



IRC UKRAINE · PROTECTION ANALYSIS UPDATE

PROTECTION ANALYSIS REPORT

Mid-Year Review, January–June 2026

Mykolaivska Sumska Kharkivska Dnipropetrovska Zaporizka oblasts

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HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

RISK SUMMARY

What the threat is and how it presented in monitored locations.

WHO IS AFFECTED · EVIDENCE

The groups carrying the risk, and the monitoring data behind the finding.

WHY IT MATTERS · IRC RECOMMENDS

The operational consequence, and the response priority that follows.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The first half of 2026 saw the protection environment in Ukraine deteriorate further, shaped by three converging pressures: intensified attacks on civilian infrastructure, a winter energy crisis that disrupted essential services during the coldest season in over a decade, and the progressive exhaustion of coping capacity among a population deep into protracted displacement.

This report presents IRC protection monitoring findings from 1,828 household respondents surveyed in Mykolaivska, Sumska, Kharkivska, Zaporizka and Dnipropetrovska oblasts across the first half of 2026, complemented by 133 key informant interviews with community representatives, service providers and local authorities across the same geographies. Findings were triangulated with secondary data from humanitarian partners, cluster reporting and open-source monitoring, and read alongside IRC service-delivery data, to contextualise trends and corroborate protection risks.

Figures are indicative, not statistically representative. Cross-oblast comparisons should be read with caution because sample sizes and access conditions varied substantially by location.

1,565

civilians killed

December 2025 – June 2026, up 40% year on year. A further 8,861 injured.

83%

displaced over a year

3.2 million of 3.9 million IDPs. Hosting is shifting eastward.

90.7%

need financial assistance

Mykolaivska respondents — the highest single-need share recorded.

WHY PROTECTION RISKS ARE INCREASING

The protection environment continues to deteriorate due to three mutually reinforcing factors:

01

Intensified attacks on civilian infrastructure and populated areas.

02

Protracted displacement and barriers to safe return.

03

Progressive exhaustion of household coping capacities driven by economic deterioration.

How the risks compound

Protection risks are increasingly overlapping and reinforcing one another. Humanitarian access, displacement, documentation loss, exclusion from services and psychosocial distress compound one another rather than acting in isolation.



Attacks



Displacement



Loss of housing and documents



Reduced access to services



Economic stress



GBV and psychosocial distress

FIVE KEY MESSAGES FOR DECISION-MAKERS

01 • Civilian harm reached its highest level since 2022. June 2026 was the deadliest month since April 2022; casualties rose 40% year on year.

02 • Displacement is increasingly protracted rather than temporary, with new movement concentrating in frontline-adjacent eastern oblasts.

03 • Financial vulnerability is no longer only a livelihoods concern — it is emerging as a primary protection risk, driving displacement decisions, psychosocial distress, GBV exposure and negative coping mechanisms. 90.7% of Mykolaivska respondents cited financial assistance as an urgent need, and 98% of IRC case-management clients had no work or income.

04 • Humanitarian access is shrinking as needs expand: assistance contracted in every monitored oblast while attacks widened geographically.

05 • Protection risks increasingly overlap, requiring integrated responses — attacks, displacement, documentation loss, service exclusion and distress compound one another rather than acting in isolation.

How each indicator moved between January and June 2026

Arrows show the direction of change over the reporting period, not a measured rate.

↑ Civilian casualties	RISING	↑ Geographic spread of attacks	WIDENING
↑ Protracted displacement	INCREASING	↓ Household economic capacity	ERODING
↓ Humanitarian assistance coverage	CONTRACTING	↓ Access to health services	DETERIORATING
↓ GBV reporting and help-seeking	SUPPRESSED	— Returns	LOW, CONDITIONAL

PROTECTION DASHBOARD, H1 2026

CIVILIAN HARM

1,565

civilians killed, Dec 2025–
Jun 2026 (+40% YoY)

8,861

civilians injured over the
same period

**293 /
1,990**

killed / injured in June 2026
— deadliest month since
April 2022

96%

of casualties in territory
controlled by the
Government of Ukraine

DISPLACEMENT

3.9M

internally displaced persons
(IOM Round 23)

83%

displaced for more than one
year

58%

of all IDP's originated
from non-government-
controlled areas

70.5%

cite insecurity as the barrier
to return (Kharkivska)

ECONOMIC CAPACITY AND URGENT NEEDS

98%

of IRC case-management
clients had no work or
income

85.6%

name meeting basic needs
as their main financial
concern

90.7%

report financial assistance
as an urgent need
(Mykolaivska)

57.4%

need health services and
medicine (Sumaska, leading
need)

LEGAL, HLP AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

1,751

housing damage or
destruction cases; 601 title
deed, 418 inheritance

**78% /
94%**

of GBV cases perpetrated
by a partner / occurring in
the residence

93%

cite fear of being identified
as a survivor as a barrier to
services

68%

of recorded legal issues
were HLP-related

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS AND COVERAGE

249

attacks on healthcare

2 yrs+

since the last distribution in
several monitored
communities

20

attacks on aid assets; 3 aid
workers killed, 10 injured

66.5%

feel completely accepted in
their community

TEN FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

- 01** Civilian harm reached its highest level since 2022, and June 2026 was the deadliest month for civilians since April 2022.
- 02** Attacks widened geographically, placing civilians and humanitarian access at risk far from the front line.
- 03** Displacement is protracted rather than temporary: 83% of IDPs have been displaced for more than one year.
- 04** People remain in place because return is unsafe, housing is destroyed and services are unavailable — not because local integration has been achieved.
- 05** Financial vulnerability has become a primary protection risk, driving distress, GBV exposure, unsafe coping and exclusion from services.
- 06** Economic deterioration was reported across all monitored oblasts, not only in the worst-affected one.
- 07** Housing, land and property dominates legal need: 68% of all recorded legal issues were HLP-related, with 1,751 housing damage cases.
- 08** Rental informality is the dominant tenure model for displaced households, and one of the least addressed barriers to durable solutions.
- 09** GBV help-seeking is suppressed by fear, stigma and absent rural services. Under-reporting should not be interpreted as absence of risk.
- 10** Humanitarian coverage is contracting while needs expand; several communities reported no distributions for two years or longer.



