



Voices of Children Charitable Foundation  
NGO "Kharkiv Institute of Social Research"

# CHILDREN AND WAR IN UKRAINE

## 24.05.-24.06.2022

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## Introduction

On June 1, the world celebrates International Children's Day. But this year, Ukraine celebrated that day with sadness. Because every day two or three children die in our country, five are injured. All together, these numbers are even scarier: 338 dead children and 610 wounded<sup>1</sup> for four months.

The occupation of the East and South of Ukraine goes on, the children suffer there from a lack of medicine, drinking water and food. In many settlements, the shelling of residential houses, hospitals and educational institutions does not stop. Internally displaced families are trying to set up their lives, find a worthy place to live for their children, opportunities to study and recreate in conditions of limited resources and constant danger throughout the territory of Ukraine.

We have prepared a report that briefly describes the key events of the fourth month of the war, as concerns the situation, problems and needs of children in Ukraine and abroad. Separately, in this report, we analyzed the situation with the compliance of the rights of children with disabilities, because such children need additional attention and social protection.

The methodology is based on the analysis of statistics, data from official sources and media materials. Also, 14 interviews were conducted with psychiatrists, social service workers, representatives of public organizations, parents in the occupation and in the active combat areas, as well as with families who were forced to move to the western and central regions of Ukraine or abroad.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-za-4-misyaci-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini-zaginuli-338-ditei>

## Children under the occupation and in the active combat areas.

At the end of the fourth month of the war, the Russian army does not stop offensive actions in the East of Ukraine, trying to establish complete control over the territory of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The occupiers are holding captured settlements in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions, and are making attempts to renew the attack in Mykolaiv and Kharkiv regions. Except for these regions, Dnipropetrovsk, Sumy and Chernihiv ones are also regularly attacked.

As at June 1, it is already known about 1,042 criminal proceedings concerning the crimes related to the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, committed against children and in the field of childhood protection. Among them, there are 491 proceedings based on the facts of armed attacks on educational institutions for children and 551 are the war crimes against children<sup>2</sup>. However, indirectly there are much more of them. These include the destruction of civilian infrastructure, mass murders of the population and shootings at humanitarian corridors. As at June 22, investigators of the National Police registered about 20,000 war crimes committed by Russian military and their accomplices<sup>3</sup>. There are some examples.

### Usage of illicit means of warfare

Journalists of The New York Times have examined more than 1,000 photos from Ukraine, identifying more than 2,000 ammunitions and their fragments there. Among them, 210 are prohibited by international contracts. These are mostly cluster munitions and sub-munitions, which can cause a serious danger to the civilian population for decades<sup>4</sup>.

Ukrainian law enforcement officers provide with similar data. Thus, as of June 13, **at least 183 facts of the using illicit means of warfare by the Russian military are under investigation**<sup>5</sup>. Some of these strokes lead to serious injuries or death of children.

On June 5, the occupiers used phosphorous munition in the area of Cherkaski Tyshki in Kharkiv region<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/prokuratura-zitomirshhini-poperedila-nezakonne-vibuttya-maize-55-mln-grn-z-byudzetu-dogovir-pro-budivnictvo-baseinu-viznano-nediisnim>

<sup>3</sup> <https://mvs.gov.ua/uk/news/katerina-pavlicenko-pravoovoronci-mayut-desyatki-aktivnix-kriminalnix-provaden-za-faktami-statevix-zlociniv-proti-civilnix-vcinenix-viiskovosluzbovcyami-rf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/06/19/world/europe/ukraine-munitions-war-crimes.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-ogp-kasetni-bomby/31896313.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0PQmzkGQRTzzN824PwdaEnM4tYyErTmBq1Wn3GrtgfhquDcPUVcZkzMqzkXhgchRzl>

On June 21, the Russians struck the beach at Zolota Rybka lake in the city of Chasiv Yar, Donetsk region, with cluster shells. In general, as a result of the shelling, one person died, eleven were injured, and six of them were children<sup>7</sup>

The same very day, cluster munitions struck residential blocks in Mykolaiv. The cassette exploded in the yard of a private house. One person died, another was injured<sup>8</sup>.

On June 23, a 13-year-old boy suffered from burns to his legs as a result of a phosphorus bomb explosion in Sumy district of Sumy region<sup>9</sup>.

### **Attacking, bombing and mining of civilian objects**

As of June 12, it is known that since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion there have already been **launched 2,606 missiles into Ukraine**<sup>10</sup>. Most of them hit the residential estates, hospitals, educational and social institutions and other objects of



non-military infrastructure. Some cities of Luhansk and Donetsk regions were almost completely destroyed. During such shelling, the civilians also suffer, in particular children.

A 5-year-old girl and her mother are in the hospital. As a result of an enemy projectile hitting a house in Kherson region, a child's leg was torn off<sup>11</sup>

On June 5, a 9-year-old boy got a gunshot wound as a result of shelling by the occupiers of the village of Dobropillya, Zaporizhzhia region<sup>12</sup>.

On June 11, during the recording of criminal offenses, it became known about the death of 24 children in the city of Mariupol, Donetsk region, as a result of non-selective shelling by the Russian military<sup>13</sup>.

On June 12, a 6-year-old child died as a result of shelling in the city of Lysychansk, Luhansk region<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> [https://t.me/pavlokyrylenko\\_donoda/3740](https://t.me/pavlokyrylenko_donoda/3740)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/mykoda/posts/pfbid02E5DFXBr6iYd4kAFdakaBhKfyyQLaLk5tCbVFdAEWdCMVtod5d6H7S25bFdokhnKfi>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-za-4-misyaci-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini-zaginuli-338-ditei>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-rakety-rf-zelensky/31894871.html>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/1923262167984511/posts/pfbid02efiVTNkgSVfnogLWLnPnenWByM8EJyqEge8BUnybq2nzMAToQunAPqNUposuAAWAl>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-263-ditini-zaginuli-vnaslidok-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini-2>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-287-ditei-zaginuli-vnaslidok-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini>

<sup>14</sup> <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/3405>

On June 13, several children were injured at once in Kharkiv region. In the village of Malynivka, two children were wounded due to the shelling by the occupiers: an 11-year-old boy and a 17-year-old girl. A three-month-old child was injured in the town of Pechenihiy. Unfortunately, her mother died<sup>15</sup>.

A 13-year-old boy from Lysychansk, Luhansk region, after surgical removal of a fragment from his lung. He was injured as a result of the shelling of the house in which he had lived<sup>16</sup>.



**A large number of unexploded shells, as well as widespread mining of roads and occupied territories**, is a particular danger.

On May 26, a 12-year-old boy died in Mariupol, Donetsk region, on the territory of school No. 30 as a result of the detonation of an unexploded Russian MLRS projectile<sup>17</sup>.

On June 3, two people died due to a mine explosion on the Pischanyi beach in Mariupol, Donetsk region. One of the dead was an 8-year-old boy<sup>18</sup>.

