

Ukraine Conflict Analysis Brief



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The impact of one year of conflict on Women and Children in Ukraine

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Executive Summary

Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 OHCHR has recorded 23,375 civilian casualties in the country: 8,709 killed and 14,666 injured¹ with many more incidents going unrecorded. In addition, a rise in protection risks has been driven by the ongoing conflict and massive displacement, with trafficking, abuse, sexual harassment and domestic violence being consistently highlighted by the Protection Sector. Children and women are particularly vulnerable to protection risks in conflict situations, yet access to protection services remains limited for communities close to contact line and those in recently reclaimed areas. Kherson, Dnipro and Kharkiv oblasts cited as being of particular concern.

As in most conflicts, it is difficult to know the exact numbers of children who disappeared, of women who suffered GBV and of both children and women suffering from stress and depression. UNICEF estimates that 1.5 million children are at risk of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health issues and 5.2 million women are estimated to have had their mental health negatively impacted by the conflict. Children and adolescents have adopted multiple negative coping mechanisms in order to face the mental load. Women have had to support an increasing burden of care while their income has reduced, leading to heightened levels of stress. The lack of psychological and social services is worsening this situation.

Poverty has been increasing since the escalation of the conflict. Estimates at the end of 2022 indicated that over 20% of Ukraine's population had fallen into poverty, approximately 7.1 million people. Displacement and loss of livelihood have resulted in lower income and purchasing power, especially for women who are single heads of households and for those who must care for children, older people and people with disabilities. This in turn leads to higher food insecurity and the adoption of negative coping mechanisms including an increasing reliance on assistance. The stress on households related to loss of income is also a contributing factor to increased domestic violence.

One of the most visible impacts on children caused by the conflict in Ukraine has been the catastrophic disruption to their education. With thousands of schools damaged or destroyed, millions of children are being forced to access their education online, yet missile and drone attacks against the country's energy infrastructure continue to heavily disrupt online learning. In addition, many vulnerable groups such as Roma, children with disabilities, children in rural areas and children living in poverty face additional challenges to access education services. All this will result in a generation of children in Ukraine, already disadvantaged by the impact of the COVID pandemic, falling further behind in their education and personal development.

There continues to be concern around young children's nutritional status although there is a lack of recent quantitative data. The latest REACH MSNA data shows that 45% of households with babies under 6 months were facing problems feeding them. Access to baby food together with an access gap in nutrition services (especially in conflict-affected areas) and increased food insecurity (impacting the nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women), are all factors driving increased risk of malnutrition.

Methodology

This brief has been prepared using publicly available sources of information including analysis/reports covering the situation in Ukraine, needs assessments, situation reports, agency briefings, government data, research and local and international media. Much of the analysis is drawn from the regular monthly situational analysis published by [Data Friendly Space on Reliefweb](#). Wherever possible sources are provided in line with the sections as they are presented. Specific information gaps are also noted. It should be recognised that much of the data available comes with a time lag (for example the recent MSNA data comes from a comprehensive data collection exercise carried out between October and December 2022). The focus is therefore on the broad issues and challenges faced by women and children (who make up an unusually large proportion of displaced and returnee populations). Specific examples and locations are used to illustrate the analysis, but equally there could be many other similar experiences shared and many more are not recorded in the public domain.

¹ As of 1 May 2023 - [OHCHR](#)

Overall Situation

The escalation of the conflict in Ukraine in February 2022 resulted in a state of emergency being adopted by the government on February 24, this included measures that restricted men aged 18-60 years from leaving the country and for physically fit men in that age group mandatory conscription was a possibility. Large numbers of Ukrainians (including some women) volunteered for the armed services or joined local militia. An immediate consequence of the escalation was widespread displacement across country as areas in the north, east and south of the country fell under temporary occupation. Over eight million Ukrainians are now refugees in Europe and millions more are displaced within Ukraine itself. With many men joining the armed forces the burden of displacement fell primarily on women. The conflict is now in its fifteenth month and a large-scale humanitarian response including international actors is targeting populations in areas heavily impacted by the conflict, those who are displaced and those who have returned to their areas of origin ([Le Monde](#) 12/04/2023, [Global Conflict Tracker](#) 16/03/2023, [Kyiv Post](#) 31/01/2023, [Al Jazeera](#) 23/02/2022).

Women make up 41% of the internally displaced population compared to only 32.5% being men.

Current figures from IOM GPS Rnd 12 (January 2023), indicate that **women still make up to 41% of displaced people** in the country with 32.5% being men and 26.5% children. In addition, women outnumber men amongst those returning to their place of origin, with **45.5% of the 5.56 million returnees being women**, with 31.5% men and 23% children ([IOM](#) 16/02/2023, [IOM](#) 23/01/2023). UNHCR data indicates that over 8.2 million people have also

fled outside of the country as refugees, also predominantly women and children. Whilst definitive disaggregated figures are not available, data UNHCR's December factsheet (based on over forty thousand interviews with refugees in countries neighbouring Ukraine) indicated that 52% of refugees were women, 35% were children and only 13% were men ([UNHCR](#) accessed on 15/06/2023, [UNHCR](#) 21/12/2022).

Due to various factors - including but not restricted to displacement, loss of assets and livelihood, family separation, and the heavy care burden for women heads of households -, women and children have become particularly vulnerable to protection threats and risks related to their living conditions. Such risks include the loss of safe places and reduced access to education for children; the heightened stress linked to women's income loss; the psychosocial impact on women and children; and the lack of access to goods and services resulting in threats to households' nutrition. While progress had been made towards gender equality before the escalation of the conflict, the ongoing crisis has exacerbated gender inequalities, with women facing discrimination and multiple risks.

Violence and Inherent Protection Threats

Women and children have been directly impacted by various protection threats due to the conflict, putting in danger their physical and mental health. As in most conflicts, it is difficult to know the exact numbers of children who disappeared, of women who suffered GBV and of both children and women suffering from stress and depression. However, reports underline that most of the mentioned protection threats were already occurring before the escalation of the conflict in February 2022, with a notable increase this past year and a half whilst at the same time the availability of protection and social services to respond to the needs remain limited.

Children and women are particularly vulnerable to protection risks in conflict situations.

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine is heavily impacting the lives of children with widespread reports of trafficking, forced deportations and abductions.

Thousands of children have been injured due to the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects, including shelling from heavy artillery, multiple launch rocket systems, and missile and air strikes.

Since the escalation of the conflict, 7.5 million children from Ukraine have been suffering from what is considered the recent largest human displacement crisis in the world, and one likely to have lasting consequences for generations. The conflict has caused an acute child protection crisis, with major concerns regarding children's physical and emotional safety, particularly those living in the most conflict-affected areas. Thousands of children have been injured due to the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects including shelling from heavy artillery, multiple launch rocket systems, and missile and air strikes. The

military offensive has also caused damage and destruction to residential houses, schools, hospitals and places where children can seek shelter. It is estimated that at least 1,000 children have been killed since the onset of the invasion in February. Additionally, since June, numerous need assessments and reports have identified the increased risk of physical violence and kidnapping in the country with concerning reports coming from Chernihiv, Sumy and Kyiv oblasts where heavy fighting occurred during the first three months of the conflict.