CONTEXT

CONTEXT OVERVIEW AND PROTECTION ENVIRONMENT

Protection monitoring conducted between January and June 2026 indicates a deteriorating protection environment shaped by three interconnected trends: escalating attacks on civilians, increasingly protracted displacement and declining household coping capacity. The reporting period included the highest levels of civilian harm since 2022, severe disruptions to essential services following attacks on energy infrastructure, and growing economic pressures on conflict-affected households.

OHCHR recorded 1,565 civilians killed and 8,861 injured between December 2025 and June 2026,¹ while IRC respondents consistently identified attacks on civilians as their primary safety concern. Ninety-six per cent of casualties occurred in territory controlled by the Government of Ukraine, underscoring that the widening reach of long-range weapons was placing civilians far from the front line at growing risk.²

Q1 · ATTACKS ON ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE DURING EXTREME COLD

Power outages, loss of heating and water supply, restricted movement, reduced humanitarian access.

Q2 · ATTACKS EXPAND TO OTHER CIVILIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

Increased disruption of essential services, growing humanitarian needs, greater protection risks.

JUNE 2026 — DEADLIEST MONTH SINCE APRIL 2022

293 killed **1,990** injured

Two weapon dynamics drove rising casualties: missiles and long-range drones (principal cause; 385 killed, 2,100 injured, +57% YoY) and short-range FPV drones (second-leading cause; the deadliest weapon type in Dec 2025, Jan and Jun 2026).

249 attacks on healthcare · 20 attacks on aid assets · 3 killed, 10 injured aid workers

LEGISLATIVE CHANGE AND THE OUTLOOK FOR H2 2026

MANDATORY EVACUATION LEGISLATION

In February 2026 the Government introduced a mandatory evacuation framework for civilians in areas of active or potential hostilities, which under specific circumstances allows evacuation of children without parental consent. Implementation should keep any child–family separation exceptional, individually assessed and safeguarded to uphold the best interests of the child. (Law of Ukraine No. 4779-IX, 10 February 2026, Art. 33 Code of Civil Protection.)

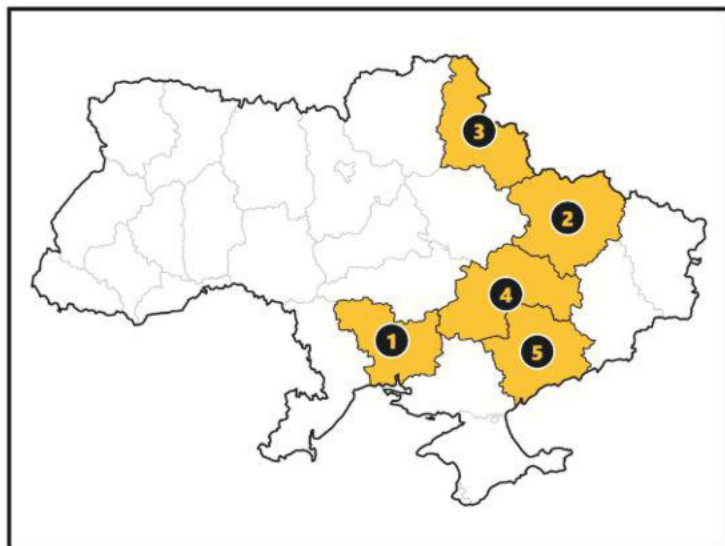
The reporting period was marked by a widening geographic spread of attacks, increasing constraints on humanitarian access, and growing pressure on conflict-affected households. These trends suggest that protection risks in the second half of 2026 will be driven less by individual shocks than by the cumulative effects of conflict, displacement and reduced resilience.^{3,4}



Notes — 1. OHCHR, Attacks against Ukraine's Energy Infrastructure and Update on the Human Rights Situation in Ukraine, 1 Dec 2025–31 May 2026 (29 Jun 2026). 2. Ibid. 3. OCHA, Ukraine Humanitarian Situation Snapshot, Mar–May 2026 (10 Jul 2026). 4. ACAPS, Ukraine Jan–Apr 2026 Humanitarian Access Update (11 Jun 2026).

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

This report draws on protection monitoring conducted by IRC between January and June 2026, using a mixed-methods approach combining 1,828 household surveys, 133 key informant interviews and direct observation, complemented by a review of secondary data. The analysis follows the Protection Analytical Framework (PAF), structuring each risk by threat, drivers, effects, most-affected groups and existing capacities.



Crimea, certain areas of the Donetsk, Luganska, Khersonska and Zaporizska oblasts were not covered by this monitoring, as currently they are beyond the control of the government of Ukraine.

COVERAGE

Monitoring was conducted in five oblasts where IRC has operational presence — Mykolaivska, Sumska, Kharkivska, Zaporizka and Dnipropetrovska — with a smaller number of interviews recorded in Odeska, Khersonska and Donetsk.

OBLAST	HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS
1 Mykolaivska	881
2 Kharkivska	274
3 Sumska	232
4 Dnipropetrovska	225
5 Other oblasts Zaporizka, Odeska, Khersonska, Donetsk	216

Numbers are household survey respondents, January–June 2026. Numbers 1–5 correspond to the map.

SAMPLING AND ETHICS

Respondents were identified through convenience, non-probabilistic sampling, standard practice for hard-to-reach areas. All data collection followed informed consent and IRC data-protection standards; identifying information was removed or aggregated.

LIMITATIONS

Findings are indicative, not statistically representative; cross-oblast comparisons should be read with caution. Data were insufficient to support dedicated analysis of risks facing Roma communities, LGBTIQ+ persons and other minorities — a data gap, not evidence of absent risk.

SAMPLE COMPOSITION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

OBLAST	# HH SURVEYS	# WOMEN	# MEN	# IDPS	# RETURNEES	# NON-DISPLACED
Mykolaivska	881	681	200	413	9	521
Sumska	232	190	42	133	2	189
Kharkivska	274	181	93	180	7	50
Dnipropetrovska	225	195	30	171	0	51
Other (Zaporizka, Odeska, Khersonska, Donetsk)	216	171	45	120	2	115
Total (Jan–Jun 2026)	1,828	1,418	410	1,017	20	926

Counts, not percentages, of household-survey respondents by oblast.

Across the two monitoring cycles conducted in H1 2026, 1,828 household representatives took part, of whom 77.6% were female and 22.4% male. Older persons predominated: 55.6% of respondents were aged 60 or over. Households reporting disability, chronic illness and functional limitations were strongly represented in the sample, highlighting the concentration of vulnerability among populations reached through monitoring.

