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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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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, in particular, 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 "Building Resilience to Conflict through Dialogue" project.

The report is based on data on events in 12 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, Kharkiv, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, Lviv, and Zakarpattia oblasts. For data collection, we distinguish between the temporarily occupied areas, frontline areas, and rear areas.

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The product content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily reflect the official 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.

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SUMMARY

Temporarily occupied, deoccupied and frontline areas

Within March–April 2023, several important events have taken place with respect to the temporarily occupied areas of Ukraine. Specifically, in late April, Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a decree for the deportation of Ukrainians from the areas of Ukraine occupied by Russia. The [decree](#) “On the peculiarities of the legal status of certain categories of foreigners and stateless persons in the Russian Federation” of 27 April 2023 says that citizens of Ukraine living in the occupied areas of Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Luhansk, and Donetsk oblasts who decide to retain Ukrainian citizenship can live there until 1 July 2024. After that, they can be deported.

At the same time, on 14 March 2023, the State Duma of the Russian Federation adopted a law according to which Ukrainians living under the occupation who had received Russian passports can renounce Ukrainian citizenship by filing relevant applications with the Russian authorities.

On 17 March 2023, the International Criminal Court in The Hague issued arrest warrants for Vladimir Putin and *Maria Lvova-Belova*, *Commissioner for Children’s Rights under the President of the Russian Federation*. The court’s notice [says](#) they are suspected of the illegal deportation of children from Ukraine.

On 27 April, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) recognised the deportations and forcible transfers of Ukrainian children to the territory of the Russian Federation as a crime of genocide. According to the [resolution](#) 2495 (2023) “Deportations and forcible transfers of Ukrainian children and other civilians to Russian Federation or to Ukrainian territories temporarily occupied: create conditions for their safe return, stop these crimes and punish the perpetrators”, the Ukrainian government reported in mid-April 2023 that 19,384 children had been deported to Russia of whom only 361 children returned, while the fate of many thousands more remains unclear.

In Kherson oblast, the following challenges have remained serious: a) daily massive artillery strikes of the territory and civilian facilities by the occupiers; b) damage to critical infrastructure facilities, primarily power grids. Dozens of population centres have been left without electricity since the last year’s autumn; c) mining of thousands of hectares which prevented farming on most lands of the right-bank part of Kherson oblast.

The situation in the frontline should be decisive for the further development of the oblast. The stabilisation can be considered as the worst-case scenario for the future of Kherson oblast and the city of Kherson, because the outflow of population, the destruction of residential quarters and infrastructure will continue. Elderly people and socially vulnerable people continue to remain there so far.

Within March–April, positive trends in the stabilisation of management processes have continued in the oblast. The personnel potential has been gradually restored. Military administrations have paid attention to public criticism and dismissed those publicly criticised. The reasons for the dismissals are their former membership in pro-Russian parties, and participation in shady transactions.

The occupiers have attempted to complete in a short time the integration of life of the left-bank communities of Kherson oblast into the Russian system. To this end, several pressure campaigns have been carried out. First, the occupying authorities launched the passporting of the local populations. Second, they re-registered property and businesses. Third, they eventually withdrew the Ukrainian currency from circulation. Fourth, the occupiers established branches of Russian political parties and public organisations. Fifth, they included the newly occupied areas in the system of propaganda campaigns and structures. In the occupied part of Kherson oblast, preparations began for the so-called elections scheduled for 10 September 2023. All those events in the oblast have been rolled out against the backdrop of a policy of terror and intimidation of the local populations.

Due to the proximity of Zaporizhzhia oblast to the frontline, it continued to suffer from ongoing shelling and to experience significant destruction which has remained its main security problem. Notwithstanding the dangerous situation, the authorities continued to operate and ensure the functioning of the territories. The oblast authorities cooperated with international organisations, and oblast communities received humanitarian aid.

International banks lifted particular restrictions on the use of currency accounts which were due to an incorrect interpretation of the status of Zaporizhzhia oblast and thereby unblocked operation of many businesses.

Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Rafael Grossi, said that during his visit to Russia-occupied Zaporizhzhia NPP, he had witnessed “increasing military activities”. In late April, according to the estimations of the Ministry of Energy of Ukraine, the situation at the plant has been deteriorating, primarily as regards its technical operation.

In Zaporizhzhia oblast, the occupiers built three lines of defence with a total length of 120 kilometres, mined fields and unpaved roads. They have continued repression against the local populations, in particular, kidnapped Ukrainian citizens in the temporarily occupied areas.

The spring sowing campaign has been launched in the oblast. According to Zaporizhzhia Oblast Military Administration, the State Emergency Service of Ukraine has demined 1,200 out of 1,232 hectares that needed to be cleared of mines in the oblast as of late April. However, 80% of agricultural land remained under the occupiers’ control or in the area of military operations.

In Donetsk oblast, the frontline has not significantly changed within the monitoring period. In late April, Ukrainian troops controlled 45% of the oblast. Within the past six months, the enemy has increased control by just 5% of the territory. The fiercest battles have continued for Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Vuhledar. Also, the Russian occupying forces have increasingly shelled population centres of the oblast which are somewhat distant from the frontline.

Although the fiercest battles were raged in Donetsk oblast compared to other sections of the front, it has demonstrated a fairly high level of stability. First, this is due to the fact that the effective system of military administrations was shaped in the oblast at a variety of levels, ranging from the oblast level to that of territorial communities. The system has proved to be stable and flexible enough and has already been tested in the liberated communities.

In late March 2023, Donetsk Oblast Military Administration decided to evacuate children from 21 frontline population centres. 56 children had reportedly remained in dangerous population centres as of 20 April. At the same time, the local population returned to relatively safe areas despite heavy shelling.

The so-called evacuation measures have also been carried out in the occupied part of Donetsk oblast. The “evacuation” took place primarily from the occupied parts of Bakhmut and Soledar. Notwithstanding the symbolic integration activities, the non-government controlled areas of Donetsk oblast have never become part of Russia. Instead of the liquidation of crossing points on the border between Donetsk oblast and Russia, the new ones have been created.

On 19 March, Russian President Vladimir Putin paid the first visit to the non-government controlled areas of Ukraine, notably to destroyed Mariupol. He was accompanied in the city only by the deputy prime minister of the Russian government, whereas representatives of either the leadership of the breakaway DPR or the occupying administration of the city escorted the Head of the Russian Federation. Moreover, the visit was not covered even by journalists from the Kremlin press pool who always accompany the first person on his visits. The purpose of this unscheduled and spontaneous visit remained unclear. Putin made no new political statements. In actual fact, his visit has not affected the course of events, nor has it produced a strong propaganda effect.

Kramatorsk was the first city in Donetsk oblast that decided to get rid of Russian symbols in local place names. To avoid an additional source of tension, the relevant activities need to be better communicated, including creating the opportunity for the public to discuss such changes.

Within the reporting period, the hottest points of the frontline in Luhansk oblast have been reported near Kreminna, Kuzmyne, and Bionorika. Stelmakhivka, Makiivka, Nevske, and Dibrova also suffered from the enemy’s attacks.

The appointment of Artem Lysohor as Head of Luhansk Oblast State Administration was the key event regarding the governance of the oblast. Heads of Sievierodonetsk, Popasna, and Hirske City Military Administrations have also been appointed.

Although with the beginning of the full-scale war, the Ukrainian government closed access to data from state registers and automated systems for security and data protection reasons, it has unblocked access to 93 registers / systems in territorial communities this April.

Recruitment for the #Offensive Guard – units of various security forces of Ukraine, including the National Police, the State Border Guard Service, and the National Guard – has come to an end. Almost 200 recruits from Luhansk are among members of the Liut (Fury) Volunteer Assault Brigade. Although the staffing of the eight brigades has officially been completed, the reserve units are expected to be recruited.

Networks of humanitarian hubs which provide various vulnerable groups of population and internally displaced persons (IDPs) forced to leave Luhansk oblast with assistance have been actively operating. Since the onset of a full-scale invasion, almost 182,000 locals have become forced migrants of whom 96,300 persons, or 53%, are of working age, 36,000 are pensioners, and 37,500 are children. The Ukrainian government has provided 11,000 IDP families with monthly housing allowances worth a total of UAH 30 million, or approximately EUR750,000 as of 1 May 2023.

The most problematic issues faced by IDPs were the lack of their own housing, inadequate living conditions, and the high cost of renting housing. Furthermore, most IDPs have found it difficult to find jobs in their new places of residence or received low wages and therefore could not use the mechanisms provided for by housing programmes being in place and purchase housing on a general basis. To solve the above problems, the communities of Luhansk oblast have already approved 11 programmes for providing their members with housing, UAH 575,685.2 have been allocated for their implementation in 2022–2024.

The authorities of the self-proclaimed LPR have adopted the so-called laws “On the administrative and territorial structure” and “On the formation of city and municipal districts on the territory of the LPR”. Specifically, they provide for division of the LPR into 11 city and 17 municipal districts (raions). The ruined city of Popasna has included in the city Pervomaisk.

The invaders have restricted free exit to and entry from population centres for all civilians who do not have Russian passports.

The occupying authorities have announced the start of a large-scale military training involving the entire conscripted male population of Starobilsk, Shchastia, Novoaidar, Novopskov, and *Nizhnioteple*.

Russian troops continued to shell the border areas of Kharkiv oblast, as well as the oblast centre, having damaged infrastructure facilities and killed local civilians. However, for the first time since the onset of a full-scale invasion, street lighting has been turned on in Kharkiv, from 18:00 to 20:00, which helped significantly reduce the psychological strain in the city.

It is possible to speak about a change in the political environment of the oblast within the past three to four months. The issues of collaborationism, anti-Ukrainian rhetoric, and corruption have been discussed more intensively in the public space, because these phenomena are less and less tolerated.

The local economy remained unstable, because it is impossible to restore all arable land. Also, many businesses did not return to the city. However, the number of initiatives and the amount of assistance geared towards developing the potential of displaced persons and boosting businesses’ development opportunities have increased.

More than half a million hectares of arable land in the oblast needed to [be cleared of mines](#). It was possible to clear half of the explosives so far. First, bomb squads were supposed to work on critical infrastructure facilities and lands that were not contaminated with explosive devices and remnants of war. A part of the liberated areas of the oblast still has not had adequate access to stores with a sufficient selection of food and non-food products.

In recent months, the large amounts of humanitarian aid have been channelled to the education sector, as the priority was not only to repair the buildings of educational facilities and adapt them to wartime conditions, but also to improve general education of children.

The decolonisation, i. e., the dismantling of Soviet-era monuments and renaming of place names, has been extensive throughout all Ukraine’s eastern oblasts – the public opinion on that issue was the same.

The representation of international organisations in the oblast increased, some humanitarian organisations re-established their physical presence through re-opening offices which has significantly increased their authority among international partners.

Public organisations have gradually moved to the systematic implementation of activities – community development and capacity building. This was manifested in the extensive promotion of localisation of initiatives and provision of critical and other aid.

Ukrainian government-controlled areas

The system of governance of the western and southern target oblasts has been characterised by a general consensus on issues of countering the Russian aggression, as well as by the absence of opposition to authorities' particular economic and management decisions.

