

Rental Housing in Ukraine: Current State and Challenges

Millions of people in Ukraine rent housing. Since the start of the full-scale Russian invasion, the number of renters has only increased. At the same time, the private rental sector remains unpredictable and unprotected. Evictions, landlords' unwillingness to sign contracts, sudden rent hikes, poor housing quality, biases and discrimination are just some of the problems faced by people who rent housing in Ukraine.

One of the key challenges is the financial unaffordability of housing: rental prices are rising faster than incomes. In some cases, the monthly rent for a one-room apartment in regional centers can amount to more than half of the household income.

The situation is particularly difficult for internally displaced people, who make up a significant share of tenants. Due to forced and sudden relocation, they often find themselves in a vulnerable position. High costs and the difficulty of finding new housing force them to agree to unfavorable conditions.

Addressing these problems requires a comprehensive approach at the level of housing policy. In order for renting from private individuals to become a reliable way of realising the right to housing, it is necessary to strengthen the protection of tenants' rights.



Methodology

The brief has been prepared based on the findings of the study *Rental Housing in Ukraine: Current State and Challenges*, which aimed to examine the state of the private rental housing sector and analyze the rent subsidy program for IDPs.

During June–July 2025, we conducted:

- 6 focus group discussions with IDPs living in Northern, Central, and Western macroregions of Ukraine. Three of the discussions with people living in collective sites, three with people who rent housing in Kyiv, Kirovohrad Oblast, Ivano–Frankivsk Oblast, Khmelnytskyi Oblast, and Lviv Oblast.
- 16 interviews with housing experts, landlords and landladies.

The stories below are compiled based on various elements of real stories shared with us by the participants of the study.

Unaffordability of renting and fear of losing a place in a shelter



Ms Sofia is 76 years old, and her daughter Olena is 50. Before 2022, they lived separately in Kreminna. Then, despite the danger and the approaching Russian troops, they delayed leaving—they did not know where to go or what awaited them. Eventually, the family left because their home and all their belongings were burned down. They had no savings.

After leaving Luhansk Oblast, Ms Sofia and Olena tried to find housing, but they did not have the funds to cover the first month's rent, the security deposit, and the real estate agent's fee. So when they came across an advertisement for an apartment with daily payment, they decided to try it. The women lived there for three weeks and realised that they could not afford to pay 400 UAH per day.



Later, Ms Olena saw an advertisement for a shelter. They immediately applied to receive accommodation there. Currently, the family has a small room for the two of them on the second floor. The kitchen and laundry room are located on the first floor. They like the living conditions, as they have beds, do not share the room with strangers, and can cook food and wash their clothes. However, using the kitchen and the washing machine remains a challenge for Ms Sofia: due to health problems, it is difficult for her to go up and down the stairs each time.

The family has critically little money: only Ms Sofia's pension and IDP payments. Ms Olena has not been able to find a job. Therefore, despite having a small room with a lack of private space, the family does not consider moving. On the contrary, they hope not to lose their place in the shelter. Renting from private landlords seems unaffordable for the family, as it is expensive. In addition, they would have to search for an apartment online and then travel to viewings, where they might face rejections and discrimination.

Short-term leases, evictions, and privacy violations

Anna left Kramatorsk in the spring of 2022 together with her two children: 13-year-old Nastia and 3-year-old Kyrilo. She had savings for only a few months but decided to take the risk.

There were already many internally displaced people in Dnipro, so Anna's family was offered one small room for the three of them. The children found it difficult to adapt to life in a shelter, and it was hard for Anna to look for a job. Anna decided to search for housing online. In some listings, people with children or pets were rejected explicitly. One landlady hung up as soon as she heard that Anna was from Kramatorsk.

After a few weeks of searching, Anna found a two-room apartment at a relatively low price, with the decor dating back to the 1990s. The landlord, Serhii, offered her to sign his own six-month lease and reassured her that this "piece



¹ Collective site

of paper” was just a formality. Anna had never rented housing before, so she agreed.

A week after moving in, Serhii showed up without prior notice, saying he wanted to check what needed repairing. Such visits were repeated. The landlord refused to pay for minor repairs and the removal of mold, so Anna had to deal with it herself. A month before the end of the lease, Serhii announced that he was selling the apartment and that Anna had to move out by the end of the week.