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS



DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS: GENDER AND DISABILITY

77.6% **22.4%**

female respondents male respondents

29.7% of households reported an officially recognised disability; 59.8% a functional limitation; 55.9% a chronic or severe medical condition. Within IRC's case-management caseload, 70% of assessed clients reported functional difficulty.

REGION OF ORIGIN AND CERTIFICATION BARRIERS

The majority of respondents who identified as IDPs originated from three frontline oblasts — Donetsk (33.3%), Khersonska (32.0%) and Kharkivska (20.7%). Barriers to disability certification: inability or unwillingness to undergo required inpatient treatment; lack of interest in applying; cost of required examinations; insufficient information about the procedure.



DISPLACEMENT

INTENTIONS AND DISPLACEMENT

Displacement is both a protection risk and the principal pathway through which households become exposed to secondary risks — housing insecurity, legal exclusion, economic vulnerability and psychosocial distress. This section establishes who is being displaced, from where, and with what intentions, drawing on IOM's general population survey and IRC's own monitoring in frontline-adjacent oblasts.

3.9M total IDPs (IOM Round 23)	83% displaced for over one year	58% of all IDPs originated from occupied raions
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WHY PEOPLE REMAIN DISPLACED

BARRIERS TO RETURN REPORTED BY DISPLACED RESPONDENTS, KHARKIVSKA OBLAST

Insecurity		70.5%
Lack of services		59.1%
Destroyed housing		51.5%

High intention to remain should not be interpreted as successful integration. Most respondents reported remaining in place because return conditions are not yet safe or viable.

WHERE DISPLACEMENT COMES FROM, AND WHY PEOPLE STAY

IRC monitoring confirms broader displacement trends identified by IOM: the top three oblasts of origin — Donetsk, Zaporizka and Kharkivska — together accounted for 70% of all displacement recorded in the three months prior to interviews,⁵ showing that displacement pressure continues to emanate overwhelmingly from a narrow band of frontline territory. The geography of hosting shifted over the round: new displacement from frontline and occupied areas is increasingly absorbed by frontline-adjacent eastern reception oblasts, rather than redistributed further west as in earlier phases of the conflict.

Displacement from occupied areas is a distinct, higher-vulnerability caseload: people from occupied raions show higher rates of disability, chronic illness and households with older members than those displaced from non-occupied raions.⁶ This profile concentrates the highest-dependency caseload in the same eastern oblasts now absorbing the most new arrivals.

WHY PEOPLE STAY — TWO DISTINCT PROFILES

Kharkivska — return blocked

Insecurity, absent services and destroyed property block return. People stay because returning is impossible, not because they have integrated.

Mykolaivska — rootedness, weakening

58.0% cite being originally from the area (rising to 77.7% in Q2), but intention to remain fell 10.9 points quarter on quarter as uncertainty rose.

Displacement should not be interpreted as successful integration.

Most displacement is not voluntary permanence. People remain not because local integration has been achieved, but because insecurity, damaged housing and limited services continue to make return unviable.

Taken together, the displacement picture is one of a protracted caseload settling into place even as fresh movement from the front line continues to feed the same eastern reception areas — settling more because return is blocked than because integration has been achieved. The analysis that follows examines the protection risks that arise where continued displacement pressure, deepening protraction and constrained return converge, with particular attention to older persons and persons with disabilities.

Notes — 5. IOM, Ukraine Internal Displacement Report: General Population Survey, Round 23 (May 2026), data as of 30 Mar 2026. 6. Ibid.: disability 41% (occupied origin) vs. 31% (non-occupied); chronic illness 6% vs. 56% (as reported); older household members 59% vs. 47% (86% among those displaced under one year). Share of IDPs hosted displaced over two years, by oblast: Vinnytsia 83%, Khmelnytskyi 82%, Ivano-Frankivsk 79%, Mykolaiv 79%, Lviv 77%, Kyiv 75%, Zaporizhzhia/Kharkiv 69%, Cherkasy 69%, Poltava 65%. Share of monitored respondents planning to remain (Q1→Q2): Dnipropetrovsk 91.0%→89.1%, Kharkiv 93.6%→90.2%, Mykolaiv 91.6%→80.7%.

URGENT NEEDS AND BARRIERS TO SERVICES

Across the monitored oblasts, urgent needs were shaped by two recurring priorities — financial assistance and access to health services and medicines — though their relative weight differed markedly by location. Because respondents could report more than one need, figures overlap rather than sum. The table below gives the top priority needs by oblast; the panels that follow disaggregate them.



OBLAST	TOP NEED	2ND	3RD
Mykolaivska	Financial assistance	Hygiene products	Health services
Sumska	Health services & medicine	Financial assistance	Transportation
Kharkivska	Financial assistance	Health services & medicine	Hygiene products
Dnipropetrovska	Financial assistance	Hygiene products	Health services & medicine

Zaporizka is not shown separately: household surveys there were recorded within the grouped "other oblasts" sample and are too few to disaggregate. Findings for Zaporizka in this report come from key informant interviews.

MYKOLAIVSKA (637 RESPONDENTS)

Financial assistance dominated at 90.7%, rising to 94.8% among 30–39 year-olds. IRC case management found 98% of assessed clients had no work or income. Health-service need rose from 2% (18–25) to 71.3% (70+).

KHARKIVSKA (133 RESPONDENTS)

48% reported no urgent need — the largest such share recorded, of unclear cause. Among those with needs: financial assistance (33%), health services (21.8%), hygiene (21%).

SUMSKA (209 RESPONDENTS)

Health services led (57.4%), most acute among 60–69 year-olds (68.9%). Transportation stood out at 26.3% — reaching services was as much a barrier as their availability, hitting host-community residents (28.8%) harder than IDPs (12.9%).

DNIPROPETROVSKA (92 RESPONDENTS)

Financial assistance led (42.4%), followed by no urgent need (38%), hygiene (29.3%) and health services (23.9%), concentrated among those aged 70+.

NEEDS

ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY AS A PROTECTION DRIVER

PRIMARY FINANCIAL CONCERNS, NEXT 3 MONTHS (637 RESPONDENTS, MYKOLAIVSKA)

Meeting basic needs		85.6%
Unforeseen emergencies		63.3%
Healthcare expenses		43.6%

ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY AS A PROTECTION DRIVER

Financial vulnerability increasingly drives other protection risks, including psychosocial distress, GBV exposure, unsafe coping mechanisms and barriers to accessing services.