On the night of June 20, two people, during their self-evacuation from the occupied territory by car, were blown up by an enemy mine near the village of Mala Tokmachka, Zaporizhzhia region. The victims got serious injuries and were hospitalized<sup>19</sup>.

### **Murder, wounding, cruel treatment and sexual violence of children**

According to Bihus.Info analysis, since the beginning of the war, **more than 30 cases of children's deaths** have been reported not as a result of non-selective long-range strikes, but **as a result of close-range shootings**. These were mostly shootings of civilian cars during evacuation attempts and shootings of children on the street without any reason<sup>20</sup>.

Besides, there are known cases of **child abuse during the occupation, including sexual violence**.

Thus, on May 27, two Russian occupiers were informed of the suspicion of brutal treatment of civilians and sexual violence against an underage girl in March of this year in Chernihiv region. The suspects settled in the house where an underage girl,

<sup>15</sup> <https://t.me/synegubov/3426>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-regions/3505173-lvivski-hirurgi-vratuvali-pidlitka-z-lisicanska-iz-oskolkom-vid-snarada-u-legeni.html?fbclid=IwAR0QdeHN8YOZ340uMXI7PvtRo65tjF-FtYg6iunCDW3ZXmgmQY79MFXOFKU#>

<sup>17</sup> <https://t.me/andriyshTime/1091>

<sup>18</sup> <https://t.me/andriyshTime/1293>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/dvoje-lyudei-na-zaporizzi-pidirvalisya-na-vorozii-mini-rozpocato-rozsliduvannya>

<sup>20</sup> <https://bihus.info/z-288-vbytyh-rosiyanamy-ditej-ponad-30-rozstrilyani>

her brother and her grandmother lived. One of the servicemen, the commander of the division, repeatedly tried to rape a 16-year-old girl, using physical and psychological violence against her, and in response to resistance, he hit her on the head with a weapon and strangled her<sup>21</sup>.

As of June 3, the monitoring group of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has already registered 124 cases of sexual violence by the Russian military, including against children<sup>22</sup>.

### **Kidnapping and forced deportation of children**

As of June 20, it is established that Russia **deported** 1,200,000 Ukrainian citizens **to its territory, including 240,000 children**<sup>23</sup>. At the same time, the National Defense Management Center of the Russian Federation announces the deportation of more than 307,000 Ukrainian children to Russia<sup>24</sup>.

Some of the deportees are children who are the wards in children's institutions or are brought up in adopted families and family type orphanages. It is almost impossible to return them now. Following is one of the stories of kidnapping from the family type orphanage.

*At the beginning of the war, six children of nine were being treated in a sanatorium in Mariupol, Donetsk region. Due to heavy shelling, it was impossible for their parents-educators to evacuate them on their own. The city's social services did not evacuate either. Later, the children were kidnapped by unknown people and illegally taken to Donetsk. They were allowed to contact their parents only in mid-March. The children are frightened, and they are still kept against their will. The only way out offered by the occupation authorities is the independent arrival of the parents, their passing through the filtration camps and possible agreement to take the children back to Ukraine. However, it is not possible because the parents need to take care of three more children, whom they managed to evacuate abroad.*

*From the evidence of the mother-educator of the family type orphanage.*

It should be mentioned that **among the deported children, there are 2,000 who have the status of orphan**<sup>25</sup>. Russia, for its part, has already issued and started to implement an order on a simplified regime for obtaining Russian citizenship by Ukrainian orphans and children deprived of parental care<sup>26</sup>. In fact, this is an attempt to legalize the illegal transfer of our children to the territory of the Russian Federation and the forced deprivation of their Ukrainian citizenship. It should be noted that **kidnapping and forced deportation of children** deprived of parental care by the Russian side **have the character of terror and political pressure on Ukraine**. It is confirmed by a comparison of the number of adopted children in the Russian Federation and

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<sup>21</sup> [https://t.me/pgov\\_gov\\_ua/4251](https://t.me/pgov_gov_ua/4251)

<sup>22</sup> <https://ukrainian.voanews.com/a/oon-seksualne-nasyistv-ukraina/6627362.html>

<sup>23</sup> <https://t.me/UkraineMediaCenterKyiv/1722>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.interfax.ru/world/846957>

<sup>25</sup> <https://t.me/UkraineMediaCenterKyiv/1722>

<sup>26</sup> [https://t.me/rian\\_ru/165508](https://t.me/rian_ru/165508)

children who are candidates for adoption or who are waiting for adoption. Thus, according to statistics, at the beginning of 2021, there were about 41,000 children ready for adoption in Russia. At the same time, only 2.5 thousand were adopted in 2020<sup>27</sup>. That is, only every 16th (!) orphaned child in the Russian Federation has a chance to be adopted.

In order to return and protect the rights of deported Ukrainians, on June 17, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine decided to establish the Coordination Headquarters for Protection of Rights of the Deported or Forcedly Displaced Persons as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine<sup>28</sup>. Help for such people is still possible mostly through volunteers and public organizations that work on the territory of Russia and facilitate removal of Ukrainians to the neighboring countries.

Besides deportation, there are **established cases of kidnapping of children and relatives of Ukrainian soldiers** in order to demand that they come to the occupied territories in exchange for the safety of their relatives. Most of such cases are recorded in the temporarily occupied territories of Zaporizhzhia, Kherson and Mykolaiv regions. Thus, recently it became known that the occupiers took hostage several children of a Ukrainian serviceman<sup>29</sup>.

### **Recruitment and participation of children in war and propaganda**

Russian occupiers **have been trying to involve Ukrainian children in gathering intelligence** for 4 months already. Thus, on May 24, the Security Service of Ukraine revealed special groups of the Security service of the Russian Federation, which used smartphone games for this purpose. In one of the applications, participants had to search for virtual boxes with prizes that could be exchanged for electronic money. During the route, the children took photos of the area, military and critical infrastructure facilities on the territory of various settlements. In particular, in Kirovohrad region, two teenagers were caught for taking photos of roadblocks, elevators and transport routes<sup>30</sup>.

Besides, **Ukrainian children are regularly involved in filming propagandistic stories** of Russian mass media. Particularly, this concerns the distribution of humanitarian aid, support for the actions of Russian authorities and military by Ukrainian children, the organization of education and leisure in the occupied territories of Ukraine.

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.google.com/amp/s/tass.ru/obschestvo/10773269/amp>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/irina-vereshchuk-ocholit-koordinacijnij-shtab-z-pitan-zahistu-prav-deportovanih-osib>

<sup>29</sup> <https://gur.gov.ua/content/okupanty-vykradaiut-rodychiv-ukrainskykh-viiskovykh-v-tomu-chysli-ditei.html>

<sup>30</sup> <https://t.me/SBUkr/4326>



Children at one of the Luhansk schools present their drawings to the investigators of the Investigative Committee of Russia<sup>31</sup>

### Denial of access to humanitarian aid



Denial of access to humanitarian aid means a violation of children's fundamental rights to safe living conditions, proper nutrition, treatment, education and recreation. Unfortunately, none of these rights are fully ensured in the occupied territories and active combat areas.

