among the population and increased the risks of political instability. Instead of initiating open discussions, central authorities, which strengthened their influence in the oblasts through the creation of military administrations, followed the tactic of hiding problems and reporting ‘positive’ news that have nothing in common with the real situation.

The Security Service of Ukraine and the Prosecutor General’s Office concentrated on uncovering supporters of the “Russian World”.

The eRecovery programme was extended to Ukrainians whose homes were damaged or destroyed in the frontline areas and areas of active hostilities. Taking into account the security situation, local commissions can now inspect housing in areas with Ukrainian electronic information resources available. Along with that, compensation for damaged or destroyed housing was not paid to the population of Luhansk oblast, almost completely occupied since July 2022, because the local commission did not have access for inspection.

Large areas of land remained mined and required reclamation and rehabilitation of ecosystems.

## Relatively rear areas controlled by the Ukrainian government

The strengthening of the power supply system is among the priorities of local authorities ahead of the autumn–winter season. Local authorities relied on the assistance from international partners and decisions of central authorities to ensure the sustainability of power supply and to avoid shutdowns of critical facilities. However, at the national level, there was a lack of effective mechanisms for encouraging communities towards energy autonomy and increasing energy efficiency.

Support for the AFU and IDPs was also among the main activity areas of authorities and local self-government bodies. They channelled, on a regular basis, financial resources, launched aid campaigns for the AFU, and posted relevant activity reports on social media and their official websites.

The export of agricultural products through the ports of Odesa oblast was considerably reduced amid military operations which adversely affected the economy of the oblast and the entire country in general. Due

to uncertainty and high risks, the oblast's investment attractiveness decreased which in turn slowed the development of small and medium-sized business.

War fatigue in society was growing, along with outcry in social media over decisions of local authorities on the distribution of resources and inefficient use of funds.

In the western oblasts, the renaming of streets, squares, and alleys associated with the Soviet past was a positive trend, generally supported by communities. Immortalising the memory of the heroes of the Russian-Ukrainian war through opening alleys of glory and unveiling memorials was also an important aspect of shaping a new identity. However, a balanced public policy is needed, because decommunisation and de-Russification caused public debate and polarisation in the southern oblasts.

The rear areas continued to accept the large number of forced migrants which increased burdens on housing, social, and health care infrastructure. Permanent stress from the war, coupled with housing and employment problems, worsened the psychological and physical condition of the population which required increased social support and health care.

Mobilisation methods of territorial recruitment and social support centres often violated not only ethical standards, but also legal rules. This spurred backlash and opposition from the population which eroded trust in the army and the system of authorities. Attempted illegal border crossings, evasion of military service, and collaborationism were recorded.

# I. TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED AREAS

## 1. Changes in the system of governance

No significant changes in political and social life in the occupied areas of Donetsk oblast were reported within the monitoring period. The occupying authorities continued integrating the occupied areas into Russia's legal and administrative structure through dissolving the so-called ministries and departments of the DPR. Along with that, information about activities of the so-called local administrations was almost completely absent in the public space. The militants' key information resources focused on Russia's nationwide news, effectively ignoring local events.

### 1.1. Decisions of occupying authorities

The influence of residents of Donetsk oblast on administrative decision-making and the opportunity to participate in the activities of authorities in general continued to decrease, which is also typical for other TOAs of Ukraine. Specifically, in July, the so-called residential qualification for representatives of the so-called DPR, LPR, occupied parts of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson oblast in the Federation Council of the RF was [cancelled](#) until 2030. Unlike other entities of the Russian Federation, these areas can be represented by people who have not *"lived in this area in the past 5 years following their nomination or have a total period of residence there for more than 20 years."* In fact, any Russian national can represent the occupied areas in the Federation Council, even the one who has nothing at all to do with these TOAs.

On 26 July, it became known that the occupiers approved the [structure of executive authorities](#) of the occupied part of Kherson oblast, with the administrative centre in Henichesk, and the [maximum number](#) of their employees. Executive power is exercised by the so-called Governor, to whom five departments and two representative offices (under the governments of the RF and Crimea) are subordinated, and the so-called government which controls sixteen ministries, two departments, and one service.

The maximum number of employees of occupying structures was set as 926, including 853 in break-away executive authorities and 73 in "other public authorities". The largest number of full-time employees, 168, was recorded in the administration of the so-called Governor and the government of Kherson oblast.

On 2 September 2024, by his Decree "On Amendments to the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 972 of 29 December 2022 "On Additional Social Benefits for Persons Sent (Seconded) to the Territory of the "Donetsk People's Republic", "Luhansk People's Republic", Zaporizhzhia Oblast, Kherson Oblast and Members of Their Families", the President of the RF [promised](#) additional social benefits to those Russians who will move to Ukraine's TOAs. The matter concerns Russia-occupied areas of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson oblasts, and Russia-annexed Crimea. From now on, social benefits should be paid not only to 'reconstructors' from various Russian institutions, who are on business trips, but also to individual entrepreneurs. The main labour force is involved in civil and military construction.

#### >> FORCED PASSPORTING

[On 1 July](#), the deadline for obtaining Russian citizenship under the simplified procedure expired in Russia-occupied areas of Ukraine. According to representatives of the occupying authorities, more than 240,000 Russian passports were issued in the territory of Kherson oblast.

According to the National Resistance Center, from 1 January 2025 onwards, TOA residents who do not have Russian passports [will receive](#) the status of foreigners or stateless persons. At present, the Russian oc-

cupiers [create](#) the so-called register of foreigners who ‘illegally’ stay in the country. Gauleiters are threatening to enter Ukrainians who refuse to receive Russian passports to the Register.

Following an entry in the ‘Register’, *“a Ukrainian will be prohibited, in his homeland, from driving a car, using banking services, registering property, entering into marriage and divorcing, as well as enrolling children in preschool and education institutions,”* the National Resistance Center reported.

#### >> ZAPORIZHZHIA NPP

The risk of an accident at the temporarily occupied Zaporizhzhia NPP remains high until Ukraine regains control over the facility. On the evening of 11 August, a fire engulfed one of the plant’s cooling towers used to cool water from the nuclear unit, but the fire did not endanger nuclear safety, as the cooling tower is located one kilometre away from the nearest reactor. At the same time, the cause of the fire could not be immediately determined, since no explosive equipment should have been there. Energoatom [emphasised](#) that due to the occupation and unprofessional management of Russia-installed administration, systems of nuclear power plant are gradually degrading, which increases the risks of more serious accidents in the future.

At a briefing on 4 September, IAEA Director General, Rafael Grossi, [said](#) that the situation at the Zaporizhzhia NPP *“remains precarious and very fragile”*, as the plant has experienced eight complete losses of off-site power throughout the full-scale war.

At the 68th Regular Session, the IAEA General Conference [approved](#) the resolution entitled “Nuclear Safety, Security and Safeguards in Ukraine” by 65 votes. The resolution emphasises that all Ukrainian nuclear plants, including the Zaporizhzhia NPP, should be immediately returned to the full control of competent Ukrainian authorities and called for the urgent withdrawal of all Russian unauthorized military and other unauthorized personnel from Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia NPP to ensure its safe and secure operation.

#### >> UNLAWFUL TAKEOVER OF UKRAINIAN BUSINESSES / RESOURCES

The occupying authorities continued to unlawfully take over Ukrainian businesses and resources. In September, the launch of the export of coal from Russia-seized mines of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts via Mariupol Sea Trade Port, the best equipped in the Sea of Azov, [was officially announced](#).

Overall, following the capture of Mariupol, the occupying authorities actively used the port to ship the stolen goods and products. Specifically, since the beginning of the year, 88,000 tons of Ukrainian grain [have been sent](#) via the port to Syria and Turkey. Moreover, the port was actively used for the export of scrap metals whose collection and processing became one of the important sectors of the occupied territories’ economy. To boost the volume of export of scrap metals, an electrometallurgical processing plant is expected to be built in Mariupol. An area for its construction was recently [allotted](#) by a special ordinance by the so-called Head of the breakaway DPR.

Also, the Russian invaders arranged the export of grain from the TOAs of Luhansk oblast to Iran, the National Resistance Center [reported](#). To this end, according to the Center, a new logistics route has been organised. Agricultural products are now being exported by rail from Luhansk oblast to the Caspian Sea, and then shipped to Iran.

#### >> INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION

On 1 July, it [became known](#) that the Russian government approved a programme to support rural areas in the occupied territories. *“This year, RUB70 billion is to be earmarked from the federal budget for the implementation of relevant tasks, and 85 regions of the country are currently receiving these funds. We will extend the programme to the DPR, the LPR, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson oblasts,”* the Prime Minister of the RF, Mikhail Mishustin, [claimed](#). Russian officials said that their programme is geared towards providing the TOA population with housing, arranging water and gas supply, road repair, public spaces, building health care and educational facilities, and creating conditions for sports.

In the occupied areas of Donetsk oblast, the emphasis has gradually shifted from the “renovation of housing” and infrastructure to the “implementation of investment projects for housing construction within the framework of the preferential housing loans programme”. However, it is possible to implement these projects only in a few cities of the oblast, in particular in Donetsk and Mariupol, which are potentially attractive targets for buyers.

This programme is obviously aimed at Russian nationals or local collaborators who have integrated into the occupying power system. The problem is that there is practically no industry and jobs with decent wages to purchase a property under a housing loan in the occupied areas. Specifically, the price for a two-bedroom apartment in a residential complex, currently under construction in the centre of Mariupol and available for purchase under a housing loan, [amounts to](#) around USD109,000.

The occupying authorities were quite satisfied with the above trends because they could solve several problems in this way. First, the occupied cities are Russified. [According to estimates](#) by Russian independent media, some 40,000 Russian nationals relocated to Mariupol and bought housing there as of mid-2024. Taking into account that only 150–200,000 people resided in the city following the occupation, it is possible to conclude that there has been a dramatic decline in the city's population.

Furthermore, expenses for the city's recovery are in this way transferred to city locals, while state-owned banking institutions integrated into the programme make profits from household loans and construction companies earn from construction of new housing. In this respect, an awareness campaign was actively spread in Russia to encourage the purchase of housing in the so-called historic areas.

On the other hand, the local occupying authorities attempted, through their media resources, to present this process as an investment boom. To achieve this goal, attractive land plots in Mariupol and Donetsk are being allocated free of charge for various construction projects. Specifically, in September, the breakaway leadership of the DPR agreed to allocate free of charge two land parcels with a total area of almost 16,000 square metres for the construction of residential buildings in Mariupol. The land parcels were transferred into the ownership of Russia's Regional Construction Company LLC associated with the Rotenberg brothers, businessmen from Russia close to Vladimir Putin. Also, housing construction under the housing loans programme [is expected to be launched in Donetsk](#).

## >> PROPERTY

The occupying authorities in the left-bank areas of Kherson oblast have continued to unlawfully seize the property of locals forced to flee their homes. They have taken it upon themselves to unlawfully [occupy](#) residential buildings, apartments, and rooms that are not registered in the Unified State Register of Real Estate of the RF. This essentially means that the real estate of Ukrainians who have relocated from the occupied areas and are unable to physically register their property will be confiscated.

The occupiers' media outlets regularly published lists of so-called ownerless property. Local Gauleiters openly declared their intention to use it. On [9 July](#), Pavlo Filipchuk, the Head of the breakaway administration of the so-called Kakhovka Municipal District, said that the abandoned houses of Kakhovka locals will be given free of charge to accommodate staff on business trips.