A World Vision report identified that child trafficking was an issue in Ukraine prior to the conflict, with some children trafficked within the country and others taken across the Ukrainian border. Since the beginning of the conflict, there have been various reports published by local news and international news sources describing child abduction and forced deportation of children by the Russian army. Numbers have varied widely; however, Ukrainian authorities indicated the number of children taken out of the country by Russian troops could have reached 121,000 in 2022. As of January 2023, the Ukrainian government has been able to verify 16,207 child abduction cases. Most cases of abduction have been coming from the most heavily conflict-affected areas including Kherson and Donetsk. For example, data from September showed that 233 children were reported as missing by [Children of War](#) (although there is no recent information to corroborate this). Child protection risks are likely to remain prominent in the coming months with non-government controlled areas being of particular concern ([World Vision](#) 31/01/2023, [World Vision](#) 22/02/2023, [HNO](#) 28/12/2022, [Education Cluster](#) 31/01/2023, [War Child](#) 02/02/2023, [The Guardian](#) 27/02/2023, [Censor.Net](#) 22/02/2023, [The Guardian](#) 15/02/2023, [UCMC](#) 07/03/2023, [Educo](#) 20/02/2023, [Censor.Net](#) 21/09/2022).

The level of protection threats faced by women was already of concern in Ukraine before the recent escalation of the conflict. Those risks have now significantly increased, particularly in areas directly affected by conflict and in displacement settings.

Threats to women's safety have been documented since the onset of the conflict and have increased since its escalation in February 2022. Women were already suffering from protection incidents before the conflict. Indeed, according to the OSCE, two-thirds of women in Ukraine had experienced some form of gender-based violence in their life before the war. A report from Amnesty International published in 2020 further showed that women were victims of physical and sexual abuse as well as domestic violence in the Donbas region of Ukraine where the initial conflict was taking place. This report also showed that collecting and comparing information on this matter was difficult, mostly because no unified nationwide database was in place. The OSCE reported that 79% of women residing in governmental-controlled areas at the time, who had a partner fighting in the conflict, experienced domestic violence, compared to 58% of women with partners who did not take part in the war. Also, 34% of women (in the same survey) considered it a common practice ([Amnesty International](#) 04/11/2020, [OSCE](#) 27/10/2019, [OSCE](#) 13/03/2019, [Eastern-Ukrainian Centre for Civic Initiatives](#) 27/12/2017).

Two thirds of women in Ukraine had experienced some form of gender-based violence in their life before the war. As of the end of 2022, 3.6 million people needed GBV support, 39% of whom reside in the east and south of Ukraine.

Such protection risks have continuously been highlighted by partners during the last twelve months. In the 2023 HNO, it is estimated that 3.6 million people will need GBV support, the majority being women and girls. Of these people in need, 39% are estimated to reside in the eastern and southern parts of the country ([HNO](#) 28/12/2022).

The rise in protection risks has been driven by the ongoing conflict and massive displacement, with trafficking, abuse, sexual harassment and domestic violence being consistently highlighted by the Protection Sector.

Since the escalation of the conflict, humanitarian actors have consistently flagged the risks for women and girls to suffer from specific protection incidents, notably during the first months of 2022 which led to massive waves of displacement. Actors observed trafficking attempts at all five border countries and in Ukraine. Displacement has further led to risks of sexual abuse and other GBV as women and girls faced higher vulnerability, including family separation, lack of privacy, poor living conditions in collective camps, etc. According to the IOM GPS (Round 12), 41% of internally displaced people in Ukraine are women and 14% are girls. Over half of the households assessed for the CESVI MSNA in November reported an increase in security concerns for women and girls. For example, the lack of privacy in collective centres was a main issue for households in Kirovohradska. The national domestic violence and human trafficking hotline created in February 2022 has received an increased number of reports of GBV cases.

The worsening socioeconomic conditions of the populations affected by the conflict and the stress endured by households is leading to a rise in domestic violence.

The worsening socio-economic conditions of the populations affected by the conflict and the stress endured by households have led to a rise in domestic violence. According to national hotline statistics, intimate partner violence has remained high in Ukraine. A survey led by USAID in August 2022 shows that 62% of female respondents believed that domestic violence was more prone to increase in wartime (against 51% of male participants).

Women who have stayed in conflict-affected areas are also at risk of conflict-related sexual violence. By January 2023, Ukraine's Prosecutor's office reported having documented 155 cases of sexual violence committed by Russian soldiers. OHCHR reported 108 allegations of conflict-related sexual violence and verified 23 of them between February 2022 and mid-May 2022. In August, a total of 86 cases were documented by HRMMU. They included rape, gang rape, forced nudity and forced public stripping, sexual torture and sexual abuse. In another assessment, 78% of female respondents interviewed by USAID stated that they thought instances of GBV increased during wartime ([UN Women](#) 23/02/2023, [IOM](#) 23/01/2023, [Euromaidanpress](#) 21/01/2023, [HNO](#) 28/12/2022, [CESVI](#) 22/12/2022, [HRMMU](#) 02/12/2022, [NP](#) 28/11/2022, [USAID](#) 05/10/2022, [CARE](#) 22/08/2022, [LaStrada](#) 26/07/2022, [HRMMU](#) 29/06/2022, [USAID](#) 10/06/2022, [HIAS](#) 27/05/2022, [NP](#) 06/05/2022, [UN Women](#) 04/05/2022).

Access to protection services remains limited, particularly in conflict-affected areas and some collective sites.

The lack of availability of child protection services and psychosocial services is preventing many children from accessing vital services and care, particularly in conflict-affected areas close to the frontline.

Reports show that the country's formal child protection system is overwhelmed by the scope of the crisis as many care professionals have left the country for their own safety. This lack of availability of services is widespread in conflict-affected areas. In January, World Vision found that an estimated 3.4 million children were in need of immediate and multi-faceted child protection interventions, including, but not limited to, psychosocial support services (PSS), case management, family tracing and reunification, and alternative care arrangements, as well as access to clean drinking water and improved food security.

Data shows that access to beneficiaries is a considerable challenge for organisations across Eastern Ukraine, heightened by energy blackouts that regularly disrupt child protection activities from taking place. Additionally, many residents in these affected areas are unaware of the services available to them and their children. A World Vision assessment across three oblasts found that the assessed caregivers lacked sufficient knowledge about the protection services provided in Kharkiv and Kherson oblasts. Only the participants of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in Dnipro reported awareness of support through schools or the social services hotline. However, most caregivers, including those in Dnipro, were only aware of the existence of social support by the state without any in-depth knowledge of existing services and activities. Children in the affected oblasts of Kharkiv, Kherson and Dnipro have also identified the unavailability of services as a major challenge. An estimated 44% of girls and 41% of boys aged between 14-17 stated that the unavailability of services was the main reason for limited access to protection and social services, with over 90% of children aged 9-13 stating the same. Other barriers mentioned, included a lack of transportation (8% of adolescents); lack of safety (12% of girls aged 14 - 17) and fear of stigma or exclusion (1% of boys and 2% of girls aged 14 - 17) ([World Vision](#) 31/01/2023, [World Vision](#) 22/02/2023, [UNFPA](#) 20/02/2023, [OCHA](#) 17/10/2022, [OCHA](#) 19/12/2022, [IOM](#) 13/12/2022, [IOM](#) 15/01/2023, [IOM](#) 05/01/2023).

