

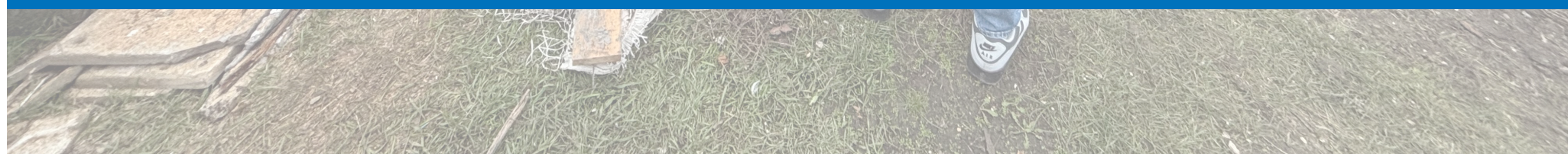


Ukraine East Hub
SHELTER CLUSTER

Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter and Settlements



Supporting Internally Displaced Persons to Find Solutions
IDP activities within the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan



Objective

Displacement affects people differently depending on their capacities, vulnerabilities, support networks, and ability to access adequate housing, services, and livelihoods. While some displaced individuals may require long-term care and accompaniment, others may need temporary support before transitioning towards independent living, while many households struggle to secure adequate accommodation due to affordability constraints and limited purchasing power.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the experiences, housing conditions, and support needs of internally displaced persons across Dnipropetrovska, Donetsk, and Zaporizka oblasts. It highlights the challenges faced by different groups of displaced people, analyses barriers to achieving adequate accommodation, and demonstrates how Shelter and Protection Cluster partners are supporting people affected by displacement through complementary housing, protection, social service, and community-based interventions.

Drawing on UNHCR's people-centred approach to accommodation solutions, the paper provides a strategic framework for understanding how different groups of displaced people may require different combinations of shelter/housing, protection, and social support in order to achieve stability, dignity, and appropriate living conditions during displacement.



17% of IDPs report that their homes are not intact as compared to 61% of returnees and non-displaced



Only 4% of IDPs with damaged or destroyed property have reportedly received full or partial compensation



28% of people remaining in frontline areas gave the reason to not evacuate as their home being their only asset and that they would have nothing left if they were to evacuate



38% of IDPs living in collective sites are people over the age of 60 years age



In April 2025, the Ministry of Social Policy estimated that 20,000 people with specific care needs were still remaining in high or at-risk areas of active hostilities with 5000 of such people living in 31 institutions.



49% of IDPs cite affordable and adequate housing as one of their priority needs



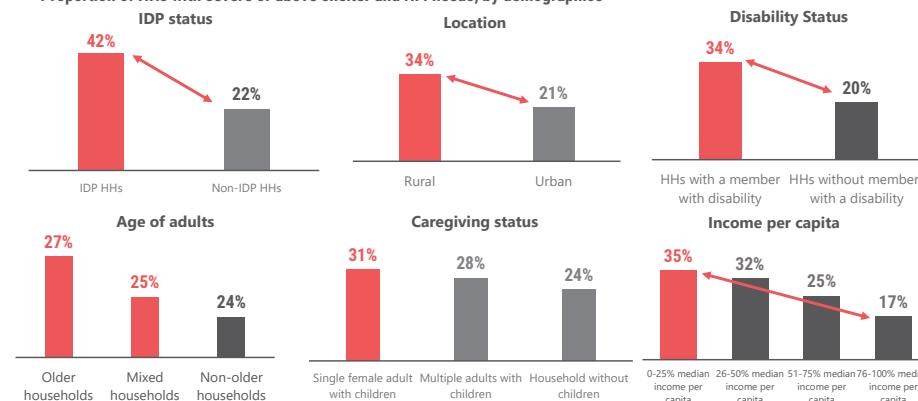
14% moved to a poorer quality dwelling to be able to make ends meet in the displacement location



35% of returnees cited limited access to housing as a reason for returning to area of origin

Shelter and NFI needs, by demographics

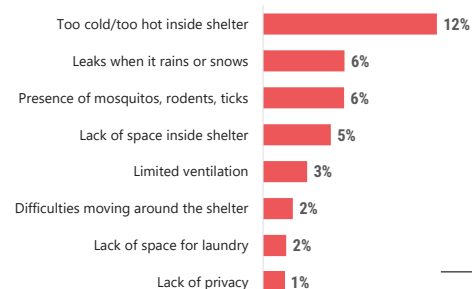
Proportion of HHs with severe or above shelter and NFI needs, by demographics