In the occupied areas of Donetsk oblast, the confiscation of apartments also continued. The occupying authorities published another list of 'ownerless' property in Mariupol, which included 180 apartments whose owners must prove their ownership of the said housing within 30 days.

## >> PREPARATIONS FOR THE WINTER AND THE 2024/2025 HEATING SEASON

[According to](#) Luhansk OMA, Russia-occupied Luhansk reported to the Kremlin that it was almost 87% prepared for the upcoming heating season. Even though this indicator looks good, it does not take into account the situation in frontline dilapidated cities, such as Sievierodonetsk (formerly known as Severodonetsk until 2024), Lysychansk, and Rubizhne which were not included in the preparation schedule.

To date, there is not enough information about the situation of housing and municipal utilities in the occupied areas of Donetsk oblast. Most likely, members of formerly occupied communities will be able to get through the winter with fewer problems compared to the newly captured territories where Russia has dedicated all its efforts to create a showcase of success in Mariupol. It seems that the rest of the destroyed cities will go through another winter in difficult living conditions.

## >> EVACUATION

It was impossible to evacuate from temporarily occupied Luhansk oblast directly to Ukraine as of August 2024. There were several tricky routes for evacuation through the territory of Russia, including:

- *Luhansk oblast – Russia – Belarus – Ukraine’s Volyn oblast*  
In connection with the [closure](#) of Kolotylivka (Ukraine’s Sumy oblast) – Pokrovka (Russia’s Belgorod region) humanitarian corridor for the return of Ukrainians to the Ukrainian government-controlled areas, the question arose about other routes for leaving the occupation. Currently, people can get to Ukraine through the only one checkpoint, Mokransy (in Belarus’s Brest region) – Domanove (in Ukraine’s Volyn oblast). At the same time, a Russian passport is mandatory for leaving the territory of the RF to Belarus. After being checked by Belarusian border guards, people must walk about 1.5 kilometres. All Ukrainian citizens can use the corridor if they hold any Ukrainian documents.
- *Luhansk oblast – Russia – Europe – Ukraine*  
A mandatory condition is the availability of a Russian and a foreign passport, as well as a Ukrainian foreign passport. When a person enters the EU countries, and this route is usually chosen by carriers, he/she must provide a Ukrainian foreign passport because the EU countries are not visa-free for Russians, and a foreign passport of the RF does not entitle its holder to enter the EU.
- *Luhansk oblast – Russia – Georgia – Moldova – Ukraine*  
Ukrainians can also evacuate through Georgia. The conditions are the same as for evacuation through Europe.  
The population of the TOAs of Zaporizhzhia oblast has not been evacuated since December 2022. As of September 2024, the closest route of evacuation from the occupation to the Ukrainian government-controlled areas runs through the Belarusian-Ukrainian border, with the only checkpoint, Mokransy – Domanove.

## >> ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTERS

From the onset of the full-scale invasion through July 2024, 253 fires [have been recorded](#) on the Kinburn Spit, Mykolaiv oblast, where enemy artillerymen were encamped, with some areas burning twice, and some three times. Although Ukrainian scientists conducted remote monitoring of fires on the peninsula, it is impossible to accurately assess the scale of environmental damage due to active hostilities.

In July, severe forest fires were reported in the occupied areas of Kherson oblast, including 16 fires in [Hola Prystan](#) forestry, 22 fires in [Skadovsk](#) forestry, and large-scale fires in Oleshky forestry.

[According to](#) Luhansk OMA, fires erupted near Russia-occupied Dovzhansk since 14 September due to which the state of emergency was declared in the oblast. On 17 September, the Head of Luhansk OMA, Artem Lysohor, said that at least 150 houses were burnt down in Russia-controlled Stanytsia Luhanska community.

After the Russians destroyed Kakhovka dam on 6 June 2023, the problem with water supply and irrigation of agricultural land [has deteriorated](#) in the southern part of Zaporizhzhia oblast. The occupiers planned to fill the irrigation canals with water from the Molochna River which could have adverse implications for the environmental situation in the oblast, in particular, leading to an increase in the salinity of water in the Sea of Azov and affecting groundwater.

The occupiers left the problem of dealing with garbage accumulation in the so-called LPR to the ‘republican’ headquarters. As stated in the summary by Luhansk OMA, a project for the construction of six landfills has existed for two years “only on paper”. To date, the location of only one landfill was determined, and RUB160 million was promised to be allocated for its construction. “*They plan to bring garbage there both from the occupied areas of Ukraine and from the neighbouring regions of Russia, by 350,000 tons each per annum,*” Luhansk OMA [underscored](#).

## 1.2. Access to public information

[It became known](#) in early July that the occupying authorities of Kherson oblast responsible for the information policy set up a not-for-profit organisation, Information Centre of Kherson Oblast, with the purpose of building and promoting an “*information society, encouraging freedom of mass information, and creating conditions for freedom of opinion*” through, among other things, the popularisation of activities of public authorities, publishing and printing activities, development of media awareness campaigns. The Centre will be funded from the budget approved for Kherson oblast by the occupying oblast ‘duma’. The Information Centre will replace the

so-called joint editorial office of Naddniprianska Pravda newspaper. Also, the construction of a new studio for propagandists of Radio Tavria [was announced](#) in July.

The Russians [planned](#) to spend a total of RUB526,790,900, or approximately EUR4,900,000, on media outlets in the occupied areas of Kherson oblast in 2024.

## 2. Humanitarian situation

In the cities of Luhansk oblast, which have been under occupation for a decade, the situation of water supply remained dire. Sorokyne, Sukhodilsk, and Otamanivka (formerly known as Molodohvardiisk until 2024) faced serious problems in providing the population with water, Luhansk OMA reported. Centralised water supply was available in these cities for only a few hours a day, while the volume of water supply in the summer was insufficient to meet even basic household needs, such as cooking and personal hygiene. The supply of technical water, sometimes provided by the occupiers earlier, was totally ceased this summer, forcing the locals to buy water in stores which significantly increased their spending. Despite this, the subscription fee for water supply remained at the previous level which placed additional financial burdens on the population.

### 2.1. Filtration measures of occupying authorities

According to the National Resistance Center, the Russians [were making preparations](#) to build a network of concentration camps in the TOAs.

*“As the Ukrainian underground has learned, the occupying administrations were given the first verbal instructions on the implementation of a “special infrastructure project”. This is how the Russians disguised the creation and construction of concentration camps for those disloyal.*

*In July–August 2024, a working group led by the RF Deputy Prime Minister, Marat Khusnullin, completed the first phase of developing proposals for the construction of new and the reconstruction of available “centres for temporary detention of foreign nationals and stateless persons” in Ukraine’s TOAs.*

*These centres have been built since the outbreak of the full-scale invasion of the TOAs of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia oblasts. Initially, the Russians placed there people who did not pass “filtration measures”. Following a series of sham elections, the centres were renamed and used to ‘re-educate’ those unwilling to receive a Russian passport,” the message says.*

The RF’s puppet Governor of the TOAs of Kherson oblast [issued](#) an order banning the locals from entering a ‘special’ 15-kilometre zone in the left-bank TOAs of the oblast along the Dnipro River and coming into force on 1 August 2024. Instructions to regulate the entry and stay of civilians were specially developed for this zone. There are more than 40 population centres in its territory.

### 2.2. Actions of occupying authorities regarding recruitment into armed formations

In the occupied areas of Kherson oblast, official media outlets extensively [published](#) advertisements promoting conditions for the participation in the so-called special military operation (payments, high wages, family support, regional and federal benefits). Points for registering ‘volunteers’ were opened in almost all administrative centres of the occupied areas, except for Ivanivka. An outreach campaign was carried out under the slogan, which called a war a special military operation, or SMO, in combination with the word ‘own’ promoting the sense of ownership of the occupation: “Strength is in truth. Join your SMown”.

[According to](#) the Center for Countering Disinformation, the RF created units of the fake Zaporizhzhia Cossacks in occupied Berdiansk for military service in the TOAs. *“In temporarily occupied Berdiansk, the Russians staged a show – a demonstrational ‘revival of the Zaporizhzhia Cossack army loyal to Russia’. According to*

Russia's propaganda resources, the newly created 'army' is "real and Orthodox", and its 'banner' was consecrated by priests of the Russian Orthodox Church. The newly created 'army' will carry out military service in Ukraine's TOAs," the message reads.

The Center for Countering Disinformation stressed that propaganda activities of this kind evidence Russia's attempts to misappropriate Ukrainian history and parasitise on it. A special emphasis was placed on the fact that the fake Zaporizhzhia Cossack army has nothing in common with the Ukrainian people or Ukrainian military traditions and is only one of the units of the occupying army of the RF in the territory of Ukraine.

### 3. Work on identity

In the TOAs of southern Ukraine, the Russian occupying authorities [launched](#) a "Door-to-Door Book" project under which activists of the youth wing of the United Russia party, together with representatives of the occupying administrations, visited the locals and distributed propaganda literature. [According to](#) the National Resistance Center, pseudo-activists distributed propagandistic-style books about history of the RF and 'artworks' glorifying Russia's aggression and justifying the occupation.

The occupying regime, together with Russian authorities, made extensive efforts to spread literature with a clear ideological throughline in the occupied areas. Specifically, a yet another batch of books, with a total circulation of more than 110,000 copied copies and released by more than 200 Russian publishing houses, [was purchased](#) for libraries of the so-called DPR. All books are written in line with the official ideology of the RF. Most books went to children's libraries and educational institutions.

Representatives of the so-called authorities gradually [opened](#) new cinemas in the occupied areas. They showed old Soviet and new Russian "historical movies" as part of 'patriotic' education. As pro-Russian media reported, the movies' content is chosen with the aim of shaping a Russian identity among the youths.

#### 3.1. Changes in education standards

Investigators of the international human rights organisation, Human Rights Watch, [reported](#) numerous violations of the international children's right to education by Russia in the occupied areas of Ukraine. In their [report](#) entitled "Education under Occupation: Forced Russification of the School System in Occupied Ukrainian Territories", human rights activists noted that Russia violates international acts, notably the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which prohibits an occupying power from making unnecessary changes to the applicable laws and obliges it to respect the laws in force in the territories before the occupation. However, the Russian authorities systematically violate the right of Ukrainian children to education in the TOAs. Russia has imposed its education system, anti-Ukrainian propaganda, and the Russian language of instruction. Also, Ukrainian children in the occupied areas receive military training as part of the school curriculum.

[According to](#) the monitoring of the occupiers' media outlets, Russian 'mentors' taught Ukrainian school children how to handle rifles and practiced shooting from various positions. The Russians also forced children to wear uniforms and march under Russia's tricolour flag. "The invaders initially recruited children to join militarised 'patriotic' movements such as Yunarmiya (the All-Russia Young Army National Military Patriotic Social Movement Association) and cadet classes so that they could later impose a new reality on them: hatred of everything Ukrainian and fighting for the Russian enemy," said the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, Dmytro Lubinets.

The Russian Guard [opened](#) first classes in schools of Russia-occupied part of Kherson oblast. The Russian militaries and guards will teach children general military disciplines, drilling and weapon training, and make them familiar with the fundamentals of military service, history and traditions of the Russian Guard.

In the TOAs of Zaporizhzhia oblast, the occupiers [established](#) 12 youth organisations engaged in propaganda and militarisation of the youths. According to the Chief of the Main Directorate of the National Police in Zaporizhzhia oblast, Artem Kysko, these movements operate in the cities of Melitopol and Berdiansk with



the aim of 'brainwashing' children and preparing them to participate in military operations under constant supervision of the Kremlin-installed officials.

