

UKRAINE: SCENARIOS



Possible developments in people's basic needs and coping capacity over the next 12 months in Ukraine

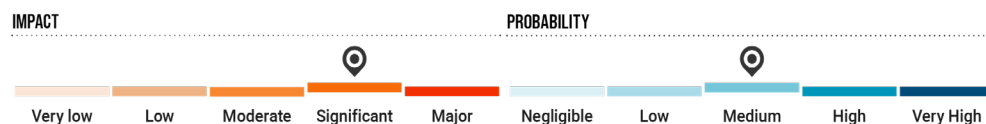


Scenario 1: escalating



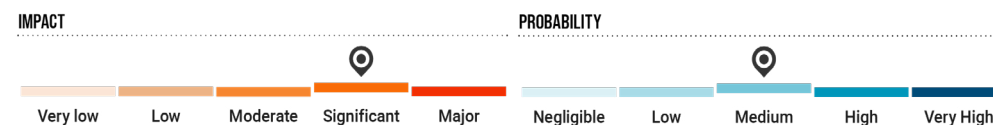
Ukrainian military successes and internal tensions within Russia lead to a more aggressive Russian military strategy. Conflict escalates across Ukraine, and Russia indiscriminately targets civilian infrastructure. Air strikes increase throughout the country. Biological and chemical agents cause significant casualties, while nuclear coercion escalates, with Russia moving its nuclear attack capacities closer to the Ukrainian borders or destabilising nuclear power plants. Ukraine's economy contracts, exports decrease, and attacks on critical infrastructure drive inflation and limit the financial capacity for reconstruction. Living conditions deteriorate as the Government of Ukraine (GOU) struggles to meet the demand for essential services, relying more heavily on humanitarian organisations. Displacement within and from the country rises, aggravating regional disparities. Basic needs become harder to meet, psychological trauma increases, and access for humanitarian assistance becomes more severely restricted.

Scenario 2: turbulent



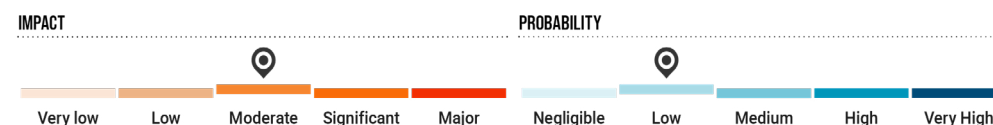
Conflict intensifies locally, affecting new regions. Front lines shift, particularly in the east and south, while new areas in the north come under attack. The increased use of private military companies (PMCs) prolongs the pressure on Ukraine and ramps up uncertainty around war developments. Air strikes continue to target military and civilian infrastructure, causing damage and disruption. Attacks on Kyiv (including guerrilla-style operations) and sabotage and guerrilla-style attacks within Russia increase. The presence of PMCs leads to increased human rights abuses. Despite some degree of stability in the Ukrainian economy thanks to international assistance and the renewal of the Grain Deal, economic activities are severely hampered in conflict-affected areas. Displacement occurs, mostly for short distances within the country, and access to basic needs and services becomes more challenging. Humanitarian operations face significant constraints, with progressively limited access, increased security risks, and disrupted supply chains.

Scenario 3: protracted

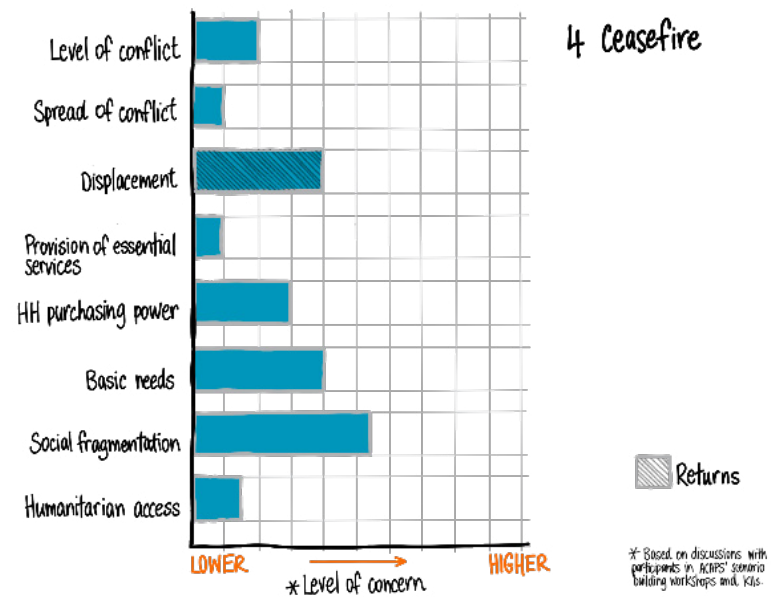
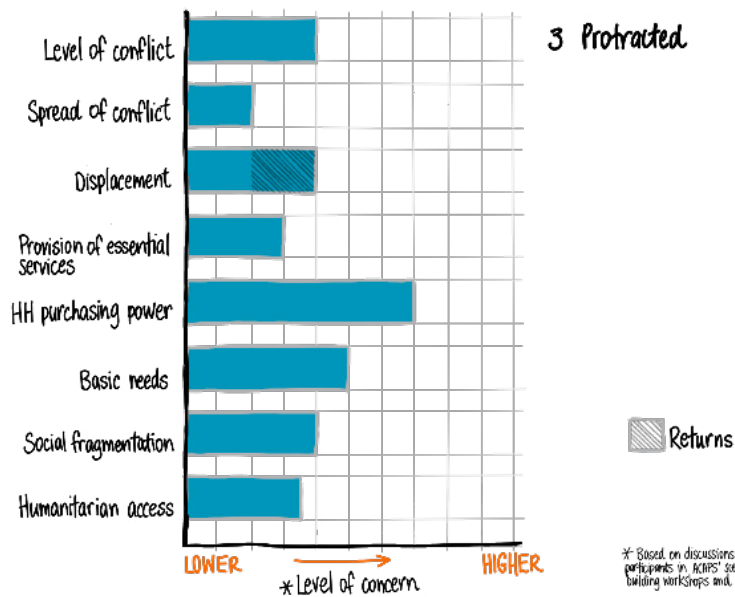
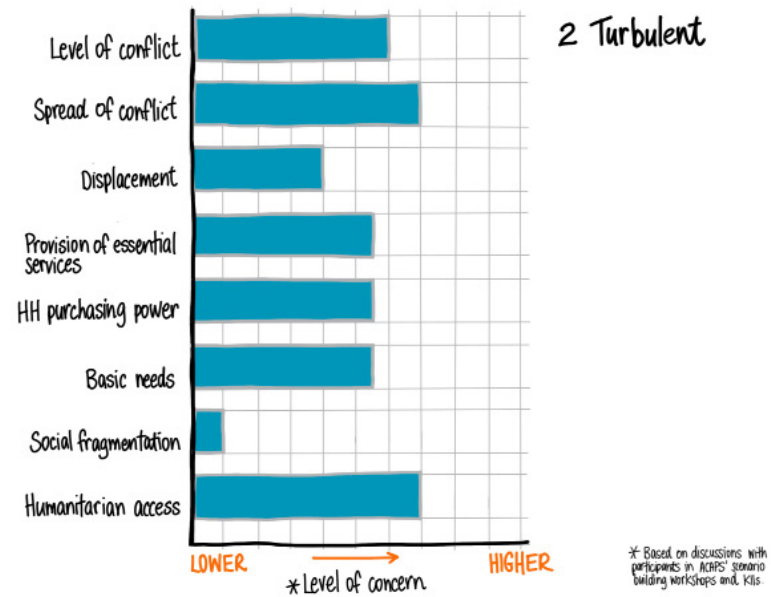
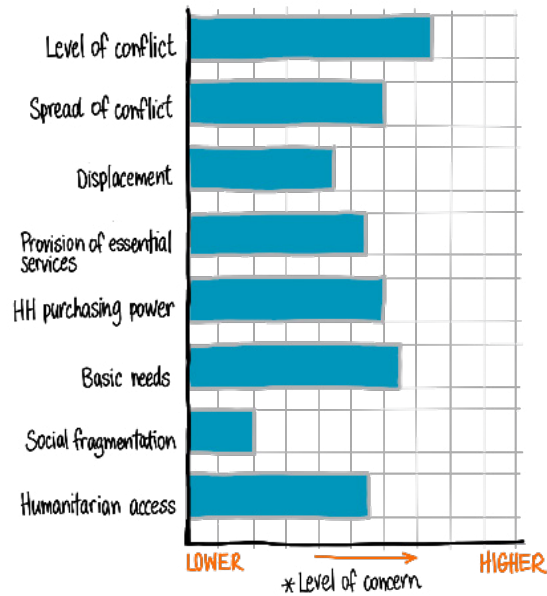


Conflict in Ukraine remains at a similar level as in early 2023, with occasional localised escalations and minimal territorial gains by both sides. Aerial attacks continue to cause damage, while front lines remain heavily shelled, impeding access to essential services. The Ukrainian economy struggles to recover, facing high inflation and limited opportunities for economic growth. Displacement protracts, with little incentive for those displaced abroad to return, leading to a brain drain and economic decline. Social cohesion deteriorates, and frustration grows among the population given the economic hardships and long-term stress of war with no apparent prospects of improvement. Humanitarian operations face reduced funding and focus primarily on hotspot locations, while other needs remain unaddressed. The operating environment remains fragile, restricted by explosive remnants of war (ERW) and a lack of trained staff maintaining essential services, particularly in active conflict and areas under Russian control.

