

TEMPORARY SPECIAL COMMISSION
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

5, M. Hrushevskiy Str., Kyiv, 01008, Ukraine www.rada.gov.ua

June 19, 2024

DECISION

**On the Activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Refugees in Ukraine**

The onset of full-scale armed aggression on February 24, 2022, marking a new phase in the international armed conflict that began in February 2014, has caused an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, presenting a significant humanitarian challenge in the realm of human rights. The armed aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and the temporary military control established by the Russian Federation over parts of its territories have led to extensive destruction, damage to infrastructure, and housing, thereby violating fundamental human rights.

In these conditions, international humanitarian organizations play a crucial role in mitigating the destructive impact on the lives and health of affected Ukrainians. One of the largest providers of assistance is the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which has been working in Ukraine since 1994 – since supporting the repatriation of Crimean Tatars and subsequently concluding a relevant Agreement between the Government of Ukraine and the UNHCR, ratified by the Law of Ukraine No. 1185-XIV on October 21, 1999.

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 referred to as the Commission) at its meeting considered the issue "On the Activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Ukraine."

According to its mandate, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Ukraine (hereinafter referred to as UNHCR) provides protection services and other assistance to refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), people who have returned to their previous places of residence, people affected by the war, and stateless persons to realize their rights and access basic services, as well as to seek long-term solutions for them.

According to UNHCR, in 2014, the organization increased its presence in eastern Ukraine to enhance its capacity to provide humanitarian services and assistance to people affected by military actions. Following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation in February 2022, UNHCR further expanded its activities and

currently has offices in eight cities in Ukraine: Chernivtsi, Dnipro, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa, Uzhhorod, and Vinnytsia.

UNHCR provides protection services, emergency housing recovery, and other housing rights assistance, implements cash assistance programs, and delivers humanitarian aid as part of the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, implemented under the leadership of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine. UNHCR also coordinates the UN clusters on protection, shelter and non-food assistance, and camp coordination and management (CCCM), and is a member of the Steering Committee for Community-Based Long-Term Solutions and Recovery Planning, as well as the Steering Committee of the Transition Initiative.

Since the beginning of the humanitarian crisis, UNHCR has focused its efforts on developing and implementing programs to address urgent needs and strengthen capacities at the national and local levels, promoting sustainability, national leadership, and responsibility. UNHCR has signed memoranda of understanding with four Ukrainian ministries and 18 regional state administrations. UNHCR prioritizes cooperation with local partners, including national non-profit organizations and organizations led by affected communities.

In 2022, UNHCR assisted 4.3 million people, and in 2023, 2.63 million people. In 2024, UNHCR continues to provide vital humanitarian assistance to people in conflict zones and areas where the Ukrainian government has regained control, responding to new challenges, particularly focusing on vulnerable IDPs who have been displaced for a long time and supporting returnees in achieving long-term solutions, given the continued interest of refugees and IDPs in returning.

In 2022, UNHCR in Ukraine planned a budget of \$729.29 million for annual expenses to cover the population's needs, of which \$463.77 million was funded by donor organizations and governments. In 2023, the planned budget was \$602.5 million, of which \$458.22 million was funded. The planned budget for 2024 is \$598.93 million, of which 18% was funded as of May 31, 2024.

UNHCR issues periodic reports on intentions, according to which access to adequate housing is the second most important challenge for IDPs and refugees in achieving sustainable and dignified returns after security issues. Therefore, housing recovery and other housing rights assistance are key elements of the humanitarian response for Ukrainians affected by the war, including IDPs.

UNHCR's housing recovery and other housing rights assistance activities aim to ensure that the most vulnerable categories of people affected by the war have access to housing. UNHCR employs approaches that consider the local context and provides support that promotes recovery and long-term solutions.

