



# Responding to Ukraine's Displacement Crisis: From Speed to Sustainability

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**What's new?** Tens of millions of Ukrainians have fled fighting since Russia invaded in February, in Europe's largest movement of people since World War II. As the war rages on, local volunteer networks, aid organisations and the Ukrainian state are stretched thin trying to respond to the mounting humanitarian crisis.

**Why does it matter?** Though Ukraine's recent military advances might enable some of the displaced to go home, millions have nowhere to return to. Helping them is a serious challenge for Ukraine and its backers – one growing more urgent as people struggle to overcome trauma, get jobs and find shelter ahead of winter.

**What should be done?** Speeding up the delivery of financial support to ease the humanitarian toll is vital to Ukraine's survival. A long view and a finely calibrated division of labour among the state, local civil society and international organisations will be critical for what will be a decades-long effort to assist the displaced.

## I. Overview

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Russia's war in Ukraine has forcibly displaced people on a scale unprecedented in Europe since World War II. In addition to the millions of refugees who have left the country, some seven million people have fled combat zones for safer areas inside Ukraine. A sprawling grassroots network has organised to help them. Local governments and civil society groups, using donated money and goods, have worked to provide housing, food and medicine to those in need. The response's ad hoc nature made it fast and flexible. But it is not sustainable. Nor is it easy to scale up for the long-term displacement crisis the country faces, for one thing because it poses challenges in ensuring accountability for flows of supplies. Donors and the international organisations they fund will need to make new arrangements that, while continuing to give civil society a prominent role, shift the burden onto the broader shoulders of the government.

With millions of Ukrainians living in cramped apartments, dormitories and gymnasiums, out of work and unable to return to homes destroyed or now in Russian-occupied territory, the scale of need is staggering. How displaced people will weather the winter to come, amid rising prices and fuel shortages, is already worrying humani-

tarian workers. International agencies face huge challenges in getting aid to those most in need at a time when the global humanitarian system is reeling from the COVID-19 pandemic and food and energy price volatility, not to mention several other major wars, and when the collapse of Russian-Western relations looks set to deepen dismal trends in multilateral crisis management, complicating diplomacy aimed at helping the displaced and those living near the front lines as well as in Russian-occupied areas.

In these circumstances, it is all the more important that the humanitarian response take a long-term approach, even while responding quickly to the emergency. Donors and international agencies should channel their assistance so that local civil society takes the lead now, but start laying the groundwork for government services to step in. Ukrainian authorities, civil society groups and foreign supporters should work together on more transparent rules for the incoming aid to clear up concerns about whether assistance is going to the people who need it most. A swifter, steadier flow of funds to the displaced would free recipients from dependence on charity and could eventually be a model for reconstruction when the war ends.

## II. Who is on the Move?

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One third of Ukraine's pre-invasion population of 41 million had to leave home during the first six months after Russia's large-scale attack on 24 February. Some 7.3 million people fled the country, the biggest share of whom travelled through or stayed in Poland.<sup>1</sup> Ukraine introduced martial law on the day of the invasion, prohibiting most men between the ages of eighteen and 60 from departing.<sup>2</sup> As a consequence, more than 90 per cent of those who arrived in neighbouring countries were women and children.<sup>3</sup> Among the internally displaced people (IDPs) as well, the majority, about two thirds, are women, as men face greater obstacles in travelling or seeking accommodation. Many men have also enlisted or stayed behind to guard property or hold on to jobs. More than half – 53 per cent – of IDP families have children, making child care and schooling a major concern.<sup>4</sup>

The needs of the displaced vary. The best off were often the first to depart. People fleeing by car and train in the invasion's early days mostly left with neatly sorted documents, money and a place to stay – allowing them to reach safety without much assistance.<sup>5</sup> Many did not require state benefits and may not even have registered as IDPs.<sup>6</sup> Because of the stringent limitations on men exiting Ukraine, many families who intended to leave the country lingered in increasingly crowded western towns to

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<sup>1</sup> "Operational Data Portal: Ukraine Refugee Situation", UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

<sup>2</sup> "The Border Guard on Restrictions in Cross-border Travel for Specific Categories of Citizens", Border Guard of Ukraine, 24 February 2022 (Ukrainian).

<sup>3</sup> "Ukraine Situation Flash Update", UNHCR, 28 April 2022.

<sup>4</sup> "Ukraine Internal Displacement Report, Round 6", International Organization for Migration (IOM), 23 June 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, faith-based charity director, Ivano-Frankivsk region, 15 April 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Crisis Group interview, Ivano-Frankivsk regional official, 22 June 2022.

postpone having to split up.<sup>7</sup> The later, larger waves of IDPs have had it worse. Those arriving with few resources need food and health services, as well as shelter for the time it takes them to find affordable accommodations.

Displaced people are often living in precarious circumstances. Worst off are a small and vulnerable group – some 3 per cent of the displaced – who live in collective shelters.<sup>8</sup> Crisis Group has visited shelters in a stadium, a university gym, a disused dormitory, a church compound and a small-town kindergarten, none of which are equipped for long-term living. Even the more durable accommodations, under hasty renovation to improve makeshift conditions, will in many cases offer little privacy or comfort. In a former dormitory in a small town in western Ukraine, where builders are refurbishing the 1980s interior with donated tiles and household appliances, sixteen residents will eventually share one kitchen.<sup>9</sup> Even the almost half of the internally displaced who live in rented accommodations face challenges. For example, a lawyer from Mariupol, his wife and their two teenage children who fled to Dnipro now live on the city's edge in a one-room flat, the rent for which is quickly running down their savings, with their future uncertain.<sup>10</sup> About one third of IDPs continue to stay with friends or family members.<sup>11</sup>

Crowding in the collective shelters, family separation and the shortage of safe accommodations raise the risk of gender-based violence for those on the move inside as well as outside Ukraine. Women and girls desperately looking for shelter or an income are easy targets for those seeking to exploit them sexually or economically. In the war's first months, hotlines set up to help those in danger received several testimonies of displaced women being offered housing in exchange for sex.<sup>12</sup> The hotline reports have fallen off since then, and gender-based violence has faded from public perception, not because it does not happen anymore but because social services, the police and NGOs are all preoccupied with other means of helping the displaced, as well as the war effort. Few resources remain for dealing with this problem.<sup>13</sup>

For those people who did not flee early on, it quickly got more difficult and dangerous to leave areas of active fighting. Within days of the invasion, Russian troops closed in on major cities in the north and south, and both armies erected checkpoints. Roads became unsafe, and petrol was rationed at 20l per car, meaning that most people fleeing to western Ukraine had to rely on evacuation trains. Women, children and the elderly were given priority when boarding trains, forcing family separation in some cases. "The most awful train was from Kharkiv", said a refugee woman who volunteered receiving IDPs at the Khmelnytsky station in western Ukraine, where in March some

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<sup>7</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, senior official, Lviv region's Economic Policy Department, 25 March 2022. The Department of Social Protection head in a large western Ukrainian city made the same point. Crisis Group telephone interview, 26 March 2022.