90.7%

of Mykolaivska respondents report cash assistance needs

98%

of IRC case-management clients without work or income

ECONOMIC DETERIORATION IS CROSS-OBLAST

Economic vulnerability was reported across all monitored oblasts and emerged as a cross-cutting driver of protection risks — Mykolaivska is the sharpest case, not an isolated one.



Financial assistance need by sex, selected oblasts — Mykolaivska: female 93.8% / male 81.4%; Sum'ska: 56.1% / 63.9%; Dnipropetrov'ska: 45.7% / 18.2%; Kharkiv'ska: 29.9% / 39.1%.



CHAPTER

PROTECTION RISKS

Structured around the risks prioritised through IRC's Protection Analytical Framework. Every risk follows the same order: risk summary, key evidence, who is affected, why it matters, and what IRC recommends. Where a prioritised risk is not analysed in depth, this reflects a data limitation, not an absence of risk.

1 · Attacks on Civilians & Civilian Objects

2 · Forced Displacement & Returns

3 · Gender-Based Violence

4 · Presence of Explosive Ordnance

5 · Legal Identity, Remedies & HLP

6 · Theft, Looting & Eviction

7 · Psychosocial Distress

8 · Discrimination & Denial of Access

01 ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS AND CIVILIAN OBJECTS

Attacks on civilians were the defining condition of the protection environment across all monitored oblasts, and the risk most directly implicated in those that follow — in household-level monitoring, the safety concern ranked first by respondents in every oblast, regardless of distance from the front line.



SAFETY AND SECURITY CONCERNS RANKED FIRST (1,827 RESPONDENTS)

Threat of missile / CAB / UAV strikes		93.7%
Destruction of civilian property		12.3%
Civilian death or injury		11.8%
Landmines and UXO contamination		7.6%

Attack patterns shifted over the period, from large-scale strikes on energy infrastructure during winter to increased attacks on civilian infrastructure and populated areas — widening disruption and raising casualties. Strikes on railway infrastructure caused injuries and evacuations from trains, severed transport links.

"The Mezhova hromada is being hit by every type of weapon the Russians have developed... Last week, civilians who were trying to evacuate were killed while travelling. Looting is widespread." — KII, Dnipropetrovska oblast

LOCAL ADAPTATION

Emergency shelter materials (boards, sheeting, roof covering) distributed after strikes; anti-drone netting expanded along strike-prone corridors in Dnipropetrovska oblast and over Kramatorsk and Zaporizhzhia. Protective infrastructure still lags the threat: some frontline starosta districts in Zaporizka oblast have no functioning shelters or air-raid warning system.

MOST AFFECTED GROUPS

/ Older persons

/ Female-headed households

/ People displaced from occupied territories

/ Persons with disabilities

/ Children

/ Low-income households

WHY THIS MATTERS

- Attacks are the trigger, not a standalone risk — they generate displacement (Risk 2), documentation loss (Risk 5) and chronic distress (Risk 7).
- June 2026 is now the deadliest month for civilians since 2022, displacing the July 2025 peak.
- Widening drone range puts civilians and humanitarian access at risk far from the line; some organisations halted rapid delivery even 20km back.
- The least mobile are the most exposed — rural starosta districts in Zaporizka, Dnipropetrovska and Sumyska remain without shelters or alert coverage.

IRC RECOMMENDS

civil-defence preparedness (shelters, alert systems) matched to the threat in frontline starosta districts; protective equipment for frontline responders operating within FPV-drone range.

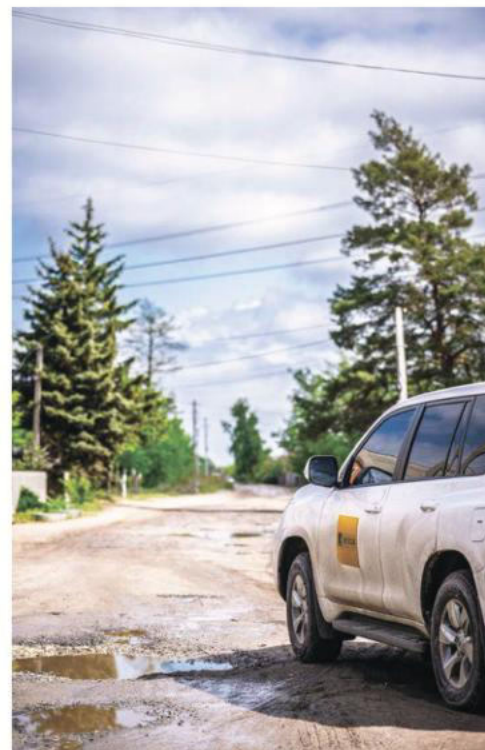
02 RESTRICTIONS ON MOVEMENT, FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND RETURNS IN ADVERSE CONDITIONS

DISPLACEMENT PATHWAY



Evacuations continued through the period, concentrated in Sumska, Donetska, Kharkivska and Dnipropetrovska oblasts. Destruction is typically the decisive trigger rather than an early one: households remain under sustained attack and leave once their homes are destroyed. In Sumy, 90% of arrivals had lost their home; winter conditions further reduced the habitability of damaged housing.

The effects reached beyond the displaced themselves. Registration figures diverged substantially from actual presence, undermining needs planning: in one Zaporizka hromada, approximately 11,200 IDPs were registered against an estimated 7,000 residents. Under-registration ran alongside this: 20% of displaced case-management clients held no IDP registration, most often for lack of a passport or documents lost during evacuation, limited mobility, or shelters that do not register residents as displaced.



"Compulsory evacuation always increases the risk of experiencing violence, particularly for women travelling alone or evacuating alone with children." — KII, Kharkivska oblast

Response capacity centred on reception rather than on movement itself: relocated military-civil administrations serving home communities in exile, transit and collective sites in Mykolaiv operating at or above capacity, and modular housing allocated through a points system favouring servicemen's families. No capacity addressed pendular movement, and support at the point of return was absent from monitoring data.

WHO IS MOST AFFECTED

- | | |
|--|--|
| / Older persons unable to evacuate | / Persons with disabilities |
| / Residents of occupied territories | / Low-income households unable to relocate |
| / Working-age men underrepresented in assistance systems | |

WHY THIS MATTERS

- **Housing destruction is the main trigger for displacement.** Families often leave only after losing their home, when capacity to recover is already reduced. In Sumy, 90% of new arrivals had lost their home.
- **IDP registration data both overcount and undercount.** One Zaporizka hromada had ~11,200 registered IDPs but ~7,000 residents, while 20% of displaced clients had no registration at all.
- **Some groups face greater barriers to movement, assistance and visibility:** older people in frontline settlements, unregistered dacha residents, working-age men outside formal systems, households that cannot afford to move again.
- **Many households return to areas where risks remain.** Reduced IDP payments and lulls in shelling encourage returns, while little assistance was reported at the point of return.