UNHCR implements housing recovery and other housing rights assistance programs in five main areas:

- Provision of materials for emergency housing recovery and assistance with such repairs;
- Minor, medium, and major repairs of houses and apartments;
- Installation of prefabricated and mobile homes of local production;

- Improving living conditions in temporary accommodation centers and subsidizing rental housing;
- Repair of social infrastructure;
- Support for the Shelter Program.

In the area of providing materials for emergency housing recovery and assistance with such repairs, since 2022, UNHCR has helped 276,186 people by providing them with repair kits. The kits contain all necessary materials to protect the house from rain and snow so that it can be fully repaired later. UNHCR also provided emergency repair kits to 1,334 damaged social facilities. UNHCR's continuous focus on emergency response to housing damage in conflict zones has made UNHCR the largest humanitarian actor in this area in 2023 and 2024.

In the area of house and apartment repairs, UNHCR has supported about 30,000 households by providing minor, medium, and major repairs to damaged homes. UNHCR is the largest participant in the Humanitarian Shelter and Non-Food Items Cluster in terms of housing recovery, especially medium and major repairs. Additionally, since the pilot project began, 128 families have received prefabricated and mobile homes of local production, which were delivered and installed on plots next to completely destroyed houses, allowing people to return to their communities. In 2024, UNHCR plans to deliver another 300 such homes.

Regarding assistance in temporary accommodation centers, UNHCR has created or improved over 20,500 bed spaces in 228 temporary accommodation centers across Ukraine, where IDPs are accommodated, to ensure proper access to kitchen and sanitary conditions, as well as warm, safe, and clean environments. In the future, UNHCR will continue to carry out comprehensive works of this type. In 2024, six temporary accommodation centers have already been fully equipped, and the complete reconstruction of four more temporary accommodation centers is planned – the total project cost is estimated at \$7.4 million.

UNHCR also supports those who wish to leave IDP sites or have difficulties living in private rented housing through an initiative aimed at subsidizing rent. Currently, over 1,800 families have received legal, material, and financial support.

To support long-term housing solutions and increase the housing stock in the country, UNHCR works with displaced families to find alternative solutions to temporary accommodation centers. One of the solutions is the repair of abandoned and uninhabited private houses in small towns and villages in the western and central regions of Ukraine. In 2024, UNHCR plans to help over 400 families in nine regions move into repaired houses that were abandoned. This is a continuation of the 2023 pilot project, when 100 such houses were repaired.

On June 19, 2024, UNHCR Representative Ms. Karolina Lindholm Billing participated in the Commission's meeting and, among other things, noted that in 2024, UNHCR initiated a pilot project to repair buildings that are state or municipal property in five regions of central and western Ukraine (Kyiv, Vinnytsia, Lviv, Khmelnytskyi, and Ivano-Frankivsk regions) to increase the housing fund for IDPs. These repairs are carried out in close coordination with local authorities to ensure the sustainability of the pilot project, as they will be operated in the future.

Moreover, Ms. Karolina added that both the UNHCR and the Norwegian Refugee Council are organizations aimed at supplementing the work of the Government, not replacing government programs. Thus, the UNHCR also supports the government program "Shelter" – the largest national social initiative aimed at funding the accommodation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine in host households. According to the agreement signed with the Ministry of Reintegration of Ukraine on December 19, 2023, the UNHCR will provide funding of \$15 million to support an average of 90,000 families hosting about 250,000 IDPs in their homes during 2024.

In the field of housing, land, and property rights (HLP), the UNHCR provides free legal consultations and legal assistance on HLP issues to those affected by the war, to facilitate the documentation of property rights and the receipt of compensation under the eRestoration program. In 2023, the UNHCR's network of legal aid partners conducted 180,152 free legal consultations, of which over 40,000 concerned HLP issues and compensation. Since the beginning of 2024, UNHCR partners have provided over 68,000 free legal consultations.

Another key area of activity is assistance in creating and improving national legislation and state policies. Given the significant level of housing destruction and damage and the massive internal displacement, the UNHCR supports the Government of Ukraine's work on developing framework policies in the housing sector. The UNHCR's recommendations focus on promoting a holistic and multisectoral approach to state housing policy, ensuring fair and accessible housing for all demographic groups, depending on their socio-economic indicators and vulnerabilities.