<sup>8</sup> "Ukraine Internal Displacement Report, Round 7", IOM, 23 July 2022.

<sup>9</sup> Crisis Group interview, head of local charity, Lviv region, 24 June 2022.

<sup>10</sup> In the spring, the flat also served as a classroom for his children, as they, like most pupils across Ukraine, attended school remotely. Crisis Group telephone interview, internally displaced man from Mariupol, 13 April 2022.

<sup>11</sup> "Ukraine Internal Displacement Report, Round 7", op. cit.

<sup>12</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, UN cluster coordinator, 8 April 2022.

<sup>13</sup> Khrystyna Semeryn, "Russian invasion overshadows domestic violence in Ukraine", Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 11 July 2022.

30 to 40 evacuation trains were pulling in daily. "They had a very long journey, and when the doors of the cars opened, some people just fell down onto the platform".<sup>14</sup>

Many people who had not previously thought to leave wound up fleeing after Russian forces shelled their cities and they faced food, water and power shortages cowering in bomb shelters. "When I understood that I had to run, I did not have many choices", a woman from a village near Kyiv said. "I just had to take the only bus there was".<sup>15</sup> Some refugees had to ditch what little luggage they had to fit into overcrowded cars and pass more quickly through numerous checkpoints on what was often a multi-day trip to safety, interrupted by shelling and nightly curfews.

Many people who fled areas already under Russian control had even more harrowing journeys, forced to wait for the belligerents to agree to open humanitarian corridors or to find rare means of transport. Evidence indicates that Russian soldiers fired at civilian cars, sometimes killing or injuring those trying to get out.<sup>16</sup> People who fled great danger and others that experienced trauma need psychosocial support as well as medical attention, sometimes including sexual and reproductive health services.<sup>17</sup> A large number of IDPs also need assistance to restore identity documents required for further travel or enrolment in long-term assistance programs but often forgotten, destroyed or lost as they escaped.<sup>18</sup>

The numbers of uprooted people have fluctuated along with military developments. After the Russian attack on Kyiv and northern Ukraine faltered at the end of March, and the Kremlin moved its forces to the east, the capital and its environs saw more refugees returning than leaving. Despite the remaining risks, some 5.7 million people crossed back into Ukraine, including some who returned only briefly. An estimated 7.3 million Ukrainians who have left the country since February remain outside, however.<sup>19</sup> Almost the same number of displaced people, some 7 million, are in Ukraine itself. That number is down from 8 million in early May, also due to returns, though in recent weeks it has started to grow again.<sup>20</sup> Kyiv's swift September counteroffensive in the north-eastern Kharkiv region has brought more than 380 towns and villages back under Ukrainian control, and displaced people may soon feel it is safe to return to this area.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, a new group of refugees, people who fear the returning

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<sup>14</sup> Crisis Group interview, woman refugee from Kyiv, Warsaw, 5 April 2022.

<sup>15</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, woman displaced from Kyiv region, 12 April 2022.

<sup>16</sup> "Russian troops have left Zhytomyr highway littered with shot-up cars and dead bodies of people who tried to escape the war", TSN, 1 April 2022.

<sup>17</sup> For the period 24 February to 15 May 2022, the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine received numerous allegations of conflict-related sexual violence. It was able to verify 23 such cases, including cases of rape, gang rape, torture, forced public stripping and threats of sexual violence. The majority of offences were committed in areas controlled by the Russian armed forces, but there were also cases in government-controlled areas. For reasons related to access and fear of stigmatisation and/or retaliation, the actual prevalence of such violence may be much higher than what has been confirmed. "New report by UN Human Rights shows the shocking toll of the war in Ukraine", press release, UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, 29 June 2022.

<sup>18</sup> "Rapid needs assessment of IDP-hosting areas, South and East oblasts, Ukraine", Reliefweb, April 2022.

<sup>19</sup> UNHCR data portal, op. cit.

<sup>20</sup> "Ukraine Internal Displacement Report, Round 7", op. cit.

<sup>21</sup> Facebook post by Deputy Minister of Defence Hanna Malyar, 14 September 2022 (Ukrainian).

Ukrainians could see them as collaborators, have fled across the Russian border in the thousands.<sup>22</sup>

The IDPs who have started going home since the spring do so because it feels safer, because they want to reunite with their families or because they can no longer afford to live elsewhere.<sup>23</sup> Some IDPs hold jobs that they can continue doing remotely. Some can live off their savings, but many rely on a combination of small government benefits, support from locals and humanitarian aid provided by Ukrainian and international organisations.

Nonetheless, the scale of displacement remains massive. In many central and western Ukrainian locales, IDPs make up a substantial proportion of the residents. In July, the governor of Lviv estimated that the region was hosting 400,000 IDPs, 16 per cent of its peacetime population.<sup>24</sup> The flow of returnees thinned in June, but in July and August the number of IDPs once again rose, as more people left their homes due to incessant fighting along the front.<sup>25</sup>

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### III. The Humanitarian Response

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#### A. War Strains Existing Capacities

Ukraine had some capacity to cope with the war's displacement because it has handled mass flight before. Some 1.4 million people had to flee in the period 2014-2021, after Russia's annexation of Crimea and amid the fighting between government troops and Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine's Donbas region.<sup>26</sup> That experience – albeit a far smaller-scale crisis – had critical lessons to offer as to how civil society, international organisations and the state could work together most effectively. The government condensed these lessons in an internal displacement strategy adopted several weeks before Russia's February 2022 offensive – in late 2021 – that puts strong emphasis on rights-based social protection and integration flowing from IDPs' self-organisation.<sup>27</sup>

The 2014-2021 displacement also meant that much of the groundwork for this year's response was already in place. One important piece is a law defining IDP rights passed in 2015 as well as a central IDP register created in 2016.<sup>28</sup> The law specifies that registered IDPs have the right to pensions, medical care, social security and education, as well as help with finding jobs, locating free or subsidised housing, retrieving lost identity documents, reunifying their families and returning home.

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<sup>22</sup> Valerie Hopkins "War may be distant in Moscow, but in one Russian border city, it's real", *The New York Times*, 14 September 2022.

<sup>23</sup> "Ukraine, Return Movement Dynamics of IDPs and Refugees", ACAPS, 7 July 2022.

<sup>24</sup> "In 24 hours, Lviv region has accommodated 200 IDPs", Press Service of the Regional Administration, 1 July 2022 (Ukrainian).

<sup>25</sup> "Ukraine Internal Displacement Report, Round 8", IOM, 30 August 2022.

<sup>26</sup> "Registration of Internal Displacement", UNHCR, March 2021.