In Sheliuhy village, located in temporarily occupied Zaporizhzhia oblast, the Russian occupiers [opened](#) a so-called hero's desk in honour of Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya. This project is implemented throughout Russia and extends to the occupied territories of Ukraine, including Zaporizhzhia oblast. Each "hero's desk" is marked with the symbols of Putin's political party and those created for the TOA. The project is aimed at implanting Soviet myths about 'heroes' of the World War Two in the consciousness of young people and comparing them with participants in the so-called special military operation.

This academic year, the occupiers [planned to introduce](#) a new subject, [Moral Foundations of Family Life](#), in schools of the left-bank areas of Kherson oblast. The subject should cover such topics as the importance of children in family life, the hierarchy of family relationships, and a wife as the keeper of the hearth. The subject is a mixture of chauvinistic propaganda and church dogma. Specifically, the textbook says that women should not laugh loudly or be more educated than men. According to the textbook's authors, girls should give birth to children before the age of 25, a man should be the family head, and equality in the family is called 'phantasmagoria'. Along with that, no sexual education is implied, because it allegedly "causes mental disorders".



Photo: Methodological guidance for teachers and model syllabus for the "Moral Foundations of Family Life". Source: dzen.ru

In Russia-occupied Luhansk, a ceremony was held to initiate the first 50 elementary school children to "eaglet Septemberists" as part of the implementation of the pro-Russian propaganda programme, Luhansk Character, ZMINA [reported](#). The event was dedicated to the "Day of Reunification of Donbass and Novorossiya with Russia," 'celebrated' in the Russian Federation on 30 September.

During the ceremony, a representative of the occupying Ministry of Education and Science, Ivan Kusov, announced that all 8,998 first-graders of the breakaway LPR will receive the status of the so-called Septemberist Eaglets and will wear on their school uniforms special badges symbolising the "Luhansk Character" and bearing the image of a "labourer of Luhansk oblast" and the date of 30 September. In the fifth grade, "Septemberist Eaglets" will receive the status of 'pioneers', and in the 10th-11th grades they will become 'labourers'.

A branch of Nakhimov Naval School was opened in Mariupol to [facilitate](#) the "correct education of youth". The admission of students to this educational facility [has already been announced](#).

## 3.2. Politics of memory: place names, museum work, holidays and their celebration

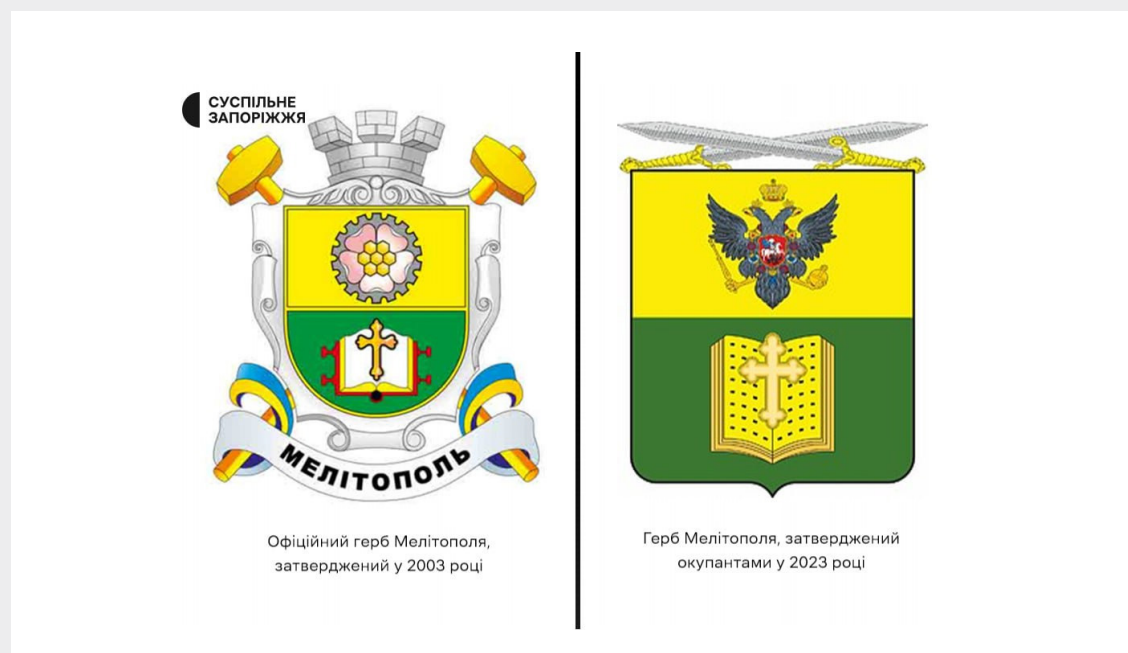
The occupiers continued to glorify the fallen combatants. In June, a memorial plaque in honour of five employees of the Russian Investigative Committee killed in Skadovsk was unveiled in temporarily occupied Henichesk, Kherson oblast, and museums dedicated to the so-called special military operation were organised in schools of the oblast. Furthermore, on 23 July, the opening of a monument to 23 soldiers of a battalion from Russia's Voronezh region killed in 2023 [was announced](#) in the settlement of Rykove, Henichesk raion.

On 30 September, the Russian occupiers [celebrated](#) the so-called reunification holiday in Kherson oblast. The purpose of the action was to remind about the holding of sham referendums used by the Russian invaders in an effort to legitimate the occupation of Ukrainian territories. So-called mass celebrations and demonstrations took place in temporarily occupied population centres. School children of Hryhorivka village, Prysnyash community, were forced to walk through the streets carrying portraits of killed Ukrainian collaborators and Russian war criminals. The occupying authorities called this action a manifestation of *"unity and respect for those who died for the reunification of Donbass and Novorossiia with Russia"*.

The memorial signs to the victims of Stalin's repression and to the victims of the Holodomor were dismantled in Russia-occupied Luhansk. [According to](#) the occupiers' media outlets, the decision to dismantle the memorial signs was made by the breakaway City Council following appeals by "veterans' organisations" who demanded that the monuments be demolished, calling them 'fakes' allegedly having no historical significance and offending the "patriotic feelings of Luhansk locals".

Within the monitoring period, new heraldic symbols of population centres were introduced in the TOAs. In July, the occupiers introduced new coats of arms of Ukrainian population centres, notably [Hornostaivka](#), [Nyzhni Sirohozy](#), and [Skadovsk](#), Kherson oblast.

In Zaporizhzhia oblast, the invaders entered the flag and the coat of arms of the city of [Melitopol](#), developed by Russian authorities in 2023, in the State Heraldic Register of the RF. The new Russian flag and coat of arms of the city are almost identical in ideological and visual content to those of 1844.



Coat of arms of Melitopol approved by the occupiers in 2023. Source: Suspilne Zaporizhzhia

## II. FRONTLINE AND DEOCCUPIED AREAS

The construction of defence fortifications, protection of the population, rehabilitation of infrastructure, preparations for the heating season, and mobilisation measures remained among priority tasks for military administrations of the frontline areas of Ukraine.

### 1. Changes in the system of governance

A system of military administrations continued to operate in Donetsk oblast at a variety of levels, including oblast, raion, and local ones. The only exception was Mariupol which repeatedly had difficulties with the use of budget resources, because due to the absence of a City Council, the occupied community cannot approve the budget for the current year and is forced to live on 1/12 of the 2022 budget which cannot cover the up-to-date needs. Some administrations operate in exile through providing support for IDPs from their communities and maintaining unity and cohesion despite the absence of a joint location.

The establishment of military administrations in communities prompted a shift in decision-making centres which complicated democratic processes and restricted civic engagement in budgeting, [according to](#) an analytical report under the “Budgets in Exile” project implemented by the Public Partnership Enterprise “For Transparent Local Budgets!” and Siverskyi Donets Crisis Media Center. A study carried out in ten communities of Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts shows that martial law significantly complicated management of the budgets of communities under temporary occupation, having eroded its efficiency and transparency.

An increase in shelling has sparked socio-demographic changes in the composition of the population of right-bank communities of Kherson oblast. Only a third of pre-war community members remained there, of whom most were the elderly. In view of the curtailment of economic activity, the oblast leadership predicts the post-war enlargement of territorial communities.

In an interview with the local outlet, Most, the Deputy Head of Kherson OMA, Dmytro Butrii, [said](#): “*The administrative and territorial system will be changed, because, taking into account the population and capacity of these communities, infrastructure, human resources, [communities] will not be able to attain even the bottom value of community sustainability, an indicator that mirrors tax revenues and payments to the budget per community member compared to the same revenues to the oblast budget. This will mark enlargement.*”

#### 1.1. Decisions of authorities that affected cohesion

##### >> PREPARATIONS FOR THE WINTER AND THE 2024/2025 HEATING SEASON

Amid ongoing shelling and the Russian aggressors’ attempts to destroy critical infrastructure, the preparations of communities of Kherson oblast for the heating season have gained strategic importance. [According to](#) the oblast authorities of mid-August, boiler houses and heating systems were 53% prepared, taking into account the need to provide 77,000 rural residents with solid fuel.

As part of preparations for the autumn-winter season, the authorities actively sought help wherever they could. The Head of Kherson OMA, Oleksandr Prokudin, [approached](#) the USAID’s Energy Security Project with a request for 4 gas-piston cogeneration units to provide heat to the population of the oblast. Also, the oblast authorities [received](#), in the framework of the Power for Health project by Direct Relief humanitarian or-

ganisation, 195 Tesla Powerwall home battery systems to ensure continuous and uninterrupted power supply for hospitals, ASCs, and rescue teams in difficult times.

The authorities of Donetsk oblast **planned** to provide members of all communities in the areas far from the frontline with centralised heating. However, the issue of stable heating will depend on the intensity of shelling. Since the outbreak of the full-scale invasion, the local authorities have started building alternative fuel boiler houses for important community facilities, including schools and hospitals. These facilities could be used as temporary accommodation points for the population should a power outage occur. Furthermore, the oblast was making extensive preparations for power outages: all critical facilities are now equipped with generators capable of meeting minimal power needs. Even small utility companies and institutions **received** alternative power sources thanks to the efforts of donors.

Heating supply companies of Kharkiv oblast **were provided** with 35 cogeneration units with a total capacity of 15,353 MW, while critical infrastructure facilities had 1,131 generators for backup power supply as of 30 September. The utilities sector was 94% prepared for the heating season.

Block-modular boiler houses, cogeneration units, and gas turbines **were installed** in Kharkiv to supply power to neighbourhoods, since the city no longer generates power due to the destruction of all TPPs and transformers. Decentralisation of life-support systems should help survive normally survive the winter.

According to Mykolaiv authorities, the oblast was almost 80% prepared for the heating season. Support was provided by foreign partners. Specifically, the Kingdom of Denmark **handed over** to the city 6 solid fuel modular boiler houses with a capacity of 0.8 MW.

## >> CONSTRUCTION OF DEFENCE FORTIFICATIONS

According to the government of Ukraine, the construction of defence fortifications for **Mykolaiv** oblast was completed. Defence fortifications were transferred to the balance sheet of the OMA. In **Kher-son** oblast, the constructions works were 97% completed. Almost UAH 147 million **was further allocated** to Zaporizhzhia oblast for building defence fortifications, strengthening defence lines, and installing a system of non-explosive barriers.

