



Six months of full-scale war in Ukraine: thoughts, feelings, actions

Findings of the third wave of research



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The research team is grateful to everyone who has filled out the questionnaire and to those who have shared it. We also thank everyone whose support enabled us to prepare this text, particularly all people who have made donations to Cedos's work, as well as our donors. Data collection for the third wave of the study has been conducted as a part of the Think Tank Development Initiative in Ukraine, implemented by the

[International Renaissance Foundation](#) with financial support by the Embassy of Sweden in Ukraine. Data analysis and the preparation of the research report have been carried out with support from the [ZMIN Foundation](#). The opinions and positions articulated in this publication do not necessarily reflect the position of the Embassy of Sweden in Ukraine, the International Renaissance Foundation, or the ZMIN Foundation.

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November 2, 2022

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● Introduction

Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine has been a great social shock. The war affects emotional states, everyday lives and routines, public opinion, interpersonal relationships, socioeconomic situations, employment, civil activity. The scale of these changes is unprecedented for both Ukraine and Europe in the perspective of decades. At the same time, these changes will affect the future of social institutions in postwar Ukraine and its further development in general. Capturing and conceptualizing these changes allows us to obtain data both for future research of Ukrainian society after the war and for planning transformative changes.

As a team of social researchers, we have continued to study and analyze the impact of war on Ukrainian society since the first weeks of the full-scale war. In March, we conducted our **first study** to capture the thoughts, feelings and actions of people in Ukraine during the first two weeks after February 24. In order to record the dynamics of changes in emotional states, decision-making, and adaptation of everyday life to the conditions of war, the **second wave of the study** was conducted in May, focusing on the first three months of the full-scale war. As we wanted to capture the impact of further developments and the changes caused by them in six months, we conducted the **third wave of the study** in August 2022; the results of its analysis are presented in this report.

Methodology

The goal of the study was to capture (in progress, directly while the events were unfolding, rather than in retrospect), describe and generalize the experiences of war in Ukraine as well as trends of changes in these experiences over time.

The subject of the study is experiences of war in Ukrainian society.

For the purposes of this study, we include everyone who identifies with Ukrainian society in the category of Ukrainian society. We do not exclude people who have no Ukrainian citizenship; people who have not lived in Ukraine for a while but who identify with Ukraine and Ukrainian

society. We do not limit the subject of our research to civilians but also include combatants; however, we suppose that the latter have limited representation in the sample.

The focus of this study is the stage of the Russian-Ukrainian war known as the “full-scale war,” which began on February 24, 2022, as a result of the Russian Federation’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Even though the war began back in 2014, the scale of its impact on Ukrainian society changed and grew significantly as a result of the full-scale invasion, which was what motivated us to start working on this study.

The study is **exploratory**, meaning that its goal is primarily to describe reality rather than look for connections and explain causes. Since the goal of this study is to identify possible trends in experiences rather than assess them quantitatively, we chose a **qualitative approach**, just like for the previous waves. This allowed us to conduct a study with a similar methodology and to be able to compare the findings.

In order to collect the data, we used a **self-report questionnaire** designed in Google Forms. As the previous waves of the study showed, this option is simple and convenient for the respondents because it has no temporal limitations, allows for non-mandatory answers, and allows the respondents to interrupt answering the questionnaire at any moment. Information about the study and the link to the form to be filled out was shared on Cedos social media pages (including via targeted advertising from the Cedos Facebook page), through the Cedos mailing list, on researchers’ personal pages, and in personal communication.

Since this study of the experiences of the full-scale war in Ukrainian society is the third such study, we call it the “third wave.” Despite this, the questionnaire only partially repeated the previous ones, because the situation in Ukraine had changed by August compared to May (the “second wave”) and March (the “first wave”). For example, in the sixth month of the full-scale war, it seemed less relevant to us to repeatedly ask about the experiences of moving, while questions about economic changes and experiences associated with them became more relevant. In view of this, we adapted the questionnaire and focused on questions that had become more important, given the developments and changes

of experiences of the war over time. Nevertheless, some questions remained in the same or slightly modified form to maintain continuity.

The questionnaire contained questions that correlated with five dimensions associated with different spheres of human life through which we view the experiences of war within this study:

- bodily dimension: questions about everyday life and routines;
- psychological dimension: questions about emotional experiences and feelings;
- social dimension: questions about interpersonal relations;
- economic dimension: questions about work, key changes and concerns;
- public dimension: questions about values, views, Ukrainian society and civil activities, particularly volunteering and donations.

In addition, the questionnaire contained final questions to determine the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents.

The questionnaire opened with an explanation about the goal of the study and the confidentiality of the collected information, as well as a warning that it contained questions on sensitive topics. Most of the questions were open-ended, so the respondents were not limited to pre-set options. This way, we tried to encourage the respondents to describe their own experiences, motivations and feelings and to answer at more length.

Before the beginning of the survey, we conducted a pretest of the developed toolkit. The pretest was conducted among acquaintances of the research team members. The main goal of the pretest was to find out whether the question formulations were clear, whether the question formulations and the process of filling out the questionnaire provoked any psychological discomfort, and to check the average time it took to fill out the questionnaire.

The survey was conducted on August 8–28, 2022. 320 respondents participated in the survey during that time.

Research limitations

While conducting this study, we faced a number of challenges in terms of research methodology and ethics. The chosen ways of responding to these challenges determined the limitations of the research:

- The research sample is not representative of the population of Ukraine. The distribution of sociodemographic characteristics (such as gender, age, financial situation, size of settlement and region of residence, etc.) among the respondents does not reflect the distribution of these characteristics among the entire population of Ukraine. In view of this, the survey findings cannot be extrapolated to the entire population. In our reports on the findings of the survey, we describe experiences which really exist and which we were able to record. At the same time, this description of experiences is not exhaustive. The chosen methodology does not allow us to draw conclusions about how widespread these experiences are. Although we do make certain observations regarding the possible trends in the differences between the answers of people who belong to different social groups, they are not definite evidence of the existence of certain patterns, only hypotheses which require further research.
- The chosen method of data collection and questionnaire distribution could have affected the non-representation in the study sample of people who had no internet access in the period when the survey was conducted, as well as those who have no skills in using the Google Forms platform.
- Due to security risks, lack of free time and potential lack of access to the internet or equipment, people who are currently in the occupied territories, in battle zones and areas of intensive shelling or close to them, as well as combatants can be underrepresented in the study sample. People who belong to these categories are present in the sample, but, given the security risks, the questionnaire does not contain any questions aiming to identify such respondents. In view of this, we cannot estimate their share in the sample or compare their answers to the answers of other respondents.