A colleague at Anna’s new job heard about her problems and suggested that she rent from her sister Olena, who was leaving for a long-term work assignment. The next day Anna viewed a spacious two-room apartment near a school and a park. She liked the good furnishings and Olena’s friendliness. The price was slightly higher, but the contract was detailed and for three years.

Since December 2022, Anna has been living there with her children. The rent has not changed during this time, and when the fridge broke due to power outages, the landlady bought a new one. However, Olena’s work assignment is coming to an end, and she is returning to Dnipro. Anna is afraid that next time she may not be so lucky with a landlady.



“No kids, no pets”



Olena is originally from Luhansk. She works for an organisation that supports internally displaced people. Her family has experienced forced displacement for the second time. In the summer of 2014, she, her husband Denys, and their four-year-old daughter Katia moved to Lysychansk. They rented housing there, Olena and Denys found jobs, Katia attended kindergarten and later school. One day the girl brought home a sick kitten, and since then they lived together with Zefirka. In 2020, their son Ihor was born—it seemed like their life was settled.

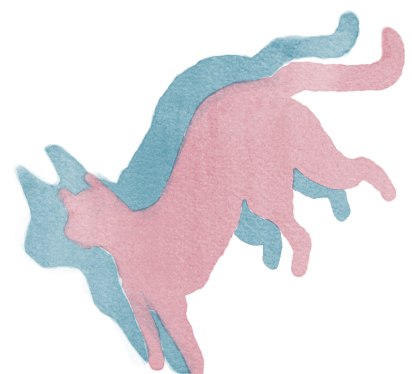
In March 2022, the family hastily fled from Lysychansk to Khmelnytskyi. They managed to take only two bags. For several days, they lived in a gym together with other displaced people and unsuccessfully searched for housing: rental prices had risen, and not all locals wanted to rent to people from the East.

Friends offered them temporary accommodation at their summer house, and although a nearby house was offered for sale at an affordable price, its owners replied that they would not sell it to people from Luhansk Oblast.


In June the family moved to Kyiv; at first, friends let them stay in their apartment. Olena and Denys were actively looking for work and housing. Most advertisements specified: no small kids and no pets.

Eventually they found a relatively inexpensive apartment for 8,000 UAH per month. It was difficult for Olena and Denys to pay at once for the first month, the security deposit, and another 4,000 UAH to the real estate agent. In February 2023, the landlady asked them to pay a thousand more. After that she said she felt sorry for the family, but continued to raise the rent. A year later, the family was paying not 8,000, but 15,000.

Olena and Denys did not dare to move, so as not to cause stress to the children, who had gotten used to their school and kindergarten. They remembered how difficult it was to look for an apartment with children, a cat, and their place of birth listed in the passport. Olena fears another rent increase. In her job at a charitable organisation, she hears similar stories every day and says that relatively speaking, her family has actually been very lucky.



Recommendations

1. Develop and adopt a section on rental housing and protecting tenants' and landlords' rights as part of the State Housing Policy Strategy.
 2. Develop and adopt dedicated legislation on rental housing.
 3. Amend tax legislation to introduce differentiated tax rates for short-term and long-term rental housing.
 4. Establish caps on annual rent increases within one lease at no more than, for example, 10% of the rent specified in the lease at the moment of its signing.
 5. Establish the minimum duration of long-term leases—for example, 3 years.
 6. Introduce registration of housing leases. Registration of leases can be done through digital instruments.
 7. Strengthen tax control over private rental housing transactions.
 8. Introduce the institution of a Housing Ombudsman, whose powers may include: reviewing and verifying complaints; monitoring, documenting, and publicizing violations of the right to housing; representing interests in court.
 9. Regulate the activities of intermediaries in the private rental sector, including by developing and adopting dedicated legislation on intermediary activities.
 10. Promote awareness of rights and responsibilities in the private rental sector through information campaigns.
 11. Conduct regular monitoring studies on housing conditions in the private rental sector, particularly regarding the quality of and access to such housing.
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