Kharkiv OMA **planned** to check, together with the National Scientific Center “Hon. Prof. M. S. Bokarius Forensic Science Institute”, all contractors for the construction of defence fortifications. More than 200 checks were to be carried out in respect of the quality of works, compliance of prices for materials with market ones and of volumes of construction with those indicated in construction completion reports.

## >> REHABILITATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES

The large-scale reconstruction of bridges destroyed during war **was completed** in Mykolaiv oblast. Overall, 19 overpasses were reconstructed. A key one among them was the bridge near Voznesensk built back in 1946. According to the OMA Head, Vitalii Kim, this bridge played an important role during the invasion of Russian troops, because it helped halt their advance northwards of the oblast.

## >> DEMINING

A Mine Action Coordination Center **was established** under Kharkiv OMA to monitor information on the mine action situation in the oblast. Specialised software will make it possible to monitor in real time all mine action processes and to analyse conditions of each individual site in the areas contaminated with explosive devices. The Center should ensure interactions between authorities, law enforcement agencies, public associations, volunteer organisations, and international humanitarian organisations.

Due to actions by the Russian occupiers, more than 40% of the territory of Kharkiv oblast **is considered** potentially dangerous or mined. Since the onset of the full-scale invasion, some 25,000 hectares have been demined. At the time of writing of the report, 26 mechanical demining machines were operating in the oblast, and a new soil preparation machine for humanitarian demining, developed in 2023 by scientists of Kharkiv oblast, was also extensively used.

85 teams were engaged in demining operations in Kharkiv oblast which first inspected critical infrastructure facilities, e. g. water, gas, heat and electricity supply systems, as well as main roads. Since the beginning of demining operations, 1,314 kilometres of highways, 212 kilometres of rails, 3,949 kilometres of power

lines, 352 kilometres of gas pipelines, and 26 kilometres of water lines have been inspected; 207,104 explosive devices have been detected and destroyed.

[According to](#) Mykolaiv OMA, critical infrastructure facilities were fully inspected and cleared of explosive objects in August, while demining of agricultural land remained on the agenda.

Demining operations [were underway](#) in Kherson oblast. Specifically, almost half of the deoccupied right-bank areas of the oblast, or more than 352,000 hectares, were inspected and cleared of mines. Over 199,000 explosives have been detected and destroyed, enabling Kherson farmers to return to work safely.

## >> EVACUATION

The evacuation of frontline communities intensified in August due to the rapid advance of the occupying forces in Donetsk oblast, but somewhat slowed down in September. On the one hand, the militaries managed to halt the advance of the enemy. On the other hand, most people who planned to evacuate have already fled the oblast, leaving there only essential workers or those unwilling to evacuate.

Some residents of Donetsk oblast were sceptical about evacuation. They recalled the events of 2022 when many people fled relatively safe population centres, spent their savings, and were forced to return home. They shaped a belief that there was no reason for evacuation and that the authorities simply deceived them with calls to evacuate. This is precisely how the events are now perceived by them. Furthermore, most cities continue to pretend to lead a normal life: roads are being repaired, flowers are being planted, and new services are being opened. This increases the confidence of the locals in the safe stay in the oblast who treat calls for evacuation by authorities as “white noise”.

The reluctance to leave the area of military operations is also influenced by a sharp curtailment of government benefits to IDPs. Only certain categories of the population currently receive housing benefits, while the relevant ministry regularly reports on a cut in housing spending. Moreover, in August 2024, the government [announced](#) its intention to stop paying compensation to homeowners for housing IDPs under the Prykhystok (Shelter) Programme. In the framework of the Programme, homeowners were paid by international donors (the Red Cross in 2023 and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 2024). An amount of USD15 million allocated for this purpose has been exhausted.

## >> HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

As of early September 2024, Russian troops [destroyed or damaged](#) 1,658 health care facilities in Ukraine, of which 889 have been fully or partially restored to date. Most health care facilities were restored in Mykolaiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Chernihiv oblasts. The matter concerns hospitals in the deoccupied areas and facilities that suffered minor damage (broken windows, destroyed roofs, damaged facades, etc.).

The humanitarian situation in the Ukrainian government-controlled part of Donetsk oblast remained stable. The population had access to necessities and industrial products, power supply systems, water supply systems; health care and social protection facilities operated there. At the same time, the situation in population centres located in the vicinity to the frontline gradually worsened. Since 20 August, offices of [Nova Poshta](#) and [local hospitals](#) have been closed in Myrnohrad. In early September, offices of two banks operating in Pokrovsk [were closed](#). Also, supermarket chains closed, entrepreneurs relocated their businesses, and doctors moved equipment from hospitals. The frontline approached Pokrovsk at a distance of around 8 kilometres.

## >> INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Cooperation with various groups of countries supporting Ukrainians in need extensively evolved; new partnerships capable of providing mutual benefit were established.

Zaporizhzhia OMA and the State of Pennsylvania, the United States, [signed](#) a cooperation agreement between Zaporizhzhia Oblast State Administration and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which provides for cooperation between public authorities, scientific institutions, civil society organisations, and businesses. The key areas of cooperation include energy, agriculture, digital technologies, and defence. The agreement will also aid in the recovery of Zaporizhzhia oblast.

Kharkiv City Council [signed](#) a memorandum of understanding and cooperation with the Ministry of Transport of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland on mapping out a transport strategy for the city of Kharkiv.

A partnership agreement [was signed](#) between Kherson City Territorial Community and Ružinov borough of Bratislava, the Republic of Slovakia.

International donors transferred not only humanitarian goods, but also equipment for municipal and public authorities of Donetsk oblast. In July, the Federal Agency for Technical Assistance of Germany [provided](#) communities of the oblast with vehicles and equipment worth EUR1.9 million. The State Agency for Strategic Reserves of Poland [handed over](#) 24 generators to Pokrovsk. And the Red Cross Society [provided](#) Dobropillia community with 4 devices for disinfecting drinking water.

#### >> INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION

According to the monitoring data on Kharkiv oblast, power banks [were delivered](#) to the Center for Emergency Medical Care and Disaster Medicine as humanitarian aid from communities of Rivne oblast. Generators, charging stations, and lanterns were also [provided](#) as part of interregional cooperation to Iziurm, Derhachiv, Tsyrkuny and Lyptsi communities of Kharkiv oblast.

In response to the deteriorating security situation, some institutions started relocating their property and equipment from Kherson. Specifically, the State Archives of Kherson oblast received premises in Chervivtsi for its funds.

#### >> eRECOVERY PROGRAMME

The [eRecovery](#) programme [was extended](#) to individuals whose homes were damaged or destroyed in the frontline areas and areas of active hostilities. Taking into account the security situation, local commissions can now inspect damaged or destroyed housing in areas with Ukrainian electronic information resources available.

In August, the eRecovery programme's software [was updated](#). From now onwards, a police clearance certificate, required for compensation, could be ordered via Diia digital platform. Along with that, legal representatives of minor or incapacitated owners of damaged housing, or those having a guardian can apply for compensation.

Also, Ukrainians who lost their homes due to the war will have an opportunity to use housing certificates to cover the first housing loan payment under the [eOselia](#) programme.

It has to be mentioned that a mechanism for compensation for destroyed or damaged housing for residents of Luhansk oblast, whose territory is almost completely occupied, is not currently in place. According to the current programme, to receive compensation, a damaged property should be inspected by a commission, though this is impossible because of the occupation of Luhansk oblast.

[According to](#) Kharkiv Oblast Prosecutor's Office, cases of fraud related to attempts to receive compensation for allegedly destroyed housing under the eRecovery programme were reported in Iziurm raion in 2023–2024. In fact, the properties were not damaged during the war, whereas individuals claiming compensation did not have legal title to the properties. Locals, servants of territorial communities, and employees of municipal companies were involved in the fraud scheme. Law enforcement officers carried out more than 25 searches; an investigation continued.

#### >> ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTERS

Due to ongoing shelling and hot weather, Donetsk oblast suffered from forest and steppe fires. Throughout September, forest fires raged in the northern part of the oblast, around the cities of Lyman and Sviatohirsk, having burnt down former tourist sites.

In Kharkiv oblast, forest fires often affected villages located near or even within forest areas. In September, half of the houses in Studenok village [were destroyed](#) (although the village is located in Kharkiv oblast, it suffered from a fire that erupted due to shelling of neighbouring Sviatohirsk community, Donetsk oblast).

## 1.2. Access to public information / information security

In August, Kherson OMA [launched](#) an initiative of showing regular short live broadcasts by Oleksandr Prokudin, Kherson OMA Head. During these broadcasts, he answers questions of social media users. The initiative

is targeted at raising relevant and important issues. However, broadcasts provide only a few short answers to questions which the press service does not comment at all. This means that viewers need to watch the entire live stream to find out all the questions and answers.

The government **channelled** UAH 16.1 million for the creation and operation of a special broadcasting system designed to block anti-Ukrainian broadcasting in Donetsk, Mykolaiv, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia border oblasts of Ukraine. The necessary equipment will be purchased and delivered to the Radio Broadcasting, Radio Communication and Television Concern. The installation and commissioning works are to be completed until the end of 2024.

## 2. Work on identity

On 19 August, a special meeting of the City Council **approved** the programme for the development and functioning of the Ukrainian language in Kharkiv for 2024–2028. The programme provides for holding events aimed at popularising the Ukrainian language, including festivals and contests, replenishment of library funds with Ukrainian-language literature, and creation of media products on Ukrainian studies.

### 2.1. Changes in education standards

In educational facilities of the Ukrainian government-controlled areas of Donetsk oblast, teaching should be continued online. This poses a serious problem, because distance learning has been lasting for five years, starting with the outbreak of the COVID pandemic. This adversely affects the quality of education and social adaptation of children. Moreover, the absence of face-to-face learning in the schools of Donetsk oblast forces parents to transfer their children to schools in other oblasts that provide face-to-face instruction. This significantly reduces the level of school children's identification with communities they left.

The authorities of Donetsk oblast attempted to intensify the development of educational facilities that had relocated to safer oblasts of the country. Specifically, Bakhmut College of Culture and Arts, relocated to Kamianets-Podilskyi, successfully resumed teaching, having retained students and teachers, and **enrolled** new students. 40 youths will become the College's students this year. The local authorities and Donetsk OSA **take care** of this educational facility on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, the oblast leadership **signed** a memorandum of cooperation in July with communities of Rivne and Volyn oblasts aimed at developing two vocational educational facilities relocated to these oblasts.

On 2 September, teaching **commenced** in Kharkiv in classes in six metro stations and in an underground school, with 5,800 children studying in a combined format. Overall, education in Kharkiv schools was planned for 102,000 students, of whom 53,000 physically stay in the city. The number of offline students should increase until the end of the autumn. 3 underground schools were built for the funds of the city budget. These schools are expected to open until the end of the autumn.

More than 7,500 children of Kharkiv oblast **took part** in catch-up classes under a programme aimed at helping children overcome learning gaps because of the war. The programme is implemented by Kharkiv OMA with the assistance of UNICEF and local communities. Since January this year, face-to-face and online classes in Ukrainian language and math have been held for third- to tenth-graders on the basis of 40 locations of the oblast.

On 1 September, 57 educational facilities **launched** face-to-face instruction in Mykolaiv oblast. These are primarily schools of Voznesensk and Pervomaisk raions. Moreover, 94 schools provide learning in a combined format. This means that children shift from online to face-to-face instruction by turn, e. g., in a week's time. Another 277 educational institutions provide online instruction.