Scenario 4: ceasefire



Russia and Ukraine reach a ceasefire agreement amid strong external and internal pressures, leading to a decline in conflict levels. Access to occupied territories remains constrained, but some inhabitants and a few humanitarian organisations are allowed limited entry. The Ukrainian economy begins a gradual recovery as infrastructure damage halts and exports increase, while military spending remains stable. Economic activity slowly resumes, aided by a more reliable electricity supply and international funding for reconstruction. At the same time, attention and assistance from the international community start to wane as other crises emerge globally. Economic recovery remains uneven, with clear disparities between western oblasts and frontline areas. Dissatisfaction grows within the Ukrainian population as a result of the ceasefire, leading to social tensions and political turmoil. IDP and refugee returns strain housing, healthcare, and essential services in less conflict-affected oblasts. The overall situation remains tense, and challenges persist in achieving long-term stability and reconstruction.



Source: ACAPS (*) Based on discussions with participants in ACAPS' scenario building workshops and KIIs.
 HH: Households
 KIIs: Key Informant Interviews

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What scenarios are and aren't

The four scenarios consider four different yet plausible futures for Ukraine over the coming 12 months. These scenarios do not describe the imagined futures in detail but consider key differences in the conflict, governance, and economic environments and the extent to which and how people's personal safety, needs, and coping strategies might change. They are not forecasts; they describe situations that could occur and are designed to highlight the possible impacts and humanitarian consequences associated with each scenario.

Scenarios are possible evolutions of the current situation, a summary of which is given in Annex A.

Intended purpose and audience of the report

The primary purpose of the report is to support strategic planning, create awareness, and promote discussion among humanitarian policymakers, practitioners, and donors through an understanding of the possible ways in which humanitarian needs may end up being met or not – whether intentionally or unintentionally. See the [Methodology section](#) for more information on the development of these scenarios.

Users are suggested to consider how each of the scenarios might influence their engagement in Ukraine to identify preparatory actions that could reduce any disruptions to the delivery of humanitarian services resulting from each scenario.

Limitations

Scenarios can seem to oversimplify an issue, as the analysis balances details against broader assumptions. Scenario-building is not an end in itself; it is a process for generating new ideas that should, in turn, lead to changes in project design or decision-making. These scenarios focus primarily on how changes in the conflict, economy, and governance will ultimately affect household income and the wellbeing of Ukrainians.

These scenarios were developed in May 2023 with input from 33 organisations that included: UN agencies, INGOS, NNGOs, international and Ukrainian academic organisations and independent experts, who contributed via participation in online workshops and a face-to-face workshop that took place in Kyiv. They were selected for their involvement in the humanitarian response, presence in the country and expert knowledge.

Note on recent key developments as at 3rd July 2023

Since the scenario-building workshops with experts in late May 2023 and the drafting of this report, the conflict in Ukraine has witnessed three major developments that have significantly affected the overall dynamics and further shaped the potential scenarios outlined earlier. Firstly, the initiation of the Ukrainian counteroffensive has marked a pivotal moment, potentially altering the balance of power in the conflict ([BBC 11/06/2023](#); [ISW 08/06/2023](#)). Secondly, the collapse of the Kakhovka dam that has led to extensive flooding in the areas surrounding the site on Dnipro River has introduced additional challenges and complexities and emphasised the willingness of Russian forces to apply military strategies with far-reaching consequences for the population and the environment ([ACAPS 09/06/2023](#); [CSIS 16/06/2023](#)). Lastly, the insurrection by the Wagner group and the subsequent exile of its leader in Belarus adds another layer of uncertainty and unpredictability to the unfolding events and shed light on the importance of PMCs for Russia's politics and the progression of the conflict in Ukraine ([Al Jazeera 24/06/2023](#); [CFR 24/06/2023](#); [Eastern Circles accessed 26/06/2023](#)). These developments also underscore the highly volatile nature of the war and emphasise the importance of considering multiple scenarios as a crucial framework for strategy-setting and preparedness given the ever-evolving circumstances.

INTRODUCTION

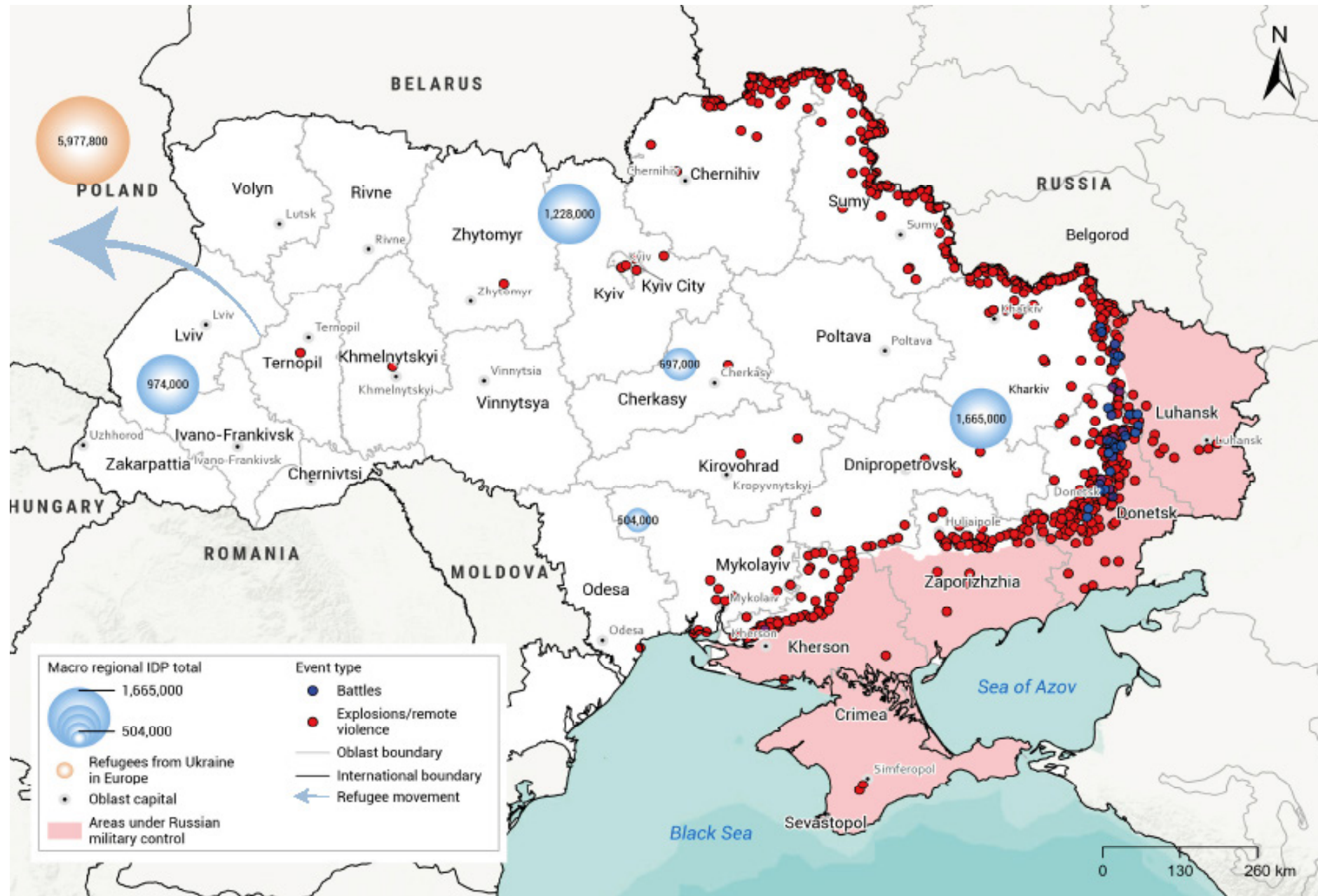
Problem statement

In February 2022, conflict between Russia and Ukraine escalated when Russian troops launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Russia's initial attempt to capture Kyiv and gain political control over the country failed. Since November 2022, the front lines have been largely static, with the Russian military controlling much of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia oblasts as well as previously occupied Crimea. The conflict has displaced millions of people within Ukraine and to neighbouring countries, with the majority displaced from and within eastern Ukraine. A large number of people has also relocated or been forcibly displaced to Russia; there is limited understanding of their needs and humanitarian conditions. The initial shock to Ukraine's economy more than doubled inflation and reduced GDP by one-third. Significant support to the country and the resumption of grain exports have enabled a partial recovery, but the economy continues to struggle, and inflation remains high. More than a year on, the poorest of the displaced continue to live in collective centres, relying on humanitarian assistance, while tensions between host communities and other IDPs are increasing with competition for housing and jobs and the rising cost of living. An overview of the current situation is in Annex A.

Ukraine has received significant foreign military aid and has recently launched a new offensive. Russia has also received armament, increased military spending, and continued to employ PMCs, such as the Wagner group. An outright military victory for either side within the next year is considered highly unlikely. Likewise, there seems to be no pathway towards negotiation. The four scenarios presented suggest how the different ways in which the conflict, Ukrainian economy, and governance within Ukraine might change over the coming 12 months and how these could change the living conditions of Ukrainians, especially those in need of humanitarian assistance.

Only the fourth scenario (a ceasefire) sees an improvement in the overall economic situation, but even then, benefits would be uneven and the number of Ukrainians in need of assistance would not significantly decrease because of the scale of destruction. The first two scenarios consider a prolonged increase in conflict intensity, which would worsen needs, reduce access, and increase humanitarian operational costs. The third scenario foresees a protracted low-level conflict continuing, the gradually declining economy pushing more people into poverty, and humanitarian assistance remaining focused on those most directly affected by the conflict.

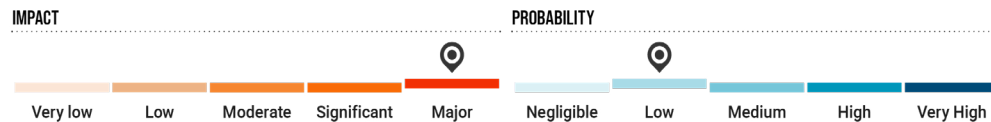
MAP 1. CURRENT SITUATION AS AT JUNE 2023



Sources: UNHCR (accessed 29/06/2023); IOM 23/05/2023; ISW (accessed 22/05/2023); ACLED (accessed 22/05/2023)

SCENARIOS

1. Escalating



- Conflict escalates and spreads
- Engineered biological and chemical accidents occur
- The economy and household purchasing power decline
- The GOU struggles to provide adequate public services
- Internal displacement and migration increase
- Humanitarian access decreases while needs increase.

