

**Appeal to the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, heads of parliamentary factions and groups of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of the IX convocation to include in the agenda of the plenary session of the Verkhovna Rada and support the Draft Law on Amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons” regarding the payment of housing allowance based on the assessment of the needs and degree of integration of an internally displaced person at the place of his/her actual residence, No. 10382 dated 28.12.2023**

As a result of the Russian aggression, millions of Ukrainians have been forced to leave their homes. There are currently 4.9 million people registered as internally displaced persons, including more than 1 million children.

To help people in this difficult time, a number of legislative and other regulatory acts were adopted.

By Resolution No. 3535-IX dated 21.12.2023 of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the Temporary Special Commission of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on the Protection of Property and Non-Property Rights of Internally Displaced Persons and Other Persons Affected by the Armed Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine (hereinafter - the Commission) was established.

One of the most effective benefits for internally displaced persons is the accommodation allowance, which is currently regulated by acts of the Cabinet of Ministers, in particular by resolutions No. 332 dated 20.03.2022, No. 709 dated 11.07.2023, No. 94 dated 26.01.2024, and the amount of this allowance for persons with disabilities and children is UAH 3,000; for other persons - UAH 2,000 per month. As of February 2024, the number of internally displaced persons receiving accommodation allowance is about 2.6 million.

At the same time, the Government's decision dated 11.07.2023 established the payment of accommodation allowance for only 6 months without automatic renewal, which significantly worsens the situation of IDPs. The Commission has already noted in its decision dated 11.01.2024 that the current procedure for the payment of accommodation allowance for internally displaced persons is extremely complicated, burdensome in terms of volume and style of presentation, extremely difficult to understand not only for internally displaced persons, but also sometimes subject to different application by different government agencies. Constant changes to this procedure negatively affect the recipients of this assistance and create uncertainty in the future for internally displaced persons.

After March 1, 2024, payments will automatically continue for only about 800,000 IDPs, as this category includes only pensioners with pensions up to UAH 9444, persons with disabilities of Group I or II, seriously ill children, children with disabilities, orphans, and persons deprived of parental care under the age of 23. Other IDPs, many of whom are unable to work, will have to collect the necessary certificates again and apply to government agencies to continue receiving payments. At the same time, unfortunately, the accommodation allowance will be awarded again only for 6 months and the suspension of its payment will not take into account the assessment of the satisfaction of the needs of internally displaced persons, the level of their integration and socialization in new communities, as well as the termination of martial law.

Taking into account the above, as well as the statement of the President of Ukraine at the final press conference dated 19.12.2023 on the non-decrease of assistance for IDPs, the members of the Commission submitted to the Verkhovna Rada the Draft Law of Ukraine “On Amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons” regarding the payment of accommodation allowance taking into account the assessment of the satisfaction of the needs and the degree of integration of an internally displaced person at the place of his or her actual residence” (reg. No. 10382 dated 28.12.2023).

This draft law provides for a mandatory approval by the Government of the procedure for assessing the needs of internally displaced persons and establishing the degree of their integration at the place of actual residence. Until the appropriate degree of integration of an internally displaced person into new communities is achieved or until the end of martial law, the draft introduces clear grounds for not assigning or termination of payment of such monthly allowance, namely:

- returning to the occupied territory or to the territory where hostilities are taking place, travelling abroad without valid reasons for a long period of time, submitting false information;

- availability of housing from 13.65 m<sup>2</sup> per person but not less than 25 m<sup>2</sup> - per family on the territory controlled by Ukraine or receiving compensation for damaged or destroyed housing from the state budget;

- purchase of a car or other movable property worth at least 30 minimum wages (for cars over 8 years old - at least 50 minimum wages) or having such an amount on a bank deposit account, or purchase of real estate worth at least 50 minimum wages;

- average monthly income of 2 minimum wages per person;

- staying on full state support in appropriate boarding schools or places of detention;

- failure to take measures to employ able-bodied persons, which is extremely important for engaging internally displaced persons in work to bring our victory closer.

If financially feasible, the amount of accommodation allowance for IDPs may be increased by a decision of the Cabinet of Ministers, and the criteria for termination of payments may be relaxed.

The Verkhovna Rada Committee on Human Rights, De-occupation and Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine, National Minorities and Interethnic Relations (hereinafter - the Committee) at its meeting on February 9, 2024 considered draft law Reg. No. 10382 dated 28.12.2023, and recommended that the Verkhovna Rada, following the results of consideration in the first reading, adopt as a basis.

In view of the above, we ask you to take the necessary measures to immediately include in the agenda of the plenary session of the Verkhovna Rada the Draft Law on Amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons” regarding the payment of accommodation allowance taking into account the assessment of the needs and degree of integration of an internally displaced person at the place of his/her actual residence, No. 10382 dated 28.12.2023, and to support its adoption in the first reading as a basis.