Among the key risks there is **lack of drinking water and food, disruptions or absence of technical water, electricity and gas, a significant number of household waste, spontaneous burials of people, capture and damage of industrial facilities and communal infrastructure facilities**. Everything may result in food, ecological and epidemiological problems in these territories in the future or is already resulting in.

People wash their things in puddles, Mariupol, Donetsk region<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> [https://t.me/rian\\_ru/164671](https://t.me/rian_ru/164671)

<sup>32</sup> <https://t.me/andriyshTime/1480>

In Mariupol, Donetsk region, daily 10-15 people suffer from symptoms of cholera and dysentery, complaining of diarrhea, sickness and headache<sup>33</sup>.

The command post of the Southern Military District of the Russian troops is deployed at the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station in Kherson region, and the occupiers are making no effort to maintain the facility's proper regime. Two hydraulic units are not already working at the station, and the Russians do not allow them to be repaired. It has already resulted in flooding of Kakhovka and threatens the nearby villages<sup>34</sup>

On May 31, the Russian troops once again hit a tank with nitric acid at the chemical plant in Severodonetsk, Luhansk region<sup>35</sup>.

Problems with access to food are caused by the actions of the occupiers, who **do not allow humanitarian aid from the controlled territory of Ukraine, destroy or steal humanitarian aid, burn the wheat fields, damage agricultural infrastructure, take out grain, vegetables and fruits from the occupied territories or prohibit their sale.**

On June 15, the Russians attacked a wagon with humanitarian aid from the World Central Kitchen for the residents of Mariupol<sup>36</sup>.

On June 21, more than 80 hectares of wheat were burned in Mykolayiv region as a result of Russian shelling.<sup>37</sup>

Since the beginning of the occupation, the Russians have prevented the farmers in Zaporizhia region from exporting and selling grain and vegetables. Those who refuse to cooperate, lose everything<sup>38</sup>.

Near Nova Kakhovka and Beryslav in the Kherson region, the enemy is forcing the population to hand over 70% of the harvest to the buyers from Crimea. Purchase prices sometimes do not exceed 10% of the retail price. At the same time, there is a ban on exporting crops to the territories controlled by Ukraine. There are cases when entrepreneurs handed out strawberries and cherries to the population for free<sup>39</sup>.

Access to medical care and necessary medicines is also an urgent issue. **For the four months of the war, rockets and shells of the enemy have damaged 628 medical institutions, and another 118 were destroyed** without the possibility of their further restoration<sup>40</sup>. High-value medical equipment continues to be taken away from the occupied territories or simply destroyed. It is difficult to get vital medicines and hygiene products for babies. There is not enough medical staff, not to mention the

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<sup>33</sup> <https://t.me/andriyshTime/1481>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=387991293383478>

<sup>35</sup> <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/3063?single>

<sup>36</sup> <https://t.me/andriyshTime/1469>

<sup>37</sup> <https://dsns.gov.ua/uk/news/ostanni-novini/operativna-informaciya-shhodo-likvidaciyi-pidrozdilami-dsns-naslidkiv-rosiiskoyi-agresiyi>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-regions/3498707-ci-bude-zelenij-koridor-dla-vrozau.html>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/DefenceIntelligenceofUkraine/posts/pfbid0D2VCvuSMuNd6gfpv6hkvDLA8QJBz964wqFaHPcc9o1rFiRptzX5sEwNq3b4sBq2LI>

<sup>40</sup> <https://moz.gov.ua/article/news/evropa-doluchatimetsja-do-vidnovlennja-zrujnovanih-likaren-v-ukraini>

lack of specialist doctors and diagnosticians. About 200 ambulances were damaged or captured<sup>41</sup>.

Children's right to education is not realized. **As a result of the bombing and shelling by the armed forces of the Russian Federation, 2,061 educational institutions have already been damaged, 213 of them have been completely destroyed**<sup>42</sup>. The Russian education program is being forcibly implemented in the occupied territories, Ukrainian books and textbooks are being destroyed, and Russian ones are being imported instead<sup>43</sup>. Ukrainian teachers are "retrained" to teach in Russian and according to the Russian programs<sup>44</sup>.



It's already the third school, which is destroyed in Avdiivka, Donetsk region, June 21<sup>45</sup>.



The training base of FC "Metalist" in Kharkiv region, where 700 children trained before the start of the war, was damaged, June 4<sup>46</sup>

**Other infrastructure for children's recreation and leisure is being destroyed and damaged:** sports complexes, children's camps and sanatoriums, centers for children's creativity, etc. In addition, due to the mine danger in the occupied territories, it is also impossible for families with children to relax in nature and on the beaches.

<sup>41</sup>[https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=pfbid02muWuUYqYNjWm52zkJ8D7gKMnKDvvX6fqU1uNjLH8wWj6FGhHYYtwWN5bYiXLgqoal&id=100072443376686](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid02muWuUYqYNjWm52zkJ8D7gKMnKDvvX6fqU1uNjLH8wWj6FGhHYYtwWN5bYiXLgqoal&id=100072443376686)

<sup>42</sup><https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-za-4-misyaci-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini-zaginuli-338-ditei>

<sup>43</sup><https://t.me/andriyshTime/1277>

<sup>44</sup><https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-61619012>

<sup>45</sup>[https://t.me/pavlokyrylenko\\_donoda/3726](https://t.me/pavlokyrylenko_donoda/3726)

<sup>46</sup><https://metalist1925.com/news/5225-navchalno-trenuvalni-centr-fk-metalist-1925-u-visokomu-zaznav-rujnuvan.html>, photo by Yuri Sapronov

On June 3, in the temporarily occupied village of Lazurne, Kherson region, three civilians blew up on a mine that the Russian occupiers had placed on the local beach. All three of them died<sup>47</sup>.

On the night of June 11-12, the Russian servicemen shoot at the children's health camp in Chuguyiv district, Kharkiv region, which resulted in damage of three buildings<sup>48</sup>.

On June 16, the Center for Children's and Youth Creativity in Gulyaipole, Zaporizhia region, was destroyed<sup>49</sup>.