- Compared to the first wave of the study, in the third wave we managed to collect the experiences of fewer people, the dynamics of filling out the questionnaire were lower (at the same time, the number of respondents who participated in the second and third wave was almost the same: 335 and 320 respondents, respectively). We associate this with the state of general fatigue among the respondents and the fact that compared to the first week of March, calls to participate in various studies of the impact of the war had become more usual and evoked less interest. In order to have the questionnaire filled out more times, we used targeted ads from the Cedos Facebook page aimed for the followers of the page and their friends. This target audience for paid distribution was also intended to make the sample more similar to the one we had during the first wave due to organic distribution (without advertising).
- Based on our experience of the previous waves of the survey, we employed a number of steps to ensure better representation among the respondents of social groups that were underrepresented in the previous waves (men, older people, low-income people). For this purpose, the form included a request for the respondents to ask, if possible, an older friend or relative to participate in the survey. In addition, we used targeted advertising from the Cedos Facebook page with a link to the questionnaire and a call to share one's experiences which was aimed for the target groups (men and women of different ages, older men and women, men of different ages).
- Even though we shared the form using the same communication channels and sent links to it to the participants of the previous waves of the study who had agreed to participate in the next waves and left their contacts, the samples of the first and second waves were not the same. The forms were not identical either, although they did include a number of similar or the same questions. In view of this, the possibilities for comparing different waves of the study are limited. We compare them wherever it is relevant and appropriate. However, comparisons of this kind are not definite evidence for the existence of certain patterns, but

rather hypotheses about possible trends which require further research.

- The self-reported questionnaire with a significant number of open-ended questions presupposed the method of recording one's own experience and feelings in writing. A limitation or consequence of choosing this method is the fact that recording one's own experiences in writing inevitably leads to higher narrativization of the story and encourages one to rationalize their experiences, which was taken into account while analyzing the data.
- The engagement of the researchers, that is, the fact that they themselves are, to different extents, experiencing the full-scale war and forced displacement, can be both an advantage and a limitation of the study. On the one hand, it can facilitate more reflection and sensitivity to the obtained data as a result of comparing them to personal experiences. On the other hand, it can produce certain preset analytical frameworks which affect the interpretation of the obtained data. In order to avoid cognitive or experiential distortion, the work with the obtained data was distributed among the researchers both at the stage of analysis and interpretation and at the stage of mutual editing.

This study is not comprehensive. Its findings record the variety of experiences of war and their modification during a certain period of time, but they cannot be extrapolated to the entire population of Ukraine and the entire period of the war, because the diversity of experiences of the war is larger and more multifaceted. They require many further studies, from representative nationwide research to studies focused on specific topics and social groups.

Sample description

The average age of the respondents at the time of filling out the questionnaire is 39. The youngest participant of the study was 18, and the oldest was 74. The median age equaled 37. Over two-thirds (71%) of the respondents belonged to the core working age group¹ (25–54). 12%

¹ According to the categorization of age groups based on working ability specified by UN experts in their socioeconomic and demographic calculations.

belonged to the mature working age group (55–64) and 12% to the early working age group (18–24). 4% of the respondents were aged 65 and above. 1% of the study participants did not specify their age.

Among the people who filled out the questionnaire, more than two thirds identified as women (70%) and a bit more than a quarter (28%) identified as men; 1% of the surveyed identified otherwise (non-binary people, bigender/agender people), and 1% did not specify their gender identity.

The majority of the respondents (78%) had higher education by the time they filled out the questionnaire. 9% had a PhD.

More than a half (68%) of the survey participants were single at the moment of filling out the questionnaire.

16% of the study participants had one child under 18 with whom they lived, 15% had two children, 3% had three children, and 3% had four children.

The study participants described the financial situation of their households as follows: 3% of the respondents said that they could not afford food; 13% could afford food but could not always afford clothes; 25% could afford food and clothes, but could not buy a car or an apartment; 14% could buy a car or other goods of similar value.

More than a half (56%) of the study participants were employees at the moment when the full-scale war began; 24% were self-employed or worked as freelancers, 8% were retired, 6% were students, 3% were entrepreneurs with their own employees. The remaining 5% included people who had no paid employment, were on maternity leave, did unpaid housework, etc.

43% of the study participants permanently lived in Kyiv as of February 24; 19% lived in Kharkiv, Odesa, Dnipro and Lviv combined; 18% lived in other regional centers; and 14% lived in other cities and towns (not regional centers). 6% lived in rural areas.

A little over a half (54%) of the respondents were forced to leave their permanent place of residence when the full-scale war began. About a third of them (34%) moved within Ukraine, 15% went abroad, and 5% moved within Ukraine and abroad.

Part 1 ● Everyday life and routines

1.1 ● Changes in everyday life and routines

We asked the respondents how their everyday lives and routines changed during May–August.² In response to this, **the study participants described various aspects of their lives: health, leisure and rest, work, place of residence and social contacts.** The full-scale war and martial law affected changes in all of these spheres.

Some of the changes described by the respondents continue the trends we identified in the [previous wave of the study](#). These included the focus on maintaining or restoring health, caring for one's own basic needs, and simultaneous deterioration of mental health. Just like during the previous wave of the study, the respondents reported that the situation with paid employment had gotten worse: some had lost their jobs and were looking for new ones. The trends towards reduced leisure due to financial, social and mental factors continued. Just like during the previous wave of the study, some people who were in relatively safe places felt that they had returned to the prewar state.

Compared to the previous wave, the surveyed did not mention the lack of the feeling of home as often. This was probably because more time had passed since their move, and some of them had managed to adapt to life at a new location. Certain features of the war had likely become habitual for some respondents, or the situation in their place of residence had become calmer, so they had started to respond to air raid sirens less. They still viewed the hallway as the safest place at home. But a share of the respondents went to the hallway less frequently during air raid sirens compared to the first months of the war. People had also stopped using the news as a coping strategy; they mentioned their news cycle fatigue and the fact that they were checking the news less.

Some respondents spoke about **changes in their everyday lives pertaining to their basic needs:** sleep and food. The survey answers show a trend towards increased attention to self-care and caring for

² Question formulation: "How have your everyday life and routines changed in the past three months (from May until today)?"

one's needs. At the same time, there is a trend towards decreased opportunities to provide oneself with living conditions at a sufficient level. One respondent noted that they focused on meeting their basic needs because they felt ashamed to spend time on leisure.

There were also cases when respondents, on the contrary, started paying more attention to actions associated with widespread ideas about healthy lifestyles: monitoring their sleep habits, food intake and exercise.

At the same time, some study participants reported sleep disturbances. They were bothered by nightmares or slept very few hours. Since the full-scale invasion began, the conditions in which people had to sleep had also changed. For instance, instead of their bedroom, it could be a shelter or a hallway; and instead of pajamas, they might have to wear regular clothes.

Some respondents noted that they were unable to rest the way they did before the full-scale war because now their rest is interrupted by thoughts about the war.

Some of the study participants reported that there were **fewer leisure practices** in their lives. These include meeting friends, visiting cultural institutions, art events, cafes and restaurants. One of the reasons for this is the fact that people were forced to move abroad: some of the people who had moved needed an adaptation period at the new location. Some respondents were separated from their loved ones, so they had nobody to share their leisure practices with. This applied both to those who had moved and to those who had stayed in their hometown. Another factor was people's shrinking incomes, which has also affected the decreased opportunities for leisure.

"I've moved to another country, my apartment in Kyiv has been destroyed by bombs. At the new location, I had to start from scratch: register, visit various services. I also had to save money on things I'm used to, my usual social practices such as going out to eat, meeting friends, attending art events have disappeared due to distance and money. Now I have no desire to talk and meet anyone because these people don't understand me."

Woman, 22, Kyiv

At the same time, some respondents said that they, on the contrary, had managed to establish their leisure and experience joy from it.