IRC RECOMMENDS

durable housing solutions in hosting oblasts whose capacity to absorb new arrivals is exhausted; support to the authorities of displaced hromadas, best placed to lead the community-based protection response.

03 GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Service-provider observations and monitoring findings suggest increasing concern around GBV, particularly intimate partner and domestic violence, while under-reporting remains significant. In Kharkivska oblast, IRC's WPE GBV Risk Assessment (March 2026) found intimate partners or former partners identified as perpetrators in 78% of reported cases, 94% of incidents occurring in the survivor's residence. Male victims appeared among registered complainants in Dnipropetrovska and Sumska; technology-facilitated violence emerged as a form in Kharkivska.



"Many men remain at home almost all the time. This can contribute to conflict and aggression... while women are forced to support the household on their own." — KII, Kharkivska oblast

The central effect, beyond the violence itself, is a reporting environment that suppresses help-seeking. In rural areas, cases were reportedly closed informally after a mobile team's visit, on the basis that parties were deemed to have reconciled, with no risk assessment or follow-up recorded. Response capacity is concentrated in larger settlements; in most rural districts, no specialised service could be identified, leaving police and mobile teams as the only recourse.

WHY REPORTED CASES DO NOT REFLECT THE REAL SCALE

Fear of identification as a survivor	93%
Lack of confidentiality	
Stigma	
Limited availability of specialised services	
Rural areas frequently lacking dedicated services	

48%

of case-management clients declined referral to psychological support

Under-reporting should not be interpreted as absence of risk.

MOST AFFECTED GROUPS

Women in the families of serving and returned military personnel · women heading households alone · displaced women in collective accommodation · male victims, an under-recognised group.

WHY THIS MATTERS

- **GBV remains significantly under-reported.** Service-utilisation data likely underestimate the scale, creating challenges for resource allocation and response planning.
- **Lack of confidential access is a major barrier.** In Kharkivska, 93% feared being identified as a survivor and 48% of case-management clients declined psychological support — expanding services alone is not enough.
- **In many rural areas, specialised GBV services are extremely limited.** Survivors often rely on police and occasional mobile teams as their only points of support.

IRC RECOMMENDS

confidential mobile and remote GBV services, building on approaches already functioning in urban centres, to reach rural and hard-to-reach areas where specialised services do not exist.

04 PRESENCE OF EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE

Explosive ordnance contamination was an acute, casualty-producing risk concentrated in three de-occupied geographies — Iziumskyi raion (Kharkivska), the southern belt of Mykolaivskyi raion, and Beryslavskyi raion (Khersonska) — with an emerging signal in Kryvorizkyi raion, where agricultural machinery detonated munitions, including scatterable "petal" mines, in working fields. Contamination is dynamic rather than residual: cleared fields in Mykolaivska oblast saw mines resurface seasonally.

Economic pressure continues to drive risky behaviour, including cultivation of contaminated land and informal attempts to identify hazards. Humanitarian mine action — including HALO Trust clearance and state demining — fell far short of contamination, and monitoring did not identify EORE activity or community awareness of such activity in the affected locations.



RECOVERY BLOCKED

In villages of Iziumskyi raion, power lines have remained unrepaired since 2022 because surrounding land is contaminated — clearance timelines exceed normal programme cycles.

MOST AFFECTED GROUPS

- | | |
|--|---|
| / Rural men engaged in agricultural activities | / Households dependent on farming livelihoods |
| / Residents of contaminated rural communities | / Returnees to de-occupied areas |

Economic hardship continues to drive farming, travel and work activities in contaminated areas, and informal demining practices were reported by community members.

Where livelihoods depend on contaminated land, risk education without an income alternative changes little.

WHY THIS MATTERS

- **Contamination persists even after clearance.** Mines reappear in cleared areas and new strikes re-contaminate land, so clearance is not a permanent solution.
- **People continue to use contaminated land because it is their main income.** In one community a resident reported clearing mines himself with a metal detector he had bought.
- **Contamination blocks recovery beyond its immediate danger.** Power lines in Iziunskyi raion have been unrepaired since 2022 because surrounding land is contaminated.
- **Mine-risk education was absent or insufficient in several affected areas,** including communities experiencing casualties.

IRC RECOMMENDS

community-level mine-risk education delivered alongside livelihood support; clearance prioritised according to the importance of land for livelihoods and recovery.

05

LEGAL IDENTITY, REMEDIES AND JUSTICE, INCLUDING HOUSING, LAND AND PROPERTY

This risk produced the largest volume of findings, manifesting in four connected clusters. Legal counselling data corroborate it directly: HLP-related issues accounted for 68% of all legal issues recorded by IRC legal counselling services.

68%

of all legal issues recorded were HLP-related

1,751

housing damage or destruction cases

601

title deed cases

418

inheritance cases

"Legal and HLP barriers are preventing households from accessing rights, compensation and durable solutions."

1 • LEGAL IDENTITY

No documented prior residence or identity documents means no displaced-person status — no status, no payments; no payments, no rent; no address, no registration. 154 dacha-cooperative residents in one Zaporizka hromada are absent from official statistics.

2 • COMPENSATION

Incomplete ownership documentation and unfinished inheritance block applications; court restoration of missed deadlines can exceed eight months; no mechanism exists for property in occupied territory.

3 • ADMINISTRATION

Transfer of social-payment functions to the Pension Fund delayed thousands of displaced households in Mykolaiv; digitalisation excludes older persons; disability-status bureaucracy described as prohibitive.

4 • RENTAL INFORMALITY

Informal rental arrangements remain the dominant tenure model for displaced households, exposing tenants to eviction, insecurity of tenure and exclusion from support schemes. Landlords refuse written leases to avoid taxation.

LEGAL ISSUES RECORDED BY IRC LEGAL COUNSELLING

Damaged or destroyed housing	1,751
Title deeds	601
Inheritance	418
IDP allowance payments	245
Pensions	219

MAIN HLP BARRIERS

Missing ownership documents

Lost documentation during displacement

Inheritance disputes

Lack of compensation mechanisms for occupied territories

Informal rental agreements

High cost of legal procedures

KEY FINDING

Rental informality remains one of the most widespread barriers to durable solutions, exposing displaced households to eviction, insecure tenure and exclusion from assistance programmes.