## Recommendations

- Constantly maintain contact with the occupied territories by all possible ways and means. Local authorities, state institutions must know their work regime, powers and procedures in various situations. This will help maintain peace and trust of the population in the decisions of the state.
- Inform the population in the occupied territories on the safety rules, which will help prevent abuses and murders by the Russian military, mobilization to the army of the occupier, as well as mine safety rules. Constantly remind children of the importance of the following safety rules during air raids, in bomb shelters and at home. Parents should limit children's stay in places where they can be hurt or injured as much as possible. This is also about the ban on visiting forest belt, beaches and rivers that could be mined.
- Promote the organization of humanitarian corridors and the delivery of humanitarian aid to the occupied territories of Ukraine and the active combat areas, as well as to the areas suffering from a humanitarian disaster. Form stocks of food products, water and medical drugs in the territories where there is a significant risk of the Russian occupation.
- Organize as soon as possible the evacuation of the population from Mariupol, Donetsk region, where, in addition to the humanitarian crisis, there is a risk of infectious diseases spreading among the residents.
- Contribute to the recording of all crimes committed by the Russian military: murders, maimings, cruel treatment and rape of children. An integral part of this process is forming trust and explaining to citizens the necessity of contacting law enforcement agencies with statements and evidence of the committed crimes, in particular via the Internet and telephone.
- Maximal use of international channels to monitor the condition of children who were deported to Russia, to document the crimes committed against

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<sup>47</sup> <https://kherson.gp.gov.ua/ua/news.html? m=publications& c=view& t=rec&id=314339>

<sup>48</sup>

<https://www.facebook.com/prokuraturakharkiv/posts/pfbid02u8LK3u8RxPKp5D3PMGgkjNFKScyitz8g3Js91qFhxemtKzDRUGTAckqxwcKsmbBRI>

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.zoda.gov.ua/news/61586/zbroyni-sili-rosiyskoji-federatsiji-prodovzhujut-znishuvati-domivki-mirnogo-naselennya-gulyaypilshini..html>

them. Promote greater involvement of international organizations and volunteer communities in the process of returning Ukrainian children home.

- Carry out informational and explanatory conversations with children about the Internet safety rules and existing schemes for recruiting/involving teenagers in the war (transfer of intelligence data, participation in agitation, etc.).

## Replacement of children in Ukraine and abroad

As of June 16, more than 2 million of Ukrainian children became refugees and went abroad; about another 3 million became internally displaced persons<sup>50</sup>.

**Internal displacement from the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine goes on.** Evacuation trains and buses are provided every day in the active combat areas. A significant part in this process is taken by local military administrations, the police, public organizations and volunteers, who search for and lay out possible evacuation routes for the population. It is especially important in conditions of regular shelling and destruction of road and railway infrastructure. According to the National Police of Ukraine, **more than 80 criminal proceedings have already been initiated for violations of the green corridors functioning**<sup>51</sup>. Unofficially, there are much more shootings of evacuation vehicles. As of June 18, almost **24,000 km of roads, 305 bridges and 6,300 km of railway tracks were damaged or destroyed**<sup>52</sup>.

From the occupied territories, it is mostly possible to leave for Russia with the obligatory passage through filtration camps. The invaders have created **at least 20 filtration camps and prisons** in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine<sup>53</sup>. Filtering also takes place on the border of the Russian Federation with Estonia<sup>54</sup>. Both adults and children are interrogated. An important decision in assistance to return our citizens home is the passage by the State Border Service of Ukrainians without passports, because they are often lost in the process of replacement or are taken away during filtering in Russia<sup>55</sup>.

Regional military administrations, which receive internally displaced citizens, provide them with accommodation, food, provision of necessities and hygiene products, and also help in solving social, medical and psychological problems. International and national public organizations are actively involved in solving these issues. Although **the possibilities of humanitarian aid to the IDPs have decreased**. Search for housing and work remains a key issue for displaced people.

According to the NBU, despite the economic revival in May, the demand for labor is slowly recovering. Supply significantly increases demand even for IT professionals. Most enterprises are unable to pay salaries at the pre-war level. **The drop in wages in the private sector averages from 25% to 50% compared to the pre-war times**<sup>56</sup>. At the same time, displaced persons are reluctantly to use the services of employment centers. As of June 1, 2022, among the IDPs, only 16,200 citizens registered as

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/nearly-37-million-children-displaced-worldwide-highest-number-ever-recorded>

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2022/06/13/7352221>.

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/oleksandr.kubakov/posts/2152012958303621>

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-ato/3508668-ukraina-v-obse-u-zahopenih-rajonah-rosiani-stvorili-20-filtracijnih-taboriv-i-vaznic.html>

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-ato/3495595-rosia-vidkrila-filtracijni-tabori-dla-ukrainciv-na-kordoni-z-estonieu.html>

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.unn.com.ua/uk/news/1982941-ukrayintsi-yaki-potrapili-do-rosiyi-zmozhut-povernutisya-nazad-navit-bez-pasportiv>

<sup>56</sup> [https://bank.gov.ua/admin\\_uploads/article/MM\\_2022-06.pdf?v=4](https://bank.gov.ua/admin_uploads/article/MM_2022-06.pdf?v=4)

unemployed (last year in this period there were 3,700). At the same time, only 3,100 IDPs were able to find employment in January-May of this year<sup>57</sup>.

*At work, the minimum wage is now paid, but there is almost no workload. I do something online, but it is a maximum of a few hours a day. I was looking for a job here, but it's mostly cashiers, sellers, cleaners. Salaries are relevant, and the city is also small. The same minimum wage, but to work eight hours a day. I don't have enough money in a rented apartment with a child. And I have been waiting for payments to the displaced for the third month, they are still promising, but the state has no money yet. That's what the Social Security Administration tells me.*

*From an interview with parents*

**As for housing, many internally displaced persons still live in temporarily adapted places: schools, kindergartens, churches, etc. With the cold weather and the new academic year, which is planned to be full-time, people will have to be relocated to places more suitable for a long-term residence. Currently, this issue is not being actively resolved in many areas. However, it is important to analyze the sphere of communal housing, to plan housing programs, especially in those regions that received the greatest number of IDPs.**

Security issues are also a concern for the displaced people and affect their plans to move on or to return to their homes left because of the war. It should be noted that **the threat of airstrikes remains throughout the territory of Ukraine**. Therefore, no Ukrainian can feel safe even after displacement.

Thus, on June 11, the town of Chortkiv, Ternopil region, was shot with four "Kalibr" missiles. 22 people were injured, 11 of them were hospitalized. Among the injured there is a 12-year-old girl from Kharkiv. Her family moved to Ternopil region after the beginning of the full-scale invasion<sup>58</sup>. Educational institutions, apartment buildings, private households, stores and other infrastructure facilities have also been damaged<sup>59</sup>.

On June 14, a baby was injured by fragments of an enemy rocket in the city of Zolochiv, Lviv Region<sup>60</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup> <https://www.dcz.gov.ua/analitics/67>

<sup>58</sup> <https://t.me/ternopilskaODA/1208>

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/chortkiv.city.council/posts/3160984720828563>

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-313-ditei-zaginuli-vnaslidok-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini>



The town of Chortkiv, Ternopil region, after the shelling on June 11<sup>61</sup>

Security issues are also important for the organization of the educational process in face-to-face format, which is planned to be introduced from September 1 in most regions of Ukraine. As of June 20, **only 25% of schools have confirmed the existence of bomb shelters**<sup>62</sup>. It is planned to form special commissions in the regions that will determine whether it is safe to start face-to-face education. It is important to learn the rules of behavior and evacuation during an air raid alert with schoolchildren.