“I’ve found an apartment for long-term rent at my new city of residence. I’ve established my everyday life and routine: how my work days go, what I can do on weekends; I can also feel joy again from the things which brought me joy before the full-scale invasion (such as reading books, walking). I’ve found things that are important for my comfortable life in my new city: doctors, a nail salon, pleasant restaurants. I’ve registered for discount cards at nearby grocery stores and drug stores.”

Woman, 27

Martial law has influenced how people interact with the city and how they structure their time. Some respondents noted that now they had to plan their days and adjust their plans to curfews. Night leisure activities have also disappeared.

“I’ve returned to Kyiv and now work remotely. Everything is the same as it was in early February, you just can’t stay at a bar late, I return home before 9 p.m.”

Woman, 27

Another change associated with the city is using public transit. The respondents said that public transit had started to resume its operations which had positively affected their access to moving around the city. At the same time, in some localities local governments made the decision to pause ground public transit service during air raid sirens. All of this had affected the way people planned their time and tasks and the way different characteristics of staying in the city had been changing and emerging. In addition, people’s habits associated with using private cars had also changed. One of the respondents noted that they started parking their car in a way that allowed them to drive away quickly if needed.

Just like during the previous wave of the study, there was still a trend towards getting used to air raid sirens and reducing the number of measures in response to them, particularly of moving to bomb shelters or hallways.

"I spend most of my time outside the hallway, I ignore air raid sirens more, I'm not in a hurry, I go outside more often (both for no reason and to do some tasks)."

Woman, 22, Kyiv

"Every day is the same. 4 workouts per week, sometimes walks. I no longer respond to the sirens, I'm waiting for my husband to return."

Man, 27, Lviv

"Everything has returned to "prewar" habits. The only thing that has remained/become fixed as a new habit is parking my car in a way that makes it possible to escape quickly."

Woman, 49, Sumy

"There's more public transit now, but it doesn't work during air raid sirens—I've switched from scooters to buses/trolleybuses; almost all of the stores have opened; more and more refugees are coming to Kyiv: I consult/help them; I'm getting ready for the winter."

Man, 33, Kyiv

Study participants had experienced changes related to their purchases. This was influenced by changes in the financial situation of households and by the **need to prepare items which could be useful in life-threatening situations** or in order to ensure comfortable living conditions. A number of people had begun to buy more necessities and stockpile them. Some respondents did it due to their fear that there would be shortages again. In contrast to the previous waves of the study, in addition to the standard emergency backpack kit, people had started to prepare for the winter by buying clothes and heating equipment.

"We stockpile more food, water, our emergency bags are permanently packed, constant light masking, we buy warm clothes and electric appliances."

Woman, 39, Zaporizhia

"I stockpile a lot because the fear has remained that there would be food and medicine shortages again."

Woman, 21, Sumy

Some people had started to be more careful about buying new things. One of the respondents explained this by their undetermined permanent place of residence.

“It hasn’t changed a lot, but every time I need to buy or change something, I think about how long I am going to stay in this place and that I don’t need excess things. And most things prove to be excessive, so I always try to manage with as little stuff as possible.”

Woman, 34, Kyiv

Employment and having or lacking income³ have affected people’s everyday life and routines. Some respondents noted that their own or their loved one’s unemployment had significantly affected various spheres of life. In addition to jobs themselves, one study participant said that it was difficult for them to find the materials required for their work due to their lack on the Ukrainian market.

The respondents’ deteriorating financial state due to losing a permanent source of income and increasing prices had affected the decrease in their purchasing power. Some people had stopped buying things in the same amounts as before. Some mentioned being unable to meet their basic needs. Others noted that they could not purchase certain goods due to their unavailability.

“Yes, a bit, the goods we consume have changed due to the unavailability of the majority of the ones we’re used to. We’ve also felt some problems with the cat litter filler.”

Woman, 32, Kyiv

“Dramatically [about changes in everyday life and routines]. No job, nothing to eat, no money to feed the kid and prepare them for first grade. My husband still hasn’t received his full salary for June, even though it’s late August now.”

Woman, 33, Zaporizhia

The economic situation also affected the possibility of providing housing for oneself. One study participant shared that they were left without a way to rent housing and were forced to live with other people whom they would not live with under different circumstances due to a

³ See more details about the impact of war on employment in section 3.1.

poor relationship. Being unable to afford housing can lead to homelessness and/or gender-based violence because people are forced to either live in the streets or return to an abuser.

While describing their everyday lives and routines, the respondents spoke about their **mental state**.⁴ Some noted that they felt anxious. One study participant associated the anxiety with the uncertainty of the future, another respondent noticed that loud sounds and people with weapons started making them anxious.

By August, some people's attitude towards consuming information had changed since May. Some of the study participants shared that they felt overwhelmed by information, tired of the news. Some respondents noted that they felt less need or were unwilling to check the news.

Places of residence affected changes or lack thereof in people's everyday lives and routines. Some people who had moved abroad noted that they had to face many processes and things they had not done before. For instance, they had to adjust to time zone differences, rent housing abroad. At the same time, some of the people who left had the time to adjust and settle in their routines. This was, in particular, influenced by whether one had long-term housing or a job.

"I've changed my country of residence (temporarily) from Germany to Italy because I was invited to join a volunteer project. My life has returned more or less to a routine in the sense that I don't have to constantly think about where I'm going to live, which papers I still have to obtain and which institutions to visit."

Woman, 25, Kyiv

"I've moved house three times in different cities in Poland, there was a real estate rental crisis."

Man, 27, Lviv

⁴ See more details about feelings in Part 4.

“Completely [about changes in everyday life and routines]. In March we moved to Chernivtsi, and in May we returned to Kyiv. Now I’ve been in Canada for three weeks, without family or loved ones. Everyday life and routines are completely different here, the time difference is 6 hours. I’ve given up Russian completely and switched to Ukrainian.”

Woman, 37, Kyiv

In this and the previous waves of the study, we noticed two trends in the answers of the respondents who had moved within Ukraine: some participants felt like their everyday lives and routines had started to return to the state typical for them before the start of the full-scale invasion, and others did not share this opinion. Both groups mentioned such features of wartime as taped-up windows, mined parks, air raid sirens, etc. We suppose that the everyday lives of some participants had stabilized, which helped them develop the feeling that their routines were returning to their prewar state. However, these routines included features of the reality of war. This may mean that the state of war had begun to normalize or had already normalized for the respondents, which was why they believed that their everyday lives had returned to the state before February 24.

“We returned to Irpin in May. Home. We lived a bit with broken windows (taped them up) but replaced them in July. There are no trips out of town anymore. The first weeks, I anxiously examined grass, trees in parks to avoid finding anything explosive there, even though all the “cultured” places had already been cleared of mines. My everyday life hasn’t changed: gas, power and water were restored quickly.”

Woman, 42, Irpin, Kyiv Region

“I’ve returned to the city which I left on February 24, I’ve returned to the job I worked at before February 24, I’ve started paying attention to mine security, realized what daily bombing means, started building defense structures in the city where I live.”

Man, 35, Kharkiv

“I’ve finally moved home and started living my own life, as close to what I had before as possible.”