CYCLE OF EXCLUSION



Older persons and persons with disabilities faced disproportionate administrative and legal barriers. Capacities were present but overmatched: NGO legal aid operated across the monitored oblasts, state free legal aid attracted distrust in some communities, and assistance rarely extended to full case accompaniment. One replicable local practice was recorded — a Zaporizka starosta facilitating online lease agreements with property owners abroad, stabilising tenancies for both parties.

WHY THIS MATTERS

- **Administrative requirements prevent households from accessing assistance and legal status,** resulting in systematic under-identification of vulnerable households in both state and humanitarian systems.
- **Multiple barriers limit access to compensation.** Court procedures can exceed eight months, no mechanism exists for property in occupied territory, and legal costs remain unaffordable.
- **Legal assistance often stops at the advice stage.** Few people can pursue complex cases through administrative and court procedures independently.
- **Some groups face disproportionate barriers:** people displaced from occupied territory, older people, people with disabilities, dacha residents and families of deceased soldiers.

IRC RECOMMENDS

legal assistance that extends beyond advice to full case support through compensation, inheritance, documentation and HLP procedures.

06 THEFT, LOOTING AND EVICTION

Loss of shelter and property through unlawful appropriation and eviction affected three distinct groups: properties left unprotected by the December 2025 mandatory evacuation of a Synelnykivskyi raion hromada, with no mechanism recorded to secure unoccupied assets; displaced tenants evicted from informal rental arrangements; and collective-site residents required to be rehoused under Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 1169, not all of whom had confirmed placements at the time of monitoring.

Eviction appeared rarely in service data, consistent with the informality analysed in Risk 5: tenants without written agreements have limited remedies to pursue, so eviction surfaces through monitoring and case management rather than as legal demand.



MOST AFFECTED GROUPS

- | | |
|---|--|
| / IDPs living in informal rental arrangements | / Residents of evacuated communities |
| / Collective-site residents affected by rehousing processes | / Older persons and persons with disabilities facing relocation barriers |

WHY THIS MATTERS

- **Asset loss undermines durable solutions** and increases dependence on humanitarian assistance.
- **Redress mechanisms are limited across all three situations.** Looting in evacuated areas lacks safeguards, eviction is tied to insecure rentals, and rehousing may relocate households without confirmed alternatives.
- **Housing solutions do not always meet accessibility needs.** For older people and people with limited mobility, relocation is not viable if accommodation and services are not physically accessible.

IRC RECOMMENDS

increased availability of accessible placements, particularly for older people and people with limited mobility.

07 PSYCHOSOCIAL DISTRESS

DISTRESS PATHWAY



Chronic psychological distress was reported across all monitored oblasts, linked to prolonged exposure to hostilities, displacement, family separation and the cumulative effects of a fifth year of war. High levels of anxiety, grief, sleep disturbance and emotional exhaustion were consistently identified through IRC psychosocial support and case management services, and the scale of need continued to exceed the availability of specialised services in every monitored area.

Social isolation compounded vulnerability among older persons and female-headed households, while a shortage of child psychologists was reported across all monitored oblasts.

EMERGING TREND

Financial hardship increasingly drives psychosocial distress

Service data show distress increasingly linked to unemployment, rising living costs and depleted household resources — shaped by the cumulative effects of protracted displacement and economic insecurity rather than by immediate conflict-related shock.

Distress is both an outcome of other protection risks and a driver of them. Strain within households with returned military personnel was explicitly linked to rising GBV risk, while caregiver exhaustion reduced the ability of women managing households alone to sustain family wellbeing. For children, prolonged disruption to education and repeated exposure to air-raid alerts continue to affect wellbeing and development.

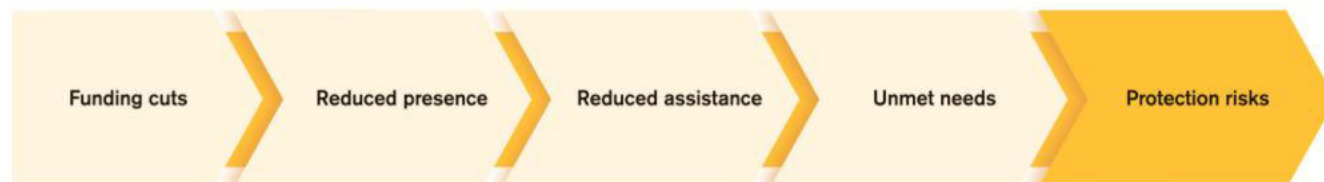
WHY THIS MATTERS

- **Distress both results from and contributes to other protection risks.** Stress in households of returned soldiers was linked to increased reports of GBV; caregiver exhaustion reduced households' ability to cope.
- **Psychosocial needs are evolving.** Financial hardship has become a major driver of distress, reflecting declining coping capacity.
- **Older people and women heading households alone were particularly affected,** with isolation worsening outcomes.
- **Children face long-term developmental impacts.** A fourth consecutive year of interrupted schooling and regular air alerts is affecting learning, wellbeing and development.

IRC RECOMMENDS

increased child-focused MHPSS and specialised child psychologists; community-based psychosocial support networks with outreach to older persons, caregivers and female-headed households; MHPSS integrated with economic recovery programming where feasible.

HOW CONTRACTION BECOMES A PROTECTION RISK



KEY FINDING

Reduction in humanitarian assistance emerged as a more significant source of exclusion than discrimination.

The reduction of humanitarian assistance was the most consistently reported change across monitored locations. Communities were removed from prioritisation lists, providers ended programmes, and distributions narrowed to increasingly restrictive vulnerability criteria.

SHRINKING HUMANITARIAN PRESENCE

A starosta district in Okhtyrskyi raion — no food or hygiene distributions for two years. A Voznesenskyi raion community — last food distribution in November 2023. Dnipropetrovska communities with no organisational presence at all in 2026. A Romenskyi raion village — first NGO visit since 2022 in mid-2026.

Humanitarian coverage is decreasing while protection needs continue to increase.