Graduates are next to the destroyed Novgorod-Siversk secondary school in Chernihiv region<sup>63</sup>.



According to the parents, it is also important **to organize at least minimal recreation for children**. It will not only help to relieve them psychologically, but also promote

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/chortkiv.city.council/photos/a.1913540375573010/3160540797539622>

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-society/3511107-skarlet-25-skil-povidomili-so-maut-ukritta.html>

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/nszosh2/photos/pcb.5155669724517053/5155661867851172>

socialization if to speak about summer camps and group trips. However, it is not possible to arrange such trips everywhere, even if it is the western and central regions of Ukraine. Rafting, hiking, walking and excursions near critical infrastructure, military and strategic objects are prohibited throughout the country. Tourist points close to the borders with Belarus are also inaccessible<sup>64</sup>.

*I would like to send my child to the camp, but this year the company we contacted is not working. I trust them, there were very good guys-instructors there. I am afraid to look for others. And what if suddenly there is an air raid or some kind of danger, what will they do? I am considering the option of going to Bulgaria or somewhere else abroad. If you stay in Ukraine, it seems to me that it is dangerous everywhere. Therefore, we are now thinking of either leaving the country altogether, or returning to Sumy — it seems that there is no more bombing there than in Lviv. There is our house, our belongings and our loved ones.*



*From an interview with parents*

Therefore, some of the displaced people who have difficulties in finding accommodation and job, decide to move further or return home, especially to the de-occupied regions of Ukraine. However, it is important to understand that the issue of security is more acute there than in the western and central regions. Because in addition to air danger, there is a risk of unexploded shells or mines.

Children are playing football at the stadium damaged by the occupiers in Irpen<sup>65</sup>.

Thus, on June 10, nine munitions were removed in the Mykolaiv region<sup>66</sup>.

On June 11, a mine detonated 20 m from the shore in Odesa<sup>67</sup>.

On June 17, a group of pyrotechnic works of the State Emergency Service in Zhytomyr region destroyed three munitions on the territory of the Luhyn territorial community in Korosten district<sup>68</sup>.

On June 22, in the village of Korolky, Sumy region, emergency workers removed explosive munition from a water reservoir<sup>69</sup>.

<sup>64</sup> <https://life.pravda.com.ua/travel/2022/06/20/249177>

<sup>65</sup> [https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=pfbid09KZj3wEhb6NERjh17Gt4nbjmyUMoNvFCgeviJee2kfVLfnCRsz3CeFDC2KovbqdwI&id=100072443376686](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid09KZj3wEhb6NERjh17Gt4nbjmyUMoNvFCgeviJee2kfVLfnCRsz3CeFDC2KovbqdwI&id=100072443376686)

<sup>66</sup> <https://dsns.gov.ua/uk/news/nadzvicaini-podiyi/mikolayivska-oblast-ryatuvalnikami-provodyatsya-roboti-z-vilucennya-vibuxonebezpecnix-predmetiv>

<sup>67</sup> [https://t.me/Bratchuk\\_Sergey/13681](https://t.me/Bratchuk_Sergey/13681)

<sup>68</sup> <https://dsns.gov.ua/uk/news/nadzvicaini-podiyi/zitomirskya-oblast-pirotexniki-dsns-znishhili-tri-vibuxonebezpecni-predmeti>

<sup>69</sup> <https://dsns.gov.ua/uk/news/nadzvicaini-podiyi/na-sumshhini-nadzvicainiki-vilucili-z-vodoimishha-bojepripasi>

In general, since the beginning of the war, the pyrotechnic units of the State Emergency Service examined the territory of more than 61,000 hectares and **discovered, removed and neutralized almost 140,000 units of explosive objects**, including about 2,000 aerial bombs. Currently, mine clearing is necessary for an area of 270,000 square kilometers including the temporarily occupied territories. The Ministry of Internal Affairs directs pyrotechnic units to carry out primary operational demining within a year from the moment of deoccupation of the territory. Complete mine clearing of these territories will take 5–10 years<sup>70</sup>.

As for migration abroad, as of June 21, the number of Ukrainians who **received temporary protection in European countries comprised 3 million 510 thousand**. The largest number of refugees from Ukraine with the status of temporary protection **in Poland comprises 1 million 180.000 people. Germany and the Czech Republic** go next, with 662,000 and 379,000 people respectively. Many Ukrainians also received temporary protection in **Italy** (127,000), **Spain** (124,000), **Bulgaria** (116,000), **France** (88,000), **Slovakia** (79,000), **Great Britain** (77,000), **Austria** (73,000), the **Netherlands** (65,000), and **Switzerland** (55,000). **Turkey** accepted 145,000 of our citizens, but temporary protection for them is not provided there. More than 1,305,000 Ukrainians crossed the border with Russia. There is no data on any status for these people<sup>71</sup>.

Despite significant support abroad, **European countries start to gradually reduce aid and opportunities for Ukrainians**. First of all, it is related to limited resources, redistribution of the burden within countries, as well as the intention to encourage people to find work and build their lives without the state assistance.

*The Czech Republic is reorganizing the registration of Ukrainian refugees. Prague will officially no longer accept our citizens. It is still possible to come directly to the capital, but free shelter will no longer be provided there<sup>72</sup>. From June 12, free ride in Prague is possible only during the first five days after arrival in the country<sup>73</sup>.*

In June, Bulgaria reduced compensation for food and accommodation of Ukrainian refugees in hotels and recreation centers by almost three times — from 40 leva (€20) to 15 leva (€7.5) per day. In addition, on May 31, the program ended that allowed Ukrainian refugees to spend the night and eat in resort hotels of the country<sup>74</sup>.

From July 1, 2022, Poland will not pay daily cash assistance to Ukrainian refugees<sup>75</sup>.

The lack of permanent housing, the difficulty in a job search, and not knowing the language lead to the fact that many have either already returned home or are planning to. As of June 23, 3.4 million citizens returned to Ukraine<sup>76</sup>. Those families who have lost their housing or lived in a temporarily occupied territory usually plan

<sup>70</sup> <https://mvs.gov.ua/uk/news/z-pocatku-viini-pirotexnicni-pidrozdzili-dsns-obstezili-ponad-61-tisyacu-gektariv-i-zneskodili-maize-140-tisyac-vibuxonebezpechnix-predmetiv>

<sup>71</sup> [https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine#\\_ga=2.228732760.514168680.1646989952-176134281.1646551413](https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine#_ga=2.228732760.514168680.1646989952-176134281.1646551413)

<sup>72</sup> <https://zaborona.com/u-chehiyi-zminyly-pravyla-pryjomu-bizhencziv-z-ukrayiny>

<sup>73</sup> <https://vesti.ua/uk/mir-uk/proezd-v-obshhestvennom-transporte-pragi-vnov-stal-platnym-dlya-ukraintsev>

<sup>74</sup> <https://tripmydream.ua/media/novosti/u-bolgarii-zmenshyly-kompensatsii>

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.rp.pl/spoleczenstwo/art36419531-rzad-zakreca-kurek-z-pieniedzmi-dla-uchodzcow-z-ukrainy>

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-society/3513396-z-pocatku-povnomasstabnoi-vijni-do-ukraini-povernulisa-34-miljona-gromadan.html>

their future life abroad. They are already trying to learn the local language, are looking for work, have placed their children in kindergartens and schools.