Woman, 22, Starokostiantyniv, Khmelnytsky Region

Social contacts between people changed during May–August. People moved: some forcibly left the country and returned, some were mobilized to the armed forces; all of this affected the respondents' circle. Some of those who had to leave their permanent place of residence faced the need to build social contacts from scratch with people at their new location. Some study participants believed that in May–August it became clear where their family and friends would be. This helped them determine their circle for the near future.⁵

“I returned from Lviv to Kyiv, that is, to my usual life. In Lviv, the four of us lived in a two-bedroom apartment, and I really lacked personal space. Now I still spend a lot of time with my partner with whom I shared a room in Lviv, but we don't live together, so the feeling is very different.”

Woman, 25, Kyiv

A number of study participants reported changes in doing unpaid housework, particularly cooking or cleaning, which led to redistribution between those who do housework. Some respondents started involving their partners in this work, while those who had been left on their own had to do everything themselves.”

“My boyfriend has completely learned to survive under the conditions when I'm too bothered by the news, work, or both. He'd cook pasta, make eggs, force me to eat and stop worrying. It's nice.”

Woman, 32, Kyiv

⁵ See more details about communication and relationships with loved ones in section 2.1.

1.2 ● Settled nature of everyday life and routines

We asked the respondents if they believed that their everyday lives and routines were settled.⁶ The study participants who replied affirmatively described their experiences as either having a certain repetitiveness of actions or lacking dramatic changes. This applied to different spheres of life: work, family, leisure, etc. The study participants who believed that their everyday lives and routines were not settled had difficulties with planning the future. The respondents who defined their everyday lives and routines as partially settled had stability in one of the spheres in their lives.

Having plans for the day helped the participants to view their everyday life as settled. Understanding of the future, even if it was just about the following day, facilitated the feeling of stability and predictability.

“Daily routine disciplines you and gives you a feeling of stability.”

Woman, 71, Kherson Region

Having a job was one of the factors⁷ that affected whether the routines in respondents' lives were settled. This could be due to the fact that having a working schedule and tasks to be completed gives one clarity and understanding of what they would be doing for a certain period of time. At the same time, work provides income which expands one's opportunities in other spheres of life. Having income is also associated with the feeling of stability and reliability.

“Because I have a rather clear and stable daily schedule, clearly defined working hours, I know what I can do in the evening and how to spend my free time.”

Woman, 35

Having housing in a relatively safe area where no active combat is taking place affected the perception of everyday life as settled. Some study participants said that their everyday life and routines were settled

⁶ Question formulations: “Can you say that your everyday life and routines are settled?”, “Why? Please explain.”

⁷ See more details about work in Part 3.

because they were home. Apparently the category of “home” in this context can play a special role as something stable and calm.

The respondents who could call their everyday life and routines **partially settled** had ambivalent experiences, meaning that one sphere in their life was established and settled while another was not. Meanwhile, the presence or lack of settledness could also lead the study participants to make only short-term plans. For some respondents, inability to make long-term plans was associated with their lack of long-term housing.

The beginning of the school year could affect one’s place of residence and other actions. One respondent noted that they had to make a decision about the location of their child’s school in autumn. The family’s future location of residence depended on this.

Some of the respondents who defined their everyday life as partially settled had stable routines, particularly due to having a job, a house, and a defined schedule, but at the same time they experienced fear and uncertainty about the future. A share of the respondents were afraid that they would have to repeat actions similar to the ones they took on the first days of the full-scale war. For instance, that they would have to pack their belongings and quickly leave their place of residence.

“I have a job, an apartment, everything is OK. But there’s a fear of having to leave once again and be a refugee.”

Woman, 32, Kyiv

“I’ve decided on my further place of residence, got a stable job, I have plans for the winter but no plans for anything after winter.”

Man, 21, Dnipro

Some study participants who **could not call their everyday life and routines settled** mentioned difficulties with planning their future due to problems with long-term housing and jobs. For instance, the lack of permanent housing and constant search for it were associated with uncertainty and inability to make long-term plans. Some of the surveyed had no jobs, which adversely affected their incomes. These respondents had difficulties with buying the things they needed for a decent life, such as clothes or household items. At the same time, there were cases

when people had difficulties with buying basic necessities such as food. In addition, having no job sometimes meant having no schedule, no specific things to do during certain hours of the day.

“Because I’m currently in Scotland, I live with hosts, no stable job, no money for life, I can’t realize myself professionally here, nobody needs my education here, Ukrainians are viewed solely as service staff of the lowest level with a minimum wage. It’s difficult in a different country, there’s no stability or understanding of what will happen tomorrow, in the future?”

Woman, 43, Kyiv

1.3 ● Practical lessons

We also asked the respondents what practical lessons they learned during the war.⁸ The following lessons can be distinguished:

- preparedness for unpredictable events;
- changed attitude towards material things;
- need to learn various skills: driving, first aid, civil defense, foreign languages;
- action algorithm during hostilities and evacuation from frontline/occupied areas;
- importance of caring for one's own needs as well as physical and mental health;
- realization that the future is unpredictable and plans can be ruined at any moment;
- changes in relationships with others;
- (dis)trust for the government;
- importance of volunteering;
- need for informational hygiene.

A rather prominent trend in the respondents' answers was that one of the lessons for them was **preparedness for unpredictable events**. Notably, in these answers the surveyed used the phrase "you have to be prepared for anything." Study participants mentioned that it was important to always have an emergency bag at hand with all necessities, documents and money. It was also important to check the list and condition of the documents, as well as to have savings. In addition, respondents often noted the need to have stockpiles of medicine, hygiene items, food and water. They also mentioned the need to prepare things for pets: feed, carriers, documents. Respondents pointed out that it was important to prepare one's place of residence for unpredictable events—for instance, to buy a water boiler in case the hot water supply is cut.

"I should have savings for a decent life for a year under conditions of unemployment, rising prices, and possible lack of housing. I should keep my documents in order: monitor the expiration dates

⁸ Question formulation: "Which practical lessons have you learned during the full-scale war?"

of passports and visas, have my medical records at hand, vaccination cards, etc., and copies of all the documents separately. I should have food stocks (foods with long shelf life and frozen processed foods), water, medicine, and cleaning products. My cat must have everything required for going abroad: a carrier, feed stocks, valid papers and vaccinations.”

Woman, 33, Odesa

“Keeping the most important things with you even when you go to work. Having a first aid kit, all the necessary medicine with you. Being prepared for having to leave right now and there’s no other way.”

Woman, 20, Kharkiv

In addition, respondents noted how **their attitude to material things had changed**. A number of them realized that they actually did not need many things and “one’s entire life can be packed into a backpack.” For some people, material things lost any value whatsoever and were no longer that important. Some respondents realized that they should not get attached to material things. In addition, some study participants noted that they saw no point in buying real estate because it is hard to leave or can be lost.

“You can make do with very few things practically without any losses in terms of comfort and quality of life.”

Woman, 48, Poltava

“Invest in health and the car. And not invest in real estate because then it’s hard to leave.”

Woman, 37, Bilohorodka, Kyiv Region

Among other practical lessons, respondents spoke a lot about having to **learn to drive** and/or buy their own car in order to leave their place of residence in case of danger. They also mentioned the need to learn **first aid and CPR skills**. In addition, some study participants noted that they needed to learn **civil defense skills**.

Some answers also referred to lessons learned about **behavior during military actions**, particularly the need to never ignore air raid sirens and to have knowledge of how to survive in a basement. A number of respondents also mentioned as a lesson they learned the need to

evacuate from frontline/occupied areas or areas under threat of occupation.