Shelter issues

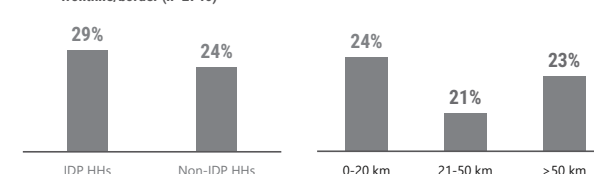
25% of the assessed households reported at **least one issue in their shelter**, not caused by the war
24% reported **1-3 issues**, while **1%** reported more than **4 issues**

Percentage of households reporting shelter issues not caused by the war (n=2746)



- Households living in the **0-20 km zone of Donetsk** (31%) and **Dnipropetrovsk** (29%) reported a higher prevalence of shelter issues, compared to the average.
- No significant differences** in the prevalence of shelter issues were linked to **IDP status** and **proximity to the frontline**.
- Households in the lowest income quartile were more likely to report shelter issues** (32%), compared to those in the highest income quartile (20%).

Percentage of households reporting shelter issues, by IDP status and distance from the frontline/border (n=2746)



Situation of Internally Displaced Persons

Many households affected by displacement delay or avoid evacuation due to anticipated difficulties in securing adequate housing, stable income, support systems in areas of displacement, fears about adapting to new accommodation in case of limited mobility, and other complex reasons. These concerns are particularly acute among older persons, especially those with specific needs, who are among the least likely or in some cases one of the last groups to leave their homes. For those who do decide to evacuate and leave behind their homes, adapting to new environments can be especially challenging, depending on whether they are able to cope in new housing and new communities. While some individuals may gradually stabilise, others may remain dependent on support systems that are not always adequately equipped to meet their needs. Households that would otherwise be able to live independently may also struggle to find solutions to their housing and economic situation. Without interventions in housing, social infrastructure and protection services, internally displaced persons may make the difficult decision to leave behind the relatively secure area of displacement to return to their areas of origin closer and in areas of ongoing active hostilities. These differing experiences highlight that displaced individuals face distinct levels of constraints and support needs. Understanding these differences is critical to identifying appropriate responses. UNHCR¹ groups displaced individuals into four broad categories based on their capacity to live independently and the type of support required:

- **People unable to live independently requiring long-term care and accompaniment** - This group includes individuals with significant physical or cognitive limitations who require sustained care and accompaniment in order to meet their basic needs. According to UNHCR Protection Survey data, older persons with specific needs represent a significant share of this group, and many remain in or near areas of active hostilities. These individuals require long-term, care-based accommodation solutions combined with access to social and health services, and are unlikely to achieve independent living without continuous support.
- **People in need of short/medium term care and accompaniment to transition to independent living**- This group includes individuals who, following the shock of displacement and exposure to hostilities, require temporary support before being able to live independently. This may include older persons with reduced mobility, individuals recovering from injury, or those experiencing psychosocial distress. With appropriate support, including temporary accommodation and access to services, these individuals may transition toward independent and stable living conditions over time.
- **People who are able to live independently who have little or no purchasing power** - This group represents a large proportion of displaced households. While these individuals are able to live independently from a social and functional perspective, they face significant constraints in accessing adequate housing due to limited or unstable income, high living costs, and reduced access to support networks. As a result, many are unable to secure affordable and adequate accommodation, and instead reside in substandard or precarious housing conditions, adopt unsustainable coping strategies, or remain at risk of secondary displacement or return to unsafe areas.
- **People who are able to live independently who may acquire purchasing power** - This group includes households that have the potential to secure and maintain adequate housing, provided that enabling conditions are in place. These may include access to employment, social benefits, compensation mechanisms, or stable rental opportunities. While generally more self-reliant, these households remain sensitive to economic pressures and market conditions, and may experience deterioration in their living situation if support mechanisms are insufficient or disrupted.