The urgent problems have included the restoration of damaged energy infrastructure facilities, completion of the heating season, provision of IDPs with permanent housing, coordination of financial and logistical assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine, establishment and development of cooperation with Western partners and donors, and preparation for the spring sowing campaign. In the future, cooperation on the arrangement of crossing points is expected to develop, especially with Romania and Hungary.

Various international and national non-governmental organisations have actively operated in the humanitarian sector, humanitarian cooperation has been developing both between communities in Ukraine and with foreign countries. The relationships, established and strengthened over the year of the full-scale war regarding the provision of IDPs, deoccupied communities, and communities living close to the frontlines of the fighting, the Territorial Defence Forces and the Armed Forces of Ukraine with humanitarian aid, has been preserved. Individual volunteer initiatives, as well as volunteering at the community level, were common.

The provision of IDPs with assistance has remained an important problem for the target oblasts: to create adequate living conditions, to supply basic necessities, and to promote their occupational adaptation which required the joint efforts of local authorities, public organisations, and foreign donors. Projects aimed at providing IDPs with social, psychological, cultural, educational, and other services have been implemented.

In the border areas, an increase in the number of reported attempts to illegally cross the border by men of conscription age was recorded. According to the monitoring data on the oblasts, the number of people willing to officially get jobs, especially in state-owned enterprises and institutions, decreased due to the fear of mobilisation. The growing number of casualties among the militaries has started to pose a serious mobilisation challenge. Almost every day, the media reported casualties among the military personnel, including the worryingly large percentage of young people.

In some communities, the religious issue remained acute which in April has transformed primarily into a discussion regarding the right of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate to lease municipal land, as well as the confrontation of parishioners over the right to hold services in the church. Priests were often categorical, and parishioners' demands for the transition of the parish to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine were presented as pressure and oppression of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in the oblast. However, disputes have been localised as a matter of law.

The consistent shaping of a new politics of memory through the visualisation of the oblast's historical (non-Soviet) past and contemporary events could be viewed as a positive trend.

I. TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED, DEOCCUPIED AND FRONTLINE AREAS

Although the front has remained stabilised along the Dnipro River for several months in Kherson oblast, the situation was tense. Artillery skirmishes continued, sabotage and reconnaissance groups were active, armed clashes were reported in the floodplains of the Dnipro delta. The security threat on the part of Russian sabotage and reconnaissance groups was so serious that on 14–17 March, Kherson authorities have imposed an enhanced curfew from 17:00 p. m. to 6:30 a. m. As the military administration explained, those temporary measures were necessary because of the presence of Russian sabotage and reconnaissance groups in the city. What was new in the monitoring period was the extensive use by the enemy of heavy high-explosive bombs which destroyed dozens of residential buildings with one hit shot. The intensity of shelling was steadily growing. The oblast authorities called on locals to leave the coastal communities. A ban on the arrival of children has been imposed.

The enemy continued to use massive shelling of Zaporizhzhia oblast with tanks, barrelled artillery, and multiple launch rocket systems. [According to](#) British intelligence, in anticipation of Ukraine's counter-offensive towards Melitopol, the Russian occupiers have built three lines of defence at a distance of 10–20 kilometres from each other, with a total length of approximately 120 kilometres, in the occupied part of Zaporizhzhia oblast.

In Donetsk oblast, the frontline has not changed significantly. [According to](#) the Head of Donetsk Oblast Military Administration (hereinafter referred to as OMA), Pavlo Kyrylenko, Ukrainian troops controlled 45% of the oblast as of early April. Within the past six months, the enemy has grabbed control over only another 5% of the territory. The fiercest battles have been raging around Bakhmut, Avdiivka, and Vuhledar. Despite the heavy fighting, the Ukrainian militaries made every effort to hold Bakhmut. This had several reasons. First, in this way, the enemy's combat-ready forces were held in the city to prevent them from carrying out an effective offensive in other directions. Second, the Russian militaries [had suffered](#) huge losses in the battles for Bakhmut which made the Russian army to bleed to death on the eve of the counteroffensive of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (hereinafter referred to as the AFU). Moreover, the Ukrainian leadership was [convinced](#) that Russia-captured Bakhmut could give Russia a springboard for attacks on Kramatorsk and Sloviansk which performed an important logistical function that largely determined Ukraine's defence capacity in that area.

Also, the Russian occupying forces have increased shelling of population centres of Donetsk oblast located away from the frontline. As of 24 April, 1,483 locals were reported killed and another 3,436 wounded as a result of military operations and shelling. In April alone, 52 civilians were killed another 175 wounded in the oblast. Those civilian casualties do not include victims in Russia-occupied Mariupol and Volnovakha, because it is impossible to count them right now.

Within the reporting period, the [hottest points](#) of the frontline in Luhansk oblast have been reported near Kreminna, Kuzmyne, and Bionorika. In Luhansk oblast, AFU units attempted to exhaust the enemy as much as possible. In April, the Ukrainian militaries have destroyed many enemy vehicles, including tanks. Specifically, the Russians lost more than ten T-90 Proryv tanks.

The military situation in Kharkiv oblast has remained stable. A small part of Kharkiv oblast remained under the occupation, while the Russian army actively advanced towards Kupiansk. Heavy artillery and tank fire returned to frontline population centres.

1. Changes in the system of governance

1.1. Legitimate local authorities during the occupation of part of the oblast. Deoccupied areas

The development of the system of military administrations has continued in Donetsk oblast. On 14 April 2023, the President of Ukraine [set up](#) nine new military administrations and appointed their heads. Hence, military administrations have already been established in almost all communities of the oblast.

Russia-occupied Mariupol in actual fact remained the only large city without a military administration. Despite that the creation of a military administration there [was announced](#) back in March, no practical steps towards its establishment have been made in April.

In general, observers say an active creation of military administrations on the territory of Donetsk oblast, even in the occupied communities, can be part of the preparations for the deoccupation of the non-government controlled areas. Speaking about the successful deoccupation of Sviatohirsk and Lyman communities, the Head of Donetsk OMA, Pavlo Kyrylenko, [emphasised](#) the great contribution to this process of city military administrations, set up prior to the liberation, which helped liberate the cities and worked to establish a peaceful life.

In Luhansk oblast, the appointment of Artem Lysohor as Head of Luhansk Oblast State Administration was a major event in the political life. The President of Ukraine [has signed](#) the relevant Decree on 12 April 2023. At a meeting with heads of oblast structures and territories, Mr. Lysohor [ordered](#) the local military administrations to organise the preparations for deoccupation of the oblast, while heads of OMA's structural divisions were tasked to identify problematic issues and to make proposals for their solution. Also, within the reporting period, the Head of State [has appointed](#) heads of Sievierodonetsk, Popasna, and Hirske City Military Administrations.

In Kherson oblast, the newly-appointed Heads of military administrations, Oleksandr Prokudin (the Oblast Military Administration) and Roman Mrochko (the City Military Administration) tried to communicate with representatives of different environments. To this end, they held regular meetings with military units, residents of surrounding villages, representatives of public organisations, volunteers, charitable organisations, and international organisations providing technical assistance.

At the same time, representatives of international organisations often served as a catalyst for the authorities' contacts with representatives of different social groups. Specifically, through the "Support for the Restoration of Local Self-Government and the Recovery and Reconstruction of Communities in Ukraine" project, which is part of the Sustainable Development through Improved Local Governance (SDLG) programme funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Kherson City Military Administration started [developing](#) the Plan for the Restoration and Development of Kherson City Territorial Community until 2027. To this end, a working group was created in March whose composition was later expanded to include representatives of the public following the intervention of the team of the international programme. In April, the working group [has moved](#) to the phase of collecting proposals from all stakeholders – business community, the public, volunteer initiatives, and Kherson locals.

Virtually paralysed agriculture has posed one of the most serious challenges for the economic life of Kherson oblast, because all arable land was mined. [According to](#) Kherson OMA, some 29,272 out of 683,000 hectares of the territory of the oblast liberated from the occupiers were examined at that time, and 57,625 explosive devices were found and destroyed.

The President of Ukraine set up 19 military administrations in Zaporizhzhia oblast. Most of the oblast population centres in which they were created remained under Russian occupation at the time of writing of the report.

Vyacheslav [Boguslaev](#), the ex-Head of Motor Sich JSC detained on treason charges, has been stripped of the title of honorary citizen of Zaporizhzhia. 37 out of 48 deputies of Zaporizhzhia City Council voted in favour of the relevant decision.

In Kharkiv oblast, the process of demining of territories was actively ongoing, with the involvement of Ukrainian state services and ad hoc international organisations. There were even organisations that proposed demining the territory, but did not have the necessary permissions. **Illegal demining** poses high risks for the civilian population, but there is a demand for such services, as many farmers from the deoccupied areas may be left without crops for the second year running.

As in the past year, farmers have made the major contribution to the economy of Kharkiv oblast. The sowing campaign was extensively launched in the areas which were safe and completely cleared of mines. As of the end of April, around 15,000 hectares of land were sown. Since the security situation has become more stable, a 20% increase in sowing areas could be **expected** this year against the previous one.

Positive changes have been observed in the private entrepreneurship sector: more than 119,000 individual entrepreneurs have worked and 317 businesses **have relocated** from the deoccupied areas to Kharkiv since the beginning of the year.

One of the villages of Kharkiv oblast which for long was under the occupation, **Tsyrkuny**, has been included in the pilot project of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine for the rapid recovery of territories. The project provides for attracting additional funds, setting the top priorities of refurbishment and rebuilding to be pursued, as well as repairing infrastructure facilities.

The percentage of investigations into collaborationism cases remained high, because since the beginning of 2023, 72 residents of Kharkiv oblast **have been notified** of suspicion of activities undermine the sovereignty of Ukraine.

1.2. Decisions of occupying authorities

>> ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The approval of the territorial structure of the self-proclaimed DPR, along with the setting-up of so-called local self-government bodies, have been the most significant event in the occupied territory of Donetsk oblast within the reporting period. On 6 April 2023, the so-called Acting Head of the DPR signed a number of “laws”. One of them **approved** the “administrative and territorial structure of the DPR”, extended to the entire territory of the oblast, including its Ukrainian government-controlled areas. In accordance with the above “law”, 12 cities of the “Republic”, including Horlivka, Debaltseve, Dokuchaievsk, Donetsk, Yenakiiève, Ilovaisk, Kramatorsk, Makiivka, Mariupol, Snizhne, Donetsk, and Khartsyzk have become “cities of republican significance”, and 18 raions have also been established (their boundaries and names coincide with the oblast’s raions of Soviet time). The second “law” provided for the **establishment** of city and municipal districts. City districts were established based on “cities of republican significance”, while municipal districts included entire raions.