In addition, study participants noted that it was important to know at least one foreign language, and that it was preferable to have a remote job and/or a profession which would allow them to find a job abroad.

A share of the answers referred to **caring for one's physical and mental health as well as taking into account one's own basic needs**. In particular, in terms of their mental state, some respondents noted the need to give an outlet to their emotions, know how to cope with them in unpredictable situations, and perform practices to maintain one's mental state. As for physical health, they mentioned the need to receive treatment on time and to exercise. Regarding meeting their own needs, the surveyed spoke about the need to provide themselves with food and sleep. In addition, they mentioned the importance of rest.

"You need to learn to better cope with uncertainty and to know how to take yourself out of the state of panic into a stable emotional state; you should know grounding techniques to help yourself or others during moments of increased anxiety."

Woman, 27, Kyiv

"You need to know how to give yourself time for any emotions. I overlooked this before, but during war you start to experience so much negativity that you have to reflect on these intense negative emotions, realize why you need them."

Woman, 20, Hostomel, Kyiv Region

Учасни_ці дослідження також згадували про **складнощі, пов'язані з плануванням майбутнього**. Деякі респондент_ки відповідали, що вони «живуть одним днем» і взагалі нічого довгостроково не планують. Також опитані оперували словами на кшталт «не потрібно відкладати» і «робити тут і зараз». Однак деякі опитані, навпаки, зазначали, що потрібно мати одразу кілька планів на випадок різних непередбачуваних подій. Деякі респондент_ки також зазначали, що в умовах війни важливо вміти адаптуватися до нових або непередбачуваних умов.

“Nothing can be planned, it’s better to believe in something good, not go too deep into what you cannot influence.”

Woman, 35, Toretsk, Donetsk Region

“That you need to have several action plans and not be anxious because something can go wrong; if you have an opportunity, use it and not postpone it.”

Woman, 22, Kyiv

Realization of the value of life and time was also one of the lessons learned by some respondents. Sometimes the value of life was contrasted to the value of material stuff.

“Every day can be your last, and you should value your life.”

Woman, 24, Kharkiv

There is a trend in the answers indicating **changes in relationships and changes in the attitudes towards people**, both from one’s circle and in general.⁹ Some respondents emphasized the understanding that the most important thing for them was the life, health and safety of their loved ones as well as the value of relationships in general. A number of them mentioned that they had reevaluated or changed their relationships with people from their circle: either stopped communicating with them or, on the contrary, started doing it more often. In addition, some study participants noted that connections with other people were important because they allowed one to adapt to the new location, supporting and helping them.

“You can survive everything when there are people next to you whom you can rely on.”

Man, 18, Drohobych, Lviv Region

“The life and health of family is the most important, everything else can be gained, and you shouldn’t get attached to it.”

Woman, 32, Kyiv

Respondents also had different opinions about trust in government bodies and institutions. Some expressed distrust and noted that one should not trust government representatives but rather their own

⁹ See more details about relationships in section 2.1.

knowledge. However, others, on the contrary, expressed trust in government bodies and the Armed Forces.

Some respondents also noted that they realized the importance of volunteering and helping others, as well as the need to ask for help themselves.¹⁰ In addition, some noted the importance of informational hygiene in wartime, particularly the need to take breaks in monitoring and reading the news.

Even though many answers referred to the importance of solidarity and unity, one of the trends among the replies was the claim that one has to rely solely on themselves. Some respondents clarified that one should only rely on oneself, but one should still ask for help as well.

¹⁰ See more details about the impact of volunteering in section 3.3.

Part 2 ● Changes

2.1 ● Communication and relationships with loved ones

We dedicated one of the sections in the questionnaire to changes in people's lives. First of all, we asked the respondents to describe how the war had changed their relationships with others and their circle.¹¹ Several key trends of changes in relationships and communication with loved ones can be distinguished in the answers we received:

- more remote communication with family and loved ones;
- higher frequency of communication with family and loved ones;
- reevaluated relationships with family and loved ones in either positive or negative direction;
- feeling of loneliness and isolation caused by separation from family and changes in one's circle;
- emerging feeling of unity and closeness to others which sometimes extends not only to family and friends but also to strangers;
- changed circle, in some cases getting closer to remote acquaintances or former friends.

The desire to be together with others was probably a response to growing tensions in society. The need to constantly keep in touch with family and loved ones became one of the ways to cope with stress and maintain emotional stability. The full-scale war was a **uniting experience** for many. It increased the need for communication, allowed people to establish and reevaluate their relationships with family or friends, and even to restore long-lost contacts. For many, each conversation became more important and valuable; respondents noted that they became more attentive and sensitive in communication.

"It's gotten much better. I love and value the people around me who haven't left, we interact productively. The distance between people who barely know each other has shrunk because we're all "our guys."

Woman, 37, Kyiv

¹¹ Question formulation: "How has the full-scale war changed your relationships with other people, your circle?"

“The war has brought a few old friends back into my life, whom we grew apart with once, we didn’t talk, and now we’ve found ourselves in the same city or the same country and started hanging out.”

Woman, 35, Kyiv

“It’s become easier to forget fights from the past, once again talk to people whom I haven’t talked to for a while. Many old friends texted me to find out how I was doing. People want to support each other more.”

Woman, 26, Kharkiv

The surveyed also noticed how the dynamics of their communication with loved ones changed during February through August. They said that in the first months of the war, the **frequency of communication with their loved ones had increased**.¹² Meanwhile, as of late August, the intensity of communication had decreased somewhat. However, they stuck to the habit of regularly contacting their family and friends and making sure everything was alright with them.

“My relationship formats and my circle have not been changed significantly by the war. But it did change the regularity of contacts. Now more regular contact has become mandatory, at least in the form of texting.”

Woman, 35, Kyiv

“At first there was a lot of communication. Then less and less. Now everyone is tired.”

Man, 21, Dnipro

“On the first days of the war, everyone was interested in everyone, but later only those who are really important for one another remained.”

Woman, 24, Kyiv

“I’ve started talking to my family more often, not every few hours anymore, like it was at the beginning of the war, but more often than before the war began.”

Woman, 25, Kyiv

¹² The findings of other studies also indicate this. According to the Rating Sociological Group, the share of people who constantly keep in touch with their loved ones had almost [tripled](#) in April this year compared to April 2020.

The feeling of unity manifested in relations not only with family or friends but also with people you barely know or even strangers. On the one hand, the surveyed emphasized that they had partially lost the anxiety they used to experience when meeting new people. On the other hand, they mentioned that it was much easier now to ask people they barely know for help, because now they could avoid long “prefaces” and explanations which used to be required.

The war has become a shared challenge for Ukrainian society and helped increase cohesion and solidarity. According to one study participant, barriers which used to stand between strangers seemed to have “grown thinner” as a result of the war. This made some people try to take care of the people around them and help others as much as they could. The surveyed also emphasized that the experience of war helped them to find common ground with others. They noted that the war had become a shared problem which therefore had to be solved together.

“I felt a lot of compassion and care from acquaintances, friends and total strangers. I myself started helping people even more. I met many new friends during the evacuation.”

Woman, 53, Kyiv

“I started donating more, started to pay for retirees at the store sometimes. Sometimes it’s hard because I’ve been unemployed for half a year now.”