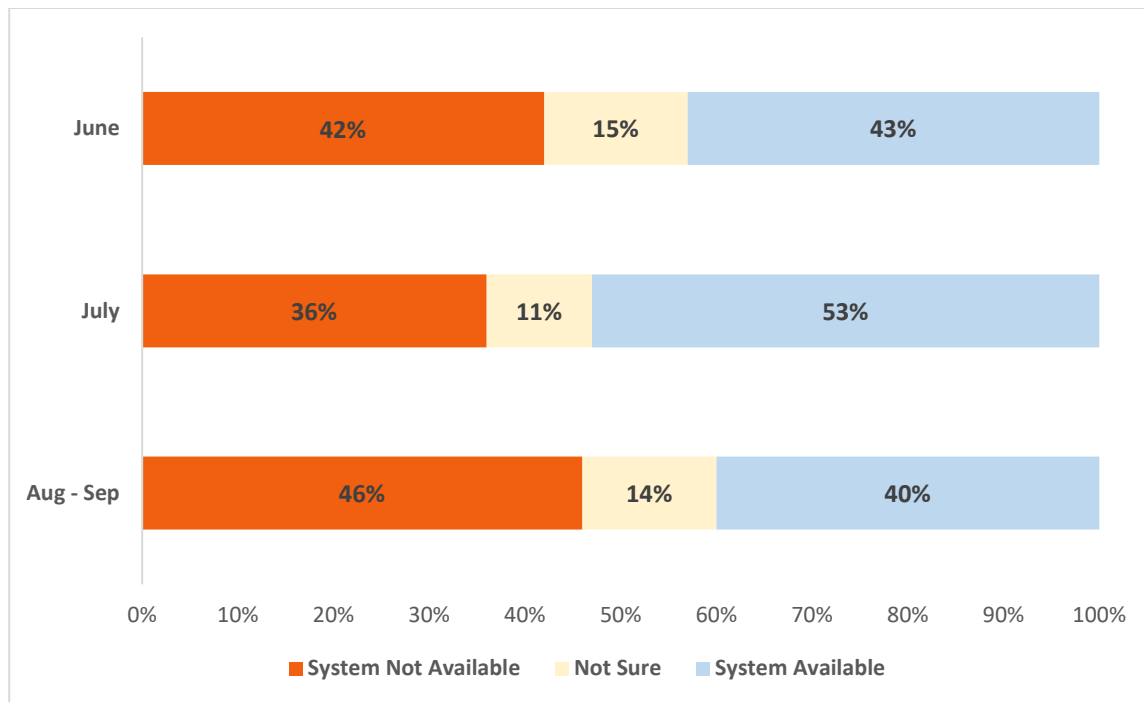
A World Vision assessment found that 44% of girls and 41% of boys (aged 14-17) and 90% of children aged 9-13 stated that the unavailability of services was the main reason for limited access to protection and social services.

Despite the lack of reliable quantitative data on the GBV in Ukraine, all actors agree that there has been an increase in the reporting of protection incidents suffered by women. However, with the ongoing conflict limiting access to assistance and support for female survivors of abuse and violence, this has likely led to a significant underreporting of incidents.

Women have faced a notable lack of referral system since the onset of the conflict. According to REACH monitoring of collective centres, the lack of a referral system to inform about GBV and human trafficking on

sites has been consistent since the first round conducted in June. Indeed, in June, only 56% of sites reported having such a referral system, against 43% during round 4 and 37% during round 6. According to the data from the REACH MSNA, 55% of respondents searching for GBV services noted the unavailability of such services, with particularly high rates in central and eastern Ukraine.

Figure 1: GBV and trafficking report system availability in collective sites



Source: [REACH CCCM, 07/11/2022](#)

Services are also reported to be less available in rural areas. In addition to the lack of services, cultural barriers including the fear of stigma and discrimination are also restricting women from seeking assistance. For those residing in conflict-affected areas, movement restrictions, insecurity and the damage to facilities can further reduce their access to any type of service. As indicated by the GBV sub-cluster in December 2022, few partners are operating in Luhanska and Kharkivska oblasts for example. Broken referral pathways, lack of quality services, weak coordination between actors and limited local partner capacity in this domain were also cited by OCHA as barriers to access (REACH MSNA data, [GBV sub cluster](#) 31/12/2022, [HNO](#) 28/12/2022, [UNHCR](#) 23/12/2023, [REACH](#) 07/11/2022, [World Bank](#) 09/09/2022).

Figure 2; Percentage of KIs stating no services related to support for survivors of Gender Based Violence were available in their community.

Oblast	Macro Region	% of KI's stating no services available
Cherkaska	Central	79%
Kirovohradska	Central	75%
Poltavska	Central	39%
Vinnyska	Central	73%
Dnipropetrovska	East	81%
Donetska	East	64%
Kharkivska	East	80%
Zaporizka	East	46%
Kyivska city	Kyiv City	10%
Chernihivska	North	35%
Kyivska oblast	North	48%
Sumska	North	31%
Zhytomyrska	North	57%
Mykolaivska	South	55%
Odeska	South	38%
Chernivetska	West	39%
Ivano-Frankivska	West	70%
Khmelnyska	West	89%
Lvivska	West	23%
Rivnenska	West	27%
Ternopils'ka	West	43%
Volynska	West	23%
Zakarpatska	West	59%
Overall		55%

Source: REACH MSNA data, November 2022

Family Separation and Unaccompanied Children

The massive waves of displacement that took place since the escalation of the conflict have led to family separation, with many unaccompanied and separated children being left at risk of traffic, abductions, and sexual and physical violence. Children who were already living in boarding schools and institutions before the conflict are also particularly vulnerable to protection threats.

Family separation is becoming a critical protection concern across Ukraine with unaccompanied children and children living in institutional care being the most vulnerable.

Family separation has become a major concern and a critical child protection risk due to ongoing hostilities, massive displacement and the increasing number of civilian casualties. Without comprehensive action, children can face separation from their families or primary caregivers and those in over stretched residential institutions - which now face challenges in providing essential services and care – are at risk of neglect. This concern for family separation has been reported by 85% of girls and 79% of boys aged between 14-17 assessed by a World Vision assessment published in February 2023 and by 78% of girls and 82% of boys aged between 9-13. In Kharkiv alone, 8% of households assessed by War Child in early 2023

A World Vision assessment found that 85% of girls and 79% of boys aged between 14-17 expressed concern about family separation.

reported that they had heard of children being separated from their caregivers. This has also been raised by respondents in multiple reports since the beginning of the conflict, especially in areas such as Kharkiv where military offensives and displacement have greatly reduced the ability of child protection and other social services to operate effectively.

There is also growing concerns around unaccompanied or separated children who are at greater risk of being victims of trafficking, abduction physical violence and exploitation. They face challenges in accessing most services, including social housing and healthcare. A REACH report from September showed that 2% of assessed collective sites in Ukraine reported the presence of unaccompanied children. Alarming this rate reached 11% in the Zaporizha oblast.

Before the conflict, there were more than 91,000 children living in boarding schools and other institutions in Ukraine, half of them with disabilities. Even though some of these children returned to their families, many were left in hospitals, and as a result, lacked the necessary caregivers to give them protection and assistance. In the last six months, various reports have documented the presence of unaccompanied children in the conflict-affected areas, especially in Zaporizka and Chernivestka oblast. Amnesty International also stated in November that children who were in orphanages and institutions in Russian-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts before the war were moved to Russia and thus separated from their families. Recent World Vision reports also indicate that due to staff shortages and the inability to manage institutions to pre-war standards, children in many residential care institutions were at a greater risk of being killed or injured during attacks, abused or adopted illegally and hence facing permanent separation from their families ([World Vision](#) 31/01/2023, [World Vision](#) 22/02/2023, [War Child](#) 02/02/2023, [CCCM](#) 18/11/2022, [REACH](#) 11/10/2022, [Amnesty International](#) 10/11/2022, [DFS](#) 10/11/2022, [UNHCR](#) 04/11/2022, [HelpAge](#) 02/11/2022).

Mental Health

The fear induced by the conflict combined with the impact of displacement, family separation, loss of livelihood and of safe spaces are resulting in a heavy toll on people's mental health. Women and children represent a large proportion of the civilians affected by the conflict, and therefore many are experiencing stress and depression. UNICEF estimates that 1.5 million children are at risk of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health issues and 5.2 million women are estimated to be mentally affected by the conflict. Children and adolescents have adopted multiple negative coping mechanisms in order to face the mental load. Women have had to support an increasing burden of care while their income has reduced, leading to heightened levels of stress. The lack of psychological and social services is also worsening this situation.

The impact of the conflict has taken a heavy toll on the mental health of both Women and Children

Growing reports of anxiety, stress and depression amongst children are being made in Ukraine with significant concerns being raised in Kherson, Dnipro and Kharkiv oblasts around the lack of access to mental health services.