Another “law” **has shaped** a system of “local self-government bodies” in the so-called Republic. Pursuant to the law, a city or municipal council is to be created in each district. At the same time, the number of deputies of these councils is to be much smaller compared to Ukrainian councils. These councils are scheduled to be set up for the first time at the election on 10 September 2023 and will function for five years. Moreover, in accordance with the federal constitutional **law** on the accession of the “DPR” to Russia, elections of city mayors were cancelled in Donetsk oblast. Conversely, candidates for heads of city administrations are to be proposed by the so-called Heads of the breakaway Republics, while “city councils” are to approve one of the nominated candidates.

According to the monitoring data on Luhansk oblast, authorities of the so-called LPR have also adopted the so-called laws “On administrative and territorial structure” and “On the formation of city and municipal districts on the territory of the LPR”. Specifically, they provide for division of the LPR into 11 city and 17 municipal districts (raions). It should be emphasised that **Popasna** has been included in the city of Pervomaisk.

The occupying authorities of Zaporizhzhia oblast have determined the administrative and territorial structure of the occupied areas. On 3 March, Melitopol became the “capital”, and the territory was divided into 16 administrative units. According to the so-called decree of the so-called Acting Governor of Zaporizhzhia oblast, Yevgeny Balitsky, Berdiansk, Melitopol, and Enerhodar have become three cities of oblast significance

with the status of urban districts. The boundaries of all raions, and those of Berdiansk and Enerhodar “are to be set up according to the administrative zoning of the Ukrainian SSR as of 16 September 1991.” At the same time, Melitopol’s “new boundaries” are “expanded” to the coast of the Azov Sea and include some small population centres, notably the resort village of Kyrylivka.

>> ISSUANCE OF RUSSIAN PASSPORTS

In March 2023, Putin signed the [law](#) on the peculiarities of the legal status of citizens of the Russian Federation who have Ukrainian citizenship of Ukraine. According to the law, Ukrainian citizenship will be considered invalid for citizens of the Russian Federation as of the date of filing a citizenship renunciation application with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation. In such case, “... *the prior possession of Ukrainian citizenship by a citizen of the Russian Federation shall be declared as having no legal effect with respect to the emergence or termination of rights, obligations, or prosecution within legal relationships that arose prior to the termination of Ukrainian citizenship of the said person,*” the law says. Such Ukrainians are also banned from using Ukrainian passports or other citizenship documents.

When it comes to [children](#), an application from one of the parents is sufficient to strip a child of Ukrainian citizenship. Furthermore, for children left without parental care, including those who permanently stay at an educational or health care facility providing social services, an application may be submitted by a guardian or an authorised representative of this facility.

In Luhansk oblast, the occupiers have enhanced their pressure on employees of the authorities, institutions, organisations, and enterprises under their control to force them into receiving Russian passports. In accordance with the Russian Federation Government Resolution No. 2571, employment relations with persons who have not acquired Russian citizenship are to be maintained until 1 July. After that date, the provisions of labour legislation on foreigners and stateless persons will be applied to these persons.

The so-called Governor of Kherson oblast, Vladimir Saldo, said that 90,000 residents of Kherson oblast [received](#) Russian passports as of 31 March. The number of points issuing Russian passports has increased. Although no such points have been reported in NOMA Kakhovka, Oleshky, and Hola Prystan, there were mobile passport issuing points instead. Vladimir Saldo planned to issue up to 150,000 passports by the end of the summer.

During passporting procedures, special attention was paid to adolescents who were to receive passports for the first time. The occupiers organised showy activities on that occasion. Specifically, Russian police officers solemnly handed over Russian passports to students of [Henichesk College of Construction](#) on 5 April, and to 14-year-old [students of the school No. 2](#) of Henichesk on 21 April.

The occupiers [have spread](#) rumours that those who failed to receive a Russian passport until 1 June would be deported and their property confiscated. According to a report by journalists for Novyi Den daily newspaper, in mid-April, [Henichesk Central Hospital's](#) employees were not paid their salaries for the previous month. The bonuses were paid instead. Those who had not yet received Russian passports were given half as much money as those who had already had such passports.

[According to](#) the General Staff of the AFU, the Russian militaries have purposefully searched vehicles, recorded personal data of people who did not have Russian ID-documents, and threatened to ban them from entering population centres. The occupiers also forced postmen into handing out the forms to locals, requiring information on the availability of Russian passports.

Health care was one of the forms of forcing locals into receiving Russian passports, because a rule was gradually imposed that only those who had got insurance policies would be entitled to free health care, and the above policies could only be received by Russian citizens or employees of Russian institutions.

The Russian occupiers also [continued](#) their forced passporting of the populations in the temporarily occupied areas of Zaporizhzhia oblast. Specifically, in the city of Tokmak, they restricted, at crossing points, the movement of Ukrainian citizens who did not have Russian passports. In Melitopol, the Russian militaries [knocked on doors](#) and demanded that Ukrainian passports be exchanged for Russian ones.

>> ZAPORIZHZHIA NPP

IAEA Director General, Raphael Grossi, said that during his visit on 29 March to Russia-occupied Zaporizhzhia NPP, he had witnessed “*increasing military activities*”. He reported that shelling continued in the vicinity

of ZNPP and once again expressed concern about the safety and security of Europe's largest nuclear power plant. Grossi also recalled that the plant relied on just one 750-kV transmission line to cool the reactors and operate other safety systems. Prior to the full-scale war, it had four such lines.

On 18 April, the Ministry of Energy of Ukraine [claimed](#) that the situation at Zaporizhzhia NPP had worsened. It primarily concerned the technical operation of the plant.

The Security Service of Ukraine [has reported](#) a suspicion notice of a violation of laws and customs of war, as well as of treason committed under martial law to the Kremlin-appointed "director" of Zaporizhzhia NPP, Russian national Oleg Romanenko, who had connected the Ukrainian nuclear plant to the Russian power grid.

>> **BUILDING OF POLITICAL PARTY STRUCTURES OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

In left-bank part of Kherson oblast, Russian political parties and public organisations continued establishing their local branches. At the time of writing of the report, local branches of only three political parties with legal addresses in Henichesk [have been entered](#) into the Russian state register: the United Russia party, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, and the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia. The occupying election commission of Kherson oblast has started preparations for voting. As of 13 April, in the non-government controlled areas of Kherson oblast, 64 candidates from the United Russia political party [had registered](#) for preliminary voting for their further nomination as members of the occupying local self-government bodies, Russian State Duma MP, Igor Kastyukevich, reported. He said that 14 local branches of the United Russia political party started their activities in the non-government controlled areas of Kherson oblast.

>> **PREPARATIONS FOR THE SHAM ELECTIONS**

The Chairperson of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation, Ella Pamfilova, said that preparations for the elections in the "four new entities of the country" were underway in the same manner as in other regions of the Russian Federation. Specifically, it was about connecting their "election commissions" to the state automated system, equipping them, and training commission members. The sham election campaign was supposed to start until early June.

At the Russian regional election on 10 September 2023, the population of the so-called LPR will "elect" MPs of the "People's Council of the Republic" as well as members of "local authorities, including Luhansk City Council". A draft law was submitted to the State Duma of the Russian Federation, according to which, during the "first election" in the so-called LPR, polling stations where such voters could vote might be set up outside the territory of the "entity of the Russian Federation" by the decision of the "election commission of the entity of the Russian Federation". This opens up significant opportunities for rigging votes.

In late May, the occupiers have intended to organise preliminary voting ("primaries") in the so-called LPR, ahead of the September elections.

The invaders have left a significant number of population centres, including large cities, without Internet and mobile communication. However, they proposed the locals who remained there to take part in the "expression of will", including online.

>> **AGRICULTURAL BUSINESSES**

Farmers in Luhansk oblast have been obliged to [register](#) their products of grain processing with the Federal State Information System of traceability of grain and grain processing products, Zerno (Grain). It contains data on the commercial movement of grain: who sowed and harvested the grain, to whom it was sold, who processed it, how and where it was transported. All market participants – producers of agricultural products, exporters, importers, grain elevators, warehouses, grain carriers, and others – have to be registered at the above Russian resource. Without registration, farmers will not be able to issue shipping documents for a batch of grain or grain processing products.

1.3. Access to public information

In the temporarily occupied areas of Zaporizhzhia oblast, the occupiers published the first issue of a weekly propaganda newspaper, Voice of Novorossiia. Five issues of the newspaper are initially planned to be pub-

lished. The content of the site of the same name is propagandistic, the news are presented in the “Soviet” style. In Russia-occupied Polohy raion, the invaders [have started](#) publishing a newspaper, Novoye Vremya.

>> UNOCCUPIED / DEOCCUPIED TERRITORIES

In Kherson oblast, the situation with access to public information drastically improved in April. The official website of Kherson Oblast State Administration has posted information about the leadership and structure of this authority, as well as ordinances of the Head of Kherson Oblast State Administration dated January to April 2023. The similar regulatory documents have been published on the website of Kherson City Military Administration since March.

Although with the beginning of the full-scale war, the Ukrainian government closed access to data from state registers and automated systems in Luhansk oblast for security and data protection reasons. Access to 93 out of 154 registers / systems in territorial communities [has been unblocked](#) at the time of writing of the report.

2. Humanitarian situation

2.1. Unoccupied / deoccupied territories

Access to drinking water has remained an acute problem for small population centres of the right-bank part of Kherson oblast. This was due to several reasons: equipment looted by the occupiers, absence of energy supply, and ongoing shelling of population centres.

Public organisations have acted as the active humanitarian aid providers. They distributed international humanitarian aid and collected aid from citizens and communities. Humanitarian aid was included food products, basic necessities, building materials, shelters, equipment for critical infrastructure facilities, medications, equipment for hospitals and educational facilities, as well as provision of health care services.

Some 170,000 people [have lived](#) in the deoccupied areas of Kharkiv oblast, with their number gradually increasing. One of the major obstacles to life improvement was the damaged infrastructure in homes. Difficulties with food products have also been reported: as large companies were not going to [return](#) to potentially dangerous cities, access to foods was significantly restricted.

Vulnerable groups of the population throughout Kharkiv oblast have been provided with humanitarian aid. The most vulnerable groups of the population received humanitarian aid in [Borivske](#) community, members of [Kupiansk](#) community were provided with hot meals, food kits were supplied for locals of [Balakliia](#), while populations of the deoccupied areas were registered for receiving financial aid from the Red Cross Society and the United Nations. [Funds](#) were provided for the most vulnerable groups of the population in the deoccupied areas.

According to Oleksiy Smirnov, the First Deputy Head of Luhansk Oblast State Administration, since the onset of a full-scale invasion, some 182,000 residents of Luhansk oblast have become forced migrants as of 20 April, of whom 96,300 (53%) were people of working age, 36,000 were pensioners, 37,500 were children. Dnipropetrovsk (43,500 people), Kyiv (38,800 people), Poltava (11,500 people) and Lviv (10,900 people) oblasts sheltered the largest number of residents of Luhansk oblast. 11,000 IDP families received monthly housing allowances from the government estimated at a total of UAH 30 million.

Since July 2022, Luhansk Oblast State Administration has created, with the assistance of communities of Luhansk oblast and as part of “My Land of Luhansk” project, a network of 33 humanitarian hubs throughout Ukraine. All hubs are connected to the state electronic accounting system, [Human.help](#), designed to control the distribution of charitable aid. A multi-channel “hotline” was opened to rapidly respond to citizens’ problems and received an average of at least 120–150 calls on a daily basis.