<sup>27</sup> "Order Nr 1364 p: On the Adoption of a Strategy for the Integration of Internally Displaced Persons and the Implementation of Mid-term Decisions Concerning IDPs in the Period until 2024", Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 28 October 2021 (Ukrainian).

<sup>28</sup> Ukrainian Law on the Guarantees of Rights and Freedoms to Internally Displaced People, (Ukrainian).

International actors, many of which were new to Ukraine or had scaled up from a much smaller base and were used to working in places where the state is weaker, did not fully realise at first what was already on hand. A Ukrainian official in Lviv said a UN agency setting up a cash program was unaware of the state IDP register and needed convincing not to establish a parallel structure.<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, there were problems during the earlier wave of displacement that are now present in aggravated form. Access to aid has always been difficult for IDPs in non-government-controlled areas, where humanitarian operations are hampered by arbitrary, frequently changing and unevenly enforced regulations passed by the de facto authorities.<sup>30</sup> Delays in compensation for destroyed or lost property prompted many displaced people in areas under Kyiv's control to sue the government, clogging the courts.<sup>31</sup> When the full-scale invasion started, programs attempting to tackle these issues for those displaced by the 2014 war in Donbas had only just begun to shift away from emergency response. "Seven years after the fighting in the east, we were still rebuilding there when the war broke out", a senior UN aid worker said. "The suffering is so much greater now, and it will keep growing over time".<sup>32</sup>

The scale of the humanitarian crisis so greatly outstripped what limited planning organisations had in place before Russia's invasion that it slowed the response. A project manager described the invasion as "Scenario D", one which "was never supposed to happen".<sup>33</sup> Even well-heeled humanitarian agencies struggled to mobilise funding to stock warehouses, get vehicle fleets ready or deploy extra staff in anticipation of major combat.<sup>34</sup> The most experienced employees were based in Kyiv and Donbas. When Russian forces moved on several fronts at once, they all had to scramble to evacuate. The result was teams dispersed across the country redesigning existing projects and applying for fresh funding at the same time.<sup>35</sup> Another big concern was the drafting of humanitarian staff, especially to work in the east and south of the country near the front lines. In many cases, specialists were redeployed from other countries, like Lebanon or Syria.<sup>36</sup> "The problems with staffing are terrible", a senior humanitarian worker said.<sup>37</sup>

Ukraine's state institutions, especially in smaller towns, also struggled in the face of the unexpectedly great emergency. The national electronic IDP database became available for new entries only in mid-March and was slowed by bugs in the program, forcing staff to work overtime.<sup>38</sup> In Lutsk, western Ukraine, the municipality issued its own IDP certificates to allow displaced people quicker access to aid. In Drohobych,

<sup>29</sup> Crisis Group interview, senior National Social Service Agency official in Lviv region, 21 June 2022.

<sup>30</sup> "Humanitarian Needs Overview Ukraine 2021", UN Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), February 2021, p. 51.

<sup>31</sup> "Protecting the Rights of Ukraine's Internally Displaced People", Norwegian Refugee Council, September 2017, p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> Crisis Group interview, senior UN official, Kyiv, 24 June 2022.

<sup>33</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, international NGO project manager in Lviv region, 19 April 2022. Other interlocutors raised similar points. Crisis Group interviews, international NGO coordinator, Warsaw, 30 March 2022; UN cluster coordinator, by telephone, 8 April 2022.

<sup>34</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, World Food Programme officer, 31 March 2022.

<sup>35</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, international NGO project manager in Lviv region, 19 April 2022.

<sup>36</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, World Food Programme officer, 31 March 2022.

<sup>37</sup> Crisis Group interview, senior UN official, Lviv, 21 June 2022.

<sup>38</sup> Crisis Group interview, civil servant in Volyn region, March 2022.

a mid-sized town in Lviv region, local authorities created a preliminary register as a stopgap solution.<sup>39</sup> In a town in the Ivano-Frankivsk region, the nursing home, hospital and kindergartens opened their doors to accommodate IDPs, like other social and health-care institutions across the region. The nursing home, already full to capacity, received nearly the same number of displaced people on top of the patients in its care.<sup>40</sup>

As the war grinds on, Ukraine's deteriorating economic situation is limiting its ability to meet the IDPs' needs. The World Bank projected that Ukraine's economy would shrink by as much as 45 per cent in 2022, with perhaps 70 per cent of the population slipping below the poverty line.<sup>41</sup> The war has cost Ukraine at least 5 million jobs.<sup>42</sup> Tax revenue has plummeted, covering only 20 per cent of what the government spent in June, while the cost of maintaining the military is some \$4.3 billion per month – nearly as much as the entire 2021 defence budget.<sup>43</sup> Under martial law, cash and spending power are concentrated in the central government, leaving local authorities with dwindling budgets, more dependent on Kyiv or on private donations. “Perhaps 80 per cent of the food supplies that we provide to our IDPs have been given to us by our twinned towns abroad”, the deputy mayor of a Lviv region town said. “The other 20 per cent were donated by local citizens and local businesses”.<sup>44</sup> But this well, too, is drying up. As an official in the Ivano-Frankivsk region said: “Private funds can't just keep flowing permanently”.<sup>45</sup>

Many civil servants have themselves fled, leaving state institutions responsible for helping people in crisis even more strapped.<sup>46</sup> “The civil service is under tremendous stress”, a veteran aid worker based in Kyiv said. “There is a big question over the capacity of the government to absorb aid”.<sup>47</sup> A 2019 law makes it easier for local authorities to contract with registered NGOs to provide services such as child care in creches, elder care in nursing homes or transport for people with disabilities.<sup>48</sup> Some have done so. But collaboration with civil society is limited, as local authorities often do not wish to share scarce resources or give up what was until recently their monopo-

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<sup>39</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Lutsk municipal worker, March 2022; Drohobych social services worker, June 2022.

<sup>40</sup> Crisis Group interview, deputy mayor of midsize town in Ivano-Frankivsk region, 22 June 2022. Similar issues cropped up at hospitals throughout the region. Crisis Group interview, regional Red Cross director in western Ukraine, 22 June 2022.

<sup>41</sup> “War in the Region – Europe and Central Asia Economic Update Spring 2022”, The World Bank Group, 10 April 2022, pp. 99-100.

<sup>42</sup> “Nearly 5 million jobs have been lost in Ukraine since the start of the Russian aggression, says ILO”, press release, International Labour Organization, 11 May 2022.

<sup>43</sup> “Not a profitable month. The budget deficit in June grows another 20 per cent”, *Liga*, 5 July 2022 (Russian).

<sup>44</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, 13 April 2022. Some 93 municipalities sought funds from businesses to cover their social expenses, according to a study by the ministry of social policy and the World Bank, while more than 10 per cent received grants from Ukrainian or international organisations for social projects. “Social Support Expenses Make Up between 3 and 13 Per Cent of Local Budgets”, Ministry of Social Policy, 7 July 2022 (Ukrainian).