Man, 37, Kyiv

“When our town was bombed, I was surprised at the number of calls from people whom I’d never suspect of caring about me.”

Woman, 40, village, Chernihiv Region

For many, the war had become an experience that **physically separated** them from their families and loved ones. This had affected the format and frequency of communication. Because friends and family had found themselves “scattered around the world,” people’s circles had shrunk or changed. Respondents also noted that the **amount of remote communication had increased**. This was both a comfort and a challenge at once. Some people managed to keep in touch remotely, others, on the contrary, noted that calls and texts cannot replace in-person meetings and conversations. This was why people sometimes felt lonely and

isolated—this especially applied to elderly respondents. In addition, texts and calls proved to be exhausting and tiring for some people, which made them try to keep in contact with the people who were physically nearby.

“Many loved ones have ended up far away. Thank God we have the internet.”

Man, 74, Kharkiv

“I’ve grown very lonely. Almost all my friends and acquaintances have moved abroad. Even though we talk on the phone, it’s a completely different thing.”

Woman, 67, Kyiv

“Real communication has grown narrower. More online: are people alive and well and when will this horror end?”

Woman, 68, Kharkiv

“I’ve started valuing in-person communication even more. I’m especially happy that there are people who are still in Ukraine, somewhere here, nearby. Some of my close friends have moved abroad. I feel sad about it and worried that I could lose touch because I don’t have that much capacity to talk online right now.”

Woman, 25, Lviv

People who had moved abroad or within Ukraine also had to **change their circle completely or partially**. For many, meeting people under their new circumstance had proven rather difficult due to lack of knowledge skills or lack of integration in the social and cultural life of their community. The surveyed mentioned that their current circle was “forced” or “limited.” Some noted that they missed their neighbors and community.

“My friends and I are now in different parts of the world, so at the new place I have no circle except for my family. I work online, so I don’t have many opportunities to make new friends either.”

Woman, 34, Bucha

"[My circle has changed] completely. Another city, job, no neighbors, acquaintances, many people have died, no time to be on social media."

Woman, 60, Mariupol

"I never developed a circle at the new location. It's limited to the landlady and her friends/family. Partially that's because I have less time for leisure now, and partially because it's difficult to find places here with people who share my interests."

Woman, 23, Kharkiv

Geographic proximity started playing a key role for communication. In a situation when many people had moved to different cities or countries, many established social ties had been cut or damaged. On the one hand, this could lead to a kind of isolation and less communication. On the other hand, it could be a reason for meeting new people. The surveyed mentioned that they had restored contact with old friends or become close with people whom they used to have colder relationships with. In addition, the war encouraged some people to **meet and establish communication with their neighbors**. This applied especially to those whose close friends or families had moved, or people who had themselves ended up in a new city or country.

"I mostly talk to people I see in real life. Or whoever contacts me first. Sometimes I feel the fear to lose a family member or friend, then I talk to them."

Man, 22, Zaporizhia

"We've started talking more to our parents and high school friends because we live closer."

Woman, 40

"[My circle has changed] significantly. New people appeared. New occupation, new interests. Even the geography has changed. Now my circle does not extend beyond the borders of the city I live in."

Woman, 49, Sumy

"My circle has expanded. I've finally met my neighbors."

Woman, 24, Brovary, Kyiv Region

“I hardly ever talk to anyone offline except for family and neighbors.”

Man, 31

The experience of war is also accompanied by anxiety and stress in society. This can have negative consequences for communication both within the family and with friends or strangers. For some people, the war had become an experience that had **increased their distrust of others**. In particular, a number of the surveyed were afraid that their traumatic experiences and feelings could be underappreciated by people who had not experienced similar events. This often referred to bombing, living under occupation, leaving the dangerous areas. Due to this, people could not always share their thoughts and had to limit their circle. Some noted that it was sometimes difficult for them to talk, especially about “regular” subjects, with acquaintances who were in the army or had left their homes due to the war.

“It’s almost uncomfortable to talk to friends in the army because this debt can’t be repaid with any donations.”

Woman, 29, Kyiv

“It’s getting hard for me to talk to some friends who’ve been less affected by the war than me, both in the psychological sense and in the sense of living conditions (that is, the ones who’ve already returned home), because I realize that their lives have generally changed less than mine.”

Woman, 27, Kyiv

“Friends who have gone abroad [...] have unfortunately disappeared from my life. At the beginning of the war, of course, everyone was actively asking how I was doing, [...] but over time it became more and more apparent that people weren’t very comfortable to constantly hear about some kind of horrors of war from me when they responded with stories about their regular lives.”

Woman, 20, Hostomel, Kyiv Region

The war has also changed the behavior of many people and their ideas about what was appropriate or inappropriate to do—for instance, whether they can buy clothes, go on vacation, or celebrate birthdays. However, in moments when different people’s ideas about what is

allowed and not allowed during the war clashed, there could be misunderstandings or even conflicts. Some of the surveyed noted that they judged people for, in their opinion, inappropriate behavior. These differences became reasons why people stopped talking to friends or acquaintances.

Many respondents also reassessed, or more exactly **broke off their relationships with family or friends from Russia as well as those who have pro-Russian views.**

“I’ve blocked all contacts with my sister who has a different opinion about these events.”

Woman, 58, Zaporizhia Region

2.2 ● Concerns and important events

We also asked the respondents to list the most important events that happened to them since early May¹³ and write about what concerned them the most at the moment.¹⁴ These answers were analyzed together because they often echoed and added to one another. The question about “important events” helped us find out about the key things that had happened to the respondents personally since early May. At the same time, the question about “concerns” allowed us to understand what the surveyed were worried about in social life.

The respondents distinguished the following types of the most important events:

- joining the Armed Forces of Ukraine;
- participating in volunteer initiatives;
- moving within Ukraine or abroad;
- returning from other regions of Ukraine or from abroad;
- events related to personal life: trips, celebrations, personal achievements, childbirths, weddings, meetings with loved ones, loved ones’ escape from the occupied territories;
- events related to work and money: a new job, losing a job and income;
- death of family members, friends or acquaintances as a result of the war;
- other events related to the war (losing housing, bombings).

The respondents indicated the following among their main concerns:

- war: the length and course of the war, mobilization, the possibility that Russia would use nuclear weapons, the potential attack from the Belarusian territory, bombings of the Zaporizhia Nuclear Power Plant, safety of Ukrainian troops who were at the frontline and in Russian captivity;
- safety: one’s own and that of one’s family, friends and loved ones;
- work and money;

¹³Question formulation: “What were the most important events that happened to you in the past three months (from May until today)? Please list them.”

¹⁴ Question formulation: “What concerns you the most right now? Please list.”

- economy: rising prices, inflation, unemployment;
- preparing for winter;
- beginning of the school year and children's education;
- international support for Ukraine;
- hypothetical risk of a shift in the country's political course;
- health: one's own and that of one's family, friends and loved ones;
- housing: the state of housing, the possibility that bombings would damage or destroy housing, housing provision for those who need it.

Below, we focus on several categories of concerns and the associated important events that happened in the respondents' lives during May–August.