1 <https://www.unhcr.org/ua/en/media/thematic-report-protection-older-people>

People-centred IDP Accommodation Solutions (from the start)



People unable to live independently requiring long-term care & accompaniment (e.g. bed-ridden, very low mobility, certain intellectual disabilities)	• Social service provision, such as facility-based care, nursing care, assisted living • Family- and community-based care options	• Shelter: social infrastructure rehabilitation • Protection: social, psycho-social and legal services, capacity building and technical assistance to state social protection system; community-based protection
People in need of short/medium term care & accompaniment to transition to independent living (e.g. older person recovering from shock of displacement; people with rehabilitation needs)	• Social service provision, such as assisted living; social adaptation • Family- and community-based care options	• Shelter: social infrastructure rehabilitation • Protection: social, psycho-social and legal services, capacity building and technical assistance to state social protection system; community-based protection
Most vulnerable profiles able to live independently (social/physical perspective yes; but no financial prospects to afford to rent/buy a home that is not sub-standard)	• Temporary IDP housing (Res. 495); in some cases house repair • Community-based options (e.g. co-habitation) • <i>(may become relevant for cases transitioning to independent living)</i>	• Shelter: rehab/equipment of Temporary IDP Housing (Res. 495); IDP house repairs; • Protection: social, psycho-social and legal services, capacity building; community-based protection
Most vulnerable profiles able to live independently (with financial prospects to afford rent/buying a home if social benefits, compensation and/or employment is secured)	• House repair; rental support (RMI, rental subsidy social rent); may be eligible for Temp IDP housing (Res. 495) • Community-based options (e.g. co-habitation) • <i>(may become relevant for cases transitioning to independent living)</i>	• Shelter: IDP house repairs; Rental Market Initiative (RMI); rehab/equipment of Temporary IDP Housing (Res. 495); • Protection: social, psycho-social and legal services, capacity building; community-based protection
Others	• May also be captured by house repair; rental support; Temp IDP housing – depending on targeting and prioritization • Community-based options	• Shelter: IDP house repairs; RMI; rehab/equipment of Temporary IDP Housing (Res. 495); • Protection: service provision, community-based protection



660K IDPs



187,000 in need of housing support



Total reach of IDPs is less than 3%

Improving access to adequate accommodation remains a critical protection concern -According to official data shared by the Ministry of Social Policy, over 660,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) are currently residing in Dnipropetrovska, Donetsk, and Zaporizka oblasts. Applying findings from the REACH MSNA, an estimated **187,000 IDPs living in private, hosted, or informal accommodation arrangements may require repairs or upgrades to meet minimum adequacy standards.** These households are often less visible within formal government and humanitarian systems, resulting in significant under-prioritisation of support. As a consequence, IDP housing repair activities accounted for only 0.1% of individuals reached in the Eastern Hub in 2025, while support to IDPs living in substandard housing reached just 3% of the overall caseload. These figures highlight a **substantial gap between identified needs and the scale of assistance delivered.**

Different groups of displaced people require different combinations of shelter and protection support Many displaced households are able to live independently but lack the purchasing power necessary to access adequate accommodation. Others require short- or medium-term accompaniment to transition towards independent living, while some individuals require long-term care and support. Responses should therefore move beyond one-size-fits-all approaches and provide **differentiated combinations of housing assistance, social services, protection support, HLP assistance, and referral pathways** that reflect people's capacities and support needs.

Shelter interventions alone are insufficient to achieve sustainable accommodation outcomes - The large volume of legal, Housing, Land and Property (HLP), protection information, case management, and psychosocial support activities demonstrates that households require more than physical shelter assistance. **People need documentation support, tenure security, legal counselling, compensation assistance, and access to protection services** in order to secure and sustain adequate accommodation solutions. More than 10,600 people received legal and HLP support, demonstrating significant demand for housing rights, occupancy, compensation, and property-related assistance. Continued integration between Shelter and Protection actors is essential to achieving sustainable accommodation outcomes.

Affordability remains a major barrier to displacement and local integration- In frontline areas, Shelter Cluster monitoring visits consistently find that **people are reluctant to evacuate due to concerns about affording rental accommodation and utilities in safer locations. Rental support is included within the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, but remains critically underfunded.** Monitoring has also identified cases of secondary or return displacement, where households move back towards frontline areas due to inadequate living conditions and the inability to sustain housing costs in displacement locations. Housing affordability should therefore be viewed not only as a shelter concern, but also as a protection issue that directly influences people's displacement decisions and exposure to risk.