MOST AFFECTED GROUPS

/ Older persons

/ Female-headed households

/ People displaced from occupied territories

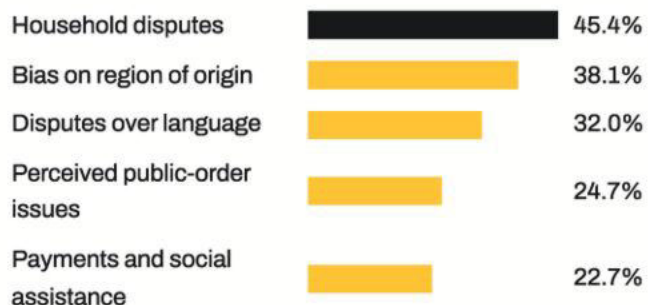
/ Persons with disabilities

/ Children

/ Low-income households

Discrimination, by contrast, was rarely reported: an average of 66.5% of respondents felt completely accepted in their community, and where tensions arose they were primarily linked to humanitarian targeting criteria rather than group identity. On this evidence, discrimination as defined by the Global Protection Cluster is not a widespread phenomenon in the monitored oblasts, and reported instances appear to arise from interpersonal conflict rather than systematic practice.

NATURE OF TENSIONS BETWEEN IDPS AND HOST COMMUNITY



EXAMPLES OF REPORTED DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT

Landlords in Dnipropetrovska declining tenants from Donetsk and Luhanska · derogatory language linked to place of origin · a Russian-speaking family refused service in a state institution until they "learned the language" · family doctors declining care declarations with displaced patients · employers refusing displaced applicants on the assumption of imminent return.

In several monitored communities, humanitarian support had not been delivered for two years or longer despite continuing protection risks.

WHY THIS MATTERS

- **Reduced assistance was a more common driver of exclusion than direct discrimination.** Shrinking coverage risks creating new protection concerns where unmet needs fuel tensions.
- **Current eligibility criteria exclude some households.** Working-age adults may fall outside IDP payments despite having no pension or stable income.
- **Communities facing the highest insecurity often have the least access to assistance,** with long interruptions to aid delivery.
- **Perceptions of unequal targeting contribute to tensions,** which respondents linked primarily to aid allocation rather than place of origin.

IRC RECOMMENDS

clear eligibility criteria communicated transparently to communities; accessible mechanisms for residents to raise concerns and challenge targeting decisions they perceive as unfair.



CROSS-CUTTING

CHILDREN ACROSS THE RISKS

Children were identified as a cross-cutting population affected by multiple protection risks in all monitored oblasts. Findings rest on key informant interviews and adult household respondents — no primary data collection was conducted with children — so the analysis reports concerns and observed trends rather than prevalence.

Children experience the compounded impact of multiple protection risks simultaneously.

EDUCATION Limited shelter capacity restricts in-person learning; destroyed schools leave children on remote education for consecutive years.	MHPSS Distress from conflict and displacement meets a shortage of qualified child psychologists in every monitored oblast.	FAMILY SEPARATION A growing number of children without parental care, linked to domestic violence and parental alcohol abuse.	ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION In Sumy city, children seeking income were reported increasingly exposed to exploitation and recruitment into illegal activities.	DISABILITY AND EXCLUSION Displaced children and children with disabilities were reported to face bullying and social exclusion.
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MAIN REPORTED CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS

Long-term disruption of education

Bullying of displaced children

Child psychosocial distress

Economic exploitation of adolescents

Recruitment into illegal activities

Lack of child psychologists

Lack of alternative care arrangements

As a result, many children experienced prolonged disruptions to learning and social development, while caregivers — predominantly women — faced additional barriers to employment where kindergarten services remained unavailable. Child protection services continued to respond to reported cases of abuse; however, the lack of appropriate alternative care and placement options often limited the ability to safely remove children from harmful environments.

WHY THIS MATTERS

- **Children carry the compounded weight of every other risk.** Attacks destroy schools, displacement separates families, economic pressure pushes adolescents toward hazardous income, and distress meets a shortage of specialised support.
- **The developmental cost outlasts the reporting period.** Several consecutive years of disrupted and remote learning, sharpest in de-occupied communities where schools were destroyed.
- **The burden is sharpest for specific groups:** children in frontline and de-occupied communities, displaced children, adolescents in economically vulnerable households, and children with disabilities.
- **Child protection response is blocked at the placement stage.** The absence of appropriate alternative care limits the ability to remove children safely from harmful environments.

IRC RECOMMENDS

expand child-focused MHPSS and the availability of specialised child psychologists; strengthen alternative care and placement arrangements so children can be removed safely from harmful environments where needed.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMMING

The protection risks identified across the monitored oblasts were closely interconnected and frequently reinforced one another. The cascade below is why overlapping risks require integrated, multi-sectoral programming rather than isolated single-sector responses.

"Protection risks are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, requiring integrated rather than sector-specific responses."



HOW THE RISKS INTERACT

1 • Attacks on civilians Directly harm civilians and create risks to life and personal safety.	2 • Displacement Disrupts livelihoods, separates families and increases dependence on humanitarian assistance.	3 • Loss of housing and documents Limits access to shelter, services, legal rights and essential support.
4 • Reduced access to services Creates barriers to healthcare, social protection, compensation and other essential services.	5 • Economic stress Reduces household resources and increases financial pressure on conflict-affected families.	6 • GBV and distress Increases exposure to gender-based violence and contributes to psychological and emotional distress.

Primary and secondary risks are presented, recognising that the situation on the ground is not always linear.

FROM RISK TO RESPONSE

RISK	OPERATIONAL IMPLICATION	RESPONSE PRIORITY
1 · Attacks on civilians	Insecurity shapes movement, service access and delivery modality in every oblast.	Civil-defence preparedness matched to threat; protective equipment for frontline responders.
2 · Displacement and returns	Reception capacity is exhausted; registration data over- and under-count simultaneously.	Durable housing in hosting oblasts; support to displaced hromada authorities.
3 · Gender-based violence	Help-seeking is suppressed; rural districts have no specialised service.	Confidential mobile and remote GBV services with discreet entry points.
4 · Explosive ordnance	Economic pressure drives people onto contaminated land; risk education is absent where casualties occur.	EORE delivered with livelihood support; clearance prioritised by livelihood value.
5 · Legal identity and HLP	Administrative exclusion blocks status, payments and compensation; advice alone is insufficient.	Legal accompaniment through compensation, inheritance and documentation procedures.
6 · Theft, looting, eviction	Informal tenure leaves no remedy; rehousing can relocate people without confirmed placements.	Accessible placements, especially for older people and people with limited mobility.
7 · Psychosocial distress	Financial hardship is displacing bereavement as the main driver of distress presentations.	Community-based MHPSS integrated with economic recovery; child psychologists.
8 · Discrimination and access	Contraction of assistance, not group identity, is the main driver of exclusion and tension.	Transparent eligibility criteria and accessible channels to contest targeting.