The UNHCR's activities in this area include providing expert support for the development of housing legislation, such as the draft Law of Ukraine "On the Fundamentals of Housing Policy" and the draft Law of Ukraine that will reform the social housing system, which are currently being developed by the Ministry of Infrastructure of Ukraine, and the State Housing Policy Strategy, which will cover the housing rights of IDPs in Ukraine in cooperation with the Ministry of Reintegration of Ukraine.

Efforts are also aimed at developing and amending the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Resolution No. 930 "Certain Issues of Functioning of Temporary Accommodation for Internally Displaced Persons" of September 1, 2023, which regulates the registration and operation of temporary accommodation centers, and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Resolution No. 495 "Some Measures to Form Housing Funds for Temporary Accommodation of Internally Displaced Persons" of April 29, 2022, which, in particular, defines the conditions for forming housing funds for temporary accommodation, accounting for and providing such housing for temporary accommodation of IDPs.

The UNHCR recommended the development of a strategy for the gradual resettlement of IDPs from temporary accommodation centers to more permanent housing and the gradual return of these buildings to their original purpose. Other recommendations include introducing a compensation procedure for repairing common areas in multi-story buildings, which will facilitate apartment owners' access to the eRestoration compensation program. Additionally, simplifying repair

requirements, without the need for extensive technical documentation, will significantly increase the ability of humanitarian organizations to participate in repairing common areas in multi-story buildings.

Finally, the UNHCR announced support for the Norwegian Refugee Council's initiative to create a Housing Institute as the main analytical center in the housing policy field in Ukraine. This institute will assist the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, other government bodies, and local governments in developing strategies, programs, projects, regulations, as well as forming knowledge and skills in the housing sector.

As a result of the consideration of the aforementioned issue, the Commission has **decided**:

1. To take note of the information presented by the UNHCR Representative in Ukraine, Karolina Lindholm Billing.

2. To acknowledge the important role of the UNHCR in Ukraine in responding to the full-scale armed aggression of Russia against Ukraine, which caused an unprecedented humanitarian crisis and violations of fundamental human rights, particularly through the implementation of cash and humanitarian assistance programs for the affected population of Ukraine, housing assistance, and providing social and legal protection services.

3. To consider it appropriate to continue the practice of communication and cooperation of the Commission with international and national humanitarian organizations on protecting the property and non-property rights of internally displaced and other persons affected by Russian aggression.

4. To appeal to the Prime Minister of Ukraine regarding the development and approval of a national housing policy strategy for Ukraine, which will cover the housing rights of internally displaced persons and take into account the existing experience and achievements of parliament, government, international and national experts in this field.

5. To propose to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine:

- 1) To develop changes to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Resolution No. 930 "Certain Issues of Functioning of Temporary Accommodation for Internally Displaced Persons" of September 1, 2023, regarding the need for phased resettlement of internally displaced persons from temporary accommodation and the implementation of a comprehensive system of support measures during the resettlement process, considering their vulnerabilities;
- 2) To develop and approve the procedure for obtaining compensation for damaged common property in multi-apartment buildings, particularly common areas.

6. To support the idea of establishing and starting the operation of the Housing Institute, initiated by the Norwegian Refugee Council in Ukraine with the support of the UNHCR in Ukraine, as the main analytical center in the housing policy field in Ukraine, which will assist the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, other state authorities, and local governments in developing strategies, programs, projects, regulations, as well as forming knowledge and skills, organizing events, and other activities in the housing sector, considering the Ukrainian and international context.

7. To send the Commission's decision to the Prime Minister of Ukraine, the UNHCR Representation in Ukraine, and the Norwegian Refugee Council in Ukraine.

Chairman of the Commission

P. Frolov

Secretary of the Commission

S. Velmozhnyi