*I have nowhere to return in Ukraine. The apartment was destroyed, as was my city. Where to return with two children? No schools, no streets, no playgrounds. Even the West of Ukraine is alarming. Will I find a place to live there? There are also a lot of immigrants. I don't want to, it's difficult, but I study German, the children also study, because it's clear that we're here for the next few years for sure.*

*From an interview with parents*

## Recommendations

- Continue informational and explanatory work regarding the timely evacuation of families with children from territories which are under regular shelling or where there is a significant risk of active combat.
- Strengthen informing citizens about possible options for leaving the occupied territories, in particular to the territory of the Russian Federation and Crimean Autonomous Republic. In such situations, it is important to interact with volunteer and public initiatives in these territories, as well as in the territories of states bordering the Russian Federation, in order to provide Ukrainians with assistance in their departure to European countries.
- Develop state programs to support returning Ukrainians with children from Europe, that would provide for compensation payments and employment or business prospects.
- Provide citizens with clear signals of prohibition or permission to return to previously occupied territories, as well as to the territories that were suffering from constant attacks. Such statements must be accompanied by the information about security and infrastructure situation in specific settlements.
- Continue informational work at the state level regarding the prevention of children being injured by mines and other explosive devices. Launch information campaigns in the media, distribute visual materials about mine danger and other types of risks in the de-occupied territories and active combat areas.
- Strengthen activities on providing employment opportunities for the internally displaced persons. For this purpose, evaluate the market of job offers and qualifications of the IDPs, activate measures for retraining citizens, create new jobs and interact with employers.
- Study the needs of the IDPs in housing, carry out an analysis of the available communal housing in order to plan state housing and regional programs for the of IDPs dwelling.
- Plan the full-time learning process for the next year, properly prepare bomb shelters, check alert systems, update educational alarm plans and procedures for various types of danger in the educational institutions. Organize training of schoolchildren on the rules of behavior and evacuation during an air raid.

## Children with disabilities: problems and needs

At the beginning of the war, **more than 167,000 children with disabilities** lived in Ukraine<sup>77</sup>. Unfortunately, the war affected almost every one of them. Air raid alerts, the nervous state of parents and overloading of the rehabilitation system led to the fact that children, even in relatively safe areas of the country or even abroad, experience stress. **Self-care and communication skills are lost. Anxiety, eating disorders, depression, psychosomatic diseases may be observed**, especially if the child experienced danger for some time and stayed in unacceptable for him/her conditions (was in a bomb shelter, heard explosions, sounds of fighter jets, experienced a difficult moving, was separated from the loved ones, etc.).

*It is a difficult situation, we have lost everything. He hardly speaks. We had been undergoing rehabilitation for three years, invested in the child, now everything is in vain... Replacement was especially difficult. 30 hours by train, then 10 hours of crossing the border on foot, then two flights. The child was sick for a week. He had stomach problems, his lips were blue, he didn't understand what was happening.*

*From an interview with parents*

*The parents complain that the child has a stomachache, a headache, and may have a fever. Because of the stress, children can also lose their appetite, have unstable sleep, strong emotional swings. Gradual regression of development may occur. It is important to form a safety perimeter for the child, to establish a familiar routine, for the parents themselves to calm down, and then the prognosis is very good, gradually both emotional and the physical state will recover.*

*From an interview with psychiatrist Natalia Masyak*

**Most families with children with disabilities evacuated on their own.** Neither the rehabilitation institutions nor the social security administration contacted the parents. The interviewed families, in particular large families, also complained about the lack of attention from the services for children. In order to evacuate, some parents of the children with physical disabilities themselves had to find special transport for their transportation. It took time and affected the further safety of movement.

Often in the process of movement, **children lost technical means of rehabilitation**, because it was not possible to take them with. These are means for moving (wheelchairs, walkers, canes), for hygiene (armchairs, bath and shower seats, steps), for orientation and communication (hearing aids, voice recorders, watches). Often the evacuation trains and buses did not fit even the most necessary things - wheelchairs. At the same time, it is extremely difficult to obtain the same means in the future.

*It is difficult to evacuate with physical disorders. For instance, the child is very heavy, does not walk. They stayed together with the grandmother in the basement for two weeks, because the grandmother could not pull the child out on her own. The child*

<sup>77</sup>[https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=pfbid02muWuUYqYNjWm52zkJ8D7gKMnKDvvX6fqU1uNjLH8wWj6FGhHYYtwWN5bYiXLgqoal&id=100072443376686](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid02muWuUYqYNjWm52zkJ8D7gKMnKDvvX6fqU1uNjLH8wWj6FGhHYYtwWN5bYiXLgqoal&id=100072443376686)

*was already green in these two weeks, until there appeared somebody to help. They could not take a wheelchair because the train was overloaded. But it is a special wheelchair, it is impossible to move without it. The child was given a different one, but it does not fit very well. Now they are already in Austria. Volunteers help them with accommodation, but not everything is suitable either. They need affordable dwelling, on the first floor.*

*From an interview with a representative of a public organization*

After replacement, the main problem for many families is the inability to restore rehabilitation at the same level as it had been before the war. Rehabilitation facilities are open, but due to high demand, it is difficult to get there. Part of the institutions has accommodated internally displaced persons with disabilities. There is also a shortage of private rehabilitation centers. In addition, the cost of regular classes is often unacceptable for displaced families who have lost their homes and jobs.

Due to the lack of housing, many displaced people moved to small towns and villages, where there are no rehabilitation centers or specialists at all. Transport connections in such regions are not well developed, which makes it impossible to organize classes with children on a regular basis.

*Before the war, we went to the rehabilitation center in the city several times a week. I also took my son to a private center. Every year, we went for several weeks to either Kyiv or Chernihiv to undergo the state-funded rehabilitation course. And since the beginning of the war it became impossible. We searched here, but we were told the price of 6,000 hryvnias for 10 classes. It is very expensive for us, before the war in Rubizhne we paid from 100 to 200 hryvnias per class. So, I try to do it myself.*

*From an interview with parents*

The lack of **full-time education in Ukraine** is also a problem. Children with disabilities do not perceive well or do not perceive at all the online format of classes at school, and even more so in kindergarten. Lack of communication with peers prevents such children from socialization, obtaining communication skills, slows down their overall development. However, the face-to-face format of attendance is planned from the next academic year. It should be noted that for this purpose, the government has already made the necessary changes to the conditions for organizing inclusive education, in particular by canceling the maximum number of children with special educational needs in an inclusive class or group, as well as prohibiting institutions from refusing to organize inclusive education and create an inclusive group<sup>78</sup>.