<sup>45</sup> Crisis Group interview, official in Ivano-Frankivsk regional administration, 22 June 2022.

<sup>46</sup> Crisis Group interview, Ukrainian parliamentarian, Kyiv, 25 June 2022.

<sup>47</sup> Crisis Group interview, veteran humanitarian worker, Kyiv, 25 June 2022.

<sup>48</sup> “Law on Social Services”, Verkhovna Rada, 17 January 2019 (Ukrainian).

ly on providing social services.<sup>49</sup> Many officials still distrust NGOs, which in the past have taken them to task over issues such as corruption and funding shortages.

### B. *Enter the Volunteers*

With the existing relief infrastructure overwhelmed at the invasion's outset, Ukrainian volunteer organisations of all stripes dropped everything to provide food, shelter and medical aid. "We had never before worked on humanitarian issues", said the director of a human rights organisation in Kyiv, "but when the big organisations evacuated their staff, we were completely abandoned".<sup>50</sup> Volunteers were often the first responders, and have kept working along several front lines, where safety rules have slowed international organisations.<sup>51</sup> They were able to act quickly with few bureaucratic hurdles, jumping in to buy washing machines, bedrolls, personal hygiene products and whatever else the IDPs needed. Volunteers thus often outpaced the efforts of more established agencies. "For us, it usually takes two weeks from the time we get a request to its completion", an NGO head in the western Ukrainian city of Ivano-Frankivsk said. "Our international partners need six weeks for their needs assessments".<sup>52</sup>

But while volunteers have been nimbler than established groups, they have also faced challenges that those groups have not. When the invasion began, hundreds of small initiatives started simultaneously buying up all the items they could find on the local market. Even with their limited budgets, they wound up competing to purchase food, fuel, medicine and hygiene products, driving up prices just as war disrupted supply chains. "For suppliers, our war is just ordinary business. We have received highly overpriced offers", a humanitarian aid manager said.<sup>53</sup> Amid supply shortages, local groups relied on in-kind donations from private individuals, businesses and charities in Ukraine and abroad. But what is donated is often not what is needed. Many organisations are paying to store products they cannot presently use. One volunteer complained of receiving the same aid that gets sent to Afghanistan and Syria, including water and hygiene products readily available in Ukraine.<sup>54</sup> Another organisation in Ivano-Frankivsk received food with a shelf life so short that volunteers could not distribute it before it expired.<sup>55</sup>

Sustaining ad hoc aid is growing more difficult, with volunteers suffering physical and emotional exhaustion. Months of unpaid work, with dangers far greater than paid

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<sup>49</sup> "The Functioning of Social Services in Ukraine: A Short Description", Solidarity Fund PL/Polska Pomoc, 2019, p. 14 (Ukrainian).

<sup>50</sup> Crisis Group interview, human rights organisation director, Kyiv, 23 June 2022.

<sup>51</sup> This finding is consistent with the conclusions in "Enabling the Local Response: Emerging Humanitarian Priorities in Ukraine, March-May 2022", Humanitarian Outcomes, June 2022.

<sup>52</sup> To describe the difference, the interlocutor said: "On Monday, I spoke to a shelter and they needed a washing machine. As of today [Friday], they have already received it with the help of local residents". Crisis Group telephone interview, deputy director of local NGO, 15 April 2022.

<sup>53</sup> "If we go for big orders, they take us more seriously and sometimes we can influence the price". Crisis Group telephone interview, deputy director of local NGO, 15 April 2022.

<sup>54</sup> A U.S. charity had sent this organisation, an LGBTQ support group in Lviv, hundreds of hygiene kits with products freely available in Ukraine. The organisation ended up using the boxes in which the kits came to mail better targeted assistance to recipients. "The boxes are like gold", the group's manager quipped. Crisis Group interview, 20 June 2022.

<sup>55</sup> Crisis Group interview, NGO director, Ivano-Frankivsk, 22 June 2022.



humanitarian staff are allowed to accept, take a toll.<sup>56</sup> At the same time, volunteers are seeing donations drop off and scepticism deepen among donors after some aid packages have failed to reach the intended beneficiaries.<sup>57</sup> The number of volunteers is also shrinking as their savings run out and they have to return to paid work. A woman displaced from Kyiv to Lviv volunteered in a kitchen making meals for soldiers. When she applied for another volunteer position, she had hoped to get free lodging, but when she learned it would not be forthcoming, she moved on to Poland.<sup>58</sup> Many volunteers are students who return to class with the autumn resumption of in-person schooling.<sup>59</sup> In several places, IDPs have stepped in to volunteer themselves. Many workers at an aid warehouse in Lviv, for instance, are displaced. Most get no compensation but a free lunch, though some will draw a small salary thanks to a new grant.<sup>60</sup>

### C. *Lingering Problems*

Today, a patchwork of government officials, politicians and civil society figures are cooperating in ways they had never imagined in order to help the displaced – and yet problems with the humanitarian response persist.

Foreign funds poured in soon after the full-scale invasion began, but crucial as they are, they remain inadequate for the scale of the crisis. In the first six months after the invasion, donors allocated more than \$17.6 billion to Ukraine, primarily for humanitarian aid or maintaining infrastructure – a big jump from the \$168 million they had paid out in 2020 and a near doubling of the \$8.5 billion already granted for 2022.<sup>61</sup> UN agencies alone applied for \$4.2 billion in aid, an amount they doubled over the spring. But the money arrives slowly. By mid-September, just two thirds of the required funds were in place.<sup>62</sup> The same is true of budgetary support, important to keep state services running. Of the €12.3 billion the European Union committed for that purpose, it had disbursed only €3.1 billion by August.<sup>63</sup> On 4 August, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy slammed the EU for the delays. “Every day and in various ways, I remind [European leaders] that Ukrainian pensioners, our displaced persons, our teachers and other people who depend on budget payments cannot be held hostage to their indecision or bureaucracy”, he said.<sup>64</sup>

Nor have the funds that are released always quickly reached people in need. In June, the biggest share of grant money was still unspent, slowed by compliance requirements too heavy for local partners and accountability concerns.<sup>65</sup> Some interna-

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<sup>56</sup> Comments by humanitarian consultant at a Crisis Group roundtable, 12 July 2022.

<sup>57</sup> Crisis Group interview, LGBTQ support group manager, Lviv, 20 June 2022.

<sup>58</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, woman displaced from Kyiv region, 12 April 2022.

<sup>59</sup> Crisis Group interview, student volunteer at communal shelter, Lviv, 21 June 2022.

<sup>60</sup> Crisis Group interview, local NGO warehouse worker, Lviv, 20 June 2022.

<sup>61</sup> David Ainsworth, “Funding tracker: Who’s sending aid to Ukraine?”, Devex, 22 August 2022.

<sup>62</sup> OCHA Financial Tracking Services, 27 August 2022.