CAPACITIES ALREADY WORKING

Local practices monitoring found sustaining access, worth building on rather than replacing.

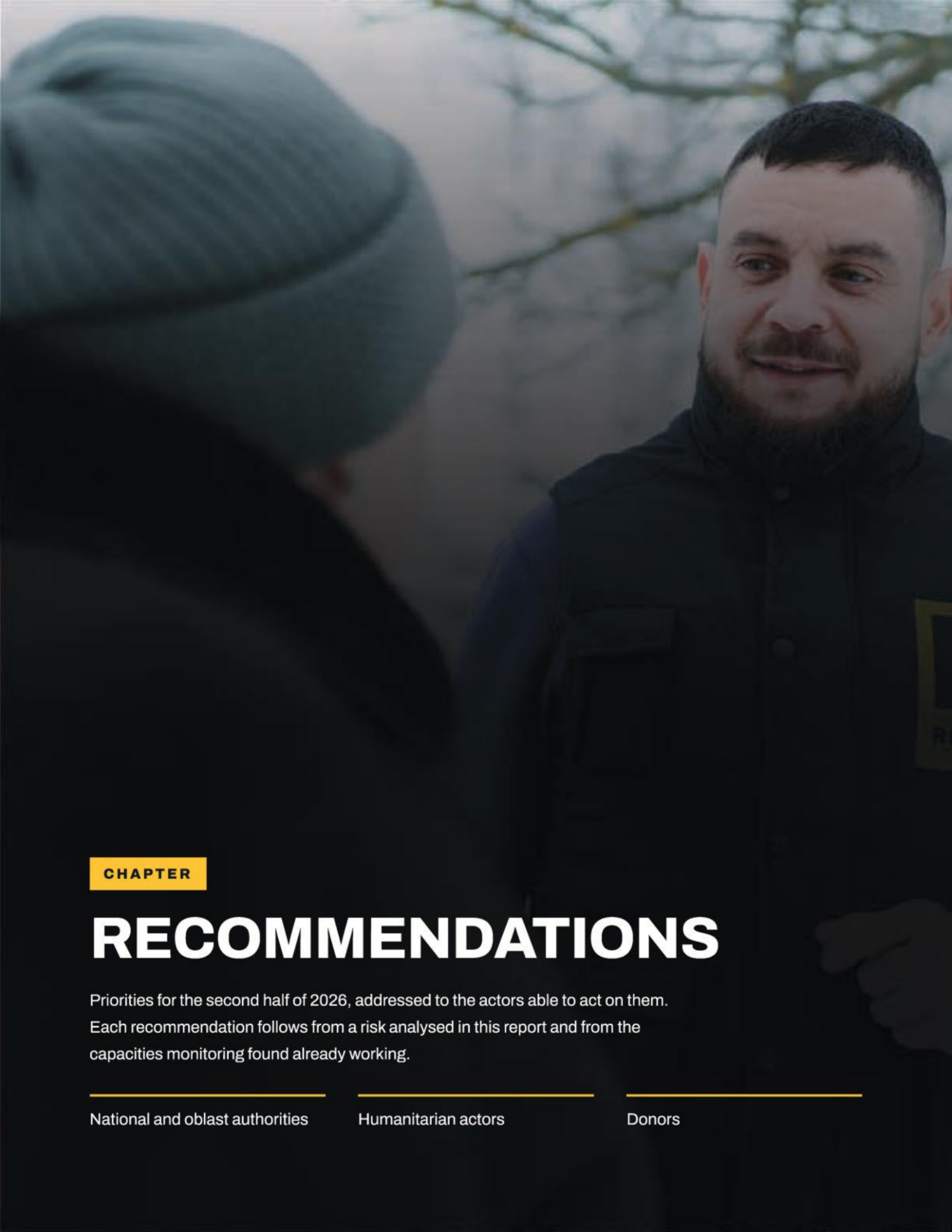
Community hubs maintaining service access

Relocated military administrations serving displaced communities

Mobile and remote GBV services

Shelter-equipped schools

Starosta-facilitated tenancy agreements



CHAPTER

RECOMMENDATIONS

Priorities for the second half of 2026, addressed to the actors able to act on them.
Each recommendation follows from a risk analysed in this report and from the
capacities monitoring found already working.

National and oblast authorities

Humanitarian actors

Donors

TO NATIONAL AND OBLAST AUTHORITIES

Prioritise civilian safety in frontline-adjacent hosting areas

Civil-defence measures, accessible shelter infrastructure, alert coverage and continuity of essential services, particularly in rural communities.

Remove administrative barriers to rights and services

Accelerate identity documentation, disability certification, displacement registration and compensation claims.

Ensure protection-sensitive evacuation and relocation

Protection assessments and confirmed accessible accommodation prior to relocation, particularly for older persons, persons with disabilities, women-headed households and children.

Strengthen the conditions for durable solutions

Expand access to affordable housing, secure rental arrangements, compensation mechanisms and opportunities for local integration.

TO HUMANITARIAN ACTORS

Treat economic vulnerability as a protection concern

Plan cash assistance, livelihoods and protection programming as complementary components of the response.

Strengthen specialised services in rural and hard-to-reach areas

Expand mobile, remote and community-based modalities for GBV, legal aid, MHPSS and protection services.

Prioritise integrated responses over single-sector interventions

Strengthen integration between legal assistance, cash support, MHPSS, community-based protection and referral pathways.

Expand protection accompaniment for complex legal and HLP cases

Extend legal assistance beyond information provision to sustained accompaniment through lengthy procedures.

Integrate EORE, livelihoods and community protection approaches

Deliver risk education alongside livelihood support where economic pressure drives farming and work in contaminated environments.

TO DONORS

Invest in local and community-based capacities

Community hubs, local civil society and displaced hromada administrations sustaining access where operational presence is constrained.

Maintain investment despite competing crises

Sustain protection funding in frontline-adjacent hosting communities where needs rise as coverage declines.

Increase support for integrated, multi-year programmes

Link protection, cash, livelihoods, legal aid and MHPSS, recognising that the risks identified are rooted in protracted displacement.



PROTECTION ANALYSIS REPORT · MID-YEAR REVIEW 2026

IRC Ukraine protection monitoring, January–June 2026.

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