Ukrainian military successes, coupled with increasing tensions within the Kremlin (as discontent among some military soldiers and internal power disputes within the country become more visible), prompt Russia to adopt a more aggressive military strategy. Longer-range weapons target civilian, transport, and energy infrastructure, and air strikes increase across Ukraine, causing significant civilian casualties. Russia initiates new attacks from Belarus and increases disinformation campaigns. The conflict rhetoric escalates, with harder-line positions from all sides. International diplomatic attempts fail, and tensions increase globally. Biological and chemical attacks disguised as accidents close to the front lines cause many military and civilian casualties. Russia increases their nuclear coercion activities by increasing their nuclear attack capacities close to the border.

Ukraine's economy contracts further as exports decrease following a suspension of the Black Sea Grain Deal and constant attacks on the energy and other key infrastructure. Continued bilateral financial assistance enables the GOU to increase military spending, fund priority repairs to damaged civilian infrastructure (power plants, railways, roads, hospitals, etc.), and maintain social expenditure. That said, increased global prices and logistic costs raise food and fuel prices. The healthcare system struggles to meet increased demand, and conflict continues to disrupt education. Although support for the war effort remains strong, living conditions decline for many. Humanitarian access to many of those most in need severely dwindles. Elections are postponed as martial law continues. Investment in newly retaken areas is insufficient to entice back an economically active population, increasing regional disparities.

The use of new weapons and increased conflict lead to a new wave of displacement from eastern and northern to western oblasts, adding pressure to the provision of services in the west of the country. Displacement out of the country also increases.

Triggers/assumptions

Conflict

- A Ukrainian counteroffensive succeeds in retaking significant parts of occupied territory.
- International military assistance (assets and funding) to Ukraine increases.
- International military assistance (assets and funding) to Russia increases.
- Russia uses biological and chemical agents as weapons.
- Russia increases nuclear coercion by moving its nuclear attack capacities closer to Ukrainian borders.
- Russia targets energy infrastructure during winter.
- Belarus gets more involved in the conflict.

Economic

- The proportion of Ukrainian revenue spent on the military increases.
- Infrastructure repair and service provision costs increase.
- The Black Sea Grain Deal is suspended.
- Global economic recovery stalls.
- Global inflation increases.

Political

- Tensions and divisions/criticism increase within the Kremlin.
- Domestic criticism of Russian President Vladimir Putin grows and becomes more vocal.
- Ukrainian Government and society remain unified around the war effort.
- International diplomatic attempts fail to end the conflict.

Impact and humanitarian consequences

The intensity of needs, as well as the number and geographical spread of those in need, increases considerably. Basic needs, such as food, water, and healthcare, severely increase where the conflict escalates. Frequent widespread electricity shortages afflict the country, disrupting supply chains and reducing the functioning of essential services. The increased intensity and unpredictable nature of the conflict lead to increased psychological trauma among combatants and non-combatants.

Agricultural activities decrease further, severely disrupting national and local economies. More large international Ukrainian companies relocate abroad, and industrial production decreases, reducing employment opportunities. The GOU increases movement restrictions within the country and military conscription. Reduced income and rising inflation cause purchasing power to decline, driving high levels of poverty.

Support for the GOU remains high, and social cohesion strengthens. That said, escalating conflict increases frustration and reduces hope, leading to targeted criticism of specific decisions and individuals. The changing focus of Russian attacks drives large-scale but fluid displacement towards safer areas in Ukraine. Repeated displacement erodes coping mechanisms, decreasing resilience. As more people leave the country, hospitality in neighbouring countries decreases. The displaced and newly unemployed live mainly off rapidly depleting savings, and departures vastly outnumber returns. The number of those displaced in collective centres in need of assistance increases.

Conflict areas: while the southern and eastern front lines remain the most affected, conflict starts to more directly target the whole country. In frontline areas, biological and chemical weapons kill a large number of civilians. As these types of weapons directly affect virtually all people in targeted areas, the number of people in need exponentially rises. This rapidly overwhelms healthcare services. Hazardous material contamination also decreases the availability of safe food and water, affecting markets and supply chains. Sustained aerial attacks on Kyiv result in the reimposition of tighter curfews and school closures. Retaliatory offensives from Russia also involve the Northeast, waterways to the Black Sea and Odesa, military and critical infrastructure and other logistic targets elsewhere in the country. ERW contaminate additional agricultural land, rendering it unproductive until well beyond any end to the conflict.

Retaken areas: access to a few areas that have been unreachable since 2022 reveal extreme and multidimensional poverty and severe needs for shelter, food, and healthcare, including mental health. The prevalence of ERW, lack of functioning infrastructure, proximity to the front line, contaminated agricultural land, and lack of workforce hamper recovery efforts. Minimal reconstruction and repairs are possible. In some areas, the reintegration of retaken

areas under government control reveals a challenge in social cohesion, as the population confronts alleged collaborators of the Russian regime under the controlled territories with accusations and suspicions. Agriculture-dependent livelihoods in the south and east are some of the most affected and will take many years to recover because of ERW contamination.

Occupied areas: while poverty levels and material needs are high, particularly closer to the front lines, reliable information on the specific demography, needs, and service provision remains very limited. Protection needs remain high as incidents of gender-based violence (GBV), arbitrary detention, forced displacement, and torture increase.

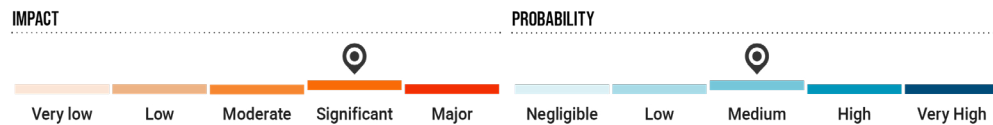
Humanitarian constraints

The increased spread of conflict restricts access to both areas with newly emerging needs and those with existing needs. The use of biological and chemical weapons forces international responders to withdraw from contaminated areas. Significant logistic challenges emerge in responding to chemical and biological contamination as well as establishing decontamination processes and suitable treatment centres. Longer-term impacts also plague the affected population and environment depending on the nature of the agents used.

Although humanitarian funding remains high, international responders reduce operations, passing the increased risk to local responders through whom most humanitarian delivery is channelled. This strains local humanitarian NGOs, who face staffing and supply chain limitations and increasingly rely on untrained and overworked volunteers. Some international organisations move their staff outside Ukraine and manage their response and relations with partners remotely, while donor funding focuses solely on humanitarian assistance rather than recovery. The cost per beneficiary significantly rises for those in hard-to-reach areas. Humanitarian organisations also face severe constraints resulting from the burnout of staff remaining in Ukraine.

Security concerns severely constrain humanitarian assistance to those in retaken areas.

2. Turbulent



- Conflict becomes more dynamic as both Ukrainian and Russian militaries mobilise further and new entities enter
- Both sides make gains and suffer losses as front lines change
- There is no overall change in military supremacy, although the area of active conflict increases
- The economy remains largely stable
- There is localised temporary displacement
- Humanitarian needs become more dynamic and difficult to assess
- Access challenges increase.

Lacking the capacity for outright military victory, Russia seeks to maintain its territorial gains while disrupting the Ukrainian economy, gradually degrading Ukrainian military capacity. As a response to increasing disagreements between elites within Russia, Moscow progressively enables private military fighters and militias to take part in the conflict, maintaining pressure on Ukraine while rearming for a major offensive later in 2024. Conflict increases locally, and front lines change as first one side and then the other make advances, mainly in the east and south of the country. New locations are attacked in the north as militias start using Belarus as a base for attack. Air strikes target a range of military and civilian infrastructure across Ukraine, particularly in Kyiv, frontline areas, and supply chain lines and power infrastructure in the west and north. Russian-backed fighters also employ guerilla-style operations in Kyiv and other major Ukrainian cities to undermine public confidence in the GOU's ability to ensure everyday safety far from the front lines. Sabotage warfare by both Russian and Ukrainian-backed movements increases in occupied areas and within Russia. The multiplication of non-state armed fighters leads to increased abuses on the local population on both sides of the front line. In Russian-controlled territories, the takeover of civilian infrastructure for military needs increases, and service provision becomes more chaotic. In Ukrainian-controlled areas, the population faces increased safety and security risks resulting from shelling and moving frontlines.

Overall, the Ukrainian economy remains stable as international financial assistance remains strong and the Grain Deal is renewed, largely mitigating a downturn in production and exports. Although Russian air strikes continue to cause significant infrastructure damage, recovery and reconstruction activities already underway in much of the country continue, driving local economic productivity. That said, insecurity, ERW contamination, and widespread damage in the east – including in retaken areas – make most economic activities unviable and prevent all but essential repairs to critical infrastructure in those areas. The increased presence of PMCs that enact their own policies arbitrarily and by force aggravates corruption and destroys pre-existing economic relationships, totally disrupting the economy in Russian-controlled areas.

The brutal characteristics of the warfare style of Russian PMCs capture international media attention, keeping the conflict in the headlines and ensuring the maintenance of international financial and military support to Ukraine. That said, voices of dissatisfaction, citing the unsustainability of supporting a long-drawn-out conflict, become increasingly loud in those countries.

Localised temporary displacement continues, with attacks targeting new areas and additional longer-term displacement from the eastern and southern conflict areas.

Triggers/assumptions

Conflict

- International military assistance (assets and funding) to Ukraine increases.
- International military assistance (assets and funding) to Russia increases.
- The number of Russian PMCs fighting in Ukraine increases.
- Russia targets energy infrastructure during winter.
- Belarus increases its involvement in the conflict.