The war and the uncertainty, fear and instability associated with it were among the main concerns noted by our respondents. The lives of many survey participants had been significantly affected by the war. Some were forced to flee from bombing or lost their homes, others joined the Armed Forces, still others continued their volunteering, while some of the respondents continued to live under occupation. For a number of people, the biggest shock since early May was their loved one's death at the front. A share of the participants mentioned that the most important thing for them was that they were able to survive bombing or battles near their homes.

Thus, **the safety of loved ones, family, as well as personal safety** belonged to the main concerns at the moment of the survey. This was especially relevant for those who lived near the frontline, in the temporarily occupied territories, or in cities which were constantly shelled by the Russian army. The surveyed noted that they were worried about the safety of their loved ones who continued to live under occupation or joined the army, as well as of their children who had started their studies at school or college.

“Instability, the invaders walking around our village like they own the place, the lives of my family and loved ones who are facing danger.”

Woman, 60, village, Zaporizhia Region

"I have family under occupation and on the frontline. I'm also concerned that we're restoring the house, but it can be hit once again."

Woman, 63, Irpin, Kyiv Region

"I lost my job due to an enemy missile that hit the work building. My finances are worse now. Frequent stresses and nightmares. [I'm concerned about] danger for my city and family, financial problems."

Woman, 37, Zaporizhia

"Possibility of missile strikes which threaten my family."

Woman, 43, Stryi, Lviv Region

"Illnesses and family under occupation who have not left because they have no place to go."

Woman, 61, Zaporizhia Region

The question "When will the war end?" often featured in the participants' answers. The findings of the [second wave of the study](#) showed that during the first three months of the war some respondents developed an understanding that the war would last a long time and would not end soon. That was why many people started to gradually adjust their lives to "the new normal." This trend can also be observed in the sixth month of the war. Despite the realization that the war would be long, many were concerned about and wary of this prospect. It also added to the uncertainty and complicated planning.

"The war isn't over. I've realized that this will last a while."

Woman, 52, Kharkiv

"There's a fear that the war would last very long, that my city can be captured, that a missile will hit my house, that I will lose loved ones."

Woman, 21, Sumy

"[I'm concerned about] when the war will end. I don't want them to bomb us and don't want to be left without a roof over my head. I'm worried if I'll have enough money to live."

Woman, 63, Kyiv

We should also note that some respondents said that **nothing important** had happened in their lives since early May. On the one hand, this can be due to the feeling that the events in their lives were not significant enough to share. On the other hand, the answers allow us to trace the feeling of apathy and loss of agency. The surveyed said that their lives were “on pause” or that they were living “as if asleep” and “awaiting” new changes. Respondents of this category often mentioned war and uncertainty as their main concerns. In addition, some of them noted the feeling of loneliness or the fear of being left alone.

“Only the war, the rest is bullsh..t, as it turns out. And, well, as a result, I REALLY miss my daughter and granddaughter.”

Woman, 56, Odesa

“When will all of this end? Mobilization, because if my son is conscripted, I’ll be completely alone.”

Woman, 67, Kyiv

Since many people were concerned about ending the war, they were also worried about **the international support for Ukraine** and **the pace of weapon supplies**, because this directly affected when Ukraine would win.

“I’m most concerned about everything related to the war, of course: how is my brother doing at the front? How are the people in the occupied territories? How are our soldiers? How are our POWs? When will we receive more weapons?”

Woman, 23, Kyiv

“When the war will end and why the help we receive is so weak. The rf breaks the laws of war, it is supported by some human rights organizations, media personalities, it is all very disappointing.”

Woman, 24, Kyiv

In the previous wave of the study, we noted that the issues of **work and money** became urgent for a significant share of people. This trend continued in the sixth month of the war as well. Respondents noted that they were concerned about the decreasing number of vacancies, the possibility of losing their jobs, and the fact that due to inflation their salaries would not cover their necessary expenses. At the same time, an

additional concern for women was the **need to combine work and childcare**, especially if they had moved to a different country.

“Lack of strength to manage a job and a child on my own in a different country.”

Woman, 34, Kyiv

“Right now there’s little work in the country, but I want to work in order to live here, provide for myself and donate to the Armed Forces.”

Woman, 20, Odesa

Some respondents said that the most important event in their lives since May was that they were “**getting poorer**” and mentioned “lack of money” among their concerns. The issue of money was especially urgent for middle-aged and elderly people as well as those who had lost their jobs during the war.

“Job loss, garden house damaged by shelling. [I’m concerned] if I’ll have enough money for the future, how to survive winter.”

Woman, 58, Kyiv

“How to survive on the tiny pension. Concerned about the lives of my kids and grandkids.”

Woman, 67, Lviv

The lack of jobs and money is associated with the feeling of uncertainty and instability. The surveyed noted that they did not know how to plan for the future, whether they would have enough savings to last the nearest months, and whether they would be able to survive the winter.¹⁵

Waiting for the winter and preparing for it made the list of people’s main concerns and worries. Respondents noted that they were concerned about rising utility fees and their ability to pay the fees on their own.

“The war, of course. But as for other things, then the situation in winter (heating, potential heating fee increases, food), job market instability.”

Woman, 41, Kyiv

¹⁵ See more details about how war has affected the respondents’ employment and work in section 3.1.

Among the things that concern them, many respondents also mentioned the **beginning of the school year**. This topic was mostly raised by women. They noted that they were worried about the format of classes (in-person or remote) and about their children's ability to attend school. Some also mentioned that schools were damaged, so it was impossible to resume in-person studies in their city or town. Women who had moved to other countries also said that their children's education was among their main concerns. In addition, the question of education in the temporarily occupied areas had become very urgent. Respondents reported threats from the occupiers and shared concerns about their children's safety.

"Threats to take away our kids if we don't take them to the occupiers' schools. It's hard to leave, and if we do, then where would we live and for what money."

Woman, 45, city, Kherson Region

Study participants also pointed out **health-related** concerns. They said that the war was affecting their both physical and mental health. The **gender aspect** should also be noted, since women were more likely than men to pay attention to their health, reflect on the emotional tension, and think about the health of their family and loved ones.

"Accumulating tension, and since I'm with the kid 24/7, there's a risk of spilling out the tension, frustration, irritation on her."

Woman, 43, Hlevakha, Kyiv Region

"How to monitor your health while you're under constant stress?"

Woman, 63, Kharkiv

"Physical state of the body. I realize I should deal with my health. But for some reason I can't get to it."

Woman, 49, Sumy

In addition, concerns about health were sometimes directly linked to concerns about finances. Some respondents said that they were afraid of getting sick because they were not sure they would be able to pay for the treatment.

“Not to get “sick until I return home [from a different country] so that I don’t have to visit doctors even once.”

Woman, 48, Kharkiv

“Lack of a stable financial foundation, and as a result, I’m afraid to get sick or afraid that someone in my family will get sick.”

Man, 47, Voskresenske, Mykolayiv Region

Despite everything, in the three months from May to August some respondents also experienced many **pleasant and long-awaited events**. Opportunities for respite and joy under the conditions of constant anxiety and worry were important for maintaining both physical and mental health. For instance, the participants mentioned getting joy from traveling—both within Ukraine and abroad. For some, the most important event was their children getting accepted to a university. For others it was having children or grandchildren. The surveyed pointed out personal achievements such as opening an art platform, finishing a book, or starting driving lessons. Other important events that were mentioned included weddings, proposals, pregnancy planning. However, pleasant events and achievements often went alongside concerns about the war, health and wellbeing, uncertainty of the future, loneliness and separation. This shows that even under the conditions of a supposedly “normal” life, a significant share of the surveyed had a painful experience of the war.