Many Ukrainian children no longer feel safe having suffered the loss of their homes and facing limited access to schools and their peer group. Some have experienced violence, abuse or exploitation, many have had to handle displacement and difficult living conditions, others have had to deal with fear and insecurity. Large numbers of children have also faced loss or separation from their friends and families since the onset of the conflict. Children continue to live in heavily conflict-affected areas and regions of active shelling with looming uncertainty. These hostilities have forced them to hide underground for an average of about 920 hours in the last year – equivalent to 38.3 days (or more than a month). Unsurprisingly, the events in the country have had long-term repercussions on the mental health of children. WHO has reported that 9.6 million people in Ukraine are at risk of mental health issues, many of whom are children. UNICEF estimates that 1.5 million children are at risk of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health issues, with potential long-term effects and implications. Children have reported increasing concerns for their safety and well-being indicating that many suffer from major psychological stress.

UNICEF estimates that 1.5 million children are at risk of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health issues, with potential long-term effects and implications.

Findings from several reports have indicated increasing instances of depression, along with feelings of isolation and extreme stress amongst teenagers, especially displaced children and children with disabilities. In December, a coordinated MSNA implemented by NGO partners in northeast and central Ukraine reported that 19% of assessed households containing children stated that their children had been displaying signs of distress due to the current situation including crying, shouting, insomnia, and aggressive or antisocial behaviour. More worryingly a joint assessment covering Poltava Oblast (Oct/Nov 2022)

also found that all the assessed households with children cited mental health issues amongst their children due to the war. There appears to be little change in the situation as many reports from the past few months have also flagged anxiety issues among children. A World Vision needs assessment from January conducted across Kharkiv, Kherson and Dnipro oblasts shows that girls aged 14-17 feel significantly more unsafe than boys in the same group. The report also examined children in the age group 9-13, where it was found that almost half of the assessed girls and boys did not feel safe due to war conditions. Although boys aged 14-17 show the least number of children feeling "somehow unsafe/ unsafe/very unsafe," at 38% this is still a worrying statistic that requires serious attention ([UNICEF 21/02/2023](#), [UNHCR 27/12/2022](#), [USAID 24/02/2023](#), [Save the Children 20/02/2023](#), [World Vision 22/02/2023](#), [UNHCR 29/12/2022](#), [JERU 24/12/2022](#), [CESVI 28/09/2022](#), [NP 23/09/2022](#), [Health Cluster 29/07/2022](#)).

Children are increasingly reporting the use of negative coping strategies with assessments indicating the growing presence of addiction and child labour amongst teenagers with many also running away from home.

Evidence shows that children in conflict zones adopt negative coping strategies to gain access to food and other supplies, or for their own safety and security, which makes them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. In Ukraine, heightened tensions, fear and anxiety have led children to resort to using negative coping mechanisms. This has been increasingly reported, notably as organisations' access to newly liberated areas and conflict-affected areas has resulted in the identification of more cases.

In Ukraine, heightened tensions, fear and anxiety have led children to resort to using negative coping mechanisms.

A JERU assessment from November shows that various households have been adopting different coping strategies to face the psychological burden of the war. Negative strategies have been adopted by households such as the use of alcohol, medication, or other substances (predominantly sedatives) to cope. This was highly reported in Dnipropetrovska (29%), and Poltavaska (22%), in comparison to an average of 3% across the other assessed oblasts.

This data is corroborated by the need assessment conducted by World Vision in February across Kharkiv, Kherson and Dnipro oblasts where children identified the various negative coping strategies that they have used. Over half of all assessed children said their peers were using smoking and other addictions as a coping mechanism; this rises to 77% for boys aged 14-17. Additionally, addiction has appeared as the most common coping mechanism among girls and boys aged between 9-13, reported by 43% of girls and 39% of boys. Roughly half of the assessed teenage children across the three oblasts also reported dropping out of school, with the highest rate seen amongst teenage boys. It was also found to be reported by a surprisingly large number of girls in the age group 9-13 (38%). The assessment also shows that children are running away from their homes to escape their current situation with 40% of teenage girls reporting eloping from home as a coping strategy. It is unclear where these children are going or if they are staying with their friends in some nearby location. Begging has also become very common in the assessed oblasts with close to 20% of children across all age groups citing it as an activity they do. The findings from the same report also showed an increasing presence of child labour in the assessed areas, especially amongst young girls with an overall 20% of girls in the age group 9-13 and 14-17 reporting it. A small portion of assessed children also reported instances of early marriage ([World Vision 31/01/2023](#), [JERU 24/12/2022](#), [World Vision 22/02/2023](#))

High levels of stress due to the impact of the conflict and displacement have taken a heavy toll on women's mental health this past year.

Women have reported suffering from mental health issues soon after the escalation of the conflict. In May 2022, UN Women reported that 49% of female respondents and 50% of male respondents saw their mental health as the part of their life the most impacted by the conflict. A later joint assessment from conducted in

November 2022 found that 95% of households had suffered from an impact of the conflict on their mental or physical well-being. It further showed a difference in the impact of the conflict between males and females. Indeed, 39% of women assessed had been affected by long-term physical or mental health problems against 28% of males. In the 2023 HNO, OCHA indicated that requests for psychological help and other MPHSS support were increasing in the country, especially for women who were single heads of household.

Women are particularly at risk of suffering from those psychological impacts when they are solely responsible for the care of their households, and notably taking care of vulnerable members such as children and older people. This was partly driven by many men enrolling in Ukraine's armed forces after the state of emergency. UN Women also reported an increase in unpaid care work this past year. According to an assessment led by REACH in Lvivska in February 2023, about 30% of IDPs could not find a job due to the need to look after other household members. Lack of childcare can further add to women's mental load and thus to their stress. As analysed in a report from SeeD which studied the sociological context in Ukraine, women were already sharing the largest burden of unpaid domestic work and care work before the escalation of the conflict.

A JERU assessment found that 95% of households reported that the conflict had a detrimental impact on their physical or mental wellbeing.

Therefore, women suffer high levels of stress and anxiety due to fear, mental load, and due to loss of family members and family separation. The displacement of millions of households has increased these impacts, notably with the increased socioeconomic vulnerabilities of displaced households. Other stressors such as loss of livelihood, irregular income, increased prices, loss of housing, school closure, exposure to difficult living conditions, isolation and deprivation of information have further increased stress. In August, CARE reported that 5.2 million women had been mentally affected by the conflict. In the HNO, OCHA reported that 22% of the population could face mental health conditions which would represent over 9 million people ([UN Women 24/02/2023](#), [Save the Children 22/02/2023](#), [REACH 22/02/2023](#), [HNO 28/12/2022](#), [UNHCR 27/12/2022](#), [JERU 24/12/2022](#), [CARE 22/08/2022](#), [UNPF 04/05/2022](#), [UN Women 04/05/2022](#), [SeeD 31/12/2021](#)).

Access to psychosocial services remains limited.

The lack of availability of psychosocial services is preventing children from accessing necessary care, particularly in oblasts most impacted by the conflict.

OCHA has recently reported a lack of psychosocial services for some children, exacerbating the risk that they could face long-lasting trauma. This could be an increasingly serious issue as more and more children are reporting mental health issues amidst growing instances of fear and anxiety. Lack of mental health services and reduced referral mechanisms can worsen their situation, especially for unaccompanied and displaced children who remain the most vulnerable and most likely to require these services.

