

This factsheet provides an overview of data from Round 6 of the Conditions of Return Assessment (CoRA), which was conducted in November-December 2023 in 498 locations across 168 hromadas and 23 oblasts. For access to the full report and operational dataset, please contact [DTMUkraine@iom.int](mailto:DTMUkraine@iom.int).<sup>1</sup>

## CONTEXT

As of 27 December 2023, an estimated 3,689,000 people remain internally displaced in Ukraine, with an estimated 5,974,800 displaced abroad according to UNHCR.<sup>2,3</sup> IOM estimates that 4,445,000 people have returned to their place of habitual residence in Ukraine following a period of displacement, 26 per cent of whom returned from abroad.<sup>4</sup>

To inform targeted interventions aimed at alleviating the vulnerability that stems from poor structural and social conditions in areas of return, the Conditions of Return Assessment (CoRA) provides granular data on where returns are occurring, the ways in which those who have returned are most vulnerable and why.

Coverage of the Conditions of Return Assessment Round 6

<b>23</b> Oblasts	<b>69</b> Raions	<b>168</b> Hromadas	<b>498</b> Locations
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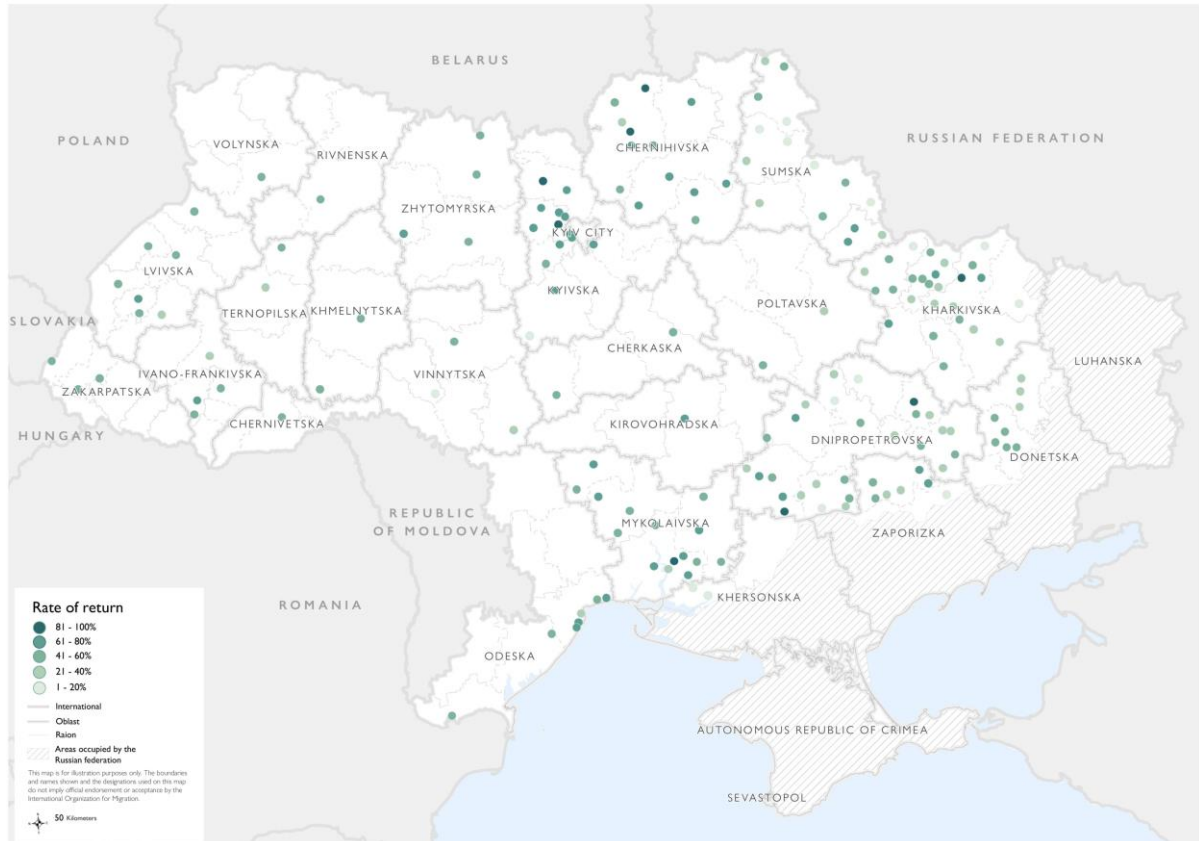
Hromada- and settlement-level data is available upon request at [DTMUkraine@iom.int](mailto:DTMUkraine@iom.int).

## RETURNS TO SEVERE CONDITIONS

In 36 per cent of assessed locations (177 out of 498), over half of those who had been displaced since the full-scale invasion of February 2022 returned from displacement (rate of return of 50% or more). Thirteen per cent of returnees resided in locations which recorded high severity for one or more drivers. This equates to 564,000 returnees living in high severity conditions in 18 per cent of return locations assessed (90 out of 498).