2.2. Filtration measures of occupying authorities

According to the General Staff of the AFU, the Russian occupying authorities of Berdiansk, Zaporizhzhia oblast, have ordered all locals to receive, until 1 April, permits from the city commandant's office for moving through the non-government controlled areas of Zaporizhzhia oblast, "though provided that the filtration procedure was successful". Those permits were expected to be issued separately on individuals and vehicles.

2.3. Actions of occupying authorities regarding recruitment into armed formations

The electronic register of conscripts, introduced in Russia, may also affect residents of temporarily occupied Ukrainian cities. The Melitopol mayor, Ivan Fedorov, **said** the occupiers could already hand out electronic military subpoenas and had been conducting mobilisation activities in Zaporizhzhia. According to the official, the adoption of this law in Russia means the launch of a mobilisation campaign in the oblasts, including the temporarily occupied areas of Ukraine. "Earlier, the mobilisation was hidden, and locals could avoid it without leaving the house, whereas it has definitely been launched as of now," Fedorov underscored. The mayor noted that the mobilisation would primarily affect those Ukrainians who received Russian passports and thereby were entered into the electronic register of the Russian Federation. At the same time, this does not mean that there is no threat to other Melitopol locals.

According to the General Staff of the AFU, casualties among those forcibly mobilised in Luhansk among local people reached about 70 people per day. To prevent public reaction, the occupiers have imposed restrictions on the number of those present at the funeral to six people.

The recruitment and sending of prisoners to the front **has continued** in Brianka, Alchevsk, Perevalsk, Khrustalnyi, Sorokyne, and Sukhodilsk. In five population centres of Luhansk oblast, notably in Starobilsk, Shchastia, Novoaidar, Novoposkov, and *Nizhnioteple*, the occupiers **took** all men for military training.

2.4. Evacuation

The occupying authorities have launched three more foundations for **taking away** Ukrainian children for "educational courses" to the Russian Federation, as reported by the Centre for National Resistance. My Genealogy, Primakov Aid Foundation for Children, and Children of Donbas joined the programme for "re-education" of Ukrainian children. Children of Donbas foundation is curated by Darya Lantratova, a senator of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation.

The evacuation from the temporarily occupied areas of Zaporizhzhia oblast **has not been carried out** since December 2022, as the occupiers blocked the crossing point in Vasylivka and allowed people to move only through the non-government controlled areas.

The Russian occupiers **have held** evacuation briefings for collaborators ahead of a possible counter-offensive of the AFU. According to Melitopol Mayor, Ivan Fedorov, the enemy posted messages on telegram channels on how to behave during the counteroffensive of the AFU.

International organisations **helped** to evacuate locals from occupied Melitopol. They were registered through Same Tut Open Space.

In Kherson oblast, the occupiers have continued to strengthen the defence on the left bank of the Dnipro. To this end, they displaced locals from their population centres, occupied them, and built their fortifications nearby. Various methods were used to displace the civilian population. The management and social protection authorities were relocated to distant populated areas. Specifically, NOMA Kakhovka management bodies were relocated to Henichesk. The hospital was closed. Only humanitarian aid distribution points remained in the city. The similar situation has been reported in Oleshky and Hola Prystan. Since no bus services were provided, every trip for receiving social benefits turned into a serious problem for the elderly. Those actions of the occupiers forced people to flee from the oblast.

Where the above measures did not help, the Russian militaries announced forced evacuation from particular areas. [According to](#) Operational Command South, on 20 March, the showy measures of “forced evacuation” were taken “for the sake of saving civilians”. “The Russians forcibly took part of the locals of temporarily occupied Oleshky to the urban-type settlement of Chaplynka, allegedly because of the shelling by the Ukrainian militaries. And in Chaplynka, the Russian invaders are actively looting and occupying the abandoned homes,” the militaries reported.

The attacks on civilian neighbourhoods were among the most terrible coercive measures. It happened for several reasons. The first one was to force people to leave. The second reason was that the shelling was used as a means of punishment following each successful hit by Ukrainian troops on the enemy. The Russian occupiers reasonably believed that the local population had cooperated with the Ukrainian intelligence and therefore hits were accurate.

The so-called evacuation measures have also been carried out in the non-government controlled areas of Donetsk oblast. The “evacuation” was primarily carried out from the captured parts of Bakhmut and Solodar. The exact number of civilians evacuated from these cities is unclear, though the occupying media outlets [claimed](#) that 380 residents of the cities had filed applications for social benefits and pensions with the so-called social services of the Republic.

>> UNOCCUPIED / DEOCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Within the monitoring period, the issue of evacuating children from frontline territorial communities has become topical for Donetsk oblast. In late March, Donetsk OMA decided to forcibly evacuate children from 21 frontline population centres. In accordance with a respective ordinance, a child accompanied by at least one of the parents or a guardian had to leave dangerous areas. For security reasons, the list of population centres has not been made public.

According to [estimations](#) of Donetsk Oblast State Administration, there were 126 children in these population centres in early April. As of April 20, it was possible to reduce the number of children in dangerous populated areas to 56.

The evacuation of children from Avdiivka has been nearing its completion; two children [remained](#) there at the time of writing of the report. As reported later, it was impossible to trace the whereabouts of one of them, as her parents were deliberately hiding the girl from evacuation.

[According to](#) the Deputy Prime Minister – Minister for Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine, Iryna Vereshchuk, 34 children were under ongoing shelling in Huliaipole and Orikhiv, Zaporizhzhia oblast. She [has called on](#) parents to urgently evacuate their children from the areas where active hostilities were taken place. The oblast authorities also called on all Orikhiv locals to evacuate.

Due to massive artillery shelling and bombardment by Russian troops of the village of Kizomys, Kherson oblast, the military administration has decided to organise the evacuation of the local population. Those willing to leave, had to contact the starosta or the military administration, the Military Administration of Bilozerka urban-type settlement reported on 25 April.

The extensive evacuation from population centres under ongoing shelling has continued in Kharkiv oblast. Most of those who evacuated were the elderly or disabled persons who were not going to leave until the situation became critical. It was planned to [carry out](#) forced evacuation of families with children and people with disabilities from population centres in the northern part of the oblast, because other ways to ensure their safety were impossible.

Some Ukrainian public and international organisations were involved in the process of evacuation. Owing to the Ukrainian Red Cross Society, since the beginning of a full-scale invasion, some 27,000 people [have been evacuated](#) from Kharkiv oblast alone. Although the intensity of evacuation significantly decreased and the main evacuation rout changed, the large number of those willing to leave the oblast remained.

The police evacuation team, White Angels of Luhansk oblast, [has started operating](#) in the liberated population centres of Luhansk oblast. The decision to create a specialised unit was made taking into account the complexity of the situation in villages and towns which were under enemy’s fire every day. The main tasks of the group included the evacuation of the populations from places where military operations are taking place, and, among other things, the evacuation of victims from the scenes of the fire, escort and delivery of humanitarian aid to residents of frontline population centres.

At the same time, despite constant shelling, the population has started to return to relatively safe areas of Donetsk oblast. Specifically, approximately 50,000 locals [lived](#) in Sloviansk in April, i.e. half of the population that lived there prior to the onset of a full-scale invasion. People started to return to the city following the liberation of Lyman and Sviatohirsk and the restoration of gas supply. Furthermore, [there were](#) about 5,000 children in the city at the time of writing of the report.

3. Work on identity

[According to](#) the Center for National Resistance, established by the Special Operations Forces of the AFU, the occupiers continued to conduct a targeted campaign for propagating Russia's ideology in the temporarily occupied areas of Zaporizhzhia oblast. "The analysis of the information space indicates the deployment of the targeted campaign to impose a Russian identity on the local population and force them to integrate into the socio-cultural space of the Russian Federation," the Center noted. In its words, at that time, in a widespread statement by the Head of the Federal Agency for Nationalities of the Russian Federation, Igor Barinov, he announced the opening of a network of representative offices of the Agency in Zaporizhzhia oblast with the aim of "strengthening Russian identity and interethnic unity". At the same time, it was emphasised that the activities of the newly-established representative offices would be focused on the involvement of various social groups of the population in cooperation with Russian public organisations, the development of joint "awareness-raising" programmes, as well as the active implementation of "humanitarian programmes".

3.1. Changes in education standards

In the temporarily occupied areas of Zaporizhzhia oblast, the occupying authorities wanted to [cancel](#) the mandatory study of the Ukrainian language, starting the new academic year (autumn 2023), as reported by the so-called Russia-installed Minister of Education and Science of Zaporizhzhia oblast, Olena Shapurova. The occupiers claimed that parents would be able to choose which language – Russian or Ukrainian – their children would learn as mother tongue. "This academic year, the Ukrainian language is mandatory for everyone, children study it for three hours a week. From 1 September 2022, according to the curriculum, it was a mother tongue, but <...> according to laws of the Russian Federation, each person can choose which language he / she will learn as native," ShapurOMA said. According to her, from the new academic year, children who choose Russian will have nine hours of Russian language and literature a week and will not study Ukrainian at all. The occupying authorities announced that parents have to choose the mother tongue of their children until 1 May.

The Ministry of Education of Russia [has provided](#) a list of higher educational institutions located in the non-government controlled areas of Ukraine which could issue diplomas of the Russian standard from 2023 onwards. Among them there are two educational institutions from the occupied areas of Zaporizhzhia oblast.

In late March, the "State Higher Educational Institution "Azov State Pedagogical University" was established, as announced by the Governor of the Russia-installed Zaporizhzhia occupying administration, Yevgeny Balitsky.

>> UNOCCUPIED / DEOCCUPIED TERRITORIES

In Kharkiv oblast, work with interactive tools for schools has been intensified to [improve](#) the quality of online education. Workshops and advance training courses were held for teachers. Along with providing teachers with computers, this will help ensure online education of children.

Moreover, UNICEF [has continued](#) to provide schools and children in war-affected territorial communities with tablets and laptops as part of humanitarian aid. This will help faster integrate children from the deoccupied areas and ensure the possibility to continue the education process.

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

Ahead of Vladimir Lenin's birthday in Nyzhni Sirohozy, Kherson oblast, the occupiers have restored his sculpture and announced that they would continue measures of that kind.

It has to be reminded that the occupiers de facto returned the old communist names of streets and population centres. Specifically, in official materials, they used the name of the village of Krasny Perekop instead of Zelenyi Pid, as well as the old names of the streets (Lenin, Karl Marx, Lunacharsky, and Kirov in Kakhovka, Lenin in Kalanchak, Sovietskaya in Chaplynka), etc.

In March, the so-called Head of Oleshky municipal district said that he [had requested](#) the Russian government to return the name of Tsiurupinsk to the city. He also added that he planned to return the old communist street names.