Economic

- The need for civilian infrastructure repairs and service provision increases, putting more pressure on the Ukrainian budget.
- International funding to Ukraine increases.
- The Black Sea Grain Deal is continuously renewed.

Political

- Tensions and divisions/criticism increase within the Kremlin.
- Domestic criticism of Putin grows and becomes more vocal.
- Putin mobilises more PMCs to fragment the opposition and revive the Russian war strategy.
- Ukrainian Government and society remain unified around the war effort.
- International diplomatic attempts fail to end the conflict.

Impact and humanitarian consequences

As the conflict becomes increasingly dynamic, the information landscape becomes unreliable and population needs more difficult to assess. The number of people in need increases as ground conflict expands to new areas, affecting access to food markets, safe water, and healthcare. The prioritisation of military spending and repairs to critical infrastructure result in a net decrease in funds available for social protection. Household purchasing power decreases, and poverty increases. Agricultural land production slightly decreases throughout the country because of increased insecurity, ERW contamination, and labour shortages. Foreign economic investment slightly decreases as growing insecurity and supply chain disruptions cause some businesses to relocate from western Ukraine. Unemployment and poverty grow slightly. Frequent electricity and heating supply interruptions occur, especially in winter. Movement restrictions are imposed in some eastern and southern regions.

Ukrainian Government and society remain largely unified around the effort to resist the Russian invasion. That said, psychological trauma among both combatants and non-combatants increases, and while most of the population continues to adjust to life during prolonged conflict, hope for an outright military victory decreases. This, coupled with rising unemployment, causes some to leave the country.

New conflict areas: military and civilian casualties increase, as well as basic needs for food, water, and healthcare along with significant infrastructure damage. ERW-contaminated areas and severely damaged locations ('burnt no-man's lands') are widespread, particularly in the east and south of the country. As conflict strategies become more brutal, protection risks increase. Many are forced to move (mostly from Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia cities towards Poltava and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts), but most displacement occurs over short distances, pending return as soon as the ever-changing conflict permits. Some population groups are forced to redisplace from their new locations as front lines move. Needs for shelter, NFIs, and other assistance rise rapidly in places of displacement, at least temporarily. Unemployment in urban centres increases. Damage to infrastructure and supply lines and the outward movement of specialised staff severely constrain access to basic services, such

as healthcare, food, and clean water, for those staying in frontline areas – mostly the elderly, people with disabilities, and those living in poverty. Households struggle to find profitable economic activities, as most businesses close and access to land is reduced. Those who receive remittances are better off, but poverty grows, and access to basic goods is limited. The dynamic and shifting frontlines extremely limit humanitarian access, with local volunteer networks delivering most aid.

Retaken areas: the situation is similar as Scenario 1, although slightly more return movements occur where the level of damage permits exposing returnees to protection risks from ERW and the absence of essential services. A lack of funding, limited materials, and continued insecurity constrain repair and reconstruction.

Occupied areas: the situation is similar as Scenario 1, except already high protection risks increase further. Specific risks include GBV, arbitrary detention, torture, and the imposition of new rules and documentation requirements by armed groups on the population.

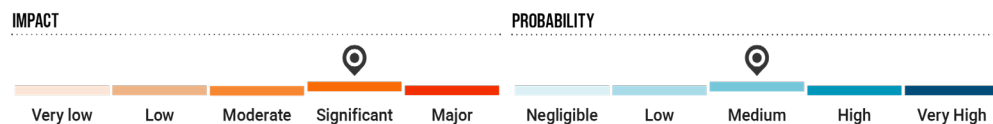
Humanitarian operations

Throughout the country, humanitarian assistance is inconsistent and scattered. Access depends on local conflict levels, but generally, humanitarian organisations face increased risks, as the security environment is uncertain and supply chains are disrupted. Violent events (such as kidnappings and the looting of convoys), difficult negotiations with multiple authorities, and an increasing mobilisation of staff for war efforts limit humanitarian capacity to operate. Interrupted supply chains result in market interruptions, shortages of goods, and increased reliance on very local supplies. The dynamic nature of the conflict also forces the focus of response plans and donor funding to be short-term and localised at the expense of recovery or longer-term development. Frequent changes in conflict dynamics constrain high-level negotiations to secure humanitarian corridors.

The heavy presence of ERW, destroyed infrastructure, and frequent changes in front lines hamper access to newly accessible areas. Confusion over required administrative permissions, the presence of checkpoints, and contradicting information coming from various authorities complicate access and response. High stress and trauma affect humanitarian staff, leading to high staff turnover, burnout, and operational strain.

In Russian-controlled areas, fragmented and changing authorities and high insecurity levels create a more anarchic situation, and humanitarian negotiations have precarious results. There is very limited political will from Russian authorities to accept the support of international humanitarian organisations, and Ukrainian and Western interventions remain negligible in these locations. Ukrainian authorities are unwilling to see facilitated access into Russian-controlled areas given the risk of aid diversion to support Russian forces.

3. Protracted



- Conflict levels and locations remain largely as at present
- The economy slowly declines
- Increasing economic hardship drives increased popular dissatisfaction with the GOU
- There is significant economic migration from Ukraine
- There is a steady rise in the number of people in and level of poverty
- Humanitarian funding decreases.

The overall level of conflict remains similar as early 2023, with occasional localised escalations as both sides seek to take or regain territory along the current front line. Areas of control do not change significantly, as territorial gains by both sides are minimal. Aerial attacks across Ukraine continue, occasionally causing significant damage and loss of life. Front lines remain highly shelled, and the GOU is unable to operate in insecure areas, diminishing access to essential services (electricity, roads, healthcare). These insecure and hard-to-reach areas receive less services and less humanitarian aid.

Despite continued international support, the economy – which had declined sharply in 2022 – struggles to recover, with inflation falling only slightly and remaining above 10%. Indirect losses suffered by Ukrainian businesses continue to prevent economic growth. International bilateral assistance remains sufficient to enable the Ukrainian military to prevent Russian advances, and the GOU continues to borrow significantly to fund the budget. Increases to pensions, social aid for displaced populations, and state salaries do not match inflation. This – together with the lack of military progress, the continuation of martial law, and the postponement of parliamentary elections – increases discontent and frustration within society, and the continuing conflict coupled with increasing economic hardships translate into expectations for the Parliament to perform better.

The majority of those displaced abroad do not return and become less likely to do so the longer they are away given the lack of incentives, increasing pressure on host countries. Only those unable to find employment or sufficient support abroad return. Ukrainians displaced from conflict areas in the east settle in other parts of the country where possible. At the same time, gradually decreasing economic prospects, the inability to revive businesses, and

the long-term stresses of war with no apparent prospects of improvement continue to drive migration among those who can afford it from all over Ukraine. The majority of those leaving Ukraine are young people seeking economic advancement, and the country's economy suffers from a brain drain.

Triggers/assumptions

Conflict

- The Ukrainian counteroffensive has a limited impact and does not change the front line significantly.
- International military assistance (assets and funding) to Ukraine does not increase significantly.
- Russian military capacity does not increase.
- Russia targets energy infrastructure during winter.

Economic

- The proportion of Ukrainian revenue spent on the military increases.
- International funding to Ukraine stabilises or decreases.
- The Black Sea Grain Deal is suspended.
- EU countries embargo of Ukrainian grain exports passing through the EU.
- Global economic recovery stalls.
- Global inflation increases.
- Other humanitarian crises emerge, increasing the competition for international humanitarian funding.

Political

- Ukrainian Government and society remain unified around the war effort.
- International diplomatic attempts fail to end the conflict.

Impact and humanitarian consequences

While the scope, scale, and type of needs do not change, there is an overall decline in people's wellbeing as problems become more entrenched and purchasing power decreases. The impact is uneven throughout the country, with a faster and more severe decline in the most conflict-affected eastern and southern regions. The degradation of critical infrastructure across the country affects the reliability of the electricity supply. Heating supply during winter is insufficient in many areas. Agricultural output does not increase significantly, as much land remains unproductive and labour shortages continue. Continued high inflation drives retail price increases. Despite bilateral grants to support the state budget, continuing military and damage repair expenditure prevents a sufficient increase in social and unemployment payments. Rising unemployment, the depletion of savings, and increasing prices drive a decline in living standards; the poverty rate continues to grow. Those with employment continue to earn, significantly widening the gap against those without income.

Social cohesion deteriorates in general, and support for the GOU wanes. Martial law continues to prevent men from leaving the country, prompting many to seek workarounds and increasing people-smuggling operations to get men out of Ukraine. Increasing numbers of women go to work in other European countries to send remittances home in place of male family members. General frustration grows as the impacts of the war on lives and livelihoods continue, while an end to the conflict and victory remains remote.

Active conflict areas/areas under Russian control: the severity of needs continues to be very high, and people fall into extreme and multidimensional poverty, increasingly adopting negative and crisis coping mechanisms. Healthcare provision is insufficient, the quality of drinking water deteriorates, and essential services become further disrupted. People in areas under Russian control continue to be more vulnerable to forced displacement and other serious human rights violations as Russian occupation authorities consolidate control. Social tensions increase as Russians settle in occupied areas, and the military administration enforces the Russification of all aspects of society.

Retaken areas: short-term needs, such as immediate shelter and food assistance, become longer term, including substantial repair to houses, durable housing solutions, and proper sources of livelihoods and mental health support. Those who can return to their homes do so, but this is dependent on the availability of sufficient services. Infrastructure damage and the absence of trained staff challenge access to services, shifting the need for mobile services and other forms of assistance. Unequal reconstruction funding allocation to areas that receive more media exposure delays the response in regions with critical needs. Agriculture-dependent livelihoods in the south and east are some of the most affected and will take many years to recover because of ERW contamination.