IOM has found that the IDP population is the most in need of such interventions and support with 4% of them also reporting psychosocial assistance as an integration need. Furthermore, recent assessments of collective sites show that the availability of psychosocial support varies from one oblast to another, and from site to site. For instance, it is available in 87% of sites in Chernivestka oblast but only in 71% of assessed sites in Lvivska. Although specific data is limited, general information for IDPs indicates that IDP children are more likely to face similar challenges in accessing child protection interventions ([World Vision 31/01/2023](#), [World Vision 22/02/2023](#), [UNFPA 20/02/2023](#), [OCHA 17/10/2022](#), [OCHA 19/12/2022](#), [IOM 13/12/2022](#), [IOM 15/01/2023](#), [IOM 05/01/2023](#)).

Access to mental health support remains limited, pushing women to use negative coping strategies many of which can be harmful to their health.

43% of health facilities do not normally provide psychological first aid, with Donestka and Kyivska oblasts showing the lowest availability scores.

Overall access to mental health and psychosocial support is still reported to be lacking in the country. This is notably due to many professionals fleeing conflict-affected areas or even the country, and that health facilities have been damaged or destroyed. The Herams report from WHO indicates that 43% of health facilities did not normally provide psychological first aid, Donestka and Kyivska oblasts showing the lower availability scores (respectively 72% and 59%). The

lack of training of staff was the main reason given for this unavailability (59% of facilities). An assessment

conducted in Izium in October 2022 showed that most of the professionals in mental health had fled the city when the conflict escalated. In order to cope with mental health issues, individuals tend to use positive or negative coping strategies. According to the JERU assessment, some female respondents indicated using sedative drugs or alcohol to cope with stress, which can be harmful to their health ([WHO](#) 03/04/2023, [IMC](#) 16/01/2023, [HNO](#) 28/12/2022, [JERU](#) 22/12/2022).

Livelihoods

Poverty has been increasing since the escalation of the conflict. Estimates at the end of 2022 indicated that over 20% of Ukraine's population had fallen into poverty, approximately 7.1 million people. Displacement and loss of livelihoods has resulted in lower income and purchasing power, especially for women who are single heads of households and for those who must care for children, older people and people with disabilities. This in turn leads to higher food insecurity and increasing reliance of assistance.

As the conflict continues, women have been particularly impacted by the loss of livelihood, whether due to the closure of businesses caused by insecurity, to displacement or to the burden of care.

The inequalities between men and women in Ukraine in terms of income were already notable before the conflict. In 2020, according to the national authorities, women earned an average 25% less than men and had lower participation in the labour force. However, they would spend twice as much time on household chores. These inequalities have been exacerbated since the escalation of the conflict. According to REACH MSNA, with data collected by the end of 2022, average monthly incomes for female-headed households (9,872 UAH) were notably lower than that of male-headed households (12,819 UAH). This can be partly explained by the fact that some female-headed households were likely to be single, divorced or widowed.

Low salaries, lack of work opportunities and irregular payment of salaries are resulting in a lack of income for households.

The living conditions of the women can also explain their lack of income. Women represent a large part of the civilian population (55% of displaced people according to IOM GPS 12), as men under 60 were enrolled in the army. Millions of households had to flee their residence due to the conflict, 13.2 million people having been displaced since the onset of the conflict, representing a fourth of the total population. Such massive displacement has resulted in the loss of livelihood and thus in loss of income. For those who did not have to flee, the damage to industry and businesses have led to business closure and to reduced economic activity, resulting in turn in a lower need for labour force in some sectors. This is collaborated by REACH findings that show that low salaries, lack of work opportunities and irregular payment of salaries are resulting in a lack of money for households. The south and the east of Ukraine are the areas where people face the most difficulties in earning money due to the war (respectively 94% and 83% against 60% in the central region). Less than half of IDPs between 18-64 had paid work by October according to the second round of IOM Return reports, with a notable difference between women and men (respectively 43% of women and 53% of men having paid work).

The latest IOM Returns report from January 2023 further shows that before the conflict, regarding income, the largest ratio of women had over UAH 20,000 (27% of them) while now the largest ratio of women have between UAH 7,001 and 10,000 (21% of them). Likewise, men had more income than women before and after the conflict, with the biggest ratio of men before and after the conflict receiving over UAH 20,000 (52% before against 25% after).

Lastly, many displaced households include vulnerable people: according to the latest IOM GPS, 15% of the households are composed of children from 1 to 5, 47% of children from 5 to 17, 25% of people with disabilities, 41% of older persons, 36% of chronically ill people. This necessarily exacerbates the burden of care for women-head of households. By May 2022, 13% of IDPs were living in single female heads of households, 70% of whom had no income or income below UAH 5000. In such contexts, the lack of childcare is one of the main barriers to access to employment, as shown by UNHCR survey from November 2022. According to REACH MSNA, 85% of female single parents as heads of households were between 'below lower' and 'upper' expenditure threshold, representing the highest rate among all types of households ([REACH](#) 23/04/2023, [REACH](#) 21/04/2023, [UNICEF](#) 21/02/2023, [UNHCR](#) 29/01/2023, [IOM](#) 23/01/2023, [IOM](#) 16/11/2022, [IOM](#) 23/05/2022, [Ukrinform](#) 03/03/2020, [Kyiv Post](#) 30/12/2022).

The loss of livelihood has had direct consequences on women's income and purchasing power, hence reducing their financial access to goods and services. The stress on households related to loss of income is a contributing factor to increased domestic violence.

Across Ukraine, 49% of returnee women have an income of UAH 10,000 or less, compared to 33% before the conflict. Also, one fifth (20%) of returnee women report an income of 5,000 UAH or less.

This lack of income results in difficulties for women-head of households to access goods and services. For instance, 40% of female single parents as heads of households were moderately to severely food insecure, which is the highest percentage among all other types of households. Among food-insecure households, 22% of them were heads of households who had to restrain from working due to housework and childcare. Moreover, financial constraints have been reported as heavy barriers to access to basic goods and services since the onset of the conflict. Data from 2022 also show that pregnant and

breastfeeding women; single young women; older women; female heads of households, especially those caring for young children and older and sick relatives or friends; women from minority groups, such as Roma, and stateless women are particularly vulnerable to loss of livelihood and income. The lack of income can further lead these women to rely mostly on humanitarian assistance or to use negative coping strategies that can be harmful to their health (such as reducing portions during meals etc.). The latest MSNA data from December 2022 indicate that 76% of households need some type of humanitarian assistance, underlying the major reliance on external aid. 80% of women IDPs were in need of financial support according to the latest IOM GPS, against 68% of male IDPs and 64% of female non-IDPs, demonstrating again the higher need faced by women ([REACH](#) 23/04/2023, [REACH](#) 21/04/2023, [IOM](#) 16/02/2023, [IOM](#) 23/01/2023, [UNHCR](#) 03/10/2022).

Moreover, the worsening socioeconomic conditions of populations affected by the conflict and the stress endured by households have also led to a rise in domestic violence. A survey led by USAID in August 2022 shows that 62% of female respondents believed that domestic violence was more prone to increase in wartime (see [section on Violence and inherent protection threats](#) for more information) ([USAID](#) 05/10/2022).

Among food-insecure households, one fifth (22%) reported that the head of household had to restrain from working due to housework and childcare.