68 out of 425 educational facilities were destroyed and 289 were partially damaged in the right-bank areas of **Kherson oblast**. Seven partially damaged facilities have been repaired. Notwithstanding the critical situation, three schools and one kindergarten, located in communities not devastated by daily shelling, will continue providing face-to-face instruction.

According to the Head of Zaporizhzhia OMA, Ivan Fedorov, 122 schools [will provide](#) face-to-face learning in Zaporizhzhia oblast in the new academic year. In his words, the construction of seven underground schools [was under way](#) in the oblast. First underground schools were to open so far this year. Most of them are designed for 1,000 children studying in two shifts. At least, another 5 underground schools will be built next year.

In early September 2024, Zaporizhzhia Investigation Center [published](#) a journalistic investigation which exposed numerous violations during the construction of underground schools in Zaporizhzhia city and Zaporizhzhia oblast and emphasised the lack of transparency of design and construction works, as well as higher prices compared to other oblasts.

In one of Kherson's neighbourhoods, the locals held a rally against the construction of a shelter where an educational facility was to be located. Kherson locals justified their protests by the fact that amid the increased use of enemy reconnaissance UAVs and the intensity of shelling, the open construction might provoke shelling of the neighbourhoods already targeted by attacks. Furthermore, children have to go through dangerous streets to get to the underground school which increased the risk of coming under fire due to the higher volume of movements. Some voiced concerns that the construction could be a waste, or even embezzlement, of budget funds.

## 2.2. Politics of memory: place names, museum work, holidays and their celebration

Decolonisation of place names was underway in Donetsk oblast. Initially, there were 3,711 place names in the oblast that needed to be renamed. The local self-government authorities renamed 2,905 place names, leaving another 806 names unchanged in the TOAs of Mariupol raion and part of Volnovakha raion.

On 23 September, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [renamed](#) more than 40 villages and settlements in Bakhmut, Volnovakha, Horlivka, Donetsk, Kalmius, Mariupol, and Pokrovsk raions of Donetsk oblast. It has to be mentioned that no large-scale discussions on new place names were held with the oblast's locals. The same goes for the renaming of streets in unoccupied cities of the oblast.

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [approved](#), on the second attempt, a draft Resolution that provides for renaming population centres whose names contain symbols of Russian imperial policy or do not meet the state language standards. Among them there are three Russia-occupied cities in Luhansk oblast: Pervomaisk is to be renamed as Sokolohirsk, Molodohvardiisk as Otamanivka, and Sievierodonetsk as Siverskodonetsk.

In Kharkiv oblast, Krasnohrad raion is to be renamed as Berestyn raion in accordance with the Resolution. Furthermore, two cities were renamed, Pervomaiskyi as Zlatopil and Krasnohrad as Berestyn, and another 26 population centres of the oblast received new names.

In Mykolaiv oblast, 18 villages and settlements were renamed. The only exceptions were the cities of Yuzhnoukrainsk and Pervomaisk because of [problems](#) with their renaming to be voted by an individual resolution.

Due to the absence of a public strategy for honouring fallen soldiers, which would have been put on public discussion and properly agreed, local self-government authorities resolve this issue at their own discretion which may cause disputes between different population groups and adversely affect the level of social cohesion.

Specifically, some population centres of Donetsk oblast are renamed in honour of fallen soldiers. Opponents warn of several possible negative consequences: someone of the fallen may be forgotten during renaming; without a large-scale outreach campaign, communities will not understand in whose honour the streets are named which may erode the preservation of memory; hasty decisions may lead to the honouring of those fallen who were formerly involved in war crimes; also in small population centres, the number of streets may be less than the number of the fallen which may cause conflicts.

The idea of creating honourable military burials in the cities of Donetsk oblast also raises doubts because of the real threat of their occupation. Mothers of fallen soldiers from Russia-occupied Bakhmut warn about the danger of creating typical burials and separate sectors in cemeteries, as the graves of soldiers' relatives were easily found by the occupiers and vandalised. The local administrations try to avoid this problem



and make a formal approach to commemoration, limiting themselves to renaming streets, installing memorial plaques, and arranging honourable burial sites.

## 2.3. Freedom of religion

The public continued to discuss cult religious buildings, notably the Holy Dormition Sviatohirsk Lavra in Donetsk oblast, to be taken back into state ownership. In the summer, the Acting Minister of Culture of Ukraine, Rostyslav Karandziej, for the first time [stated](#) the need to take back a number of religious buildings, including Sviatohirsk Lavra, from the Moscow Patriarchate. It has to be mentioned that the Lavra serves as an outpost of the Russian Church in Ukraine's east. Its return to state ownership even as a museum, to say nothing about the transfer of the monastery to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, may radically change the balance of influence of churches in the oblast. Along with that, open protests are unlikely to take place because of active hostilities, evacuation of the population, destruction of a large number of religious buildings, and dispersion of religious communities.

## 3. Joint action

### 3.1. Cooperation at the community–authorities level. Trust in decisions of authorities. Response to the needs, business and civic initiatives

On 29 August, the creation of a new separate structural division of the Department of Veterans Affairs under Kherson OMA [was announced](#). Also, the Council of War Veterans and Families of the Fallen [operates](#) in the oblast and holds meetings once a month. In all 17 deoccupied communities of Kherson oblast, militaries and their loved ones can receive 19 one-stop administrative services in any of the 17 stationary and 39 mobile ASCs.

In Kharkiv, a project on free rehabilitation and prosthetics for militaries and civilians with leg amputations [was launched](#) on the basis of Kharkiv National Medical University.

Peaceful protests under the motto “Don't be silent! Captivity kills!” [were regularly held](#) in Zaporizhzhia, bringing together friends, relatives and loved ones of Ukrainian prisoners to draw attention of the public and authorities to soldiers in captivity.

On 19 August, a decision was made at a meeting of Kharkiv City Council to [extend](#) the exemption of all entrepreneurs from the real estate tax, land tax, and single tax for IEs of the 4th group until the end of 2024.

Kharkiv Business Hub [launched](#) a new business support programme, Broneplivka (Armoured Tape). The initiative is implemented by I Am Saved NGO with the assistance of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). In the framework of the programme, entrepreneurs who are officially registered in Kharkiv, who have been working for more than a year, and who are not in the process of dissolution or on sanction lists, will have windows of the buildings where their businesses are located covered with armoured tape.

On 27 September, representatives of the public, authorities, and international organisations (over 100 participants) [engaged](#) in a discussion on plans and ideas for the recovery of Zaporizhzhia oblast at the local development forum, Public Safety and Recovery. The event was organised by the United Nations Development Programme in Ukraine in partnership with Zaporizhzhia OMA as part of the EU-funded “EU4Recovery – COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT in Ukraine” project.

On 16 August, a dialogue platform entitled “Nonviolent Communication and Conflict Prevention as a Tool for Effective Cooperation and Cohesion” [was held](#) under the auspices of the National Platform for Resilience and Social Cohesion. The event was attended by 20 representatives of communities relocated from the TOAs of Zaporizhzhia oblast, public organisations, Zaporizhzhia Recovery Council, activists, and the media. The main goal of the platform is to strengthen the capacity of relocated communities and IDPs in communication and conflict management to facilitate social cohesion and avoid escalation of conflicts.

## 4. Changes in the social structure

### 4.1. Challenges related to the situation of women and children, people with disabilities

The Council for Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities [was established](#) in Kharkiv oblast. According to Kharkiv OMA, there were some 154,000 people with disabilities in the oblast, of whom 6,400 obtained this status because of the war. At the first meeting of the Council, the issues of sanatorium and resort treatment, provision of rehabilitation means, integration of people with disabilities through employment, pension provision, and accessibility of structural subdivisions of the Pension Fund of Ukraine were discussed.

### 4.2. Needs of displaced persons. Response

[According to](#) the Kharkiv Oblast Employment Center, the demand for employment services among IDPs continued to grow. Within the initial eight months of 2024, 8,500 people were provided with services of the Employment Center, 74.5% up from the same period of the previous year. At the time of writing of the report, more than 3,400 IDPs were provided with employment in Kharkiv oblast.

In Kharkiv oblast, the International Organization for Migration, with the assistance of the USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Affairs, [launched](#) a programme to help IDPs living in collective accommodation centres. Through this programme, the International Organization for Migration will repair a building worth up to UAH 120,000 and provide financial aid for renting temporary housing for a period of up to 6 months (on the condition of moving from collective accommodation centres to the renovated premises for year-round living). The programme is suitable for people who reside in collective accommodation centres, have a permanent residence in unoccupied areas, can safely return home, whose homes need light or medium repairs, and who do not have destroyed homes.

# III. RELATIVELY REAR AREAS CONTROLLED BY THE UKRAINIAN GOVERNMENT

## 1. Changes in the system of governance

Myroslav Biletskyi [was appointed](#) as Acting Head of Zakarpattia OMA. His predecessor, Viktor Mykyta, was appointed as Deputy Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine. Since February 2021, Biletskyi has held the office of First Deputy Head of Zakarpattia OSA. These appointments did not bring about further personnel changes in the OMA's structure.

### 1.1. Decisions of authorities that affected cohesion

#### >> **PREPARATIONS FOR THE WINTER AND THE 2024/2025 HEATING SEASON, ENERGY FACILITIES**

[According to](#) the Ministry of Energy of Ukraine, from October 2022 through September 2024, Ukraine's energy infrastructure facilities suffered more than a thousand attacks, leaving no oblast untouched by strikes. In view of the reduced capacity margin of the energy system, the situation will be more difficult than in the previous winter. The duration of power outages in the country this autumn and winter will depend on a number of factors, including weather conditions and new possible attacks.

Water and heat supply, as well as the maintenance of critical infrastructure facilities in the event of long-term power outages may pose the biggest challenge for Odesa this winter. To prevent it, gas-powered mini power plants were to be installed, with the assistance of Japan, at two large boiler houses of the city.

In Odesa oblast, the installation of new power transmission lines was launched to transport power to its southern parts and thus strengthen the energy independence of the oblast. Since Soviet times, power has been supplied to the south of Odesa oblast through Moldova and the unrecognized breakaway Transnistrian Moldovan Republic. Furthermore, alternative energy sources [were developed](#) to reduce the load on power grids.

Lviv was engaged in strengthening energy sustainability. To build a transformer substation, the city [received](#) 7 free transformers with a total capacity of 7 MW to support the UNBROKEN National Rehabilitation Centre. Equipment worth around UAH 10 million was provided by GoLocal with the assistance of the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ).

Chernivtsi [was](#) about 70% prepared for the heating season. The city planned to complete the installation of 2 cogeneration units provided as part of a grant under a USAID-funded project. The investor was expected to have additional equipment with a capacity of 18 MW provided until November. Cogeneration units will simultaneously produce electricity and heat from gas which will increase the city's energy sustainability.

Missile attacks completely destroyed Burshtyn TPP, forcing the authorities to urgently [look for](#) alternative solutions ahead of the heating season. The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine channelled UAH 105 million from the reserve fund and planned to earmark another UAH 104 million for 2 boiler houses with a capacity of 8 and 10 MW to be built in three months, until the end of the year.

About half of communities of the oblast joined the “Mutual assistance of communities of Prykarpattia in crisis situations” initiative. 34 out of 62 communities of the oblast [allocated](#) over UAH 6.5 million from their budgets for the preparations of Burshtyn community for the heating season.