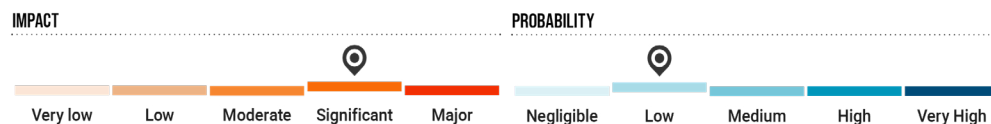
Western/centre/non-conflict areas: the general economic downturn particularly affects displaced people who remain in collective centres in the centre and west. The most vulnerable populations are mostly the urban poor from the four most affected eastern oblasts who have no safety nets and limited options to return home. A growing debate between those for and against negotiations challenges social cohesion.

Humanitarian operations

The focus of response plans and donor funding continues to be on hotspot locations, while needs remain unaddressed in other parts of the country. At the same time, reduced donor funding restricts activities towards direct humanitarian assistance and away from recovery and longer-term needs. Access to frontline and Russian-controlled areas remains highly constrained. Humanitarian delivery decreases in hard-to-reach areas, where the cost per beneficiary is high, and needs rise in areas with easier access. Donors continue to favour funding the UN and INGOs, hampering localisation.

The humanitarian operating environment remains fragile given persistent conflict in frontline areas and contamination by mines and unexploded ordnance. Humanitarian organisations in the southeast also struggle with staffing, as many professional and skilled workers (e.g. in healthcare and other essential services) leave.

4. Ceasefire



- An enforced ceasefire reduces active conflict
- Increased investment in many areas drives economic recovery
- Public opposition to the ceasefire fuels discontent with the GOU
- Social tensions rise
- Return movements drive the demand for housing repair and essential services provision in many areas.

Ukrainian territorial advances, a stretched Russian military capacity, and fears over the possible nuclear and global escalation of the war lead external and internal pressures to force Russia and Ukraine to a ceasefire and negotiations. While talks progress slowly and are fraught with difficulties, the ceasefire is largely successful, with only occasional breakdowns. Conflict levels decline, but forces from both sides remain at the front lines, and the situation remains tense. Access to occupied areas remains constrained. That said, some crossline movement becomes possible, and a limited number of humanitarian organisations is allowed to operate.

The Ukrainian economy slowly starts to recover as damage to infrastructure stops, exports start to increase, and military spending stabilises. The ceasefire allows economic activity to slowly recover, with more businesses opening. More reliable electricity supply and international funding for reconstruction activities further boost economic activity. On the other hand, international humanitarian assistance starts to decrease, as attention is diverted to other regions in the world. Economic recovery is also uneven, with oblasts in the west and Kyiv receiving more attention than frontline areas, where fears of a ceasefire failure limit reconstruction and investment. Demining efforts scale up, but much land, especially agricultural areas in the south, remains inaccessible. Tensions between regions increase with discussions around the prioritisation of areas for reconstruction and between immediate needs and long-term investments.

The enforced ceasefire leads to increased dissatisfaction within the Ukrainian population. A segment of the society is not satisfied about the negotiations, wanting no concessions to Russia and a continuation of the war. The movement of people from occupied countries challenges social cohesion. Criticism of the GOU grows, and opposition parties gain strength

as civil society expect significant reforms. Accusations of corruption and war crimes by the Ukrainian authorities surface, martial law continues (preventing elections), and conscription is not stopped, fuelling growing public dissatisfaction. Occasional protests force certain top officials to step down.

IDPs and refugees start to move back into less conflict-affected oblasts, increasing the need for housing, reconstruction, healthcare, and other essential services.

Triggers/assumptions

Conflict

- A Ukrainian counteroffensive succeeds in retaking significant parts of occupied territory.
- Russian military capacity does not increase.
- Russia uses biological and chemical agents as weapons.
- Russia increases nuclear coercion by moving its nuclear attack capacities closer to Ukrainian borders.

Economic

- International funding to Ukraine increases.
- Other humanitarian crises emerge, competing for international humanitarian funding.
- Sanctions have an increased effect on the Russian economy.

Political

- Tensions and divisions within the Kremlin increase, and Putin loses power.
- Ukrainian popular support for the war decreases.
- China and other aligned countries increase pressure on Russia to end the conflict.
- The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and EU increase pressure on Ukraine to end the conflict.
- The US/NATO re-evaluate conditions for ceasefire negotiations.

Impact and humanitarian consequences

The ceasefire precipitates a significant return of refugees and IDPs to government-controlled areas, even those more strongly affected by conflict. Returns are highest to rural areas.

Economic recovery in the country is unequal. Businesses in western, central, and northern macro regions attract significant private sector investment, driving employment and growth. Despite significant reconstruction funding to the south and east, which creates employment and improves local economies, the level of infrastructure damage and ERW contamination deter private sector investment and slow economic recovery. This aggravates the current economic divide between the southeastern oblasts and the remainder of Ukraine. While agricultural production recovers in many areas, it remains minimal along the front line and in areas under Russian control. While the need for high military spending continues, the pressure on the GOU to increase social payments, roll out reconstruction activities, deliver social protection services, and support returns increases. While many people benefit from new opportunities, others – especially those still displaced or with limited income – continue to struggle to meet basic needs. Despite the generally improving economic conditions, high unemployment in some areas and sectors continue to drive the movement of people out of the country, including through illegal routes that present significant protection and legal risks. At the same time, reconstruction efforts create the demand for low-skilled workers, producing employment opportunities for Ukrainians and encouraging the (re-)immigration of third-country nationals. IDPs in collective sites facing higher levels of systemic poverty, special health or disability needs, and limited income opportunities continue to require assistance. Unmet needs increase among urban populations not considered vulnerable, such as households on the edge of poverty and unemployed men.

Strained social cohesion and disagreements over the negotiations reopen political debates. As retaken territory is reintegrated, tensions around perceived collaboration with Russian forces occur.

Communities along the contact line continue to endure sporadic shelling and localised fighting and require medical assistance and evacuation. Living conditions continue to be difficult, as repairs to essential services are slow and high needs persist.

Recently retaken areas: newly accessible areas become a repair and reconstruction priority for the GOU, donors, and humanitarian organisations, but the presence of mines and ERW, as well as the scale of damage and destruction, constrains restoration efforts. These issues also delay the recovery of heavy industry in the east. As the rate of return is greater than the rate of job creation, unemployment increases in many areas of return. In the immediate aftermath of the ceasefire, basic services are minimal, infrastructure extensively damaged, and healthcare severely disrupted. While the priority for most is the reconstruction of homes

and livelihoods, WASH, health, and education needs are also high. Most schools are damaged or destroyed, and children have been out of in-person school for more than two years, with some even having switched to the Russian education system. Provisions are needed for children who have aged out of the system without completing their education. Remote areas in the east and south are more strongly affected. Agriculture-dependent livelihoods in the south and east are some of the most affected and will take many years to recover because of ERW contamination.

Occupied areas: few people are willing to go back to occupied territories despite reopened crossing points and easier/safer movement. Those who return are more likely to be poor and/or older and those with stronger ties to Russia. Younger people are less willing to move back because of uncertainty over the strength of the ceasefire, a lack of economic opportunities in those territories, and increased protection risks, particularly for military-aged men. Movement across the contact line via recognised checkpoints also comes with protection risks, such as arbitrary detention, mistreatment, and documentation requirements. Priority needs, especially in areas closer to contact lines, are basic supplies, WASH, healthcare, cash, and shelter assistance, especially during winter.

Western and central areas: critical infrastructure is rebuilt over time, and water, gas, and electricity services are delivered to the population. In larger cities, such as Kyiv and Lviv, higher numbers of IPDs remain, especially if they have integrated and found new employment, reducing overall return movement.

Humanitarian operations

While the humanitarian logistics landscape in the country is more enabling, regained access to occupied and retaken territories shifts the focus of international humanitarians and their donors towards those areas. As a result, those organisations position insufficient resources to cover remaining needs, while development-funded recovery activities start up. This leads to gaps in immediate economic recovery, livelihood creation, social protection, mental health support, GBV support, and winterisation across the country in the short term. As humanitarian operations scale down and become more focused, services and needs that the GOU is unable to cover fall to development responders. Tensions emerge within the humanitarian community as many local responders focus on meeting needs in more accessible areas, whereas international responders push for a focus on the most affected areas, which continue to be hard to access. There is also growing discussion around the distinctions between humanitarian and development aid.

Russian authorities grant very specific permits for a few international organisations to operate in the occupied territories, restricting their geographic and sectoral focus.

COMPOUNDING FACTORS

Irrespective of which scenario(s) the actual future resembles, several other factors have the potential to significantly affect basic needs.

Severe weather

Cold weather: Ukraine typically faces extreme winters, with heavy storms and snowfall and temperatures falling as low as -20° C in some areas (WHO 28/12/2022). A harsh 2023 winter would have consequences on military operations, as it would make territorial progress slower for both sides (NYT 12/11/2022). Very low temperatures would have a harsh impact on the population, particularly the displaced and others living in inadequate housing conditions, by increasing health risks, such as hypothermia and frostbite; worsening respiratory and chronic health conditions; and deteriorating the general wellbeing of people. The impacts would be particularly relevant in case of continued displacement and Russian attacks on power, heating, and health infrastructure (WHO 28/12/2022).

Hot weather: heatwaves during summer could lead to wildfires, potential industrial accidents, and negative direct health impacts on people (GFDRR accessed 24/05/2023; WHO 01/06/2018).

Disease epidemic

Ukraine suffers from low immunisation rates. A highly transmissible infectious disease, such as cholera, measles, or vaccine-derived poliovirus, or the uncontrolled spread of a viral respiratory infection, such as a coronavirus, in areas where war efforts have overstretched healthcare services would have a severe impact on the population's health. A severe epidemic would also have an impact on the available workforce, with consequences on service provision and supply chains, including for humanitarian operations (WHO 07/07/2022).

Nuclear warfare

There are different ways in which Russia could escalate their nuclear warfare, with extensive consequences on the development of the conflict and severe impacts on the population.