>> UNOCCUPIED / DEOCCUPIED TERRITORIES

The campaign for de-Russification and decolonisation of street names and other place names which took place in Kherson city community has marked an important event in the spring of 2023. In response to numerous citizens' appeals for regarding the renaming of streets, in early March, the Head of Kherson Military Administration resumed the activities of the renaming commission. The working group has prepared a list of 138 street and place names that it believed need to be renamed. In April, the list was presented which triggered heated discussions in society. The initiative showed that part of active Kherson locals became more radical and demanded more drastic changes. At the same time, there remained the significant number of those who do not want any changes. Yet, representatives of that group mostly left Kherson towards Russia.

Kramatorsk was the first city in Donetsk oblast that decided to get rid of Russian symbols in local place names. On 19 April, the Head of Kramatorsk City Military Administration signed two ordinances at once: the first was on [renaming](#) the culture and recreation park, formerly named after Pushkin, and the second ordinance was on [renaming](#) 307 streets and alleys on the territory of Kramatorsk community.

However, the decision raised many questions among Kramatorsk locals primarily because of the timeliness and method of renaming. During the discussion on social networking sites, many questioned the expediency of the renaming process in the city located 20 kilometres from the frontline which constantly suffers from shelling. Besides, the government order on mandatory evacuation was in effect in Donetsk oblast at the time of writing of the report, and no more than 40% of the locals were in the city. Hence, the majority of the population was removed from discussion and decision-making. Furthermore, as a matter of fact, the authorities failed to conduct a public discussion of the proposed options for new names, having limited themselves only to the collection of proposals. There were also questions regarding the approved names. In this way, an ideologically correct decision has the potential to become an additional source of social tension due to insufficient communication and the absence of public discussion.

The active dismantling of Soviet-era monuments [has continued](#) in various cities of Kharkiv oblast. Dozens of streets have already received new names, and the renaming of some of them was heatedly discussed in communities, as about [2,500](#) street and place names were subject to change. Kharkiv oblast [ranked](#) fifth in Ukraine's by the largest number of dismantled monuments of the Soviet past. Ahead of the International Day of Struggle for Women's Rights and International Peace on 8 March, the question of the number of place names to be renamed in honour of women became acute. Iziium became the leader in terms of the number of new "female" place names.

3.3. Freedom of religion

Almost nothing is known about the situation with various religious denominations in the Russia-occupied areas of Kherson oblast. Only isolated information somehow is made public. In the village of Dobropillia (the territory of Russia-occupied Skadovsk raion), the abbot of the Holy Trinity Church of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine

(hereinafter referred to as the OCU), Father Platon, [was banned](#) from holding a service. On 16 April, representatives of the occupying authorities forced the local priest, Father Platon, to leave the OCU and transfer to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (hereinafter referred to as the UOC MP) / the Orthodox Church of Russia. This was announced by the secretary of the Kherson Diocese of the OCU, Ioan Zamaraev. According to him, Father Platon categorically refused to obey orders of the occupiers. After that, representatives of the Russia-installed authorities banned him from holding services in the church and promised to send a representative of the Moscow Patriarchate to the church.

>> UNOCCUPIED / DEOCCUPIED TERRITORIES

One of the important decisions expected in Kharkiv oblast was [a ban](#) imposed on the activities of the UOC MP. Deputies submitted a draft decision that could prohibit the extension of lease agreements. The Head of Kharkiv OMA, Oleh Synyehubov, noted that all actions will be within the law, and that no one will punish locals for their religion. According to statistics, six religious communities [have changed](#) their denominational membership as of April 2023. Believers were more conscious of which church they attended. This was clearly manifested during the [Easter holidays](#) in April, although in most churches there is no mention of belonging to the Moscow Patriarchate in their names.

The [petition](#) on the termination of all contracts of the city of Zaporizhzhia with Zaporizhzhia Diocese of the UOC MP has gathered the required number of signatures in almost a day. However, the paradox is that the UOC MP did not do this despite another legal re-registration requirement. Due to the fact that its name is the "UCO", not the "UOC MP", the hierarchs claimed that were not concerned over the petition's content.

On 16 March 2023, the hierarch of the UOC MP of Zaporizhzhia Diocese, Luka (Kovalenko), [filed](#) a claim with the Supreme Court of Ukraine. He is suing the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyi; the third parties are represented by the Security Service of Ukraine and the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine. Metropolitan Luka is asking the court to declare the Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 863 of 11 December 2022 unlawful and cancel it. According to this [document](#), 14 types of personal sanctions for five years have been imposed on the clergyman for a term of five years. What is meant here is the temporary deprivation of the right to use and dispose of assets; termination of cultural exchanges, scientific cooperation with foreign countries; cancellation of official visits, meetings, negotiations on the conclusion of contracts or agreements; deprivation of state awards of Ukraine, other forms of commemoration and the like.

4. Changes in the social structure

Social support in the temporarily occupied territories has been a tool of forced passporting.

According to the monitoring data on Luhansk oblast, Russia has started paying pensions in the so-called LPR since March, but only to those who have received Russian passports. Passports of Ukraine or the so-called LPR were not accepted. [Childbirth allowances](#) could also be obtained in the occupied oblast only by those with passports of the Russian Federation.

4.1. Unoccupied / deoccupied territories

On 20 March 2023, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [approved](#) a law on the specifics of granting pensions to persons living in the temporarily occupied territories or in the territories of military operations. The law reads that during the period of martial law and within three months as of the date its termination or cancellation, an old-age or disability pension for people living in the occupied areas or in the places where military operations are taking place shall be granted from the day after reaching the retirement age or recognising the disability status, regardless of the deadline for applying for a pension. This step is geared towards strengthening social protection, because, as the authors of the law explain, people living in the occupied areas or in the places where military operations are taking place cannot, for reasons beyond their control, file a person an application with the Pension Fund of Ukraine, since its bodies cannot operate there.

Earlier this year, “Recovery Army” government-funded [project](#) was launched in Kharkiv oblast. Its purpose is to involve people who have temporarily lost their jobs in the reconstruction of the country through performance of socially useful works. As of 15 March, the programme was implemented in 36 communities of the oblast, with 659 people participating. It helped the population demonstrate a proactive position and provided an opportunity to have insurance records.

4.2. Challenges related to the situation of women, children, people with disabilities, and others

A total of more than 1,409 Ukrainian children were wounded as a result of the full-scale armed aggression of the Russian Federation as of the morning of 31 March 2023. According to the official data of juvenile prosecutors, 466 children were killed and more than 943 have wounds of various degrees of severity. These figures are not final, data collection is ongoing in places where military operations are taking place, as well as in the non-government controlled and liberated areas. The most affected children were in Donetsk oblast – 446, Kharkiv oblast – 273, Kyiv oblast – 127, Kherson oblast – 94, Zaporizhzhia oblast – 88, Mykolaiv oblast – 85, Chernihiv oblast – 68, Luhansk oblast – 66, and Dnipropetrovsk oblast – 66.

Despite an arrest warrant for the Commissioner for Children’s Rights under the President of the Russian Federation and the President of the Russian Federation issued by the International Criminal Court in The Hague, accusing them of war crimes of unlawful deportation of Ukrainian children, the deportation of children has continued in the non-government controlled areas. Some children have disappeared following their medical examinations that continued in the self-proclaimed LPR. Doctors from the Russian Federation have already [examined](#) more than 94,000 boys and girls, as reported by the occupiers. They had “discovered” pathology of various degrees in 69.6% of children which served as a reason for deportation. 2,726 children were [referred](#) for hospitalisation which usually takes place in health care facilities on the territory of the Russian Federation.

Unoccupied / deoccupied territories

Ukrainian and international public organisations have started providing socio-psychological support to socially vulnerable populations and war victims. In April, the Survival Relief Centre was opened in Kherson, with the assistance of the United Nations Population Fund in Ukraine (UNFPA).

As part of the National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, Security to manage consequences of Russia’s armed aggression against Ukraine, Kherson City Military Administration cooperated with the public sector to stabilise and restore the operation of social services in Kherson. Specifically, on 18 April, the [Memorandum](#) of Cooperation was signed in Odesa within the framework of Stand Together project funded by the European Union. Its purpose is to help victims, particularly women, of war-related sexual violence and enable them to rehabilitate and defend their effectively rights in courts.

In Zaporizhzhia, the results of a [survey](#) by Yes NGO on the actual needs of populations of the frontline communities of the oblast and IDPs were presented. According to sociologists, the majority of IDPs and frontline area residents are middle-aged and elderly women in terms of their age. A total of 230,000 IDPs lives in the oblast centre.

The support for people with disabilities in Kharkiv oblast was fairly strong. According to Kharkiv Oblast State Administration, around 20,000 people in the oblast (adults with disabilities since childhood and children with disabilities) [have received](#) social benefits and pensions from the government at the time of writing of the report. This category of people has also been prioritised in the provision of humanitarian aid and psychosocial counselling.

II. UKRAINIAN GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED AREAS

Almost every day within the monitoring period, Ochakiv and Kutsurub territorial communities of Mykolaiv oblast have been shelled. Although the [demining](#) of territories had remained most problematic issue for Mykolaiv oblast, almost 90% of the arable land in the oblast was cultivated at the time of writing of the report.

Odesa oblast has been regularly attacked by missiles, the Black Sea water area near the coast has remained mined. According to Operational Command South, in January–April 2023, the Sea carried about 20 mines into the coastal zone of Odesa and Mykolaiv oblasts, and Georgia. Most mines were destroyed by the Defence Forces in a controlled manner, but some 20% exploded in an uncontrolled manner, causing destruction. No casualties were reported this year, but people should be cautious with the beginning of the swimming season.

1. Changes in the system of governance

Consensus was reached among the authorities on issues of countering Russian aggression and the absence of opposition regarding their particular economic and economic decisions. The urgent problems included the restoration of damaged energy infrastructure facilities, completion of the heating season, provision of IDPs with permanent housing, coordination of financial and logistical assistance to the AFU, establishment and development of cooperation with Western partners and donors, and preparations for the spring sowing campaign.

1.1. Decisions of authorities that affected cohesion

>> INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

In early March, USAID's Decentralisation Offering Better Results and Efficiency (DOBRE) programme and the leadership of Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast Military Administration and Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast Council [signed](#) the Memorandum of Cooperation. The key activity areas of DOBRE Program for 2022–2025 are as follows: the involvement of the public in managing affairs of territorial communities, rendering support for local economic development, restoring and developing the youth work, increasing the level of transparency of the use of public funds and public monitoring of budget spending, improving the provision of services by the local self-government bodies, supporting and helping communities overcome the consequences of the war.

USAID's DOBRE programme also [signed](#) the Memorandum of Cooperation with Chernivtsi OMA until mid-2025. The Programme's partner communities will receive project co-financing, as well as training and counselling assistance to enhance the capacity of the local self-government bodies.

An international team of experts [have developed](#) five pilot projects for Mykolaiv as part of #UN4Mykolaiv project, implemented under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. Specifically, "Residential microdistrict" project took the lead. It provides for the reconstruction and modernisation of the available residential buildings, as well as the integration of new residential elements into the development scheme. "Cultural Heritage" project focuses on the reconstruction of Mykolaiv downtown and aims to return to the city an area which is particularly significant from a historical and cultural point of view. "Industry and Embankment" project takes into account the fact that Mykolaiv is located in the southern strategic area between Kherson and Odesa, with direct access to the Black Sea, which makes the city the centre of national and international industry and trade. "Innovation District" pilot project will explore the creation of a new multi-

functional district focused on science and innovation. “Green and Public Spaces” pilot project will be focused on the redevelopment of three coastal areas.