Prykarpattia [took a lead](#) in Ukraine by the number of installed SPPs as alternative energy sources as of the end of September. According to the OMA, Ivano-Frankivsk oblast ranked fourth by the number of power plants and third by their total capacity. 140 industrial SPPs, 5 mini-SPPs, 2 wind farms, a biogas plant, and a waste processing plant operated in the oblast.

The generation of electricity in the oblast from alternative sources recently [increased](#) by 23–25%, while the authorities supported those willing to receive loans for installing solar panels on the roofs of companies’ buildings, educational and health care institutions, which should significantly reduce the load on the main power grids, Odesa OMA reported.

In September, a wind farm with a capacity of almost 60 MW, a joint project of the Ukrainian company “Ekooptima” and the Czech MND, [was put in operation](#) in Lviv oblast. The total cost of Oriv wind farm project, whose construction was launched in September 2021, is EUR61.5 million. The wind farm’s capacity was increased from initial 55 MW to 60 MW, thereby enabling it to produce almost 160 GWh of electricity per annum, meeting the needs of more than 45,000 households, and contributing to diversification of energy sources in the oblast.

In Zakarpattia oblast, the first wind farm [was put in operation](#) in test mode. The wind farm is equipped with a turbine with a capacity of 4.8 MW and is capable of providing electricity for up to 3,000 households.

Wind farms are also to be built in the mountains at an altitude of 1,300–1,500 metres, notably in the protected Carpathian highlands, including Polonyna Runa, Liutianska Holytsia, and Vododilnyi Ridge. However, the project implementation is accompanied by scandals, since, according to environmental activists, the construction of wind farms in unique and valuable for Ukraine mountain areas may harm the [Emerald network](#) and adversely affect the ecosystems, traditional farming, and local green tourism.

## >> INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Zakarpattia oblast [was preparing](#) to sign a memorandum of cooperation with the State of New York, USA. Also, the construction of a 261-metre bridge across the Tisza River [was launched](#) in the oblast, with the financial support of the Romanian government. As part of the cross-border cooperation programme, Interreg NEXT Hungary–Slovakia–Romania–Ukraine, 33 projects with an estimated budget of EUR15 million [are being implemented](#) in Zakarpattia oblast.

Representatives of Chernivtsi City Council held a series of meetings with delegations from [Germany](#), [Romania](#), [Indonesia](#), and [Canada](#) to discuss areas of educational cooperation, inter-municipal partnerships, support for local businesses, assistance to the militaries, and shelters for IDPs. The interlocutors also addressed relocated businesses and possibilities of their support.

The Special Envoy of the President of France for Ukraine’s Relief and Reconstruction, Pierre Heilbronn, [visited](#) Lviv. At a meeting with the Mayor of Lviv, Andrii Sadovyi, possible areas of cooperation were discussed, notably a project for the construction of a tram track to the UNBROKEN National Rehabilitation Centre. The French government allocated a EUR5 million grant for the project, while the city of Cannes supported the creation of a new modern centre for the elderly.

Ukraine’s Zakarpattia oblast, together with international partners, won 5 grant projects worth a total of EUR1.9 million under the Interreg NEXT Hungary–Slovakia–Romania–Ukraine cross-border cooperation programme. The projects are targeted at facilitating tourism opportunities in the oblast, preserving cultural heritage, and developing cross-border cooperation with Romania.

The Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Ukraine, closed following the outbreak of the full-scale war, resumed its operation in Odesa. On 31 August, the newly appointed Consul General of the Republic of Poland, Jacek Gocłowski, [was introduced](#) in the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Roman Catholic Church in Odesa. He emphasised the importance of resuming the Consulate’s operation to support Ukraine and the local Polish community.

## >> INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION

On 6 September, another group of utility workers from Ivano-Frankivsk [went](#) to Donetsk oblast to build defence fortifications to support Ukraine's militaries. For some of them, it was the first trip, whereas for others it was the sixth. Notwithstanding the risks of shelling, they have been working there every day for a month.

On 5 September, Liubeshiv community of Volyn oblast and Yasinia community of Zakarpattia oblast [agreed](#) on inter-municipal cooperation and are already adopting best practices for creating volunteer fire brigades and safety classes, supporting youth initiatives, developing tourism and local business, and promoting cultural heritage.

A multi-genre festival, Kharkiv: (Un)Relocated Culture, estimated to number of over 1,200 people [was carried out](#) in September. 15 art events were held in the city. More than 100 artists and cultural figures from Kharkiv took part in the festival. They presented works created following the onset of the full-scale invasion.

## >> RAILWAY

Within the framework of the EU funding programme, Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), a project for the integration of Ukraine's railway network into the EU transport system [was approved](#). The project, estimated at almost EUR43 million, provides for improving the railway network and developing a 1,435 mm gauge to ensure technological compatibility and increase the capacity of the railway infrastructure railway track to ensure technological compatibility and increase the carrying capacity of railway infrastructure in some sections of Lviv, Chernivtsi, and Zakarpattia oblasts.

## >> OPERATION OF PORTS

The ports of Greater Odesa [handled](#) 7 million tons of goods in August, more than twice the turnover rate of 3.3 million tons recorded for 2023, with grain and ore being the primary freight commodities.

## 2. Work on identity

In August, Chernivtsi City Council [approved](#) the Regulations on the Coordination Council on Establishing Ukrainian National and Civic Identity.

As part of the Bukovynski Maliopysy project, implemented by the youths of MediaHubBukovyna, the first patriotic comic of the series, Super-Fedko and the Missing Folk Song, [was released](#). This comic about a superhero symbolises the struggle for independence and is aimed at shaping the national and civic identity of children and youths.

### 2.1. Changes in education standards

In the new academic year, schools [launched](#) a model class, Defence of Ukraine, for tenth- and eleventh-graders with the purpose of shaping a national identity. Considerable emphasis was placed on practical skills for life protection and mutual aid, such as terrain orientation, weapon training, fundamentals of engineering fortifications, and first pre-medical aid, through the use of up-to-date equipment, including computer simulations and interactive simulators. Tenth-graders will study the principles of national security and military technologies, whereas eleventh-graders will learn military technologies, information security, and the protection of civilians in crisis situations.

65 centres [were to open](#) in Prykarpattia to conduct Defence of Ukraine classes, of which 54 will operate in secondary educational institutions and the rest in vocational and technical educational institutions and colleges, at a rate of one centre for approximately 5–10 schools. Tenth- and eleventh-graders [will study](#) Defence of Ukraine in national and patriotic education centres in Lviv. In [Chernivtsi](#), the class will be run by special teaching centres to be established in the Military and Sports Lyceum and the Philosophical and Legal Lyceum No. 2.

In 2024, 199 lyceum graduates from 23 oblasts of Ukraine [were admitted](#) to the Heroes of Kruty Lviv Lyceum. The specific feature of this year's admission is the first admission of girls to the 10th grade, for whom appropriate living conditions have been created.

The first state Ukrainian–Hungarian bilingual secondary school and gymnasium [opened](#) their doors in Budapest. This event was preceded by a long-term work of a bilateral working group and accords between the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyi, and the Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Orbán. From 1 September, Ukrainian children living in Hungary started studying in the full five-day school that provides instruction for first- to twelfth-graders in their native language. Furthermore, children will learn Hungarian as a foreign language.

## 2.2. Language politics

In response to a high-profile murder on 19 July 2024 in Lviv of a vociferous linguist and Svoboda Party's former member of parliament, Iryna Fariion, Ivano-Frankivsk City Council adopted a [programme for popularising the Ukrainian language](#) in August. Specifically, Hvardiiska Street will be named after the stateswoman. Police [are investigating the murder](#).

In September, the Mayor of Ivano-Frankivsk, Ruslan Martsinkiv, [announced](#) a public initiative of language inspectors to counteract the growing use of the Russian language in the city. Russian propaganda immediately used this novelty for spreading a fake about severe punishment for speaking Russian in Ukrainian cities. The fake was also spread by the international media outlets, notably by Germany's *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Der Spiegel*. After that, the author of the initiative had to make public [excuses](#), saying the matter concerned not language inspectors, but public activists who will not punish, but will popularise the state language. The State Language Protection Commissioner, Taras Kremen, [claimed](#) that there have never been and will never be any language inspectors in Ukraine.

## 2.3. Politics of memory: place names, museum work, holidays and their celebration

Decommunisation and renaming of streets [continued](#) in Chernivtsi oblast. A total of 1,550 toponyms were renamed as of early August. Chernivtsi OMA renamed another 252 streets which communities failed to rename until 27 July in accordance with the requirements of the law. Most often, streets were renamed in honour of prominent local figures, such as writers Yurii Fedkovich and Olha Kobylanska, astronaut Leonid Kadeniuk, composers and singers Volodymyr Ivasiuk and Nazarii Yaremchuk, and actor Ivan Mykolaichuk.

Zakarpattia OMA [renamed](#) 100 streets in communities of the oblast as part of decommunisation reform. Odesa City Council [scheduled](#) 19 monuments in the city for dismantling under a decommunisation campaign. Among the statues to be pulled down are those to proletarian writer Maxim Gorky, Russian poet Alexander Pushkin, Russian emperor Alexander II, Komsomol partisan Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, as well as models of the Order of Lenin, the mass grave of red guards who died in 1918 while establishing Soviet regime in Odesa, a monument to Komsomol members of Odesa, cultural figures of the Soviet era, etc.

Discussions took place in Odesa about the demolition of monuments to Russian prominent figures. The Mayor of Odesa, Hennadii Trukhanov, [was against](#) demolishing monuments to Alexander Pushkin and Mikhail Vorontsov, considering them important for the city. According to him, Pushkin is part of Odesa history and world culture. He said if the monument is removed from the pedestal in Odesa, he will not cease to be admired in France, England or Italy. As for Vorontsov, the Mayor also mentioned the historical connection between the Russian count and the city's development, saying: *"The information space is open, and everyone can now read the history of the creation of the city. A word dropped from a song makes it wrong. Rejecting historical figures of this kind means taking a head-in-the-sand approach. You cannot put your head in the sand and pretend there isn't a problem."*

On 29 August, the Alley of Heroes, designated as a space to commemorate soldiers who gave their lives for Ukraine, its freedom and independence, [was opened](#) in Odesa's Taras Shevchenko Park. The alley was created with the participation of the relatives of the fallen, mothers, wives, and sisters. Today, hundreds of names of fighters who took part in ATO, JFO, and in battles during the full-scale invasion are immortalised here.

In Chernivtsi, commemoration events were regularly held to honour the fallen, serving as a constant reminder of the courage, heroism, and self-sacrifice of Ukrainians who have defended their homeland from the Russian invasion. In September, Chernivtsi locals [honoured](#) servicemen of the 128th Mountain Assault Brigade from Bukovyna who defended Ukraine.

## 2.4. Freedom of religion

On 19 August, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [adopted](#) a law on amendments to certain laws of Ukraine on the activities of religious organisations in Ukraine. The Law bans the activities of religious organisations in Ukraine with a governing centre in the aggressor country and gives them nine months to sever ties. The State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Policy and Freedom of Conscience has the right to sue religious organisations that have not severed their connection with the Russian Orthodox Church. Signing the Law on Ukraine's Independence Day, 24 August, the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyi, [mentioned](#) spiritual independence of the Ukrainian people and said that the *"Ukrainian Orthodox Church today is taking a step towards liberation from Moscow's devils"*.