Community-based protection and social infrastructure are essential components of accommodation solutions - Community networks, protection information services, case management, and referral mechanisms help displaced households identify risks, access assistance, and sustain accommodation solutions over time. For individuals unable to live independently or requiring additional accompaniment, **investments in social infrastructure, care facilities, and protection services are equally important. Strengthening these systems enables social protection workers and local authorities to support vulnerable displaced people over the longer term** while reducing dependency on emergency accommodation arrangements.

How can this group be supported?

People with disabilities and limited mobility **may require longer-term accommodation and support arrangements**, particularly where critical care needs limit their ability to transition towards independent living. Therefore, support to these people and their families can include:

- Support the refurbishment and rehabilitation of specialized institutions to support the establishment of solutions for this population.
- For those caregivers of people with special needs, IDP house repairs may support them in improving the adequacy of their housing situation which may release housing cost burdens enabling them to focus on their care.

What kind of protection services can support shelter or housing activities?

- Social, psycho-social and legal services
- Capacity building and technical assistance to state or community social protection systems
- Community-based protection systems.



Options for People able to live independently

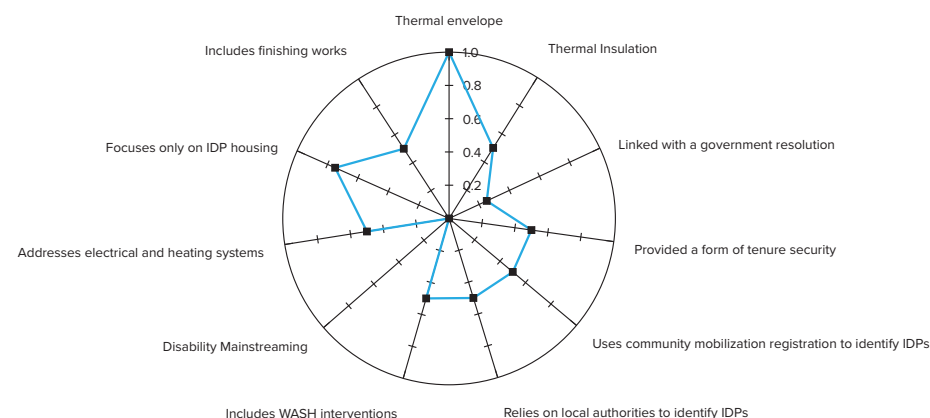
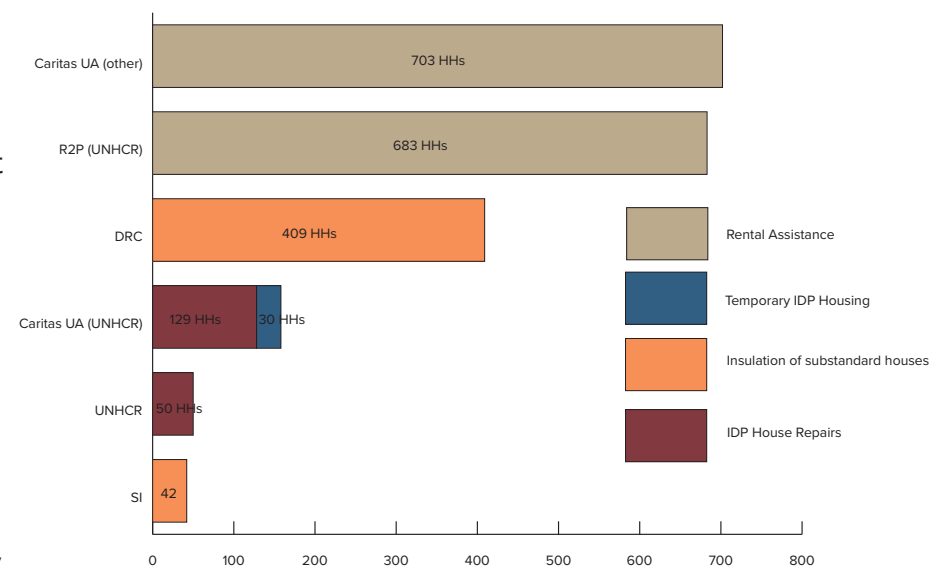
Support activities for people able to **live indepently but with limited purchasing power**