*We moved to live with relatives in a small town in Dnipropetrovsk region. There is a rehabilitation center, but it is far away and there are not enough specialists because they also left due to the war. Thus, I don't even know if going there once a week would be effective. In Lysychansk, we attended classes much more often. Kindergartens do not work as well, so the child communicates less. Before the war, he used to make new sounds, we could calmly walk down the street. Now there are*

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<sup>78</sup> <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/news/uryad-sprostiv-umovi-organizaciyi-inklyuzivnogo-navchannya>

*hysterics in the street. He lost chewing skills, although he already used to take at least some solid food. He reacts to loud sounds, as if he squeezes. We should at least go to kindergarten so that there is some kind of socialization. Now he is afraid of children.*

*From an interview with parents*

The **lack of documents**, such as medical history, individual rehabilitation card, appointment of specialists, etc. becomes an obstacle to the rehabilitation and treatment of the child. Unfortunately, not all of these documents are available in electronic databases. It is difficult to get them again: there could be no specialist who would prescribe the necessary drugs, or no possibility to bring the child, or a lack of necessary certificates, etc. At the same time, it should be noted, that regardless of the availability of documents or the child's place of stay, the parents still receive social assistance for children with disabilities. There are no problems with this today. According to Daria Gerasymchuk, the authorized representative of the President of Ukraine on children's rights, the state makes such payments in the amount of UAH 1.2 billion every month<sup>79</sup>.

*The mother and her child left Kharkiv. Of course, they did not take the documents, because they left as quickly as they could. And now the woman is trying to restore all these appointments, examinations, etc. Calls, searches in the archives. At the same time, we have an electronic database of children with disabilities. But the documents are uploaded there only for those who received rehabilitation at the state expense according to the 309th resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers<sup>80</sup>.*

*From an interview with a representative of a public organization*

Due to limited opportunities for rehabilitation, parents **try to work with their children on their own**. However, neither knowledge nor skills are often enough for this. Besides, some children do not perceive their parents as teachers. The **lack of space in the places of residence of the IDPs** also complicates the situation. Families live either in facilities adapted for this purpose (schools, kindergartens, etc.), or with relatives or friends, or they rent housing, the area of which often does not correspond to the number of people. Classes aimed at developing a child's physical and other skills should take place in an atmosphere that does not distract or annoy the child. A child with disabilities needs a separate space. He/she can be nervous because of strangers, too many people, noise around, which causes difficulties in living together with others.

It is especially true for children with autism spectrum disorders. They are much more dependent on the family, on repetitive things and hardly endure any novelty - it must be introduced into the daily schedule gradually. This applies even to changes in nutrition, because such children are used to eating only a certain list of products that are not easy to find in a new place.

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<sup>79</sup>[https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=pfbid02muWuUYqYNjWm52zkJ8D7gKMnKDvvX6fqU1uNjLH8wWj6FGhHYYtwWN5bYiXLgqoal&id=100072443376686](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid02muWuUYqYNjWm52zkJ8D7gKMnKDvvX6fqU1uNjLH8wWj6FGhHYYtwWN5bYiXLgqoal&id=100072443376686)

<sup>80</sup> [Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dd. March 27, 2019 No. 309 "On approval of the Procedure for the use of state budget funds provided for rehabilitation of children with disabilities."](#)

An important component of the development of a child with disability is **to provide him/her with proper recovery and recreation**. For this purpose, the state prepares free vouchers to health resorts and recreation facilities every year. However, this year **only a quarter of children with disabilities — about 40,000** — will be able to get such a voucher<sup>81</sup>. Other families have to look for opportunities on their own.

*This year we will probably be without a recreation. The social service does not offer us anything, as before. And they won't, I have already found out. And for me, it was also an opportunity to rest a little from the non-stop care of the child. Our car was burned down, so we can't even go to the river. Thus, we will walk more in the street if only there were no air raid alerts.*

*From an interview with parents*

**The activities of public organizations and charitable foundations are a significant help** both in the organization of rehabilitation of children with disabilities and in the completion of rehabilitation programs. They hold excursions and entertainment events, pay for rehabilitation courses, and help parents overcome the consequences of stress and trauma in children since the beginning of the war. Thus, the Voices of Children Charitable Foundation provides assistance to internally displaced families who are unable to pay for the rehabilitation of children with disabilities on their own. Since the beginning of the war, 43 children have already received rehabilitation treatment in such a way. Also, since June 15, thanks to the Foundation, more than 50 children with autism spectrum disorders receive rehabilitation treatment in Lviv. UNICEF, the Happy Child Charity Foundation, the International Charity Happy "EverybodyCan", Caritas of Ukraine, the Kyran Charity Fund, the Charitable Organization "Fond "Aspern" and others are also involved in helping children with disabilities.



A child is undergoing rehabilitation treatment at the Kozyavkin International Rehabilitation Clinic with the assistance of the Voices of Children Charitable Foundation

<sup>81</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=384500256994115>

**The children under the occupation and in the active combat areas are in the worst situation.** There is almost no rehabilitation there, except for very few centers and specialists, who have not evacuated. They try to organize rehabilitation classes, but this usually done unofficially and with the risk for all participants. In addition, in the occupied territories there is a problem with receiving social benefits for children, because it is extremely difficult to withdraw cash or pay by card there.

The situation is more favorable in settlements that are under regular, but less intensive shelling (Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, and Zaporizhzhia). There, rehabilitation institutions work according to schedule, although they also experience a shortage of specialists and must take additional safety measures when working with children.

A girl with a disability who survived under the occupation in Luhansk region. Together with her mother, she had to hide from shelling for more than two months and thaw icicles in order to have water.



Abroad, the main problem of families with children with disabilities is **lack of funds and lack of individual accommodation.** Paying for the services of a private specialist for a child is very expensive, and financial aid is not provided in all the countries or it takes a long time to receive it.

*We do not get financial assistance, instead we live for free and are helped with food and clothing. However, this is not enough when there is a child with disability. The money I receive in Ukraine for a child is not comparable to the prices in Europe, so I can't even look for classes for her here, because I simply can't afford them. And I cannot rent a separate apartment. The three of us have been living in five square meters for three months. And there are the certain rules, after 9 o'clock in the evening you can't even talk loudly, but a small child doesn't care.*

*From an interview with parents*

Rehabilitation programs vary in different countries. According to the parents, integration into society without individual work with the child is practiced

somewhere, support classes are provided somewhere to preserve acquired skills, and at some places a system of rehabilitation and treatment is developed.

However, to have access to such programs, in a number of countries **it is necessary to confirm the status of a child with disability**. But it can take from six months to several years.