Education

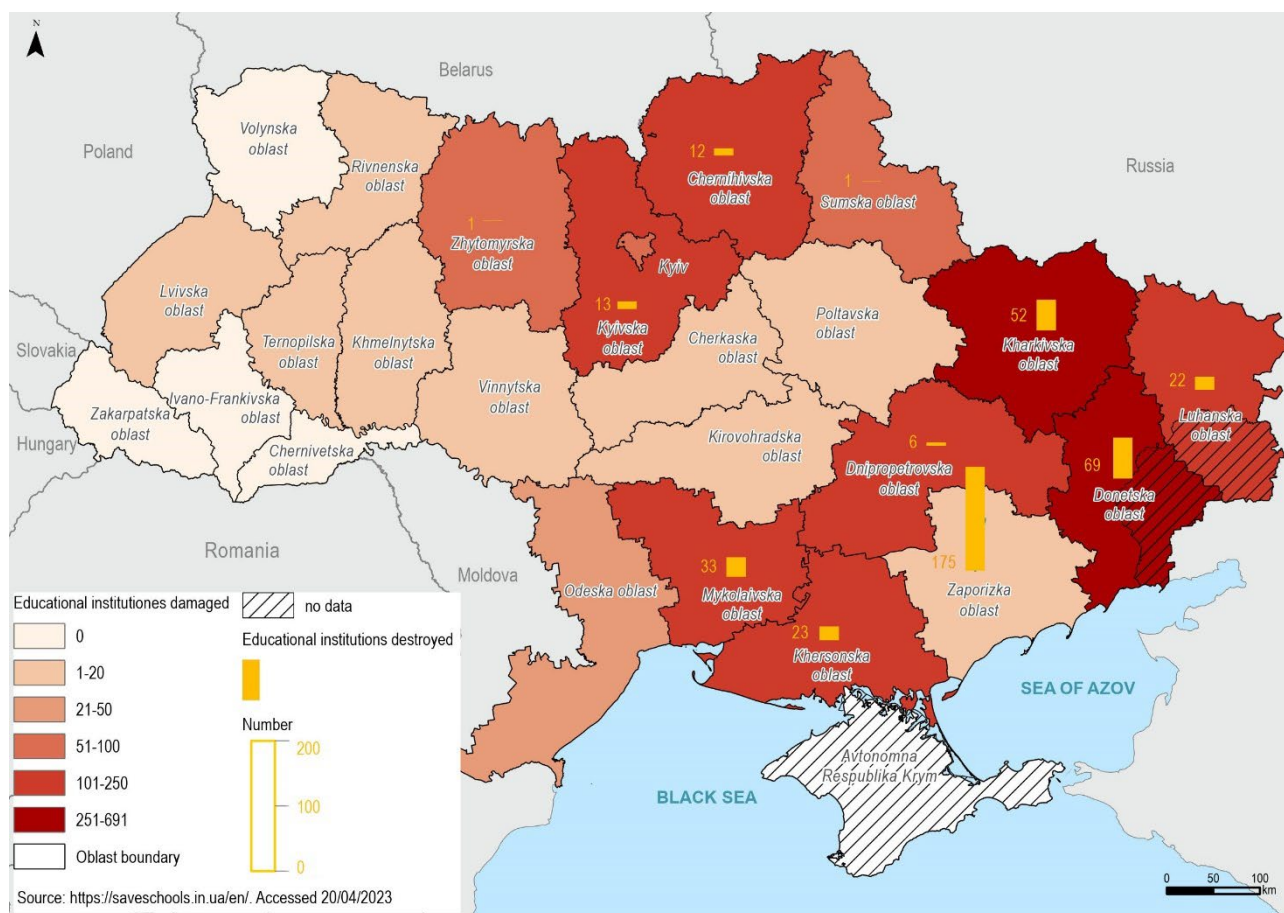
One of the most visible impacts on children caused by the conflict in Ukraine has been the catastrophic disruption to their education. With thousands of schools damaged or destroyed, millions of children are being forced to access their education online. However, missile and drone attacks against the country's energy infrastructure is heavily disrupting online learning. In addition, many vulnerable groups such as Roma, children with disabilities, children in some rural areas and children living in poverty face additional challenges to access education services.

Widespread destruction of schools and education institutions along attacks on Ukraine's power infrastructure continues to disrupt access to education for millions of learners.

There has been widespread destruction of education infrastructure with education institutions continuing to be damaged or destroyed by missiles, airstrikes and shelling. Many schools and colleges have also had their premises repurposed for humanitarian or even military use.

The devastating impact of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine on the education sector continues with widespread damage to educational institutions primarily through the use of explosive weapons, including missiles, airstrikes and shelling. By May 2023, a total of 3252 educational institutions had been damaged, including 277 that have been destroyed. In the first six months of the conflict this translated to a rate of over 13 schools or other education premises per day ([MoES](#) accessed 12/05/2023, [GCPEA](#) 24/02/2023).

Figure 3: Number of Education Institutions Damaged or Destroyed since February 2022



Source: [MoES website](https://saveschools.in.ua/en/) accessed 24/03/2023.

As well as the loss of schools to conflict damage, many education institutions have also been repurposed. Many schools and early childhood centres have been used as collective sites to house displaced persons. A study of tertiary institutions in Ukraine found that the majority of those who responded (55%), have had parts of their premises used for non-educational purposes included as centres for collecting, sorting and distributing humanitarian aid, or as shelters during air raid alerts. Even more concerningly there have been reports of the use of educational facilities as military bases, detention centres, and to store military equipment ([GCPEA 24/02/2023](#), [Educo 20/02/2023](#), [Education Cluster 02/12/2022](#)).

The risk to children posed by missiles, airstrikes and shelling has forced many parts of the country to push education services to either a blended approach or fully online.

The conflict continues to prevent millions of students attending in person lessons, with most schools closed for an extended period and many students forced to rely on distance and online learning. At the start of Ukraine's new academic year (01/09/22), the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) reported that only 27% of schools resumed face-to-face learning, with 43% relying entirely on distance learning, and 30% a mixed modality (face-to-face and distance learning) ([GCPEA 24/02/2023](#), [OCHA 20/09/2022](#)).

A back-to-learning campaign for the new academic year was focused on continued education instead of schools' reopening. The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) requires schools to have early warning alarm systems and access to bunkers before they can hold face-to-face classes and less than 60% of schools were deemed safe and eligible to reopen by the Government at the start of the beginning of September 2022 ([UNICEF 01/09/2022](#), [ACAPS 18/08/2022](#), [OCHA 12/08/2022](#)).

Targeted attacks on the country's energy infrastructure led to widespread disruption of online learning throughout much of the current academic year; other barriers to education include insecurity, a lack of suitable electronic devices and a lack of appropriate support.

Inadequate internet access is the main barrier to education according to roughly half of both IDP households (48%) and non-displaced households (45%) surveyed in round 12 of the IOM GPS. A nationwide survey of

higher education establishments indicated even greater issues with 79% of the responding institutions reported that the lack of an internet connection was a major barrier to learning. A lack of necessary devices such as PCs, notebooks, or smartphones was also reported as a barrier by 10% of IDP households and 7% of non-displaced households. These barriers have been corroborated by other assessments where safe travel to and from school for children (especially in oblasts close to the front-line) was also highlighted as a major issue ([IOM](#) 02/02/2023, [Plan International](#) 02/03/2023, [JERU](#) 24/12/2022, [UNICEF](#) 14/12/2022, [MoES](#) 02/12/2022).

Inadequate internet access is the main barrier to education according to roughly half of both IDP households (48%) and non-displaced households (45%).

For rural areas in particular, insufficient infrastructure and security concerns limit the use of online and in-person learning, reducing educational opportunities for students. Students and teachers in newly accessible areas also face multiple challenges. In a recent assessment from Kharkiv, a lack of tablets and laptops continues to be a significant obstacle to students accessing online education. Power cuts during the winter months were frequent and often long, lasting over 24 hours in some areas.

This disrupts the ability of both learners and teachers to connect to online learning platforms regularly and on time. As a result, teaching and learning often takes place at odd hours, such as early morning or late at night. Moreover, the lack of electricity also makes it difficult to charge devices, which adds to the stress of the situation. Additionally, a lack of heating and warm clothing also negatively affects children's ability to concentrate on their studies ([Education Cluster](#) 31/01/2023, [Save the Children](#) 24/01/2023, [UNICEF](#) 24/01/2023, [Govt. Ukraine](#) 05/01/2023, [HNO](#) 28/12/2022).