In Odesa, the debate surrounding the Law grew heated, as its implementation could affect the city's religious communities. Archpriest Yevhen Hutiar, Secretary of Odesa Diocese of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, [said](#) the new draft Law is politically motivated and is unlikely to be implemented. Also, representatives of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate believe that the church has already severed all ties with the Moscow Patriarchate at the Synod in Feofaniia in 2022.

At the same time, the Orthodox Church of Ukraine believed that the new Law would facilitate the conversion of religious communities under its jurisdiction. Archpriest Theodor Orobets, Secretary of Odesa Diocese of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, expressed hope for an increase in the number of communities in Odesa willing to join it. He noted that in some cases, a distance to the nearest priest of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine reaches 70 kilometres which complicates the provision of parishes with pastoral care. Orobets also emphasised that the Law is targeted at ensuring the religious security of Ukraine.

On 20 August, Chernivtsi-Bukovyna Diocese of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate [made](#) a post on its Facebook page, saying: "The actions of the majority of MPs in the Verkhovna Rada are not aimed at consolidating the population, but, unfortunately, at dividing and weakening it." The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate [was expelled](#) from the Council of Churches under Chernivtsi OSA consisting of 14 representatives of various religious denominations. [According to](#) scientists, this church preserves a reference to the Letter of Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia.

A similar process was reported in Zakarpattia oblast. Representatives of religious organisations [demanded](#) that the Head of the Interconfessional Spiritual Council under Zakarpattia OMA convene a meeting of council members to consider the expediency of membership of representatives of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate in the Council of Churches under Zakarpattia OMA, as well as the inclusion of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in the Council.

Within two years, 43 religious communities of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate changed their affiliation or were closed in Lviv oblast due to which the oblast [has](#) the fewest number of religious communities in the country, 11.

In Uzhhorod, the rite of ordination and enthronement of Bishop Ordinary Theodor of Mukachevo Greek Catholic Diocese [took place](#). The event is unique, because, for the first time since 1932, a bishop appointed specifically for the Mukachevo Greek Catholic Diocese was ordained in Zakarpattia. [Mukachevo Greek Catholic Diocese](#) is an ecclesiastical and administrative unit of the Byzantine rite subordinated to the Holy See.

## 2.5. National minorities

The Romanian community of Chernivtsi oblast stepped up cultural, educational and religious cooperation with the Romanian state. In the framework of cooperation, carried out through the Department for Romanians from

Everywhere, joint projects are implemented, including the unveiling of the Stephen the Great Monument, Moldavia's ruler of the 15th to the early 16th century, in Hrushivtsi, the consecration of a church in Bancheny and a bell tower in Yordaneshty. The main challenge of cooperation was the absence of representatives of Ukrainian authorities at these events, despite the presence of those of the Consulate General of Romania in Chernivtsi.

A "Teaching materials for primary school students in Ukraine (Chernivtsi, Zakarpattia, and Odesa oblasts)" project [has been ongoing](#) since May. The project is geared towards creating a set of exercise books (calligraphy exercise book for first-graders and "I explore the world" work book for second-graders). The exercise books will be handed over free of charge to primary school students of Romanian-language schools in the three oblasts where ethnic Romanians live. The project is implemented with the assistance of the Department for Romanians from Everywhere and in partnership with Chernivtsi-based BucPress Media Center, the Association of Romanian Teachers of Odesa Oblast, and the Association of Young Romanians of Zakarpattia.



Photo: Exercise books developed under the "Teaching materials for primary school students in Ukraine (Chernivtsi, Zakarpattia, and Odesa oblasts)". Source: [BucPress](#)

In the 2024/2025 academic year, schools of Odesa oblast with the Romanian language of instruction [will operate](#) with methodological support from the Institute of Postgraduate Pedagogical Education of Chernivtsi oblast. The initiative aims to improve the quality of education and provide effective teaching methods for teachers.



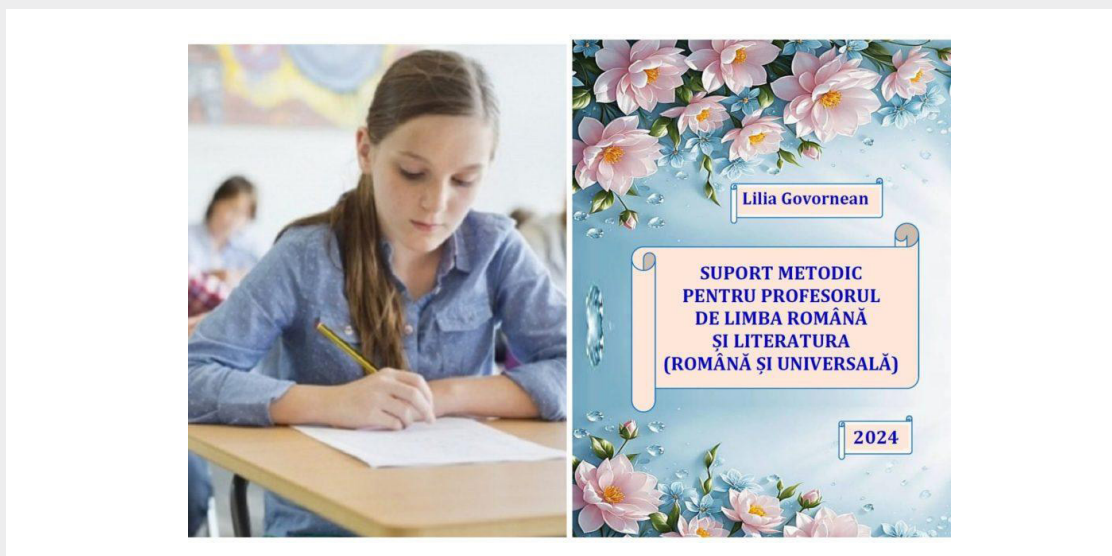


Photo: Guidance manual for teachers of Romanian language and literature (Romanian and general) authored by Lilia Govornean. Source: [BucPress](#)

On 15–18 July, Horbova secondary school, located in an area traditionally populated by more than 90% of ethnic Romanians, [opened](#) an admission point for students at Stefan cel Mare University in the Romanian city of Suceava. Students who study in Romanian are expected to receive free tuition, while ethnic Romanian applicants are expected to receive scholarships within a total of free places.

### 3. Joint action

#### 3.1. Cooperation at the community–authorities level. Trust in decisions of authorities. Response to the needs, business and civic initiatives

On 16 August, the USAID's HOVERLA Activity team and Odesa OMA [presented](#) an Analytical Portal, a geo-information intellectual system with the most up-to-date data on the oblast. The Analytical Portal, built on geo-spatial data, allows for a detailed analysis of various aspects of life in the oblast, including urban development planning, natural resource assessment, environmental monitoring, and social infrastructure analysis. The Portal's statistics will help identify which facilities require major repairs, where new road sections should be constructed, and where cell phone towers need to be installed.

##### >> **NEEDS OF WAR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

A pilot project to support the adaptation of war veterans and their families [was launched](#) in Chernivtsi community. Experts will provide counselling to war veterans on obtaining veteran status, benefits, housing, rehabilitation services, and employment, help starting their own business, and provide legal aid. The UNDP-funded project is implemented by Rokada Chernivtsi Charitable Foundation in partnership with the Social Policy Department of Chernivtsi City Council for the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine.

In July, a one-stop shop, veteran complex administrative services centre, [was opened](#) for war veterans, their family members, people with disabilities due to the war, and relatives of fallen defenders. 31 ASCs were involved in its operation.

Chernivtsi oblast [joined](#) a project to install mobile rehabilitation modules, unique spaces for the physical and psychological rehabilitation of those affected by the Russian invasion. The mobile rehabilita-

tion module is a barrier-free modular house with an area of 72 square meters, equipped with high-quality rehabilitation equipment. These spaces are integrated into the local health care system and significantly facilitate rehabilitation.

A Veteran Development Centre **was opened** at Uzhhorod National University to contribute to the professional adaptation of war veterans, demobilised defenders, members of their families and families of fallen heroes and help them return to a peaceful life. This is the 19th institution in the network being developed by the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine.

In Odesa, children of fallen soldiers **will receive** benefits worth UAH 10,000 for the academic year. Benefits will be paid to families of dead or deceased militaries registered in the city's Department of Labour and Social Policy.

In Lviv, the number of free services provided to the militaries under a fitness reimbursement programme **was increased**. From now onwards, the militaries are entitled to free rehabilitation services, including therapeutic physical training, electrical stimulation, hardware procedures, various types of medical and therapeutic massage, and reflexology. Services are designed to support the militaries in physical recovery and rehabilitation.

### >> PROGRAMMES TO SUPPORT BUSINESS

Businesses, forced to relocate to other oblasts due to Russia's armed aggression on 24 February 2022, **can take advantage** of a programme of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. *"Due to the programme, companies can relocate their equipment faster, resume production processes, adapt to new conditions, ensure stable operation, save jobs and sustainable development in the future. Furthermore, the participation in the programme opens up access to new opportunities and partnerships, which can enhance the competitiveness of companies in the domestic and foreign markets,"* Lviv OMA said in a message.

In Vyzhnytsia, Chernivtsi oblast, the Made in Ukraine office **was opened** to support small and micro business. The office provides information on government initiatives, oblast support programmes, and grant programmes. The latter include the Own Business and Grant for war veterans and their family members programmes supported by the employment service. The office also notifies of compensation programmes for employers that provide for arranging workplaces for people with disabilities and employing IDPs.

BF TERMINAL production and transshipment complex in Berehove raion, Zakarpattia oblast, is one of three industrial parks that **was awarded** public funding under the Made in Ukraine programme. UAH 148 million will be spent for the construction of railway tracks and electrical infrastructure facilities. The implementation of this large-scale project will help create jobs for some 2,000 people and foster community development.

A network of industrial parks was also expanded in Ivano-Frankivsk oblast. On 24 September, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine **included** Kalush Production which will create more than 2,000 jobs in the community. The park's production capacity will include the manufacture of chemicals and products, furniture, finished metal products, non-metallic mineral products, paper, as well as rubber and plastic products. The project envisages the development of infrastructure that will create favourable conditions for attracting investors, expanding industrial capacity and stimulating economic growth in the oblast.

## 3.2. Cooperation at the level of society. Initiatives. Trust between groups

### >> AID FOR THE AFU

The resilience of communities in the face of Russian aggression is shaped due to self-organisation of volunteer communities that effectively respond to military requests. One of the most striking examples of the above initiative is **Seraphym** drone workshop, opened in February 2024 near Ivano-Frankivsk. Within six months, a team of volunteers produced more than 500 FPV drones. The project demonstrates not only a creative approach, but also economic efficiency. Drones cost almost twice cheaper than those produced by market counterparts. More than 20 volunteers joined the initiative in half a year. Moreover, the workshop is provided with stable financial support from the so-called support groups, i. e. friends, relatives of the milita-

ries, and others concerned who monthly donate UAH 500,000 for the purchase of parts for manufacturing approximately 60 drones.

In September, another 450 FPV drones [were handed over](#) to the militaries of Lviv oblast as part of a Birds of Victory project. According to Lviv OMA, the project raised UAH 218 million to produce almost 10,500 drones that help confront the enemy on the front lines.

The staff of Chernivtsi Oblast Council [decided](#) to monthly donate their one-day earnings for the purchase of drones for the AFU.

A demobilised military, Vasyl Bondarenko, [founded](#) a company, Bdzholy Bessarabii (Bees of Bessarabia), in Odesa. The company produces 1,000 drones per month, with plans to ramp up monthly production up to 10,000 drones, and offer a variety of models, including scout, disposable, bomber, and special delivery drones.