Increased nuclear coercion and signalling. The movement of Russian tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus following the signing of an official agreement can be seen as a clear signal to Ukraine and NATO. Russia could adopt additional strategies that would further force NATO to scale up nuclear deterrence strategies and intensify international diplomatic

conversations. Increasing coercion could also escalate the intensity of the conflict following a response from Ukraine (Reuters 26/06/2023; NATO 22/11/2022; BBC 25/09/2022).

The use of a tactical nuclear weapon either in territories under active conflict or in western Ukraine to disturb supply chains and prevent weapon imports from Poland. This would severely escalate the war (including a possible nuclear escalation or the deployment of armed forces by NATO countries), with extremely severe immediate and long-term impacts on the affected populations and environment (Russia Matters 17/05/2023).

Destabilisation of any of Ukraine's four nuclear power plants. Of particular concern is the plant in the occupied territory in Zaporizhzhia, the biggest nuclear plant in Europe with higher uranium levels than a nuclear missile. Should the plant suffer a safety failure leading to the discharge of nuclear radiation, the impact could be much worse than a tactical nuclear weapon. The consequent contamination of a large area, possibly including neighbouring countries, would have immediate and extremely severe impacts on the population, such as massive casualties, displacement, and shortages of safe food and water, as well as long-term negative consequences on health and the environment (UN 22/05/2023; Al Jazeera 11/08/2022).

The use of nuclear weapons or destabilisation of a nuclear plant would effectively result in Scenario 1 or significant conflict escalation.

Emergence of large-scale corruption and/or International Humanitarian Law violations by Ukraine

Since February 2022, Ukraine has faced several corruption cases that the GOU has quickly addressed and had led to the dismissal of five regional governors, four deputy ministers, and two heads of government agencies (Wilson Center 13/02/2023; TWP 19/06/2023). A large-scale scandal involving the Ukrainian Central Government or the military resulting from corruption or human rights/IHL violations would affect international support. The military, political, and financial support to the country, including for humanitarian funding, could decrease. This would halt some businesses and reconstruction activities, with negative consequences on household economies, while demands would increase for social assistance. The GOU would have difficulties in guaranteeing social assistance programmes, and reduced funding would further limit humanitarian assistance. Disappointment among the population could also lead to louder voices of discontent, with a potential effect on the country's social cohesion (AI 04/08/2022; OHCHR 24/03/2023; Time 24/01/2023).

New conflict involving major global powers, such as China, the EU, or the US

The outbreak of conflict elsewhere in the world (such as conflict between China and Taiwan) involving the major global powers and/or supporters of either Ukraine or Russia would divert attention from Ukraine. While NATO countries are expected to continue to support Ukraine militarily, the level of support could diminish, and financial assistance could reduce, resulting in a sharp decline in Ukraine's economy with impacts on the population's capacity to meet needs (The Guardian 02/04/2023).

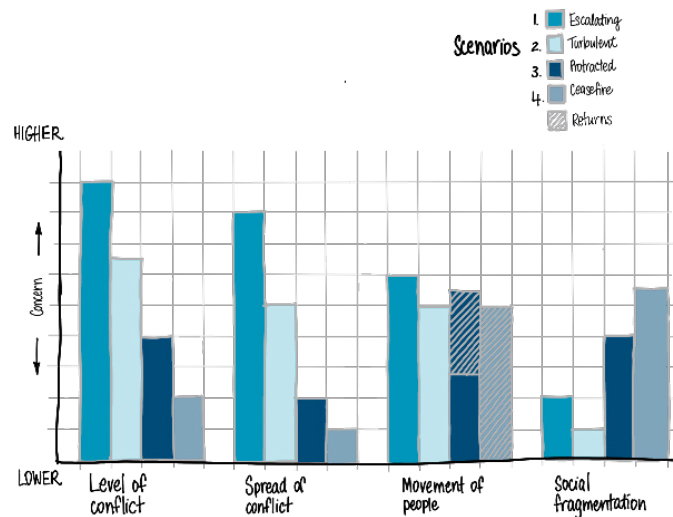
International political and economic developments reduce support for Ukraine

International support for Ukraine has been generally high and stable since the beginning of the Russian invasion. That said, shifts in political positioning triggered, for example, by the upcoming Taiwanese presidential elections in January 2024 and the run to the US presidential elections scheduled for November that year could have detrimental effects on this support (FT 18/05/2023: FT 05/01/2023). Social and political war fatigue instigated by protracted conflict and the presence of large numbers of Ukrainian refugees could lead to an increasingly anti-war rhetoric among allied European countries. This could particularly affect the elections for the European Parliament in June 2024 and the Polish elections in Autumn 2023 (FT 05/01/2023). The waning of European and international support for Ukraine could have consequences, such as the reduction of its military and financial capacity, as well as more difficulties in the cross-border movement of people, goods, and military equipment. The decrease in support could also affect the protection scheme for Ukrainians abroad (Al Jazeera 24/02/2023).

In case of a global economic recession and/or substantial rise in inflation with negative effects on the economies of the countries supporting Ukraine, financial and military support from those countries could wane as they increasingly focus on internal dynamics (Al Jazeera 04/11/2022).

Although changes in the current political landscape are not expected, both Ukraine (whose elections cannot be held during martial law) and Russia have scheduled presidential elections for 2024. A surprising outcome in any of those ballots could have significant impacts in the development of the conflict (FT 05/01/2023).

SCENARIO IMPACT COMPARISON

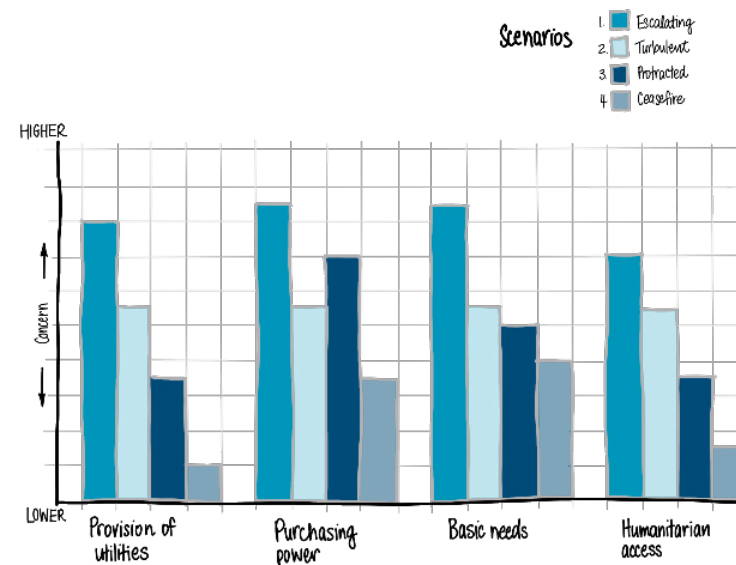


Source: ACAPS

The above diagrams illustrate the differing levels of concern certain issues may have in each scenario. It is important to note that these are summary indications and that the actual concerns will vary by scenario.

Level of conflict. Conflict is of high concern in both the escalating and turbulent scenarios, but in the first scenario, it is more widespread across the country, and the use of chemical or biological weapons is envisioned. In the turbulent scenario, intense offensives and counteroffensives are focused largely along the current front lines, although some subversive attacks occur deeper inside both Ukraine and Russia and air strikes become more widespread at times.

While the escalating and turbulent scenarios both envision significant displacement, it is more localised and shorter-term in the latter. In the ceasefire scenario, significant return movement is seen as active conflict decreases, although the presence of ERW limits safe returns to some areas. The protracted scenario foresees small-scale localised displacement and some limited return movement.



Source: ACAPS

Social cohesion/fragmentation is seen as closely linked to a sense of progression in the war; a strong spring offensive will likely unite the country even in the event of a subsequent Russian offensive. That said, a sense that victory is receding – either as the conflict escalates across the country or continues with no significant success – or steps to end the conflict that may involve seceding territory would cause significant social unrest, including significant protests that could result in a change of government.

Utility provision is closely linked to the level and spread of conflict. In both the escalating and turbulent scenarios, the lack of access to utilities, especially electricity in winter, is of high concern. That said, it is more likely to affect people in the former, where the targeting of infrastructure is more intense and the ability to effect repairs more limited.

Purchasing power decreases for most of the population in the first and third scenarios, where the economy (and non-military bilateral assistance) declines and inflation continues. In the turbulent scenario, purchasing power decreases significantly for those directly affected by the conflict, while others, especially the employed, fare better.

Basic needs increase in all scenarios, but the type and locations of those in need change frequently in the turbulent scenario. The protracted scenario sees increased needs for many who are unlikely to qualify for assistance.

METHODOLOGY

ACAPS uses the chain of plausibility approach to scenario-building, as outlined in our [guidance note](#). ACAPS uses the chain of plausibility approach to scenario-building, as outlined in our [guidance note](#). While ACAPS staff normally use and advocate face-to-face workshops with context experts to proceed through a structured process of scenario-building, these scenarios were, by necessity, developed through remote working sessions, discussions, and document exchanges. The sessions involved:

- agreeing on the research question and current situation and mapping a wide array of variables that affect displacement and humanitarian access
- creating miniscenarios from different combinations of assumptions on how the main variables might change over 2023–2024
- reviewing and further developing the four most interesting scenarios.

Key terms used throughout the scenario-building process and the report are:

Variable: a development or event likely to cause a change in a situation.

Assumption: the direction that a variable can take (i.e. increase, decrease).

Scenario: a verbal picture of a possible future state based on a number of assumptions (which may be more or less probable) as to how certain key variables will change. Scenarios describe both the future state and the impact and consequences on people and society.

Triggers: events that, should they occur, may contribute to a scenario materialising.

Compounding factor: a development that can occur in parallel with any of the above scenarios and which have the potential to significantly change the nature of humanitarian response.

It should be noted that a combination, but not necessarily all, of the triggers are required to reach any given scenario.