It is unsurprising then that one in nine households across Ukraine (11%) have Extreme or Extreme+ Living Standard Gaps in Education, with the southern (16%), eastern (13%), and northern (9%) regions being the worst affected ([REACH MSNA](#) 02/03/2023).

Vulnerable groups and children in NGCA's face additional barriers in accessing education.

Access to quality education is a significant challenge for marginalized groups in Ukraine, including the Roma population, poor communities, and children with disabilities, who face various obstacles such as discrimination, limited opportunities, and lack of access to technology and support, and the destruction of specialist schools due to the conflict.

The conflict had a significant impact on students with disabilities, with at least 36 schools or institutions for students with disabilities being damaged or destroyed. The closure of schools and the shift to remote and online learning have further exacerbated the challenges faced by students with disabilities, who require specialized support. In addition, the lack of privacy and dedicated space for online studies, inadequate support for children with disabilities, and the language barrier also contribute to the difficulties in accessing quality education.

The closure of schools and the shift to remote and online learning have further exacerbated the challenges faced by students with disabilities, who require specialized support.

The Roma population in Ukraine face significant obstacles in accessing education due to a lack of civil status. Inadequate internet access is the main barrier to education according to roughly half of both IDP households (48%) and non-displaced households (45%) documents, discrimination, and limited opportunities. This issue is particularly pronounced for Roma girls, who are often denied access to education altogether. The situation has been further exacerbated by the conflict with Roma families often unable to afford the necessary devices and internet costs for children to access online education services ([GCPEA](#) 24/02/2023, [Education Cluster](#) 31/01/2023, [UNHCR](#) 27/12/2022, [HIAS](#) 27/05/2022, [UN Women](#) 04/05/2022).

As part of the Russification campaign in NGCAs, schools are required to follow Russian curriculum.

The Ministry of Education and Science reports that as of November 24, 2022, more than 2,000 schools and kindergartens were located in the NGCAs covering Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhia oblasts. In recent months reports have been increasing of schools being forced to adapt the Russian curriculum. Teachers who refuse to comply have been threatened with losing their jobs and many have fled, being replaced with teachers from Russia. Teachers have also reported having their electronic devices removed to prevent them from providing Ukrainian classes online. Local press also reports incidences of Ukrainian books being taken from schools and libraries and burnt ([Plan International](#) 02/03/2023, [GCPEA](#) 24/02/2023, [Kyiv Independent](#)

Nutrition and Reproductive Health

Concerns around nutrition remain although there is a lack of recent quantitative data. The latest REACH MSNA data show that 45% of households with babies under 6 months were facing problems in feeding them. Among households with children under two, 56% reported not having been aware of the distribution of infant food or baby formula and 51% cited baby food as a priority need. Increased food prices have indeed reduced access to nutritious food for households in Ukraine with the situation further aggravated by an access gap in nutrition services (especially in conflict-affected areas). Women also suffer from poor nutrition, with risks to their pregnancy and to their breastfed babies. Access to reproductive healthcare has been limited since the escalation of the conflict, adding yet another risk to women's health and well-being.

Low levels of breastfeeding practices and poor access to baby formula exacerbates nutrition risks for children.

Detailed data related to nutrition is lacking in Ukraine, especially since the beginning of 2023. However, the risks highlighted by humanitarian actors in 2022 are likely to remain.

By December 2022, 45% of households with young babies (0-6 months) were facing problems in feeding their children, mostly due to mental stress on the caregiver.

Since the escalation of the conflict in early 2022, malnutrition information has been mainly limited to reports highlighting risks to children that could drive increased malnutrition rates as opposed to any specific survey data. Since August there have been occasional reports have flagging malnutrition as a concern, but with concerning issues of food insecurity in both newly liberated areas and NGCAs, this represents key information gap. To inform the HNO, the Nutrition Cluster estimated that about 1.8 million children under five needed life-saving nutrition

services in 2023. The latest data comes from REACH: the MSNA conducted in November and December 2022 shows that 45% of households with young babies (0-6 months) were facing problems in feeding their children, mostly due to mental stress on the caregiver. Another 36% of households with children up to 2 years were facing problems in complementary feeding, mostly due to a lack of financial resources ([REACH](#) 21/04/2023, [HNO](#) 28/12/2022).

Low levels of exclusive breastfeeding were already reported before the escalation of the conflict, a key driver of malnutrition. The lack of availability of breastmilk substitutes and baby food is also a factor in increasing malnutrition risks.

Historically low levels of exclusive breastfeeding in children under 6 months are putting at risk the nutrition of children, inducing notably a lack of micronutrients. Figures made available by UNICEF from 2012 showed that only 20% of babies under 6 months in Ukraine were exclusively breastfed, against 44% of babies on the global level. Recent data from REACH MSNA show a high rate of breastfeeding as 67% of participants with children under 2 reported having breastfed their child. This does not however detail how long these children have been breastfed and shows that 33% were never breastfed, increasing the need for breastmilk substitutes.

OCHA estimated back in July 2022 that 125,000 children under 1 year were not breastfed and 270,000 children between 1 and 6 needed complementary feeding. The historically low level of breastfeeding is particularly problematic in Ukraine with the ongoing conflict, especially due to the lack of breastmilk substitutes.

Assessments published in 2022 showed a high need for baby food. Only a month after the invasion in February, 25% of households assessed by IOM for the General Population Survey (GPS) reported facing barriers in getting baby food. Likewise, according to REACH Rapid Needs Assessment from April 2022, baby food was highly needed in Kyiv and Zhytomyrska oblasts; according to the Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM) findings, in July, baby food appeared as the second main need in all settlements and as the fourth main need in conflict-affected areas and newly-liberated areas; in September, women with

Among households with children under two, 56% reported not having been aware of the distribution of infant food or baby formula and 51% cited baby food as a priority need.

small children in government-controlled areas were requesting baby formula. It was not reported as a priority in the other rounds of the HSM. The Rapid Gender Analysis of Ukraine reported similar issues in May 2022, with the lack of baby food being flagged as a critical concern, coupled with poor nutrition.

The multi-sectoral assessment conducted a few months later by CESVI (November 2022) showed a different perspective with breastmilk substitutes being reported as available in all the assessed oblasts (Dnipropetrovska, Kharkivska, Poltavska, and Sumska) except in three hromada in Kirovohradska. Though, according to the Collective Centre Monitoring conducted from August to September, baby food products were needed in 26% of CSs and infant formula was not available in 74% of sites in Cherkaska oblast, demonstrating a continuous availability gap in some parts of the country. Moreover, the second round of the IOM return monitoring (October 2022) showed that infant feeding was still reported as a major need.

Finally, the latest data from REACH MSNA collected by the end of 2022, showed that 15% of women who have children under two have faced struggles related to breastfeeding due to a lack of breastmilk. 11% of them lactating were also facing barriers to accessing infant formula. Among households with children under two, 56% reported not having been aware of the distribution of infant food or baby formula and 51% cited baby food as a priority need (REACH MSNA data 2022, [HNO](#) 28/12/2022, [JERU](#) 22/12/2022, [IOM](#) 01/11/2022, [IOM](#) 27/10/2022, [REACH](#) 11/10/2022, [OCHA](#) 20/07/2022, [REACH](#) 08/07/2022, [UN Women](#) 04/05/2022, [REACH](#) 15/04/2022, [IOM](#) 05/04/2022, [UNICEF](#) 01/12/2022, [WHO](#) 09/06/2021).

Increased food prices have reduced access to nutritious food for households in Ukraine with the situation further aggravated by an access gap in nutrition services (especially in conflict-affected areas), by the living conditions in these areas and by the conditions in some collective sites.