- **Substandard housing**- Interventions under this activity aim to improve the thermal envelope efficiency and overall winter habitability of structurally sound detached houses in substandard condition that were not damaged by war-related activities. This may include ceiling or attic insulation, replacement of old windows and entrance, doors with more energy-efficient ones, and, where justified, complementary improvements to internal heating systems.
- **IDP housing** - This activity supports light repairs and limited rehabilitation of privately owned houses or apartments occupied by internally displaced persons, whether through ownership, loan, lease with a purchase option, free use, or longer-term rental arrangements, where the dwelling has no war-related damage but remains substandard, unsafe, or inadequate for dignified living.
- **Rental Support** - This activity aims to support people affected by the war by providing grants to help pay rent and utilities for their dwelling for a limited period of time to help them stabilize in their displacement situation
- **Temporary IDP housing**- Aligned with the Cabinet of Ministers Resolution 495, the intervention aims to restore buildings on the balance of territorial hromadas into temporary IDP housing for registered IDPs.

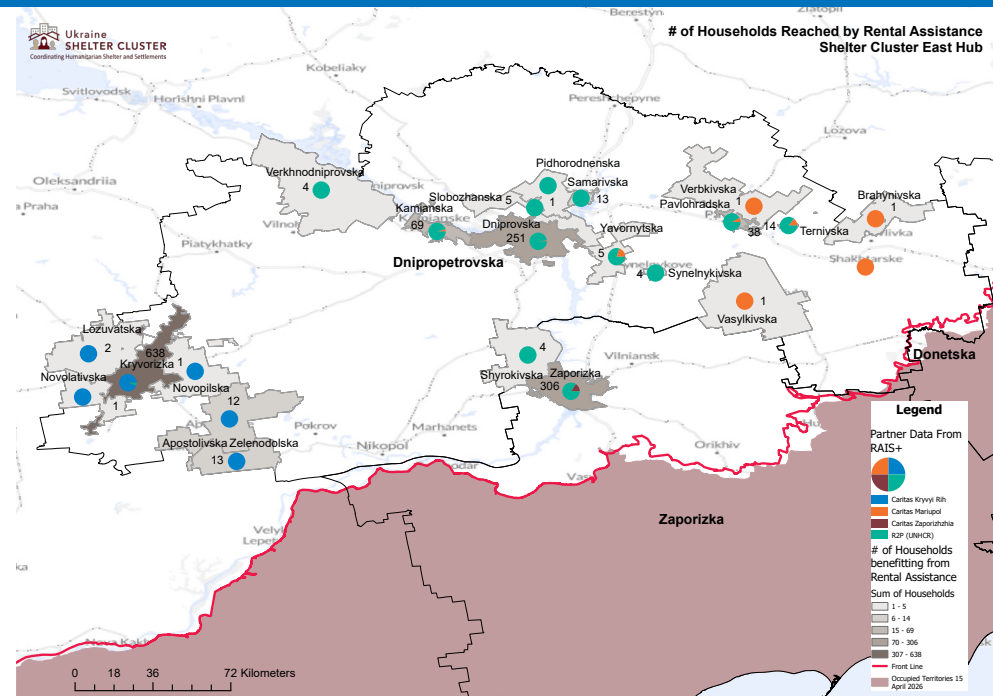
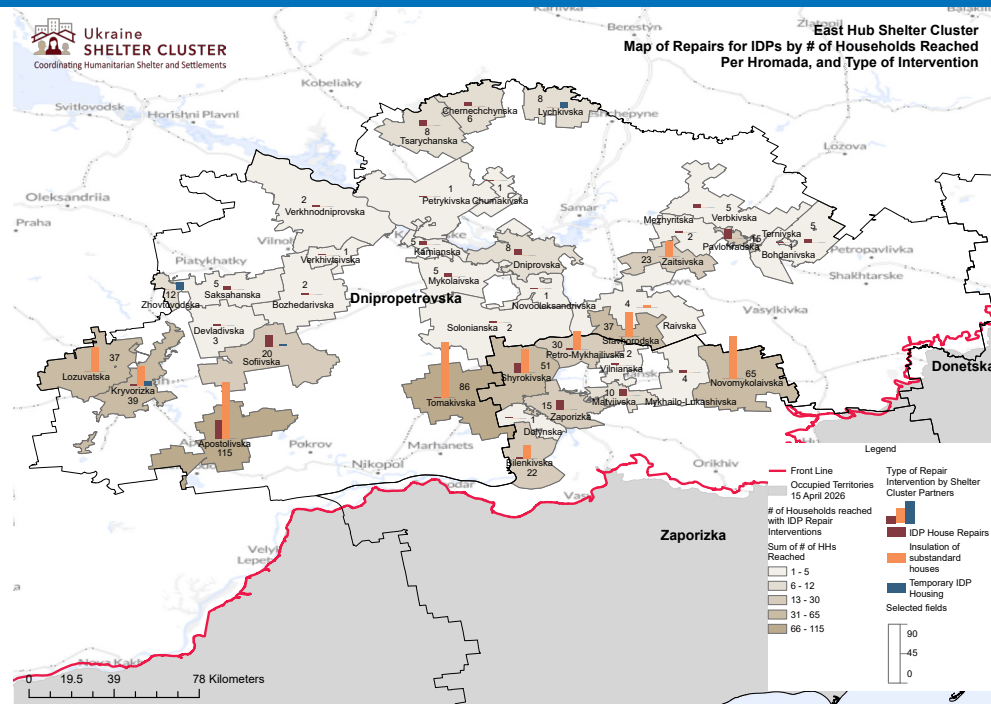
What kind of **protection services** can support shelter or housing activities?