## >> MASS RALLIES

On the International Day of the Disappeared, a Waiting to Hear documentary [was screened](#) in [Odesa's](#) Prymorskyi Boulevard. Families of the missing, representatives of veteran and public organisations, Odesa locals, and guests of the city gathered to honour the memory of those lost in action and shared their stories. Some 100 people took part in the action.

On 4 August, another peaceful protest in support of prisoners of war [was held](#) in the Central Square of Chernivtsi. Families of prisoners of war and those concerned rallying under the motto “Don’t be silent! Captivity kills! Let’s unite for the sake of heroes’ lives” once again drew attention of the world community and Ukrainian authorities to their relatives and loved ones still in captivity.



Photo: A peaceful protest under the motto “Don’t be silent! Captivity kills! Let’s unite for the sake of heroes’ lives” in support of prisoners of war in Chernivtsi on 4 August 2024. Source: [Breaking News Media](#)

## 4. Changes in the social structure

### 4.1. Challenges related to the situation of women and children, people with disabilities

Prykarpattia [received](#) more than UAH 45 million in state subsidies for the purchase of housing for large foster families relocated from the frontline areas to Ivano-Frankivsk oblast. 14 such families raising 112 children have

found safe shelter in the oblast so far. Seven family-type children's homes are in need of adequate housing which they plan to purchase for state subsidies.

On 29 August, a new building of Donbas-Prykarpattia rehabilitation centre **was opened** in Uhryniv community, Ivano-Frankivsk oblast. The rehabilitation centre relocated from Kramatorsk, Donetsk oblast, and will provide a wide range of rehabilitation services to people with disabilities from all over Ukraine. With the help of international donors, an elevator worth UAH 3.5 million was installed in the centre.

A house of supported living for youths with disabilities **was opened** in Hlybochok village, Chernivtsi raion. The youths will learn to independently live and provide for their household needs. Although the pilot project is being implemented without funding, the initiative is to be continued in view of its importance for young people.

Internally displaced women with children **will be able** to live in the Unbreakable Mothers Centre in Lviv. A woman can live here until two years of the child's age. However, the period can be extended up to the age of three years. This decision by the Executive Committee of Lviv City Council extends the previous period of residence of up to the age of one year.

The construction of a shelter for single mothers with children **completed** in Berehove with the support of the Hungarian government. The shelter has five separate apartments for the long-term residence of five families. The project budget totals around UAH 8 million.

## 4.2. Needs of displaced persons. Response

### >> HOUSING FOR IDPS

With a total project budget of EUR10.5 million, housing **is to be built** in Chernivtsi under the "EU Support for Urgent Housing Needs for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Ukraine" action. The project involves the construction of two residential complexes with a total of 144 apartments for 615 people.

In Neresnytsia village of Tiachiv raion, Zakarpattia oblast, a modular town for IDPs **was opened** through the assistance of international partners, Caritas Czech Republic and People in Need Slovakia charity organisations. Seven families from Kharkiv, Kherson, Donetsk, and Zaporizhzhia oblasts have already moved into; another three houses are ready to be delivered to their owners. With the financial assistance of Zakarpattia OMA, oblast and local budgets, the modular town was connected to utility lines and landscaping was arranged.

The organised reception of evacuees **continued** in Zakarpattia. Unfortunately, IDPs were accommodated in extremely remote communities of the oblast with limited social infrastructure. Specifically, 78 people came from Pokrovsk to Zakarpattia oblast by evacuation train. IDPs were taken by bus to temporary accommodation places in the villages of Zhornava and Vyshka in Uzhhorod raion, as well as in the town of Vynohradiv and the village of Zatysivtsi in Berehove raion.

### >> SUPPORT AND ADAPTATION OF IDPS

An integration centre for internally displaced persons **was opened** in Sokyriany community, Chernivtsi oblast, under the "Promoting Sustainable Support for IDPs in Collective Centres and Beyond in Western and Central Ukraine" project implemented by Poshuk Innovatsii (Search for Innovations) with the financial assistance of Acted Ukraine.



Photo: Integration centre for IDPs opened in Sokyriany community in early August 2024. Source: [Sokyriany community's website](#)

During a public marathon in Chernivtsi on 12 July, Together or Separate: Ways to Unity through the Challenges of War, the National Platform for Resilience and Social Cohesion and the Regional Universal Scientific Library named after Mykhailo Ivasiuk discussed the integration of IDPs into communities and presented the activities of mobile teams providing psychological support.

### 4.3. Needs of volunteers of Territorial Defence Forces. Response. Mobilisation

Throughout the summer, AFU recruitment centres [have been opening](#) all over Ukraine. According to Oleksii Bezhevets, Ukraine's Defence Ministry authorised representative for recruiting, these centres will operate in all oblasts of the country. More than 16,000 persons applied to recruitment centres as of early September.

In September, Ukrposhta [started sending](#) conscription notices, generated by the Register of Reservists, to those liable for military service. Unlike the previous method of serving enlistment letters, now conscription notices are served even in the absence of actual personal delivery or the absence of a person at the place of registration. In case of non-appearance at a TRSSC after receiving a conscription notice, a reservist is held administratively liable.

From 1 January 2024 through 13 August 2024, the Office of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights [received](#) 1,634 reports of violations of rights by TRSSCs. In 2023, 561 such reports were received.

The stepping up of mobilisation efforts had a strong impact on the relatively rear areas, prompting a shortage of labour, a decline in official employment, and an increase in social discontent. Often, mobilisation efforts of TRSSCs were accompanied by violations of ethical and legal rules, triggering a public backlash and resistance.

In September, the number of reports on criminal cases against those seeking to evade military service in the AFU increased. Since the outbreak of the full-scale war, 569 cases of orchestrating illegal border crossings [have been registered](#) in Chernivtsi oblast. The price for such services starts from USD6,000, while media often focus on evasion schemes.

In Odesa oblast, law enforcement officers [shut down](#) two criminal schemes for transferring persons liable for military service across the border, the Security Service of Ukraine reported on 11 September. The masterminds of these illegal transfers helped Ukrainian men to cross the state border bypassing checkpoints, having received up to USD9,000 for their 'services'.

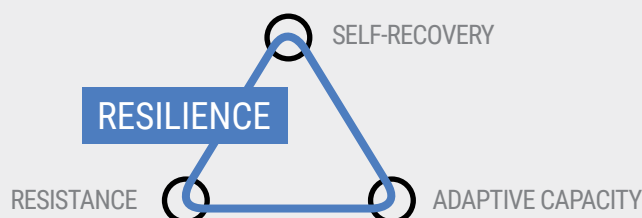
In Zakarpattia oblast, the sentences for the orchestrators of illegal transfer of those seeking to evade military service in the AFU [were](#) flexible, which made it possible to receive a much less severe punishment. For example, according to a ruling by Uzhhorod City District Court, a Zakarpattia local had to pay UAH 17,000 in fine for bribing a border guard and was sentenced to 5 years in prison for illegal transfer of a person liable for military service across the border, with a 3-year ban on holding particular offices. Yet, he was released from a prison sentence, with a probation period of 2 years. Also, the perpetrator donated UAH 90,000 to the AFU.

On 10 September, the Deputy Head of Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast TRSSC and two employees of the district TRSSC [were accused](#) of bribery. The amounts of unlawful benefits ranged from UAH 2,000 to USD1,000, depending on the complexity of the 'request' for the services of that kind. The suspects may face imprisonment of up to 10 years, a 3-year ban on holding particular offices or carrying out particular activities, and confiscation of property.

# DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

## Conceptual framework of the approach of the National Platform for Resilience and Social Cohesion

**RESILIENCE** means a social practice at the national, oblast, and local levels that offers opportunities to overcome challenges and adapt to transformations.



We measure resilience in the following three dimensions:

- **adaptive capacity** of social systems and institutions to crises and sudden environmental changes,
- **self-recovery** that means mobilisation of citizens, institutions to jointly solve various humanitarian, social, and security tasks,
- **resistance** means stabilisation of models of cooperation between the government, business community, and civil society which contributes to increasing the level of cross-sectoral trust in the course of transformation.

**SOCIAL COHESION** means the state of relationships in society between social groups (horizontal cohesion) and between society and the authorities (vertical cohesion). It is measured by the levels of trust and norms of reciprocity (development of positive social capital); the strength of civil society; and conflict management institutions being in place (e. g., responsible democracy, independent judiciary, etc.).

**RESILIENCE AND SOCIAL COHESION ARE BASED** on common approaches, shared values, and versatile models of cooperation.

### >> FOCUS

- on actors, changes in the governance, assessment of vulnerability, adaptive capacity, and transformation as opposed to return to the previous state.

### >> DATA COLLECTION:

- temporarily occupied and frontline areas – Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, and Kharkiv oblasts
- Ukrainian government-controlled areas where military operations are not taking place – Odesa, Mykolaiv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Zakarpattia, and Chernivtsi oblasts.

**DATA SOURCES:** publications in the media, decisions of authorities, draft decisions of authorities, data of surveys and public opinion polls, data of social networking sites, reports of non-governmental organisations, and any other publicised information. The data are collected by coordinators of the National Platform for Resilience and Social Cohesion in 11 oblasts, based on data sources, their own understanding of the state of affairs and involvement in local cohesion processes.

**>> PROBLEMS**

In the temporarily occupied areas:

- Dynamics of occupation. The advance of Russian troops, the situation in occupied population centres; opinion of the population of the oblast / community / political forces regarding Russia's occupation and military actions.
- Changes in the system of governance. Decisions and information of the occupying authorities; cases of collaborationism; seizure of property; expropriation of products by the occupying administrations.
- Humanitarian situation. Filtration measures of the occupying authorities; forced deportation and its routes; hostage taking; recruitment into armed formations; nature of evacuation; destruction; access to health care services.
- Work on identity. The operation of educational facilities; relocation of school children, students, and teachers; forced Russification; Russian state education standards; politics of memory: place names, museum activity, holidays and their celebration; activities of religious organisations.
- Changes in the social structure. Challenges related to the situation of women, children, and people with disabilities.

In the Ukrainian government-controlled areas where military operations are not taking place:

- Dynamics of military operations. Shelling and attacks / weapons used against the civilian population; destruction.
- Changes in the system of governance. The organisation of activities of authorities and access of citizens to decision-making at the local level; access to public information; coordination of actions of volunteers and authorities, as well as actions between authorities at a variety of levels, authorities and the militaries, volunteers and the militaries, etc.
- Humanitarian situation. The accessibility of drinking water, food, communication, electricity; access to health care services; provision with humanitarian aid at the oblast level.
- Changes in the social environment. The attitudes in communities to changes in symbols, calendars (holidays, memorial days); renaming of streets and other public places; operation of educational facilities, relocation of school children, students, and teachers; civil society and business community, labour market.
- The situation of internally displaced persons. The availability of housing and employment; integration into the host community; networking.

**>> THE PUBLISHING FREQUENCY OF THE REPORT**

The initial monitoring report covers the first four months of the large-scale invasion (from February through June), starting on 24 February 2022; the monitoring reports Nos. 2–9 have a two-month timeframe, and those including and following the monitoring report No. 10 have a three-month timeframe.





## ABOUT UKRAINIAN CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT POLITICAL RESEARCH

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# RESILIENCE AND COHESION OF UKRAINIAN SOCIETY DURING THE WAR

Periodic report based on monitoring materials from selected regions of Ukraine  
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