<sup>63</sup> “Government support to Ukraine: Committed vs. disbursed budget support”, Kiel Institute for the World Economy, 3 August 2022.

<sup>64</sup> “There can be no condition under which any Russian attack on Ukraine becomes justified – address by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy”, President of Ukraine, 4 August 2022.

<sup>65</sup> The requirements sometimes create distortions, with money flowing to organisations that are good at clearing bureaucratic hurdles rather than at the activities the incoming money is meant to

tional organisations take what they call a “no regrets” approach, tolerating some losses of funds and material due to lack of oversight, but local practitioners still find the bureaucratic procedures involved in accepting the grants onerous. “Transparency is more important than saving lives”, the director of a Kyiv-based human rights organisation said of the grantmakers’ attitude.<sup>66</sup>

A related issue is that different aid providers may have different priorities that muddy the lines between different modes of support. Ukrainian initiatives often treat aid to civilians, displaced or not, and support for soldiers fighting Russia as part of the same struggle. A volunteer told Crisis Group that helping the Ukrainian military was the top priority, in order to “prevent more IDPs and destruction”.<sup>67</sup> For international organisations with purely humanitarian mandates, the blurring of the boundary between aiding civilians and supplying armed forces can make it hard to work with local groups. Humanitarian organisations try to keep their distance from aid flowing to the military, because association with it could cost them access to aid recipients in the future when they might need to coordinate with Russia. Some local NGOs keep budgets and teams for the two modes of assistance separate. Others, however, perceive international wariness of assisting armed units as arbitrary or wrong-headed. “It’s such an existential struggle [that] Ukrainians just see no place for neutrality”, an international aid worker said.<sup>68</sup>

## IV. Unmet Needs

### A. Special Challenges

With so much displacement, and the humanitarian responders stretched thin, large numbers of IDPs continue to face significant hardship – and some among them confront special challenges.

Men – a minority among the displaced – are one such group. As noted, martial law prohibits men between the ages of eighteen and 60 from leaving Ukraine. Therefore, men who had to leave their homes but cannot leave the country often become IDPs. Others are excused from enlistment. A medical condition or disability that prevents a man from serving in the military can give him the right to leave the country. Single fathers, fathers of three or more children, and fathers of children in need of special care are also exempt from service.<sup>69</sup> But proving these circumstances requires official documents, and the papers are not always at hand, especially for those who had to leave in a great hurry.

Displaced men have particular difficulty finding housing. As an NGO director said: “Especially with the municipal schemes that distribute displaced people to hosts,

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pay for. “Enabling the Local Response: Emerging Humanitarian Priorities in Ukraine, March-May 2022”, *op. cit.*

<sup>66</sup> Crisis Group interview, human rights organisation director, Kyiv, 23 June 2022.

<sup>67</sup> Crisis Group interview, IDP from Mariupol, 5 April 2022.

<sup>68</sup> Crisis Group interview, international aid worker, 6 May 2022.

<sup>69</sup> “Which men can leave Ukraine? The government changed the rules for crossing the border”, *Liga Zakon*, 4 May 2022 (Ukrainian).

they very strongly dislike taking men. If these are, for example, elderly people, taking in a stranger comes with certain risks and people are afraid".<sup>70</sup>

Part of the displaced men's difficulty stems from the notion that men belong on the front lines. Some people in western Ukraine said men from towns in the combat zone should be battling the invaders; after all, according to their perceptions, they have sent their own brothers, husbands and fathers to fight and die there.<sup>71</sup> A man from Kyiv said when he fled to western Ukraine in the war's first days, staff at his hotel gave him orders to clear out a local bomb shelter. "They treated us as deserters, although I was happy to help", he told Crisis Group. Other hotels in the region, the man reported, used their websites to warn that they would allow only women and children to stay.<sup>72</sup> Many men thus avoid registering as IDPs for fear of discrimination or conscription. But some municipalities and even private hosts insist that men register.<sup>73</sup> Municipal officials in one western Ukrainian town said they would allow men to use communal shelters or register as IDPs only after checking in with the recruitment office.<sup>74</sup> The queues at these offices became shorter over the summer but they can still delay access to aid by days or weeks.

Another group facing greater obstacles comprises the elderly and others with limited mobility. Many are unable to flee the fighting at all. Among those who do make the long wartime journey, those with disabilities or chronic illnesses, especially conditions that require special facilities or a caregiver, can have problems finding suitable accommodations.<sup>75</sup> People in need of medical attention in western Ukraine have arrived to find health facilities with inadequate basic equipment to cope with the swelling numbers of patients.<sup>76</sup>

Ukraine's Roma are still another group among IDPs that faces difficulties in finding accommodations. They are not welcome in communal shelters. Five people Crisis Group spoke to in Lviv either were told or witnessed others telling Roma to go instead to Zakarpattia, a region in the west that is home to the country's largest Roma population.<sup>77</sup> "If Roma arrive here, we try to send them to Zakarpattia, where there is a readiness to accept them under proper conditions", the chief coordinator at a stadium accommodating hundreds of IDPs said.<sup>78</sup> Such exclusion from state support places

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<sup>70</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, director of an NGO that coordinates a program for placing IDPs in private accommodations, 23 March 2022.

<sup>71</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, director of a state-funded institution that provides shelter and psychosocial support in Uzhgorod, 23 March 2022.

<sup>72</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, man displaced from Kyiv, 2 April 2022.

<sup>73</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, director of an NGO that coordinates a program for hosting IDPs in private homes, 23 March 2022.

<sup>74</sup> Crisis Group telephone interviews, deputy mayor of midsize town in Lviv region, 13 April 2022; and social services director in the same town, 24 June 2022. Both officials made it clear they were concerned primarily with catching men trying to dodge the draft.

<sup>75</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, director of an NGO that coordinates a program for hosting IDPs in private homes, 23 March 2022.

<sup>76</sup> "War Amid a Pandemic: The Public Health Consequences of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine", Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 22 April 2022.

<sup>77</sup> Crisis Group interviews, IDP help centre coordinator, Lviv, 8 April 2022; Roma community activist and local politician, Uzhgorod, 26 April 2022; reception centre social worker, Lviv, 21 June 2022; and displaced Roma women, Lviv, 21 and 25 June 2022.