- Social, psycho-social, and legal **services**
- Capacity Building
- Community-based protection
- Service Provision

Previous Implementation in East Hub



Housing Specific support programs for people able to live independently and acquire purchasing power



Many households may have the capacity to eventually live independently, but **face barriers in achieving stable living conditions without sustained support**. Access to adequate housing and services remains a key factor in enabling this transition. When supported through a combination of housing interventions and social services, these households are better able to progress toward stable and independent living. However, these households are often less visible within formal systems and may not appear in official registries, making them difficult to identify and reach. As a result, targeted outreach through community networks, social media, and multi-sectoral approaches is critical to connect them with appropriate support. Current support efforts, including housing repairs, often focus on improving thermal conditions. However, current housing implementation programs could support people with improved water, electricity, and heating systems, which affect the overall adequacy of their living conditions. Similarly, while rental assistance can help address affordability, it is often insufficient on its own when housing conditions remain substandard. For many people, achieving adequate accommodation requires a combination of support measures that address both affordability and housing quality. Strengthening guidance and increasing investment in these approaches would help expand support to this less visible but significant group of displaced persons and improve their ability to stabilise over time



Protection Cluster Coverage for IDP activities

Scope of coverage

Across these three oblasts, Protection Cluster partners reached 54,759 people through a comprehensive protection response focused on life-saving information, legal and HLP assistance, case management, and psychosocial support. The response demonstrates strong complementarity with shelter interventions, particularly through HLP assistance, site management, protection referrals, and community-based approaches that help ensure shelter solutions are safe, accessible, and sustainable for displaced and non-displaced conflict-affected populations.

IDP activities prioritized:

- Protection information and counselling- enabling newly displaced and conflict-affected households to understand available assistance and referral pathways.
- Legal and HLP assistance- critical for households facing documentation loss, property damage, compensation claims, and displacement-related legal challenges.
- Case management services- supporting individuals with acute protection risks and facilitating referrals to specialized services.
- Psychosocial support and MHPSS- reflecting the high levels of distress and vulnerability among displaced and conflict-affected populations.
- Targeted support for women and girls- including dignity kits, GBV information sessions, specialized psychosocial support, and Women and Girls Safe Spaces.

Geographical scope: Of the three oblasts, IDP priority interventions were concentrated in Dnipropetrovska (85%), which strongly informed its role as a receiving/settlement oblast for most displaced persons coming from Donetsk and frontline regions in Dnipropetrovska oblast, followed by Zaporizka (13%) and Donetsk (1%).

Key activities and people reached

1.	Targeted life-saving information and protection counselling	20,023 people reached
2.	Legal assistance, including Housing, Land and Property (HLP) support	10,679 people reached
3.	Case management interventions	7,237 people reached
4.	Psychosocial and social-emotional support activities	6,226 people reached
5.	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)	4,379 people reached

Protection Cluster Activities in support of Internally Displaced Persons