The estimated caseload for each scenario is an estimate of the additional caseload that could result should that scenario unfold. They are designed to give an order of magnitude only and are based on current displacement and refugee return trends.

The estimated probability is subjective and based on the views of individual participants. It is most usefully used as a guide in comparing the relative probabilities of the scenarios.

THANK YOU

These scenarios were developed in May 2023 with input from 33 other humanitarian or academic organisations/independent experts, who contributed via participation in online workshops, bilateral meetings, and/or reviews. ACAPS would like to thank all the organisations that provided input to these scenarios.

ANNEX A: CURRENT SITUATION – AS AT JUNE 2023

Ukraine, located in eastern Europe, is one of the largest successors to the Soviet Union in terms of population, territory, and economy (CRS 21/10/2021). Ukrainians' vote for independence in 1991 (with 92% of the population voting in favour) helped bring down the Soviet Union. Ukraine held much of its agricultural production, defence industries, and military, including the Black Sea Fleet and some of its nuclear arsenal (CFR accessed 31/23/05/2023). Since independence, Ukraine has made halting but significant progress in establishing democratic institutions and practices and a free market economy. That said, it has also struggled with serious governance issues and internal divisions while confronting attempts by Russia to influence Ukrainian politics and claim territory.

While facing internal leadership turmoil, Ukraine faced a significant sovereignty crisis in 2014 as Russia annexed Crimea and instigated an armed conflict in Donbas region. Since then, conflict has continued with Russia and PMCs, notably the Wagner Group. The crisis escalated in February 2022 when Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine (DW accessed 27/06/31/05/2023; Atlantic Council 14/02/2023). The invasion has caused over 24,000 civilian casualties and the displacement of more than 11 million people (OHCHR 19/05/2023; UNHCR accessed 13/06/2023; IOM 23/05/2023).

Demographics: according to the 2001 census, the majority of the population identified as ethnically Ukrainian (78%) (State Statistics Committee of Ukraine accessed 31/03/05/2023). People identifying as ethnic Russians were the largest minority group, representing 17% of the population (60% in Crimea). Other significant minority groups included Crimean Tatars – many of whom were able to return to Crimea after independence from forcible displacement since 1944 (Minority Rights accessed DD/MM/2023; Council of Europe 18/04/2013; BBC 18/05/2020).

Politics: since independence, Ukraine has faced significant challenges in transitioning to democracy and a market economy. The country has suffered from significant corruption, competition between and the control of oligarchs over resources, tendencies towards authoritarianism at the executive level, and the weak rule of law (Chatham House 24/11/2021 and 24/09/2018; Wilson Center 05/11/2020). Russia regarded Ukraine as part of its so-called sphere of influence and kept interfering with Ukrainian domestic politics. After Ukraine's independence, Russia retained military presence in the country with its Black Sea Fleet stationed in Crimea, weaponised its oil and gas supply, and launched extensive propaganda and disinformation. Russia also constantly questioned Ukraine's territorial integrity in violation of bilateral treaties, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe principles, and the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 (UN 05/12/1994; War on the Rocks 10/06/2015).

In 2004, through peaceful mass protests known as the Orange Revolution, Ukrainians prevented Viktor Yanukovich, the Kremlin-backed candidate, from winning the presidency

after clear electoral fraud (Atlantic Council 22/11/2020; Wilson Center 08/03/2005). In the following years, Ukraine made some progress in holding free elections and consolidating democracy, but political and economic reforms began to backslide after Yanukovich took the presidential office in 2010 (Atlantic Council 22/11/2020). Yanukovich's attempts to centralise power in the executive branch led to a significant decline in freedom (Freedom House 07/10/2011).

In 2014, under pressure from the Kremlin, President Yanukovich suddenly reversed his position and decided not to sign an EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. This sparked mass protests across the country, which ended after three months when state police units fired on protestors, killing 100 people and leading to Yanukovich fleeing the country (Defense Priorities accessed 31/23/05/2023). Russia also accelerated its efforts to influence Ukrainian public opinion, while Ukrainian NGOs, independent media, and the State worked to oppose Russian disinformation (Wilson Center 19/01/2021; Vox Ukraine 22/06/2020).

Taking advantage of the political turmoil, Russia occupied Crimea and orchestrated an armed seizure of power in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (Piechal 17/06/2015). From 2014, the Russia military and PMCs would be directly involved in the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine (Mitrokhin 08/2014; DW 16/12/2021; Źochowski et al. 03/09/2014; Atlantic Council 14/02/2023). Intense fighting in Donbas would continue until February 2015, eventually transforming into low-intensity conflict. By the end of 2021, the conflict had already resulted in over two million IDPs and over 14,000 fatalities (Chatham House 18/10/2017 and 24/11/2021; Wilson Center 05/11/2020; Reuters 23/08/2022; DW 23/02/2022; PBS 22/02/2022). Russia had also constantly kept thousands of troops staged near Ukraine's border since 2014, threatening further invasion (Radio Svoboda 17/04/2021).

Ukraine strengthened its economic ties with the EU, doubling its exports to Europe, while exports to Russia fell by 80% and Russian gas acquisitions decreased (Chatham House 24/11/2021). In 2017, an agreement between Ukraine and the EU on free trade and visa-free travel came into force, and the US increased its military aid.

In 2019, Volodymyr Zelensky was elected President, and his Government embarked on anti-corruption reforms with an emphasis on ending the war in Donbas. By 2020, the Government was facing significant internal turmoil resulting from corruption scandals and the COVID-19 crisis (Euromaidan 13/01/2023; Wilson Center 14/04/2020).

In the same year, Ukraine acquired NATO Enhanced Opportunities Partner status and applied to join in 2021 but was not granted membership (NATO accessed 31/11/05/2023).

Conflict: on 24 February 2022, Russia began its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The 880-kilometre front line has remained mostly static since the last Ukrainian counteroffensive in southern Kherson oblast in mid-November 2022 (Jamestown 07/12/2022; Live UA Map accessed 04/05/2023). It divides Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia oblasts between areas

under Ukrainian government control and occupied areas (ISW 15/08/2022; NPR accessed 31/04/05//2022). Besides the Russian armed forces, numerous Russian PMCs – among which the Wagner group is the most prominent – are active in the conflict (ISW 26/04/2023; inews.co.uk 02/05/2023; CSIS accessed 19/06/2023 03/05/2020; Al Jazeera 12/06/2023).

As at June 2023, ground conflict remained active in the southeast of Ukraine (ISW 15/08/2022). Following months of the Russian offensive in Donetsk oblast, the Russian forces and PMCs took control of Bakhmut city in May, and Ukraine officially announced the start of the long-expected Ukrainian counter-offensive in June (NBC 08/06/2023). At the same time, missile and drone attacks continued across Ukraine. May 2023 saw an increase in the frequency and intensity of attacks on Kyiv city (ISW 20/05/2023 and 14/05/2023).

International support to Ukraine: overall, 54 countries have provided military support to Ukraine through the Ukraine Defense Contact Group (US DOD 14/02/2023). NATO has been supporting Ukraine with military equipment, munitions, and personnel training. While support for Ukraine is strong across all NATO countries, domestic political disagreements over the level of support to Ukraine are emerging in some countries.

International support to Russia: the Belarusian armed forces are not directly involved, but Belarus allows Russia to launch attacks against Ukraine from its territory. At the same time, the defence-industrial complex of Belarus is involved in the repair of Russian equipment damaged during hostilities (NV 12/10/2022). Since December 2022, Iran has also provided support for Russia, delivering artillery shells, drones, and military instructors (ISW 19/04/2023). Russia could be receiving support from allies as far afield as North Korea (BBC 30/03/2023; AsiaTimes 04/09/2022).

Damage to infrastructure: as at March 2023, based on the replacement costs of the GOU, the Russian invasion had caused an estimated USD 140 billion in damage to Ukraine's infrastructure. The most affected sectors are housing, road infrastructure, and productive assets. Education facilities, agricultural land, and energy infrastructure have also been affected (KSE 22/03/2023). Ukraine's power, gas, and heating infrastructure has also been heavily damaged, and its generating capacity has decreased by more than 60%. Over 1,000 targeted attacks on the energy infrastructure have been reported by the UK Government mostly affecting Donetsk, Kharkiv, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia oblasts (UNDP 05/04/2023; WB 12/04/2023).

The targeting of electrical infrastructure was aimed at disrupting Ukraine's heat and electricity provision during the cold winter months and led to rolling blackouts that hampered economic production (The Guardian 19/10/2022; WB 20/03/2023). That said, by April 2023, the provision of electricity had become more reliable. Ukraine has since been generating enough electricity to support its domestic needs and resume the sale of electricity to neighbouring countries (AP 11/04/2023).

There have been over 900 attacks on Ukraine's healthcare system, and over 420 schools have been destroyed (Insecurity Insight 12/06/2023; PI 02/03/2023).

Landmine contamination: before February 2022, Ukraine was already one of the most mine-contaminated countries in the world (UN 05/04/2021). Since the launch of the Russian invasion, landmine contamination has risen tenfold, with around 180,000 km² of contaminated land in the country (30% of the total land in the country) (HRW 13/06/2023; STC 04/04/2023; The HALO Trust 17/05/2023).

Humanitarian needs/impacts on the population: since the launch of the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the number of people in need of humanitarian aid had increased from approximately three million to nearly 18 million by the end of 2022. This number has been mostly stable since (OCHA 10/02/2023). As at 19 June 2023, the conflict had killed more than 9,000 civilians and injured more than 15,500 (OHCHR 19/05/2023).

The high level of violence has had impacts throughout society, leaving many with precarious access to food, water, healthcare, education, safe shelter, and dignified livelihoods. In frontline and occupied territories in the east and south of the country, particularly Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, the population has further exhausted their coping capacities, already limited by the years of fighting in the region. Essential services, such as electricity and heating, have been also severely disrupted (OCHA 10/02/2023; PAX 21/12/2022).