*At home, we went to school with an assistant, but we were not provided with one here. They have told that the child can manage on her own. Thus, she goes to a normal school, although it is difficult because she does not know the language. This is a slightly different view of inclusive education. The child is given more freedom, more opportunities. Whereas adults are insured with us just in case.*

*From an interview with parents*

*I was told to fill in a 70-page form and was told that my child would receive the status no earlier than next September. Bureaucracy is very developed here. And so far they have arranged for a kindergarten. In Great Britain, as far as I understand, autistic people are not treated. Just inclusion, just let into the general environment. Perhaps they do not consider it a serious diagnosis, because there is no question of any correction at all.*

*From an interview with parents*

At the same time, it is much easier to place a child with disability in a kindergarten or school. But the choice of an educational institution is often limited by territorial accessibility for Ukrainians. Some families are provided with a social taxi or there is a school bus, but mostly they have to get to the place of study on their own. If the family has a car, it increases the possibilities of choosing an educational institution. Although, according to the parents, it is temporary, because after some time the car will have to be cleared and abroad this is rather an expensive procedure. Therefore, a child with disability is more often placed in an educational institution that may not be entirely suitable as for the conditions of education, but is located close to the family's accommodation. Also, in countries that have accepted a significant number of Ukrainians, there is a lack of educational institutions and specialists that children with disabilities need.

*There is a service that deals with the selection of schools. They have a specialized school, but it is very far away. And we were looking for the nearest school. We came to a meeting with the director, they accepted us. But it is difficult for the child, someone must be with her. Teachers also see problems with motor skills and behavior and will probably appoint someone, I don't know. There will be another meeting next week.*

*From an interview with parents*

The parents also note, that unlike Ukrainian schools, **there are much more leisure activities here**. Children spend more time outside, visit cultural places, master classes. At the same time, the academic curriculum is significantly less; foreign

programs lag behind Ukrainian ones by several months and even half a year. According to parents, this practice is much more suitable for children with mental and physical disabilities. They have the opportunity to socialize and develop communication skills.

The **presence of a universal design and the formed culture of inclusion** are also positive factors of bringing up a child with disability in the countries of Europe and America. According to the parents, a number of countries (Poland, Israel) has a strong experience in rehabilitation, and therefore there are opportunities to improve the quality of life of such children.

*In Ukraine, a child of my acquaintances was kicked out of a bomb shelter because she was constantly screaming. And she screamed because she was frightened by the situation, strangers and noise. And here, in Italy, I saw how a child with disability poured with cold water a pregnant woman on the beach. It was very unexpected and unpleasant for her. However, she took it calmly, did not shout and did not even move away. I can't imagine what kind of scandal there would be in Ukraine in a similar situation. In our country, the child should be adapted to the society, and abroad, the society adapts to the child. And that is why the society here is used to different people.*

*From an interview with parents*

The **language barrier** can also be highlighted among the problems abroad. To receive rehabilitation, in most cases, the child must understand the language used by the specialist. Children with intellectual disabilities can simply ignore a foreign language and, accordingly, classes. In addition, parents hesitate how to burden children with learning a foreign language in conditions when they have not yet made a final decision about their permanent accommodation.

*I have a non-verbal child again. I have to work with her and introduce each word to her on my own so that she responds to it. And now the question is – Ukrainian language, as before, or to start speaking English. Because I don't know if I return to Ukraine, our city is already almost destroyed.*

*From an interview with parents*

**Another difficulty is the absence of a father** who, before the war, helped with caring of the child. The mother is forced to take care of a child with disability by herself in conditions where she has to collect documents for temporary protection and financial assistance, as well as look for housing. In addition, staying abroad involves gradual integration into communities, including getting a job and learning a language. It is quite difficult to combine it with bringing up a child with disability who needs constant care.

That is why it is also important to **organize support for the parents of a child with disability** — informational, material, psychological, methodical, etc. Unstable financial conditions, loss of permanent housing, regression of the child's

development cause additional stress and anxiety. Group and individual psychological sessions with parents could give them a resource and support in setting up life and bringing up a child. In addition, it is important to work with parents, who can independently engage in rehabilitation exercises with the child and form the necessary skills for life. Such parents should be involved in training and consultations with specialists.

*Parents need to feel that they are not alone, that they will not be left alone with their problems and their child after replacement. Now they are demoralized, depressed, because within a few months the child has lost some of the acquired skills. At almost every examination of the child, I spend time for the parents: I talk, consult, reassure. In this regard, parent groups work very well, where they can communicate with parents who are like them, exchange experiences, share problems, and support each other.*

*From an interview with psychiatrist Natalia Masyak*

*Parents have lost their usual contacts, they have lost understanding of further rehabilitation. They need to learn how to renew it all. So, it is difficult for them psychologically. And if somewhere there is an opportunity to support such parents, it is very good.*

*From an interview with a social service worker*



Evacuation of children with disabilities from the Kharkiv Regional Specialized Children's Home No. 1<sup>82</sup>

Separately, those children with disabilities are worth mentioning, who are in the children's institutions of the system of education and social protection. As of the beginning of June 2022, it is established that the state could **evacuate more than**

<sup>82</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-60660625>

**270 institutions.** These are special boarding schools, orphanages, and social and psychological rehabilitation centers. These comprise more than 6,000 children, including those with disabilities<sup>83</sup>. Most of them were evacuated abroad, the rest are in the territory of Ukraine. **Some of the institutions have not yet been evacuated from the areas under regular shelling.** Such institutions are maintained, in particular, by the forces of volunteers and public organizations, which provide them with food and hygiene products. The problem is the lack of suitable transport and places where children with disabilities can be evacuated. Not all countries have the proper conditions for accommodation and the necessary number of specialists to meet the needs of children arriving from Ukraine. The situation is similar with the western and central regions of our country. Some children were transferred to institutions that are not similar to those they were in before the war and do not comply completely with their diagnoses and conditions.

## Recommendations

- Take into account the increase in the number of children with disabilities as a result of the war and plan in advance the state's rehabilitation and treatment capabilities.
- Due to the lack of places to accommodate children with disabilities, try to continue negotiations on their evacuation abroad.
- Contribute to the organization of the face-to-face learning process for children with disabilities, in particular through the creation and expansion of inclusive classes and groups in educational institutions.
- Develop a special program of psychological support for children with disabilities and their parents.
- Create opportunities for teaching parents, in particular those who are in the occupied territories or abroad, the basics of independent rehabilitation of children at home.
- Promote the organization of rehabilitation activities and recreation for more children with disabilities, involving charitable foundations and international organizations.

<sup>83</sup>[https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=pfbid02muWuUYqYNjWm52zkJ8D7gKMnKDvvX6fqU1uNjLH8wWj6FGhHYYtwWN5bYiXLgaoal&id=100072443376686](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid02muWuUYqYNjWm52zkJ8D7gKMnKDvvX6fqU1uNjLH8wWj6FGhHYYtwWN5bYiXLgaoal&id=100072443376686)

The Voices of Children Charitable Foundation

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