On 13 April, the European Investment Bank [approved](#) an additional loan of EUR20 million to improve water supply and drainage in Mykolaiv. Funding will be provided within the framework of Ukraine Municipal Infrastructure Programme which will help complete the process of reconstruction and improvement of the city’s water supply systems.

On its visit to the partner region, Kraj Vysočina, the Czech Republic, a delegation of Zakarpattia Oblast Council [has agreed](#) on the joint construction of a rehabilitation centre for the military personnel in Zakarpattia oblast. The government and deputies of Kraj Vysočina allocated CZK 6.5 million for this purpose for 2023 and confirmed their intention to further support Ukraine.

In late April, the *President of the General Council of Deputies of the District of Swabia of the Land of Bavaria* (Germany), *Martin Seiler*, [has paid](#) an official visit to Chernivtsi oblast. It took the German side several days to get familiar with the situation in the oblast, and discussed the ideas of creating a rehabilitation centre for the Ukrainian militaries on the basis of Chernivtsi oblast hospital for war veterans.

During his stay in Zakarpattia oblast, the Deputy Minister of Foreign and Economic Affairs of Hungary and Deputy State Secretary of the Hungarian Prime-Minister’s Office, Levente Magyar, [has said](#) that Hungary was working on the development of transport highways, the expansion and development of railway tracks, and the opening of new crossing points on the border with Ukraine. Nagyhódos – Velyka Palad crossing point, where bilateral control will be organised, is the closest to completion and launch (approximately within half a year). Also, during Levente Magyar’s visit, Hungary handed over six passenger buses to Chernihiv, Sumy, Kharkiv, and Zakarpattia oblasts.

>> INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION

In the spring of 2023, cooperation between communities of Chernivtsi oblast and other oblasts of Ukraine intensified. On 10 March, the Head of Novoselytsia community, Maria Nikorych, and the Head of Slobozhany community, Dnipropetrovsk oblast, Ivan Kaminsky, [signed](#) the Memorandum of Cooperation. The main areas of the scheduled work include culture, education, sports, business, tourism, health care and, experience sharing.

The agreement on municipal cooperation [was signed](#) in March by the Head of the village of Rukshina, Chernivtsi oblast, Oleh Horbatiuk, and the Head of Mykolaiv City Military Administration, Kramatorsk raion, Donetsk oblast, Yurii Pidlisnyi. The communities plan to jointly complete the construction of a culture centre and turn it into a shelter for displaced persons, including those from Mykolaiv community.

On 28 February, the mayors of Lviv and Mariupol [signed](#) the Mariupol Declaration of Solidarity on cooperation and coordination of efforts to rebuild the city of Mariupol and render assistance to other Ukrainian cities. The signing ceremony was attended by representatives of Ukraine’s business community, international organisations, the community of architects and urban planners.

1.2. Access to public information

In April, the Transparent Cities programme, launched by Transparency International Ukraine, [has presented](#) the results of a study on the state of transparency of 70 Ukrainian cities in war conditions. Dnipro, Lviv, and Mukachevo are ranked as “transparent” in this year’s study. They are followed by 10 cities ranked as “partially transparent”, including Vinnytsia, Volodymyr, Zhytomyr, Kamianske, Kyiv, Kropyvnytskyi, Lutsk, Ternopil, Uzhhorod, and Chernivtsi. The rest of the cities (57) are “non-transparent”. The authors of the study emphasised that the low level of transparency of individual cities does not always indicate their lack of integrity or corruption risks. This could be affected by several factors related to wartime restrictions.

“For more than a year, Ukrainian cities have been working in the context of unprecedented wartime challenges. Among other things, finding a balance between restricting access to information and protecting people from threats from the aggressor has become a challenge. At the same time, issues of transparency and accountability are important not only for municipalities and residents, but also for the continued support of Ukraine by the international community. Therefore, it is essential to update the work in this direction wherever possible,” the Transparent Cities report says.

1.3. Scandals and related high-profile events

In the spring of 2023, political life of Odesa oblast intensified. Though, mostly in the form of scandals and confrontations. On 15 March 2023, Maksym Marchenko was dismissed from the post of Head of Odesa OMA. In the opinion of experts, one of the key reasons for that decision of the President of Ukraine are high-profile corruption scandals that have not subsided in Odesa, including Odesa OMA, since the end of 2022. The newly-appointed Head of OMA has not been designated at the time of writing of the report.

While the situation with water supply in Mykolaiv remained difficult, the Mykolaiv Center for Journalistic Investigations has published a material in which it **was emphasised** that the city municipal enterprise, Mykolaivvodokanal, purchased without tenders the large amounts of crushed stone and sand from newcomer companies in the public procurement market, possibly at inflated prices. Journalists discovered a number of contracts in ProZorro whose prices are almost twice as low as those in the contract of Mykolaivvodokanal.

The National Agency on Corruption Prevention of Ukraine **has drawn up** an administrative protocol on the conflict of interests of Ternopil Mayor, Serhiy Nadal. Specifically, in 2021–2022, he rewarded himself in the maximum amount and provided himself with allowances for health care, social and household issues, also in the maximum permissible amounts. However, the court decided to **close** the case due to the absence of the fact of an administrative offense.

The criminal proceedings on abuse and embezzlement of humanitarian aid by the Humanitarian Headquarters (hub) of Chernivtsi oblast which has operated since 24 February 2022 in the premises of Olympia physical culture and recreation complex, have continued in Chernivtsi oblast. There was a reception base for humanitarian aid which operated on a 24/7 basis. In the summer, the humanitarian hub ceased to operate (as stated, the reason was a change in management). A number of questions about the operation of the hub and alleged abuses **have been raised** in the public space. It has to be emphasised that at the time of writing of the report, there were no documents in Chernivtsi OMA regarding the fixed date of the beginning and termination of the activities of the humanitarian hub, as well as the further distribution of humanitarian aid.

2. Work on identity

2.1. Changes in education standards

Since the onset of a full-scale invasion, 91 educational institutions, or 61% of their total number, **have been damaged** in Mykolaiv due to shelling by Russian troops. The Head of the Education Department of the City Council, Hanna Lychko, said, “At some facilities, roofs need to be repaired, the windows replaced, and everything will be fine. While such facilities as gymnasiums No. 7, 48, 49, schools No. 60, 51, Lyceum No. 2, and Lyceum named after M. Arkas are heavily damaged, major repairs are needed, as well as possibly new construction.”

The number of full-time male students of some educational institutions has reportedly increased in April. This is primarily due to the fact that these students have the right to delay mobilisation. Chernivtsi Institute of Trade and Economics is a **record holder** among large higher education institutions where the number of contract students increased twelvefold in the first year of study.

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

“Decommunization. Ukraine” NGO has compiled a list of streets that should be renamed in Odesa oblast. Activists **counted** 1,246 objects that needed renaming. Nevertheless, they also noted that more than half of the streets that needed to be renamed in the oblast have already been renamed, so the organisation is confident that there will be less than a thousand of such streets in the near future.

Chernivtsi oblast is among those of Ukraine which are characterised by the rather slow [process](#) of de-communisation and de-Russification. A marker of this is the [renaming of streets](#), as Chernivtsi are invited to participate in round tables and discussions on this issue, but information about the results has [never been made public](#).

Also, a lot of attention this March was focused on historical investigations into the life of the Ukrainian writer, [Olha Kobylianska](#), and her relationships with the Soviet authorities, as well as the [renaming](#) of streets in Bukovyna on the instructions of Moscow. Such historical investigations contribute to the informed perception of the Soviet past and are important for shaping the Ukrainian national identity, as well as the strengthening of civil unity and cohesion in the fight against the aggressor.

2.3. Freedom of religion

A group of MPs [has registered](#) a draft Resolution on the termination of the lease agreement with the Pochaiv Holy Assumption Lavra of the UOC MP Ternopil oblast. The Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on Humanitarian and Information Policy recommended that the government check the Pochaiv Lavra's compliance with the terms of the agreement on the use of the complex of buildings. On 28 March, a meeting of the Holy Synod of the OCU was held. As part of Ternopil Diocese of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, a religious organisation, the Holy Dormition Pochaiv Lavra of Ternopil Diocese of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, [was established](#). The Metropolitan Nestor of Ternopil and Kremenets was approved as its archimandrite.

Deputies of Ternopil City Council [have banned](#) the administration of the local diocese of the UOC MP from using the land on which the Church in Honour of Faith, Hope, Love and Their Mother Sophia is located.

On 2 March, the handover of the last UOC MP church in Ivano-Frankivsk ended. The first service of the OCU was held there, a [prayer service](#) for the victory of Ukraine. Today, this temple belongs to the OCU community. The community is officially registered and has ownership rights to these premises.

As Lviv Mayor, Andrii Sadovyi, [noted](#) on the Telegram channel on 6 April, the UOC MP ceased to exist in Lviv. According to the press service of the Lviv City Council, "The premises on Pekarska Street will be transferred on the balance of the city to develop a rehabilitation system. When it comes to a "squatter" in Sikhov, it will be dismantled in the near term. In accordance with the decision made at the session of Lviv City Council on 9 March 2023, the procedure for assignment of the land plot at 89 Chervona Kalyna Avenue for use of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine has been initiated. As for the church on Bobanych Street, its property belongs to a religious community which says it disavows the MP."

Inter-religious conflicts have continued in Bukovyna, ranging from the [refusal](#) to pay tribute to the hero of Ukraine in the church of the UOC MP to open fights over the ownership of the church. Specifically, the conversion of the believers of the St. Dmitrii Church in the village of Yurkivtsi to the OCU caused a flurry of various information, including fake news about the events in the village, in particular, on the [Telegram channel](#) of Chernivtsi-Bukovyna Diocese of the UOC MP. A similar situation [was recorded](#) in the village of Babyn on 22 March. The conflict was resolved in favour of the OCU, but the confrontation gained publicity and was used by the UOC MP for promoting its own interests. The [conversion](#) of the religious community of Verbivtsi village from the UOC MP to the OCU was peaceful.

The challenge, to which there is currently no response from the authorities, [was](#) a statement by the abbot of Banchen Monastery in Bukovyna, Longinus (Mykhailo Zhara), who said that his monastery is ready to receive all monks of Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. Specifically, he claimed, "Our state has started a war against God, the Church of God, and against the Ukrainian people. Today, they want to evict our brothers, monks from the Lavra, Pochaiv, and Kyiv. ...Yet, nothing will come out of them. I would suggest everyone to go to Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra and protect it." The absence of a clear position of the authorities on this issue has adversely affected the religious processes in the oblast, especially in communities where representatives of the Romanian national community live in compact groups, most of whom are believers of the UOC MP.