<sup>78</sup> Crisis Group interview, IDP help centre coordinator, Lviv, 8 April 2022.

additional hardship on an already ill-treated community. On the outskirts of Lviv, a Roman Catholic church has stepped in, offering shelter to 50 Roma among the 200 displaced it is housing. Roma staying at the church said their prospects of finding a permanent place to live were dim.<sup>79</sup>

Part of the Roma's challenge has been proving their displacement. People who had not registered a permanent place of residence before the war have difficulty demonstrating that the fighting forced them to move, a precondition for IDP status, which confers benefits and cash assistance from the state and often international organisations as well.<sup>80</sup> It is common for Ukrainian Roma, rural-urban migrants and people who have been displaced previously to have no such registration. Displaced people without documents also have a hard time finding accommodations and travelling across borders. One Roma woman interviewed by Crisis Group had only a birth certificate issued in Russia and could not cross the border into Poland even though her children and husband have Ukrainian passports.<sup>81</sup>

Another group that faces discrimination in shelters is LGBTQ people. Early in the war, LGBTQ rights groups sounded the alarm about dangers to trans women, whose identity documents do not match their gender identity, and who thus might be prohibited from leaving Ukraine. They also warned of disruption of hormone treatment for trans and intersex people and mistreatment of displaced LGBTQ people in shelters.<sup>82</sup> Even in peacetime, Ukrainians can openly identify as LGBTQ only in narrow social niches. In shelters, where the protective walls of those niches break down, people perceived as belonging to a sexual or gender minority may experience aggression from other displaced people or shelter staff. In one case in Lviv, residents in a shelter beat a trans woman repeatedly. Shelter staff called an LGBTQ organisation in an attempt to resolve the conflict, asking the group to "take away this man-woman".<sup>83</sup>

## B. *Squeezing Together*

The displacement crisis has strained the capacity of many parts of Ukraine. Poverty has risen among both the uprooted and the population at large.<sup>84</sup> Meanwhile, in the major cities to which many IDPs fled, the cost of housing has risen dramatically, putting financial pressure on people who live in rented accommodations. Some IDPs have returned home as a result, while others have moved to more rural areas.<sup>85</sup> In smaller towns, rent is cheaper, but other means of meeting basic needs are running out. A deputy mayor in the Lviv region said the municipality may need to cut the num-

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<sup>79</sup> Crisis Group interviews, displaced Roma, Lviv, 25 June 2022.

<sup>80</sup> Crisis Group interview, official, Lviv region's Economic Policy Department, 25 March 2022. The website of the Ukrainian ministry of digital transformation provides a detailed list of documents required to register as an IDP.

<sup>81</sup> Crisis Group interviews, displaced Roma, Lviv, 25 June 2022.

<sup>82</sup> "Ukraine War: LGBTI People in the Context of Armed Conflict and Mass Displacement", ILGA Europe, April 2022.

<sup>83</sup> Crisis Group interview, LGBTQ support group manager, Lviv, 29 April 2022.

<sup>84</sup> "War in the Region – Europe and Central Asia Economic Update Spring 2022", *op. cit.*

<sup>85</sup> "Rental prices soar in western Ukraine amid influx of refugees", *The Kyiv Independent*, 18 March 2022.

ber of daily meals provided to IDPs sheltering in schools and kindergartens from three to one due to lack of food.<sup>86</sup>

The influx of displaced people has hit hospitals and other care facilities particularly hard. Many of these institutions are accommodating not only IDPs who need medical attention but also others for whom the municipality has no other suitable facility. Space is at a premium. One hospital in the Ivano-Frankivsk region built for 120 patients took in 40 arrivals from the east for whom it had not planned, overstretching its budget and making it dependent on charity.<sup>87</sup> Another hospital in the region housed elderly displaced people for weeks, simply because they had nowhere else to go.<sup>88</sup> Many institutions have had to rely on donated food and bedding. Cities that have in the past contracted with NGOs to provide elder care cannot afford to continue, leaving both IDPs and the permanent residents underserved.<sup>89</sup>

Making sure people have a place to stay can sometimes also mean that children are deprived of educational and recreational facilities, with kindergartens, schools, gymnasiums and dormitories serving as shelters. In one midsize town close to the Polish border, seven of fourteen kindergartens were sheltering IDPs in the spring, as was the vocational school dormitory.<sup>90</sup> Such facilities are in many places the only option for housing IDPs, as they can be heated and have rudimentary sanitation. They are often not equipped as long-term accommodations, however, and their use as shelters also delays the return of both local and displaced children to classrooms – which in turn prevents the uprooted children from feeling a semblance of normalcy or adapting to their new surroundings.<sup>91</sup>

Cultural and linguistic divides between IDPs from eastern Ukraine, who are used to speaking Russian at home, and residents of western Ukraine, who increasingly insist that only Ukrainian be spoken, are not so deep as to be insurmountable but are pronounced enough that some IDPs complain of feeling excluded or stigmatised. Speaking in a Facebook forum, the mayor of Ivano-Frankivsk, Ruslan Martsinkiv, said that with the IDPs' arrival the city had too few parking spots and too many chaotically parked cars, linking these issues to the displaced people's disregard of local customs. He said residents should see to the IDPs' "gentle Ukrainisation", for instance by forcing them to speak Ukrainian in shops.<sup>92</sup>

As resources become scarce for IDPs and locals alike, frictions seem to be growing. In Lviv region, according to a survey, around 36 per cent of IDPs and 52 per cent of locals sensed tensions between the displaced and permanent residents.<sup>93</sup> Anecdotes abound. A Russian-speaking mother of three girls aged three to nine, who slept for weeks in a boxing ring in Lviv after fleeing Lysychansk in Luhansk region, said she felt like "a stranger among [her] own".<sup>94</sup> A civil servant from Donbas was told that,

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<sup>86</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, deputy mayor of midsize town in Lviv region, 9 April 2022.

<sup>87</sup> Crisis Group interview, regional Red Cross director in western Ukraine, 22 June 2022.

<sup>88</sup> Crisis Group interview, deputy mayor of midsize town in Ivano-Frankivsk region, 22 June 2022.

<sup>89</sup> Crisis Group interview, faith-based charity director, Kolomiya, 28 March 2022.

<sup>90</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, deputy mayor of midsize town in Lviv region, 9 April 2022.

<sup>91</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, management officer, UNICEF Education Cluster, 14 April 2022.

<sup>92</sup> "The mayor of Ivano-Frankivsk calls on displaced people to respect local customs", *Zakhid*, 18 March 2022 (Ukrainian).

<sup>93</sup> "Lviv Region in Wartime Conditions", Rating Group Ukraine, 31 May 2022 (Ukrainian).

<sup>94</sup> Crisis Group interview, woman displaced from Lysychansk, 21 June 2022.

since he was an outsider, it was useless for him to apply for a similar post in western Ukraine.<sup>95</sup> Another Russian-speaking woman who fled from the east said she was offered a flat to live in on condition that she speak only Ukrainian so as not to upset the neighbours.<sup>96</sup>

## V. Building for the Future

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Because the numbers of people affected are so tremendous, the displacement crisis is Ukraine's most pressing humanitarian issue, at least in the territory under Kyiv's control. The crisis will be protracted, with no end to the war in sight and many people with no home to return to. A survey in a Lviv region town suggested that at least one third of the IDPs who were residing there in the summer will stay for the long haul and need more permanent housing, suited for winter.<sup>97</sup>

Policymakers have only to look at the legacy of Ukraine's earlier crisis beginning in 2014 – the response to which was just starting to shift from emergency aid and the victims of which were only just finding jobs and permanent housing when Russia staged its full-scale invasion. The biggest challenges are ensuring adequate shelter for the millions of displaced and finding them paths to a new life without discrimination or exclusion. More than anything, this effort will be costly. Western donors should rely more heavily on existing local capacity and remove administrative hurdles so that the funds they are sending can flow more quickly to people in need ahead of what will likely be a trying winter.