The highest proportion of locations displaying severe conditions were located in Kharkivska and Sumska Oblast, accounting for 23 per cent and 17 per cent of the 90 locations with severe conditions. Five locations faced high severity conditions for three or more drivers: Vyshchetarasiivka (Dnipropetrovska Oblast, 1,600 returnees), Ryzhivka (Sumska Oblast, 62 returnees), Vovchansk and Oleksandrivka (Kharkivska Oblast, 2,600 and 160 returnees), and Huliaipole (Zaporizka Oblast, 2,580 returnees). Notably, public life (57%), livelihoods (53%) and residential destruction (53%) were recorded as medium or high severity across the largest number of locations. Each of these drivers plays an important role in the possibility of return and sustainability of reintegration.

Map 1: Rate of return in hromadas assessed in Round 6 of the Conditions of Returns Assessment



<sup>1</sup> The data included in the full report and operational dataset are classified as 'restricted' under the [OCHA Ukraine Information Sharing Protocol](#).

<sup>2</sup> International Organization for Migration (IOM), [Internal Displacement Report \(December 2023\)](#).

<sup>3</sup> [UNHCR](#).

<sup>4</sup> International Organization for Migration (IOM), [Returns Report \(December 2023\)](#).

## KEY FINDINGS – DRIVERS OF SEVERITY



### LIVELIHOODS

- Livelihood opportunities and improved employment conditions **are an important factor for returns** for return: over half of the previously displaced population had returned to their place of habitual residence in 40 per cent of locations for which livelihood conditions were ranked as low severity- i.e. where agricultural activities had resumed to pre-war levels, most residents could find work, and most shops were open.
- In 90 per cent of assessed locations with **high severity livelihood conditions** – i.e. where agricultural activities had not resumed, where few residents could find work, and where only few shops were open - fewer than 40 per cent of the displaced population had returned.
- Key informants reported **more severe livelihoods conditions** in 16 locations, half of which were located in Dnipropetrovska and Chernihivska Oblasts.
- The **ability to afford basic food and non-food items** remains a pressing concern in return locations. Key informants in 25 per cent of assessed settlements reported that most residents reduced the quality or quantity of basic goods.



### RESIDENTIAL DESTRUCTION

- Residential destruction was classified as **high severity** in 26 locations, 54 per cent of which had experienced **missile strikes, shelling or other long-range attacks** in the month preceding data collection.
- Up to 14 per cent of returnees resided in a location **where more than 40 per cent of residential infrastructure has been severely damaged or destroyed** by the war (est. 631,000 returnees in 59 locations). This represents a decline of 6 percentage points (p.p.) since the last round.
- **Returns have been recorded in locations with extensive residential damage.** Of the 59 locations where more than half of homes were severely damaged/destroyed, 39 per cent were also reported as experiencing high rates of return (60-100%).
- **Compared to Round 5, residential damage worsened in five locations** (2% of assessed locations), located in Kharkivska, Kirovohradska, Kyivska, Odeska and Ternopil'ska Oblasts. Long range attacks and falling debris caused superficial or limited damage in Ternopil, Kyiv and Kropyvnytskyi; in Odesa and Vovchank, the intensification of long range attacks caused more substantial damage.
- In 16 locations (6% of assessed locations in which residential homes were damaged), **damaged houses were not being rebuilt or repaired.** Close to half (44%) of these locations were located in Kharkivska Oblast.



### UTILITIES AND SERVICES

- Up to 57 per cent of returnees resided in locations where key informants reported that the **electricity infrastructure had been damaged** (1,433,000 returnees in 90 locations).

- Up to 41 per cent of returnees resided in a location where **water supply infrastructure had reportedly been damaged** (1,040,000 returnees in 63 locations).



### PUBLIC LIFE

- In 25 assessed locations, key informants reported that **residents only left their homes when required to, with streets mostly empty.** Half of these locations were in Dnipropetrovska Oblast.
- Key informants in 16 locations (8% of locations assessed in both rounds), located in Ivano-Frankivska, Ternopil'ska, Kharkivska, Khersonska, Odeska and Lvivska Oblasts, reported **greater limitations in daily life** and restrictions in freedom of movement compared to Round 5, reportedly the result of the intensification of long-range attacks and multiplication of air raid sirens. Key informants in 10 locations (5% of locations assessed in both rounds), located in Ivano-Frankivska, Ternopil'ska, Mykolaivska, Kyivska and Odeska Oblasts - most of which also recorded more restricted daily life - noted a **deterioration in social cohesion** in return communities, attributed to perceived differences in the allocation of humanitarian aid and social assistance, increasingly challenging economic conditions, mobilization orders, and greater anxiety linked to increased insecurity..