According to the monitoring data on Odesa oblast, conversions from the UOC MP to the OCU were not massive and have not been recorded at all within the reporting period. Conversely, Odesa oblast [ranked](#) se-

venth in Ukraine in terms of the number of the UOC MP branches. There were 416 of them in the oblast. There is no information on major conflicts.

On 24 March, the Muslim community of Lviv oblast [opened](#) the Islamic Religious and Cultural Center. This happened in the first week of the holy fasting month of Ramadan. Alvin Kadyrov, the Head of the Mejlis Coordination Center for Humanitarian Affairs, invited everyone to visit the Center and unite for victory of good over evil.

2.4. National minorities

The issue of instructing in the languages of national minorities was discussed both in the [public space](#) and in the Department for Education and Science of Chernivtsi OMA. The Council of heads of schools providing instruction in the languages of national minorities [has been set up](#) under the Department. The Council is tasked to ensure high-quality communication with heads of educational facilities for the development of effective organisational and management decisions on the exercise by members of national minorities of the constitutional right to be instructed in their native language, as well as to study the state and native languages. In accordance with the Law of Ukraine “On Education”, from September onwards, part of the subjects for fifth-grade school children will be taught in Ukrainian (three subjects to be decided by parents). Among the challenges are the negative response of some parents; absence of new textbooks.

The conflict-generating potential of Ukrainian-Romanian relations has been growing. The steps of some Romanian MPs also added fuel to the fire: on 23 March, the senator of the Parliament of Romania, Diana Șoșoacă, [submitted](#) a draft law proposing to denounce the agreement on good neighbourliness and cooperation between Bucharest and Kyiv. She called on to annex the territories of Ukraine. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine has immediately [responded](#) to that statement in an appropriate manner, though further attempts to shatter socio-political peace in this direction could be expected.

In the context of international cooperation, the translation of the Easter Haggadah from Hebrew into Ukrainian [has marked](#) positive changes in Chernivtsi oblast. It was timed to Pesach whose celebration began on the evening of 5 April this year, following the initiative of the All-Ukrainian public women’s Jewish organisation, Keshet Ukraine Project. This is especially important for Chernivtsi, because a powerful Jewish community has traditionally lived here, and the city is known in the world, including for masterpieces of Jewish culture, created by prominent Chernivtsi locals (e.g., poet Paul Celan).

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 20 April 2023, a representative forum, dedicated to an open discussion on “The oblast’s choice of sustainability: approaches to defining and creating a sustainability eco-system. Cross-cutting resilience areas in the Strategy for the oblast development”, [was carried out](#) in the building of the Decentralization Office of Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast State Administration. The event was attended by representatives of Ivano-Frankivsk oblast, the territorial executive bodies, scientists, heads of oblast public organisations for the development of local self-government and promotion of entrepreneurship. The forum participants discussed activity areas and mechanisms for the implementation of strategic and operational goals and objectives of the current Strategy for the oblast development, the role of resilience as a tool for the implementation of projects and programmes, development in war conditions, and strengthening of the potential of the local authorities. The goal of the forum is to enhance resilience of the oblast by promoting the resilience concept in the development of projects in Ivano-Frankivsk oblast.

>> RELOCATION OF BUSINESSES

The operation of Kherson oblast-based weaving atelier, Vandra Ragz, in Kosiv, Ivano-Frankivsk oblast, is an example of the effective business [relocation](#). The Ukrainian-Swedish company specialises in the exclusive export production of carpets to individual orders. This year, it is planned to launch an innovative line, manual tufting. This will not only create new jobs in the community, but also deepen cooperation with Kosovo State Institute of Applied and Decorative Arts: students will be able to try new weaving technology and implement creative ideas on pile carpets during practical classes at the company.

In Zakarpattia oblast, the construction of a new production workshop of an enterprise relocated from Kramatorsk has begun. The enterprise specialises in the manufacture of turbines and energy generation equipment and will become part of the future industrial park. Uzhhorod district has become the new permanent place of its location. Most of the enterprise's products are expected to be exported.

The research and production company, Apex Plant, which relocated its production facilities from Kharkiv oblast, has resumed operations in Ilnytsia village, Irshava raion, Zakarpattia oblast. The company specialises in producing of polymer containers exported to Romania, Slovakia, Hungary, and other countries. The location near the borders is optimal in terms of logistics which makes products competitive on the European market and significantly increase the volume of orders. The company has up to 50 workers and intends to increase its number up to several hundred specialists.

As part of the relocation programme, 9.8% of 800 relocated businesses [relocated](#) to Chernivtsi oblast. Among them there are [private clinics](#), companies producing plastics, fireplaces, etc. 53 relocated businesses [have remained](#) in Chernivtsi, whereas 9 returned to the liberated territories at the time of writing of the report.

>> LOCAL INITIATIVES

Mykolaiv City Council redistributed UAH 501 million of unutilised balances of the 2022 budget of which UAH 200 million [will be spent](#) for the purchase of housing for the militaries serving in parts of the Mykolaiv garrison as part of the recently approved [target programme](#). There are requirements for the housing to be redistributed, including the number of family members, their age, and special needs. As of 21 April, Mykolaiv City Council received four housing applications. [According to](#) the first deputy mayor, Vitalii Lukov, UAH 200 million from the city budget should be enough for approximately 150 apartments.

On 2 March, the Head of Mykolaiv Oblast Military Administration, Vitalii Kim, [signed](#) the ordinance "On Developing the Project on the Programme for Comprehensive Reconstruction of Mykolaiv Oblast". The text of the document says that in the course of preparations of the programme, proposals of the administrations of neighbouring oblasts and communities of Mykolaiv oblast will be taken into account. It is also planned to hold a public discussion of the project. Following the discussion of the project, it must be approved by Mykolaiv Oblast Council.

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

>> AID FOR THE ARMY

According to the monitoring data on Ivano-Frankivsk oblast, territorial communities, public authorities, and volunteer communities paid great attention to issues of comprehensive support for the AFU. Priority was given to military units formed on the territory of the oblast. At a [meeting](#) of the Head of Kolomyia community, Bohdan Stanislavsky, with the command of the brigade in the east of Ukraine on 3 April, it was emphasized that this year, about UAH 100 million had been earmarked for the support of the 10th Separate Mountain Assault Brigade "Edelweiss". "We have allocated more than UAH 50 million for the direct support to the "ten". This money is to be channelled for the requests of soldiers of the "Edelweiss". We use them to buy drones, walkie-talkies, computer equipment, spare parts, and the like. Since the beginning of the year, almost 10% of the allocated money has already been used. Besides, more than UAH 40 million is given for the repair of "dozens" of buildings. The largest amount will go to the completion of the construction of a dormitory for the militaries," Stanislavskyi reported.

In early April, 1,000 Drones for Ukraine charitable [project](#) was launched in Lviv oblast, implemented by the International Assistance Headquarters for Ukrainians and Dignitas Fund with the assistance of Lviv and Donetsk OMAs. The first ten drones were transferred to Donetsk oblast on 12 April.

The Head of Lviv OMA, Maksym Kozytskyi, said that although the thousandth car was handed over to the AFU as part of 1,000 Cars of Freedom [initiative](#), the campaign does not end and will be continued. The benefactors have sent one thousand cars to the frontline within ten months.

On 31 March, Lviv Defence Cluster [handed over](#) 2,000 modern body armour covers to the militaries of the 38th Separate Marine Brigade. In total, over the year of its activities, it produced and equipped more than 95,000 bulletproof vests for the AFU.

Given an increase in the number of veterans and families of the fallen soldiers, the problem of their support has become urgent. In the Ask the Government hour on 11 April, the mayor of Ivano-Frankivsk, Ruslan Martsinkiv, said that since 2014, 242 male and female fighters from Ivano-Frankivsk territorial community who defended Ukraine from the Russian occupier [have been killed](#). Moreover, more than 50 members of Ivano-Frankivsk community were considered missing. According to unofficial sources, over the period of Russia's full-scale invasion, some 1,000 residents of the oblast died. Such situation has a significant impact on the social well-being of the population of the oblast, yields pessimistic sentiments and war fatigue.

>> HUMANITARIAN AID

The Executive Committee of Mykolaiv City Council [has approved](#) the Procedure for control of humanitarian and charitable aid. In this way, the city plans to strengthen control of the aid received from foreign partners. The procedure was developed in cooperation with the EU Anti-Corruption Initiative (EUACI). Accordingly, a special headquarters was set up in Mykolaiv to monitor the handling of humanitarian and charitable aid. All aid is subject to review and photo-recording by the commission which decides on its distribution. Aid accounting is carried out at all phases. All information about the receipt and use of aid is posted on the official website.

The international humanitarian organisation, [Halo Trust](#), which has been operating in the liberated areas of Mykolaiv oblast for several months and helps Ukraine to detect explosive, has been conducting active educational work among the residents of the oblast centre. On April 6, an event to raise awareness of the mine danger risks was held near the so-called Yurt of Invincibility.

Ternopil volunteers delivered 11 minibuses with products to the oblasts, shelled by the Russian militaries. The Easter Basket for a Soldier [charity initiative](#) has been organised by volunteers ahead of Easter for seven years running. The food kits went to seven oblasts.

>> HEALTH CARE

On 14 April, the first phase of the newly-founded Superhumans Center, a nationwide medical centre providing prosthetics, rehabilitation, and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorders of victims of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, [was opened](#) on the basis of hospitals in Lviv oblast. The Center will use German equipment for making prosthetics of various complexity.

>> GRANT AID

Lviv Regulatory Hub [implements](#), with the assistance of USAID's Competitive Economy of Ukraine Programme, the initiative entitled "Relocate together: assistance platform for relocated enterprises". Its goal is to identify the most common challenges faced by entrepreneurs in times of war and to develop mechanisms to address them. In the course of several months, more than ten businesses have received consultations and more than 80 business representatives have participated in themed events.

Chernivtsi [has won](#) a grant worth UAH 1.76 million, jointly funded by the EU and the German government, to support small and medium-sized enterprises. Technical equipment of the Entrepreneurship Development Center, as well as advisory and mentoring support for small and medium-sized enterprises and relocated businesses throughout 2023 will be provided as part of Business and Authorities: Strong Together project.

4. Changes in the social structure

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

On 1 April 2023, a medical evacuation train of Doctors Without Borders – Brussels [transported](#) 15 female wards from Lyubomyrivskiy psycho-neurological boarding school municipal institution of Zaporizhzhia Oblast Council to Chernivtsi oblast.

In Mamaivtsi, Chernivtsi oblast, a shelter for victims of domestic violence, notably women and mothers with children, [has started operating](#). The shelter was jointly equipped by Eleos-Ukraine network and Mamaivtsi Village Council.

Among the problems raised by the media in Chernivtsi oblast was the [absence of access](#) for people with disabilities to all premises of the local self-government bodies (e.g., the City Council). An examination was [carried out](#) in terms of the accessibility of educational facilities for people with limited mobility, because on 1 September 2022, the updated state construction standards of the creation of a barrier-free space, as well as the standards of construction and reconstruction of educational and preschool facilities and landscaping of territories came into effect in Ukraine.