Housing is the top priority. Most immediately, funds should go to helping Ukrainian cities renovate dormitories and other unused or underused buildings until durable solutions can be found to accommodate IDPs now living in shelters, with friends or family or in inadequate rented quarters. Western governments can reserve funds to foster partnerships to achieve this goal, as they are doing on a modest scale with the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Reconstruction of Ukraine.<sup>98</sup> Such alliances could ease the flow of money and know-how, not only providing housing for IDPs but also slowing the rise in rents for everyone. For the commercial housing market, which serves the majority of IDPs, cities should introduce transparent ways of discouraging speculation, such as regularly publishing rent maps and requiring landlords to disclose what previous tenants were paying.

Municipalities should allocate housing based on need, taking care to avoid discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, age or sexual orientation. Western funding earmarked for groups that represent the interests of Roma, LGBTQ people and others who experience discrimination can help ensure that the aid effort under way does not bypass these groups and that shelters are equipped for IDPs with special needs. Better coordination among municipalities would also allow them to redistribute the

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<sup>95</sup> Crisis Group interview, NGO worker married to civil servant displaced from Donetsk region, 24 June 2022.

<sup>96</sup> Crisis Group interviews, displaced civil society activists from Donetsk region, Ivano-Frankivsk, 23 June 2022.

<sup>97</sup> Crisis Group interview, director of social services of midsize town in Lviv region, 24 June 2022.

<sup>98</sup> As stated in the Lugano Declaration, issued following a reconstruction conference in July 2022, cooperation among sub-national entities like cities will be instrumental for rebuilding.

burden away from crowded regional centres and make it more attractive for IDPs to move to smaller towns, where life is cheaper.

Direct financial support to private households in accommodating IDPs can help bridge the gap while the state is preparing more housing and spare people the precarious conditions of communal shelters and the prohibitive cost of rent. At the very least, housing additional people pushes up utility bills, often the biggest expense in a Ukrainian household's monthly budget. The ministry of temporarily occupied territories and IDPs offers subsidies to those housing IDPs. At present, homeowners can get this money only if they let IDPs stay with them for free (and have no outstanding utility bills). With foreign aid, Ukrainian legislators could adapt a sliding scale of compensation if IDPs are paying below-market rent. Municipalities could use the payments as an additional instrument to control rents. Aid would also allow other expansions of the subsidy scheme: raising the amount, introducing more generous application periods for landlords or granting landlords such compensation even if they are indebted to utility providers.

As the state and international agencies step in, they should not sideline civil society. Volunteers and local NGOs have much pertinent knowledge, and supporting civic engagement can also help increase community cohesion and encourage the displaced to remain in the country. Although such contracting was a growing practice before the full-scale invasion, state funding for civil society organisations remains sparse, not just because the state is short of cash but also because distrust between state and non-state providers remains rife, especially in the social services domain, where NGOs are both watchdogs and competitors of the state. Local governments should nevertheless hire NGOs where these groups are well placed to provide the services and benefits IDPs are entitled to by law. In the near term, Western aid to Ukraine could be earmarked for this purpose.

When international organisations fund NGOs directly to help IDPs, they can make sure that their partners gradually adapt the services they provide to state standards, rather than just to donors' specific requirements. By doing so, they can help the projects they fund to eventually compete in public tenders; they can also help donors formulate a sustainable exit strategy by assisting their local partners with eligibility for state funding, once more of that becomes available.<sup>99</sup> As more NGOs become service providers with state contracts, they also can create more transparency as to whether state standards are sufficient and how the state itself enforces them.

In many cases, the quickest way for international organisations to reach people in embattled front-line areas is through local partner organisations with fewer institutional security requirements and higher individual risk tolerance among their workers.<sup>100</sup> Organisations without such local partners first have to create networks, recruiting staff and giving them the equipment and fuel they need, tasks that get more difficult the closer the operations are to the front.<sup>101</sup> It takes international organisations with

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<sup>99</sup> Sticking to state standards in planning for such projects made sure they were comparable to the state's own services and competitive in public tenders. Such projects also were based on state standards because they envisioned an eventual transition from donor to state funding. See, for example, "Social Contracting in Ukraine: Sustainability of Non-Medical HIV Services", USAID, Health Policy+, PEPFAR, September 2019.

<sup>100</sup> Crisis Group interview, international NGO manager, Dnipro, 18 July 2022.

<sup>101</sup> Crisis Group interview, senior member of IOM mission to Ukraine, Kyiv, 23 June 2022.

strict security standards months to build teams they can send into such perilous environments. By providing salaries, protective gear and insurance to locals who are already assisting people in danger, international organisations can significantly expand their reach and at the same time empower volunteers, lowering reliance on unpaid work.

Working with civil society can ease other problems, too. Recruiting from its ranks may help fill open positions in both state institutions and international organisations. In addition, NGOs with experience dealing with earlier waves of displacement can provide training for state servants. Although foreign donors will compete for the best workers, they should calibrate the salaries they pay in the humanitarian sector so as not to pull people out of other vital areas or state jobs.<sup>102</sup> Ukraine's Western backers should also encourage Kyiv to speed up passage of a bill, now pending in parliament, that would delay mobilisation of humanitarian workers into the army.<sup>103</sup> Some international organisations have written letters asking that their local employees be exempted from military service, but they lack a legal basis for doing so – meaning that they continuously risk losing staff to the front.<sup>104</sup>

If international donors could do more to lower the bureaucratic and administrative hurdles attached to funding, local NGOs, too, can put forward a better case for themselves. In particular, Ukrainian NGOs should be transparent about whether they provide supplies to the armed forces and how they keep this assistance separate from that to civilians. For their part, international organisations might do more to explain why keeping military and humanitarian aid separate is so important for their future humanitarian access.

Access to areas under Russian control and to people displaced within them will remain a challenge for international organisations.<sup>105</sup> Perhaps the best lessons from the past stem from the Ukrainian Humanitarian Fund, a country-based pooled fund set up in 2019 that could finance projects without attribution to particular donor nations, most of which separatist de facto authorities perceive as in cahoots with their adversaries in Kyiv. Up to 2021, this fund helped depoliticise humanitarian aid and expand the network of local partners so that critical gaps beyond the contact line between the Ukrainian army and separatist fighters could be closed.<sup>106</sup> It took five years after hostilities started in 2014 to gain this limited degree of access. Now, with fighting on a much larger scale, this experience could provide guidance on how to get aid to people in non-government-controlled areas.