### SAFETY AND SECURITY

- In 47 locations (9% of assessed locations), in which an est. 260,000 returnees resided, safety and security were ranked as high severity. Compared with Round 5, key informants in 31 assessed locations (14% of locations assessed in both rounds) – in which an est. 455,000 returnees (18% of returnees) lived – reported a **deterioration in the security situation.** These locations were primarily located in Kyivska, Zaporizka, Dnipropetrovska, Mykolaivska and Ivano-Frankivska Oblasts, with KIs noting increased frequency in long-range attacks as well as growing concerns over the presence of armed forces as factors for this deterioration.
- **Limited safety and security in return locations might possibly deter return.** In nearly half of locations with high severity of safety and security conditions (20 out of 47), less than 20 per cent of the displaced population had returned. The majority of these locations were located in Sumska, (15%) and Kharkivska (13%) Oblasts.
- Up to 21 per cent of returnees resided in locations where key informants reported that residents were aware of the presence of **mines and/or unexploded ordnance (UXOs)** (est. 473,000 returnees in 93 locations). Demining efforts were active in 68 per cent of assessed locations where the presence of mines or UXOs were reported.

## METHODOLOGY

To provide granular and actionable data on the conditions and sustainability of returns in Ukraine, the Conditions of Return Assessment (CoRA) employs a **multisectoral location-level assessment (MSLA) methodology conducted with local authority key informants (KIs) at the settlement or city-raion level**. Each round of the assessment is two months in duration. Round 6 covered the period from 1 November to 31 December 2023. Data was collected by data collection experts using structured face-to-face or telephone interviews with one or more local authority key informants- with the exception of Dnipropetrovska Oblast, where interviews were conducted with key informants who were not part of local government, so as to provide insights into a key area of return despite challenges in gaining access to regional authorities.

To capture the diversity of conditions that can be present within a hromada, a purposive sample of locations was selected based on criteria such as the size of the displaced and non-displaced population, and the presence of key infrastructure. In the case of cities, a KI is identified for each city-raion. **Once a hromada is assessed, it is included for re-assessment in every subsequent round, to understand how return mobility and conditions change over time.** KIs are asked to provide an estimate of the share of people who had been displaced from a location and have since returned in the form of a range (e.g., 41-60%).<sup>5</sup>






Population figures at the settlement level are cross-checked and triangulated with figures collected through IOM's Mobility and Needs Assessment (MaNA) to ensure harmonization and accuracy of population numbers across IOM assessments. All population figures at hromada and oblast level, as well as rates of return, presented in CoRA are sourced from Round 4 of MaNA (December 2023). Population figures at the national level are derived from Round 5 of IOM's General Population Survey (December 2023). Hromada-level pre-war population figures are sourced from the Ukrainian State Statistics Service (SSSU).

The criteria used to assess conditions of return are informed by the International Recommendations on IDP Statistics (IRIS) indicator framework and by the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions, and adapted to create a list of **critical or minimum conditions required for return to be a durable solution to displacement**. The indicators selected are divided into five thematic areas, or "drivers" of severity (Table 1).

## SCORING SEVERITY

Each sectoral indicator is assigned a "severity score", that is, the **relative reported absence of critical physical and social living conditions that are conducive to sustainable reintegration**. For example, the assessment asks: "Which of the following best describes normal public life in the location now?". To answer this question, key informants choose from three answer choices:

Table 1: List of selected indicators on structural and social conditions

DRIVERS	INDICATORS
<b>Livelihoods</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recovery of agriculture (where relevant)</li> <li>Recovery of large enterprises and industry (where relevant)</li> <li>Recovery of the public sector</li> <li>Recovery of small businesses, shops and markets</li> <li>Availability of employment</li> <li>Reduction in the quality or quantity of basic items and food used in household</li> </ul>
<b>Utilities and services</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to regular government services</li> <li>Access to criminal, legal and justice institutions</li> <li>Access to education</li> <li>Access to healthcare services</li> <li>Disruptions to electricity supply</li> <li>Disruptions to household water supply</li> </ul>
<b>Residential destruction</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential damage or destruction</li> <li>Rehabilitation and repair of residential damage or destruction</li> </ul>
<b>Safety and security</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presence of unexploded ordnance (UXO) or mines</li> <li>Active demining initiatives (where relevant)</li> <li>Concerns regarding of military and military activities</li> <li>Occurrence of missile strikes, shelling or other long-range attacks</li> </ul>
<b>Public life</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intra-communal tensions related to displacement or social assistance</li> <li>Quality of daily public life</li> </ul>

- Streets are busy with residents carrying out daily activities and it feels calm (**low severity**)
- Streets are busy with residents carrying out daily activities, but it feels tense (**medium severity**)
- Residents leave their homes only when they have to and streets are sparsely populated (**high severity**)

For each assessed location, the severity score for each indicator is aggregated as a simple average to provide a severity score for each driver. For each hromada, the severity scores for all assessed locations are aggregated, and weighted by the pre-war population of each location.

*Hromada and settlement level data is available upon request at [DTMUkraine@iom.int](mailto:DTMUkraine@iom.int).*

<sup>5</sup> In the absence of a uniform or official system for recording the return of displaced populations (both from internal displacement and spontaneous returns from abroad), the rate of return is presented in this report as a percentage of the estimated population to have been displaced from a particular location, who have returned after a displacement of at least two weeks.

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