Women and children are especially vulnerable to protection risks resulting from the conflict and mass displacement, although access to protection services remains limited in frontline and newly accessible areas. Besides the risks of trafficking, abuse, sexual harassment, and domestic violence, many women in Ukraine are coping with an increased burden of care despite reduced incomes because of the war. Throughout Ukraine, children face severe disruptions to education given the damage to and destruction of schools as well as access challenges from having to rely on an internet connection to continue their schooling (OCHA 28/12/2023). Children, particularly those in institutions, have been at risk of deportation to Russia (OCHA 28/12/2023).

Humanitarian operations: when conflict escalated on 24 February 2022, many international humanitarians struggled to respond quickly to the crisis. Strong government leadership, robust civil society organisations, and volunteers enabled a rapid local response to the humanitarian crisis. Overall, there has been a massive expansion in the total number of responders involved in the humanitarian response in Ukraine (ACAPS 25/05/2022). The number of humanitarian organisations operating in Ukraine had increased almost sixfold, from about 120 at the beginning of the war to 700 by the end of 2022, 60% of which were local NGOs. In areas close to the frontlines, assistance mostly relied on the support of local community and volunteer groups (OCHA 10/02/2023).

Between March–December 2022, humanitarian organisations reached nearly 16 million people with critical assistance in Ukraine (OCHA 10/02/2023). By the end of April 2023, 5.4 million people (49% of those targeted) had received humanitarian assistance across the country (OCHA 26/05/2023).

Economy and purchasing power: the Russian invasion of Ukraine has affected the Ukrainian economy in several ways, largely driven by the damage and destruction of productive assets and critical infrastructure, the displacement of staff and business owners, and supply chain disruptions. Ukraine's GDP decreased by 29.1% in 2022, although the contraction was less than expected, as the Black Sea Grain deal and the return of migrants helped support economic activity in the third quarter. At the same time, despite adaptation to the new conditions, damage to the power grid has worsened production constraints, hindering recovery (WB 20/03/2023; Ukrstat accessed 28/03/2023). GDP growth is expected to reach 0.5% in 2023, with war-related economic activities and a recovering domestic service sector offsetting a decline in agricultural activities and stagnation in the metal and mining sectors (WB accessed 13/06/2023).

Figure 1. Ukraine GDP by quarter, year on year



Source: WB et al. (23/03/2023)

Household income and employment: displacement and large-scale destruction in the conflict-affected areas have affected access to employment for IDPs and the small and medium-sized businesses in the areas most affected by conflict. Mine contamination and supply chain disruptions have also affected businesses in frontline and newly accessible areas.

The conflict has caused a 15-year setback in poverty reduction goals (WB accessed 13/06/2023). The estimated poverty rate in Ukraine increased from 5.5% in 2021 to 24.1% in 2022 as a result of displacement, inflation, and decreased household income (WB 20/03/2023). Estimated household incomes have not shown any improvements since February 2022 (NBU 05/04/2023).

The unemployment rate increased from 8.9% in 2021 to 24.5% by the end of 2022 but is forecast to decrease to 18% in 2023 (Kyiv Post 30/12/2022; NBU 04/05/2023). As at March 2023, 36% of the population (51% of IDPs) who had lost jobs since the invasion remained unemployed (NBU 05/04/2023).

In July 2022, the National Bank of Ukraine devalued the exchange rate to improve the competitiveness of Ukrainian exports and slow the decrease of reserves in currencies such as the US dollar and the euro (The Kyiv Independent 21/07/2022; ACTED et al. 12/09/2022; NBU 05/04/2023).

Inflation has increased prices on all consumer goods, placing further strains on households that already have to cope with decreased income opportunities (WB 20/03/2023). As at March 2023, the inflation rate was at 24.9% year-on-year. It had slightly decreased since the start of 2023, and the increase in food prices had slowed down to around 27% year-on-year after peaking at over 35% in October and November 2022 (NBU 05/04/2023).

The agricultural sector, which accounted for 11% of the GDP, employed 17% of the workforce, and accounted for 41% of exports prior to the invasion, has been significantly affected. Planting area decreased by 20% in 2022 compared to 2021, and grain and oilseed exports decreased by 37% year-on-year. Increased input prices has also contributed to a further decrease in agricultural sector incomes. A reduced workforce and contamination of 5 million hectares by mines and unexploded ordnance are expected to result in a further decreased harvest in 2023. The impact will be unequal across the country, as all available land was sowed in western oblasts, while only 26% of land was sowed in eastern oblasts (WB 20/03/2023; Euroactiv 28/03/2023).

Ukraine's Black Sea ports, which account for 90% of the country's agricultural exports, were blockaded from the start of the full-scale invasion until the Black Sea Grain Initiative came into effect on 22 July 2022 (UNCTAD 23/09/2022). In February 2023, grain exports surpassed the three-year pre-invasion average for the first time since February 2022 thanks to the continued use of the Black Sea corridor and improved export capacity via other routes towards Europe (NBU 05/04/2023). The initiative was last extended 18 May 2023 for two months, but the likelihood of Russia agreeing to a further extension is unclear (UN 18/03/2023; Reuters 17/05/2023).

International funding: for the first year of the conflict, Ukraine received over USD 100 billion in funding commitments from national governments, multilateral organisations, and foundations such as the EU, the US, the World Bank, and the IMF (Devex accessed 23/06/2023). On 31 March 2023, the IMF's Executive Board approved a financial arrangement for Ukraine amounting to USD 15.6 billion over the next four years as part of an international USD 115 billion financial package for the same period (IMF 31/03/2023).

Population movements: under martial law, men ages 18–60 are not allowed to leave Ukraine.

IDPs: as at May 2023, IOM estimated that there were around five million IDPs in the country. The number of IDPs peaked at seven million in May 2022 and has steadily declined since August. With around 1.6 million IDPs, the east hosts the highest number of displaced people, mainly located in Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts. The majority of registered IDPs are from Donetsk, Kharkiv, and Luhansk oblasts (IOM 23/05/2023). Protracted displacement is more prevalent, with 58% of IDPs being displaced for six months or more. IDPs' livelihoods have been heavily affected, with one in four IDPs surveyed by IOM in January reporting social assistance as their primary source of income (IOM 02/02/2023).

There are more than 7,000 collective sites for displaced people distributed around Ukraine (CCCM Cluster accessed 13/06/2023). A survey of 1,100 collective sites, hosting more than 60,000 people, found out that 21% of those displaced were children. Local authorities manage most of the sites, and 40% are located in educational facilities. Food products are among the most urgent needs, and most collective sites need some degree of repairs, including for WASH-related facilities. While some people transit through collective sites, moving to alternative accommodations within three months, most stay longer (CCCM Cluster/REACH 10/05/2023). Many of those currently in collective centres for the longer term are the elderly and people with disabilities, and larger families.

Refugees: as at June 2023, over six million people were displaced outside of Ukraine (UNHCR accessed 23/06/2023). Most people left during the first six months following the invasion (by August 2022, seven million people had left), mostly to Europe. Since then, the increase has been much more gradual. According to UNHCR, 1.2 million people are displaced into Russia (UNHCR accessed 23/06/2022). People displaced into Russia undergo screening, with many forcibly displaced into Russia at risk of also being detained (HRW 01/09/2022; ICC 17/03/2023).

Returnees: the return of IDPs and refugees back to their places of residence started as early as April 2022. As at May 2023, 4.7 million people had moved back to their areas of residence. Most returns are to large cities, mainly to Kyiv oblast and Kyiv city (1.8 million people) (IOM 23/05/2023).

ANNEX B: SCENARIO TRIGGERS

Scenario 1 = **escalating** Scenario 2 = **turbulent** Scenario 3 = **protracted** Scenario 4 = **ceasefire**

Conflict	S1	S2	S3	S4
A successful Ukrainian counteroffensive retakes significant parts of occupied territory.	X			X
A Ukrainian counteroffensive has limited impact and does not change the front line significantly.			X	
International military assistance (assets and funding) to Ukraine increases.	X	X		
International military assistance (assets and funding) to Ukraine does not increase significantly.			X	
International military assistance (assets and funding) to Russia increases.	X	X		
Russian military capacity does not increase.			X	X
The number of Russian PMCs fighting in Ukraine increases.		X		
Biological and chemical agents are used as weapons.	X			X
Russia increases nuclear coercion by moving its nuclear attack capacities closer to the Ukrainian borders.	X			X
Russia targets energy infrastructure during winter.	X	X	X	
Belarus enters the conflict directly with Russia against Ukraine.	X			
Belarus is used as a base for PMC attacks to Ukraine.		X		
Economic				
The proportion of Ukrainian revenue spent on the military increases.	X		X	
Infrastructure repair and services provision costs increase.	X	X		
International funding to Ukraine increases.	X	X		X
International funding to Ukraine stabilises or decreases.			X	
The Black Sea Grain Deal is continuously renewed.		X		
The Black Sea Grain Deal is suspended.	X		X	
EU countries embargo Ukrainian grain exports via their territory.			X	
Global economic recovery stalls.	X		X	
Global inflation increases.	X		X	
Other humanitarian crises emerge, competing for international humanitarian funding.			X	X
Sanctions have an increased effect on the Russian economy.				X
Tensions and divisions within the Kremlin increase, and Putin loses power.	X	X		X
Domestic criticism of Putin grows and becomes more vocal.	X	X		
Putin mobilises more PMCs to fragment the opposition and revive the Russian war strategy.		X		
Ukrainian Government and society remain unified around the war effort.	X	X	X	
Ukrainian popular support for the war decreases.				X

Political

International diplomatic attempts fail to end the conflict.	X	X	X	
China and other aligned countries increase pressure on Russia to end the conflict.				X
NATO/EU increases pressure on Ukraine to end the conflict.				X
The US/NATO re-evaluate conditions for ceasefire negotiations.				X