Kyiv has been critical of the International Committee of the Red Cross for ostensibly cooperating too closely with Russian forces. Ukraine will surely oppose any

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<sup>102</sup> Comment by adviser to international NGO during a Crisis Group roundtable, 12 July 2022.

<sup>103</sup> "On the Introduction of Changes to Legislative Acts for the Optimisation of the Functioning of Ukraine under Wartime Conditions, for the Strengthening of its Economy and Defence Capacity", Legal Project 7381, 17 May 2022 (Ukrainian).

<sup>104</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, international NGO manager in Dnipro, 18 July 2022.

<sup>105</sup> Denise Brown, the UN humanitarian coordinator in Ukraine, said access to areas controlled by Russia is complicated by lack of security guarantees for aid workers. Humanitarian agencies have reached only one million people in occupied areas as opposed to twelve million in government-controlled areas. "Little humanitarian aid reaching Ukrainians in Russian-controlled areas", *Voice of America*, 26 August 2022.

<sup>106</sup> "Annual Report", Ukraine Humanitarian Fund, 2021.



arrangement between the UN and Russia that appears to legitimise Moscow's occupation, especially to the extent that Russia claims sovereignty over any of the land it holds. Western donors are also likely to balk at funding any aid operations that could be construed as abetting Russia's control of Ukrainian territory. Nonetheless, it is a humanitarian imperative to try improving access to Russian-occupied areas. With winter imminent, aid organisations should hold the Ukrainian government to its own promises of support for citizens living beyond the front lines.

Moscow's rhetoric, too, could provide a pressure point for better humanitarian access. Russia has repeatedly complained that UN institutions are biased toward Ukraine and blind to the civilian suffering it says Ukrainian forces cause. If Moscow is indeed interested in shedding light on civilian suffering in areas it controls, the Russian army and proxy administrations should be prepared to let in and guarantee the security of aid organisation personnel, including for needs assessments.

Focusing on ways in which to encourage social cohesion while supporting IDPs will also be essential over the long term. In receiving communities, support for IDPs should not crowd out vulnerable locals. When identifying their target groups, international aid organisations should be careful to conduct thorough needs assessments and focus on vulnerability as their main criterion instead of drawing a hard boundary between IDPs and the local population.<sup>107</sup> Funding bodies in the West can make the inclusion of vulnerable locals a granting condition. Focusing on vulnerability could also help cut through red tape as aid organisations would have to check only that recipients are in need and would not have to ask where they are from. Especially where municipalities had contracts with NGOs to provide social services, foreign funding can cover them temporarily, so that services remain available for the local population.

Direct assistance schemes between Ukrainian and Western regions or municipalities could also fund job centres to offer requalification training for IDPs and increase existing subsidies to create incentives for local businesses to employ IDPs and create more jobs. These subsidies could also be expanded with a special category for men in limbo between displacement and possible mobilisation. Direct support for municipalities could also help them enlarge their capacity to help displaced people with retrieving lost documents.

While it helps an organisation's accountability to register its beneficiaries, requiring registration can lead aid providers to exclude people who do not have the right documents. People who are unsure whether they will stay or move on may also have to put off registering if they need extensive documentation of their status. Organisations should therefore clarify if in some cases a telephone number is sufficient identification to register a beneficiary. Where official documents are indeed required, organisations should also reserve more funds for legal assistance that can help people without the right documents retrieve them quickly.

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<sup>107</sup> Crisis Group interview, international donor organisation program officer, Warsaw, 13 June 2022. This practice would also be a practical implementation of a core humanitarian standard, "providing impartial assistance based on the needs and capacities of communities and people affected by crisis". See principle 1.4 in "The Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response, 2018 Edition", Sphere, 6 November 2018.

## **VI. Conclusion**

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Ukrainian refugees' flight to other European countries has garnered the most media attention, but the internal displacement crisis is at least as severe. Ukraine must find food, shelter and other resources to support IDPs, even while the country is suffering great loss of life, physical destruction and socio-economic damage as it defends itself from the Russian invasion. The money and material on hand are inadequate for the enormity of the challenge, particularly with winter approaching and the possibility of still more mass displacement if the fighting shifts to other parts of the country or if basic services break down in areas near the front. "We are not meeting all the needs, and the needs are going to increase over time", a senior UN employee said. "I am very worried".<sup>108</sup>

Having endured a displacement crisis in recent memory, Ukraine is equipped with many of the laws and institutions and with much of the know-how it needs to mount a sustained humanitarian response. To be maximally effective and inclusive, this response will need to build on and extend existing capacities by supporting the Ukrainian state and civil society in developing new forms of collaboration to reach people who so far have often fallen through the cracks.

**Kyiv/Warsaw/Brussels, 26 September 2022**

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<sup>108</sup> Crisis Group interview, senior UN official, Kyiv, 24 June 2022.

## Appendix A: About the International Crisis Group

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The International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 120 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries or regions at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, it produces analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international, regional and national decision-takers. Crisis Group also publishes *CrisisWatch*, a monthly early-warning bulletin, providing a succinct regular update on the state of play in up to 80 situations of conflict or potential conflict around the world.

Crisis Group's reports are distributed widely by email and made available simultaneously on its website, [www.crisisgroup.org](http://www.crisisgroup.org). Crisis Group works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analyses and to generate support for its policy prescriptions.

The Crisis Group Board of Trustees – which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media – is directly involved in helping to bring the reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policymakers around the world. Crisis Group is co-chaired by President & CEO of the Fiore Group and Founder of the Radcliffe Foundation, Frank Giustra, as well as by former Foreign Minister of Argentina and Chef de Cabinet to the United Nations Secretary-General, Susana Malcorra.

Comfort Ero was appointed Crisis Group's President & CEO in December 2021. She first joined Crisis Group as West Africa Project Director in 2001 and later rose to become Africa Program Director in 2011 and then Interim Vice President. In between her two tenures at Crisis Group, she worked for the International Centre for Transitional Justice and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Liberia.

Crisis Group's international headquarters is in Brussels, and the organisation has offices in seven other locations: Bogotá, Dakar, Istanbul, Nairobi, London, New York, and Washington, DC. It has presences in the following locations: Abuja, Addis Ababa, Bahrain, Baku, Bangkok, Beirut, Caracas, Gaza City, Guatemala City, Jerusalem, Johannesburg, Juba, Kabul, Kiev, Manila, Mexico City, Moscow, Seoul, Tbilisi, Toronto, Tripoli, Tunis, and Yangon.

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Crisis Group also holds relationships with the following foundations and organizations: Carnegie Corporation of New York, Ford Foundation, Global Challenges Foundation, Henry Luce Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Open Society Foundations, Ploughshares Fund, Robert Bosch Stiftung, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Stiftung Mercator, and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund.

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