In April, Ukrzaliznytsia and UNICEF [opened](#) the third, toll-free development and entertainment children's area, Together, at Lviv railway station where parents can spend time with children of all ages while waiting for a train.

4.2. Needs of displaced persons. Response

On 22 March, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [presented](#) a plan to respond to the humanitarian needs of displaced persons in Ivano-Frankivsk oblast in 2023. It provides for the creation of 1,000 new places where IDPs can live in compact groups, renovation of the available premises, creation of public spaces, support for relocated businesses, economic integration of IDPs into the life of Prykarpattia, consultations on their employment, support for government officials in terms of social protection to meet the needs of those displaced.

On 1 March, the Help Point, which aims to provide IDPs and the most vulnerable groups of the population with comprehensive humanitarian aid, [started operating](#) in Ivano-Frankivsk. The initiative is implemented by Hilfsweg International (HWI) non-governmental organisation, Austria, in partnership with STAN NGO, Ukraine. At the Help Point, people can get humanitarian aid (food products, household chemicals, hygiene products), as well as social support and psychological counselling. It is planned to provide monthly assistance to 400 households (the list of families will be changed every two months). Some 3,000 applications have been submitted at the time of writing of the report. Food kits prepared by the humanitarian organisation are of high-quality. According to the organisers, one grocery kit costs approximately EUR100 for a family of four. Preference for receiving food kit will be given to IDP families, while educational, psychological, and social measures (e.g., employment counselling) will also be available for families of combatants and low-income families.

The authorities of Chernivtsi oblast paid special attention to the support for IDPs. Specifically, they [plan](#) to establish advisory and coordination centres to deal with IDP issues under raion state administrations.

There were bunkers and shelters in the territory of Chernivtsi oblast which provided comprehensive support, especially social protection and security, to victims of military-related crimes. Ahead of Easter, egg painting master classes [have been held](#) for IDPs, along with other activities aimed at familiarising the population with the customs and traditions of Easter celebration in the oblast. Special attention was paid to children. Mykolaichuk Center [has hosted](#) Together with Ukraine event (the project is implemented in three – Odesa, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Chernivtsi – oblasts of Ukraine). It was an exhibition of drawings by children who relocated due to the war and by children with disabilities which they had created during therapeutic classes.

>> HOUSING FOR IDPS

The implementation of the 2023 Programme of Priority Infrastructure Projects geared towards creating living conditions for IDPs [has continued](#) in Lviv oblast. In April, UAH 1.8 million was transferred from the oblast budget for the Programme implementation. This year, UAH 3.5 million out of a total of UAH 165.7 million have already been allocated to the implementation of 13 projects and provision of IDPs with 319 housing facilities.

[According to](#) Lviv Oblast Military Administration, 238,254 IDPs were officially registered in Lviv oblast as of 9 April. 700 people lived in Lviv's modular town. It was built with the assistance of the United Kingdom and Poland.

[A modular town](#) in Sadhora district, Chernivtsi, built on the funds of the EU and Germany, [was opened](#) with the participation of the German Ambassador, Anka Feldhusen, and the Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine, Matti Maasikas. The town can accommodate 225 people. Also, in Khotyn, [it is planned](#) to arrange permanent housing for displaced persons in the former premises of the blood transfusion centre (32 apartments).

The first IDPs in Zakarpattia oblast settled in modular houses [built](#) on the money of Caritas Foundation, the Czech Republic, on the territory of Mukachevo Professional Agricultural Lyceum. Almost all 11 buildings built on the Lyceum's territory are ready for housewarming. Help also came from the international charity organization, Man in Need, Slovakia.

Mykolaiv oblast has already [received](#) from the European Commission 468 modular houses with the necessary equipment to accommodate IDPs and persons whose housing was destroyed / damaged as a result of military operations. More than a hundred of modular houses were installed as of 17 April.

The arrangement of a new shelter for displaced people [was nearing completion](#) in Ivano-Frankivsk. It is designed for 80 people who can live there for four years. Residents of the new shelter will pay only for utilities and home maintenance. In other words, they will pay UAH 1,400 per month for a room. Additionally, they need to pay for water and electricity. The construction of the shelter was carried out by MetaLab NGO in the framework of KO-HATY project. The construction works commenced in June 2022. The cost of the project is USD280,000. The lion's share of this amount is grant support from Germany and Sweden.

At the same time, due to insufficient communication and coordination of development issues, quite difficult situations sometimes happened between the authorities and the local populations. Specifically, the same occurred because of the choice of a site of construction of housing for IDPs. On 10 March, Ivano-Frankivsk City Council agreed to receive a grant from the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO), founded by the five Nordic governments of Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Finland, and Sweden, in the amount of EUR9.5 million for the construction of 12 five-storey buildings for displaced people (about 40,000 IDPs were registered in Ivano-Frankivsk as of 1 May). Yet the Council did not consult with residents of the suburban villages where the selected construction site is located. People were outraged by the fact that they learned about the City Council's plans from the news, no one asked their opinion, nor conducted an assessment of the impact of construction on the business conditions and a production facility located nearby.

>> EMPLOYMENT OF IDPS

In Zakarpattia oblast, the implementation of the [pilot project](#), Local employment partnership in Zakarpattia oblast, has continued. As part of the initiative, the organisers held an application competition for grants worth up to USD10,000 for representatives of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Local and relocated companies could participate in the competition. Every fifth application was filed by a relocated business. Almost 60% of application forms were submitted by individual entrepreneurs.

According to the monitoring data on Lviv oblast, the State Employment Service of Ukraine [has offered](#) training vouchers for veterans and IDPs. This is an opportunity to get a new profession free of charge or enhance professional skills and thus have more chances to find a job. In accordance with the initiative, participants in military operations; people who gained disabilities due to the war; people released from military service without the status of participants in military operations, with 10+ years of service; and internally displaced Ukrainians are eligible for the programme. The programme offers 70 professions and specialties.

[According to](#) the monitoring data on Chernivtsi oblast, IDPs have rarely filed applications with the employment service in order to find a job: since the beginning of the year, 421 persons received services of

Chernivtsi oblast employment service. Most of them filed applications with its Chernivtsi-based office – 296 persons, Dniester office – 101, and Vyzhnytsia office – 24. Accordingly, 352 IDPs have received the status of unemployed and 42 displaced persons have found jobs in 2023.

>> INTERNATIONAL AID

About 600 households in Zakarpattia oblast, both from among IDPs and vulnerable groups of the local population, received firewood free of charge as of March 2023. The support initiative was organised by Zakarpattia OMA and the international charity organization, [Man in Need](#), Slovakia. The project was geared towards providing the populations of Rakhiv, Tiachiv, and Khust raions with firewood.

>> FREE SERVICES

In early April, Batkivshchyna sanatorium in Truskavets, Lviv oblast, [launched](#) an experiment to provide IDPs with free services. On 21 March, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted a Resolution on piloting a project to change the model of interaction of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine and sanatoriums subordinate to it. What is meant is that Truskavets-based Batkivshchyna sanatorium will provide some categories of citizens with social services to free of charge until the end of 2024. The Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine [has reportedly said](#) that goal of the pilot project is to introduce the “money follows the person” principle in sanatoriums. The sanatorium will provide social services, namely inpatient care, shelter, assisted-care living, social adaptation for elderly IDPs, displaced persons with disabilities, and those whose housing is destroyed or uninhabitable due to damage and who have submitted a relevant application for reimbursement of losses.

>> PROVISION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELLING AND LEGAL AID

Social and psychological work with IDPs in three communities of Chernivtsi oblast (Storozhynets, Nedoboivka, Velykyi Kuchuriv, and the city of Chernivtsi), implemented by Ukrainian People’s House in Chernivtsi [NGO](#) with the assistance of Community-Led Emergency Action and Response (CLEAR) program, [has continued](#).

On 31 March, the second aid coordination space in Ukraine, Melitopol. Same Tut. Lviv, [was opened](#). Here, Melitopol locals can receive humanitarian, information, social, medical, psychological, and legal aid. More than 2,000 residents of Melitopol and Melitopol raion were registered in the city.

>> PREFERENCE SERVICES

As [reported](#) by representatives of the utility company for road maintenance, Lvivavtodor, IDPs registered in Lviv can apply for a preferential fee for parking on sites adjacent to their residential buildings. This will enable IDPs to pay the same parking fee as locals. It is also possible to issue discounted parking tickets for a longer period.

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

9,373 men of conscription age who left during the martial law for volunteer or humanitarian purposes through the Shliakh system have not returned to Ukraine. This is 11.1% of the total number of people who used the right to leave, [according to](#) the interim report of the Temporary Investigative Commission of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine which checked the intended use of humanitarian and other aid. The mentioned statistics cover the period from 24 February to 31 December 2022. Lviv (31,558 men left the country and 1,036 did not come back) and Ternopil (14,036 and 964 respectively) oblasts were at the top of the lists of Ukrainian oblasts in terms of the number of men of conscription age who did not come back.

The Security Service of Ukraine blocked 26 Telegram channels that prevented the mobilisation of Ukrainian nationals of conscription age. The Internet resources “reported” on the activities carried out by territorial recruitment and social support centres in Ivano-Frankivsk, Cherkasy, Vinnytsia, Chernivtsi, Kyiv, Lviv, and Odesa oblasts. First and foremost, they “disclosed” the places of serving subpoenas on conscripts and

urged them to hide from representatives of military commissariats. Specifically, Where subpoenas are served in Frankivsk [Telegram channel](#) had more than 70,000 subscribers.

According to the monitoring data on Chernivtsi oblast, the number of reported attempts to illegally cross the border by men of conscription age increased in April. The following several schemes for evading mobilisation were exposed:

- [church “aid”](#) from a clergyman of the UOC MP,
- a group of persons who, for money, helped Ukrainians to [flee](#) to foreign countries (three defendants in the case),
- temporary [delays](#) in mobilisation,
- [complicity](#) of customs officers in illegal border crossing.

Furthermore, systematic solo attempts to illegally cross the border with neighbouring [Moldova](#) and Romania have been recorded.

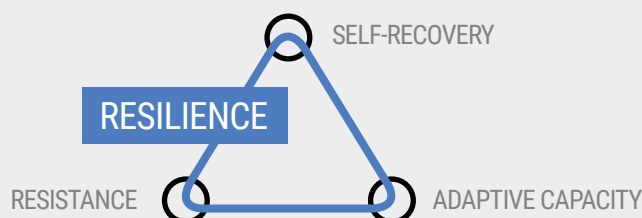
An increase in the number of locals killed at the front posed a serious challenge for mobilisation in Chernivtsi oblast. Almost every day, the media [reported casualties](#) among the military personnel, including the worryingly large percentage of young people.

At the same time, 100 residents of Chernivtsi, including 3 women, have filed applications for a volunteer police formation of the offensive guard, Liut (Fury) Volunteer Assault Brigade, of whom eighteen passed the tests and selection [as of March](#).

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, Ternopil, 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 12 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 work, 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 24 February 2022; and each of the follow-up reports has a two-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
Issue No. 6. March–April 2023

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