The JMMI is showing a notable increase in food costs since the escalation of the war. Food and non-alcoholic beverages have increased by 32% within a year (February 2022 – February 2023). This, along with loss of income, is reducing the access of households to nutritious food, putting millions at risk of food insecurity and thousands at risk of malnutrition as highlighted by WHO in May 2022 and WFP in September 2022. According to the data from REACH MSNA, among the households who reported having children under two, 14% reported facing barriers in feeding their children due to lack of income. The lack of access to baby food and the high price of food is further aggravated by the interruption of essential nutrition services in healthcare facilities and maternities. This is notably the case in conflict-affected areas, non-government-controlled areas, and in newly liberated areas.

Children under five years old are known to be particularly vulnerable to diseases and malnutrition. The living conditions -both in conflict-affected areas and in settlements in which displaced people reside- can lead to WASH-related risks including contaminated water sources, and thus to waterborne diseases. Such diseases can in turn result in malnutrition. As mentioned by WHO, poor nutrition can be really harmful to children, as proven by the fact that 45% of deaths globally among children under the age of 5 years are linked to undernutrition. However, the latest available data prior to the conflict show that the prevalence of undernourishment in Ukraine was only 2.5% in 2020, much is lower than the global level (9.3%) in the same year (REACH MSNA data 2022, [REACH](#) 28/03/2023, [WHO](#) accessed 01/05/2023, [HNO](#) 28/12/2022, [WFP](#) 15/09/2022, [WHO](#) 05/05/2022, [OCHA](#) 13/03/2022, [OCHA](#) 08/03/2022).

Poor access to nutrition food and services for women adds to the deficiency of the reproductive, maternal and post-partum healthcare services.

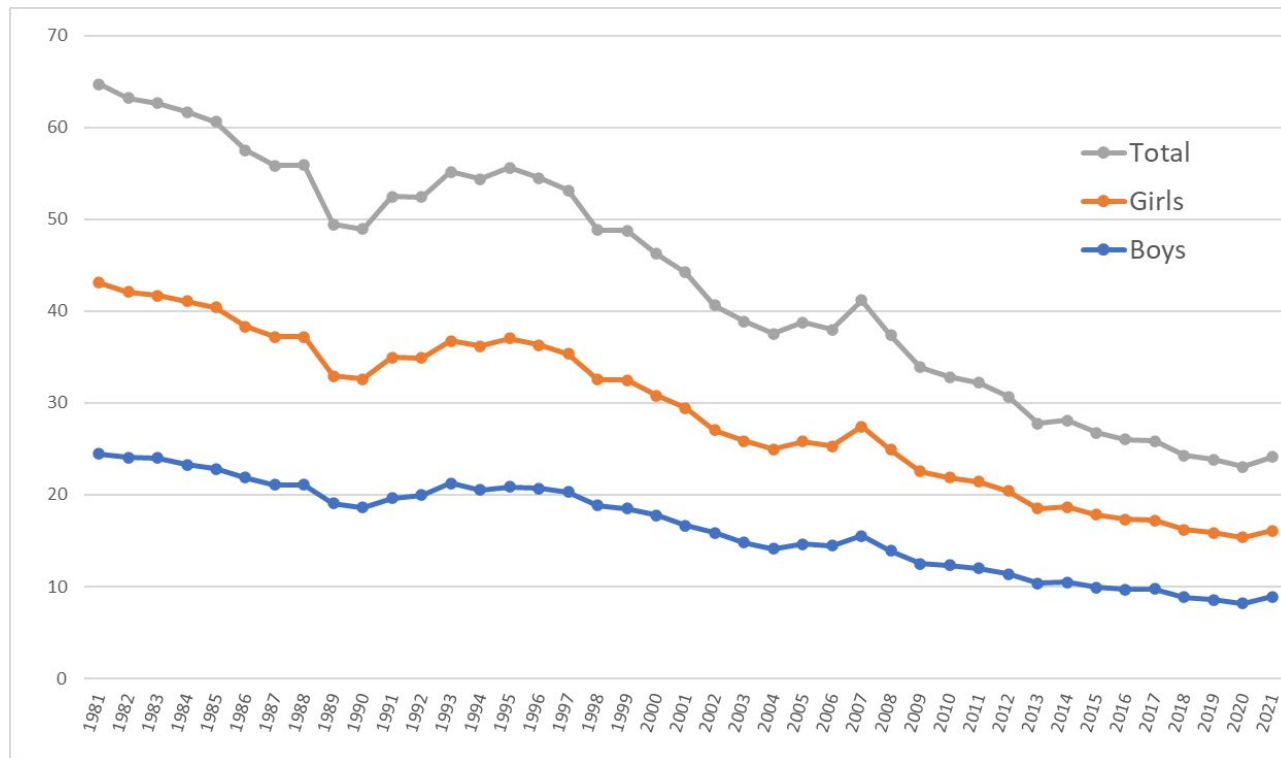
Women also suffer from poor nutrition, with risks to their pregnancy and to their breastfed babies. Access to reproductive healthcare has been limited since the escalation of the conflict, adding yet another risk to women's health and well-being.

There is very limited information available on the impact of malnutrition on pregnant and breastfeeding women, which is therefore a critical information gap. Reports from OCHA and UN Women from the first months of the war flagged the risks faced by these women regarding poor nutrition. Premature birth and hypertension problems are likely to increase due to poor nutrition and to a lack of medical care. Such increases were reported in 2022 and also in February of 2023.

Access to sexual and reproductive health has been limited or even disrupted in some parts of the country due to lower availability of staff and medicine, physical barriers for displaced people, movement restrictions, and lack of functioning facilities and services in conflict-affected areas and in NGCAs. Over the past 20 years,

Ukraine had made significant progress in reducing the risks to women in childbirth. The mortality rate per 1,000 live births noticeably decreased between 1971 (32 deaths) and 2021 (8 deaths). Current figures are unknown, notably due to the lack of capacity to collect data during the conflict. However, reduced access to reproductive health and maternity care could impact this ratio. Insecurity due to the ongoing conflict is also a barrier to access to healthcare. These were the main findings of the VOICE report, with barriers being most prevalent in the east of the country.

Figure 4: Ukraine Under-Five Mortality per 1,000 live births (pre-conflict data)



Source: [Child Mortality](#), assessed on 01/05/2023

Skilled care during childbirth was not normally provided in 85% of the facilities assessed, mostly due to the lack of staff (for 56% of facilities) and lack of medical equipment (39%).

According to the assessment from Herams, conducted in December 2022, skilled care during childbirth was not normally provided in 85% of the facilities assessed, mostly due to the lack of staff (56% available) and medical equipment (39%). Those services are lacking the most in Sumska and Donestka oblasts. Basic emergency obstetric care was also not normally provided in 84% of assessed facilities, lacking mainly in Donestka (unavailable in 33% of facilities) and Sumska oblasts (40%). The main reason for the lack of availability is the lack of staff (71%). Results

are very similar regarding comprehensive emergency obstetric care as 85% of facilities do not normally provide it, mostly due to a lack of staff (77%).

The low access to reproductive healthcare has resulted in difficulties in implementing aspirated abortions for instance, due to a lack of resources. Services for women survivors of GBV are also reported to be lacking. According to Herams, 62% of facilities assessed did not normally provide clinical management of rape survivors, Donestka and Kyivska oblasts showing the lowest availability scores (respectively 60% and 76% of availability). Regarding sexual health, the lack of access to condoms and interruption of treatment have been flagged, exacerbating the risks of sexual transmissions and lack of HIV diagnostic ([see the section on GBV](#)). 21% of health facility assessed for the Herams report did not normally provide HIV testing and counselling and pre-exposure prophylaxis. The main reason for unavailability is the lack of medical supply (50%) ([WHO](#) 03/04/2023, [UNRIC](#) 26/02/2023, [HNO](#) 28/12/2022, [VOICE](#) 26/05/2022, [UN Women](#) 04/05/2022, [OCHA](#) 13/03/2022, [UNICEF](#) 2021).

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