“I’ll become a grandfather once again. [I’m concerned that] my daughter-in-law is in Germany with my grandson.”

Man, 75, Radomyshl, Zhytomyr Region

“In May, I started taking driving lessons, went and bought a car. My boyfriend proposed and [...] we got married. Our wedding was [in summer], we gathered our friends, and it was a beautiful small celebration in an apple orchard which we all need so much right now. And in just two weeks, my husband was mobilized for the Armed Forces. Now I’m the wife of a military man and I’m learning to live with it.”

Woman, 34, Kyiv

“I got married and my parents could be there. My dad went to serve, and they were relocated from the reserve to the frontline. I

went on vacation abroad, although I didn't even think I would go anywhere at all this year."

Woman, 29, Lviv

"I won a stipend and had "stability" for a few months; my family escaped occupation in Melitopol."

Woman, 43, Hlevakha, Kyiv Region

"I fell in love happily and mutually, which hadn't happened to me for like five years. [I'm concerned] about the possibility of a hard winter and the need to prepare for it, the number of people killed at the front, the ruined cities I've never been to and never saw."

Woman, 36, Kyiv

"I launched my project website. [I'm concerned about] the lack of confidence in the future. When you're prepared to die of a missile any day, you don't really manage to live."

Man, 47, Fastiv, Kyiv Region

Part 3 ● Work and volunteering

3.1 ● Impact of war on employment

Answers about emotional states¹⁶ during the second wave of the study showed that probably the highest number of respondents were concerned about issues of financial wellbeing and employment. Respondents mentioned losing their jobs due to the war and being concerned about whether they would be able to find new ones, or being worried of losing their jobs in the future.¹⁷ A significant number of respondents felt anxiety, despair and fear due to the size of their income. These concerns were shared more often by people who had changed their place of residence since the beginning of the war, as well as those whose households were less well off before the war.¹⁸ That is why in the third wave we decided to directly ask our respondents about the impact of the war on their work.¹⁹ Just like all the other questions in the survey, this question could be answered by all the participants who wanted to answer, regardless of their labor market status or type of work (employment, self-employment, own business, several types of employment combined). In addition, we purposefully used the general term “work” to leave space for respondents to broadly interpret what they consider to be work, particularly regardless of whether that work is paid.

The answers to this question most often reflect four main scenarios:

- the war had barely affected a respondent’s work or had no effect at all;
- a respondent’s income from paid employment had shrunk;
- a respondent had lost paid employment;

¹⁶ Question formulation: “How do you feel right now? Please describe your state, emotions and feelings.”

¹⁷ The relevance of this problem is confirmed by official data. According to the [International Labor Organization](#) about 4.8 million Ukrainians had lost their jobs just by May. By August, the unemployment rate in Ukraine had reached 35%, according to the [National Bank](#). In addition, formally keeping one’s job does not mean continuing to receive one’s pre-war salary or wage, and the purchasing power of Ukrainians’ wages is falling rapidly.

¹⁸ Meaning the respondents who described the financial state of their household as follows: they could not afford food; they could afford food but could not always afford clothes.

¹⁹ Question formulation: “How has the full-scale war changed your work and its nature?”

- the organization and content of work had changed.

In the first scenario, the war had no significant effect on either compensation for a respondent's work or on its organization or content. This was often reported by respondents who had worked remotely even before the full-scale war began (and they often compared the current organization of their labor to COVID lockdown periods). The employment of those whose employers or customers were located abroad had not changed either. In general, Kyivians and residents of big cities were somewhat more represented among the respondents who answered this way.

"I'm lucky because I worked remotely for a foreign company before the war. Now I continue to work in the same mode."

Woman, 27, Kyiv

"[The war] has barely affected it. I worked remotely since the beginning of COVID, I went to the office maybe once every few months."

Man, 33, Kyiv

"It hasn't changed anything. My work is rather mobile, I just need to have a laptop and a stable internet connection."

Woman, 34, Kyiv

"It hasn't changed much. Because everything was set up for online work during COVID."

Man, 34, village, Ternopil Region

But the war has affected the work of the majority of respondents one way or another.

Some respondents faced changes only during the first few months of the full-scale invasion (for instance, the enterprise/facility where they worked had to be idle for a while or reduce its processing volumes), but by the time they took the survey the situation had already returned to the prewar state.

“Everything stopped. Only now I’m returning to what I did before.”

Woman, 49, Sumy

“Since the beginning of the full-scale war my work just disappeared, all projects were stopped, the first signs of returning to the normal state of affairs appeared in late May, payments resumed in July, and in August we started launching new projects.”

Woman, 39, Kyiv

A significant number of the respondents who reported that their **income from paid employment fell** during the full-scale war faced the situation when their **workload had increased while their salaries (or incomes from self-employment of business) had decreased**. The growing workload was associated by employees, among other things, with the need to perform the redistributed duties of their colleagues who had been laid off while receiving the same salaries, as well as with the fact that their professional work was directly related to the war or its consequences (working in the media, NGOs, etc.).

“I had to take over many of the duties of my colleagues who were or still are unable to work for health reasons (elderly people on the team, their health “shattered” due to the war) or for reasons of physical absence (left, moved to a safer region).”

Woman, 53, Kyiv

“We’ve switched to remote work; half of the employees have been fired [...], sales volumes have decreased, but I now have so much work due to the lack of employees.”

Woman, 27, Kyiv

“We started feeling like we had no right to vacations or rest. We started working more persistently, among other things because we got rid of contracts with Russian and Belorussian companies, and a lot of money was sent to the Armed Forces and to support soldiers we knew, for evacuation to safe regions, so we had to regain our footing to avoid going bankrupt.”

Woman, 23, Kyiv

Another widespread situation in this scenario was **a decrease in workload and a corresponding decrease in salaries** (or fees in the case of self-employed people).

“My salary has decreased. I work half the hours. From March we had downtime, in late June the downtime ended.”

Woman, 36, Brovary, Kyiv Region

“We’ve switched to remote work completely. The company cannot maintain the previous volumes of work but it decided not to fire employees, keeping the salaries minimal—therefore, there are much fewer working hours now, too, and I work a quarter of the hours I worked before the war.”

Woman, 47, Kyiv

“The volume of projects has decreased a lot, the customers are very harsh in negotiations, with the rising inflation it’s impossible to raise prices.”

Woman, 39, Kyiv

Some respondents from the employee group **had completely lost their income** from the employment they had before the war without formally losing their job and therefore their employed status. This was the situation for the respondents who took the survey while living in active battle zones and/or in occupied areas, being unable to do their jobs; and for the respondents who were on unpaid leave.

“I live in a battle zone and can’t reach work. To reach it, I have to pass 2 other battle zones.”

Man, 47, rural town, Mykolayiv Region

“I’m in an occupied area. I don’t support the new Russian authorities. I don’t collaborate. So I stay home, don’t work.”

Woman, 58, Berdyansk, Zaporizhia Region

Some respondents’ experience also shows a potential **tendency for employment to move into the shadows** during war, although the scale of this process cannot be assessed within this study.

“My employer has moved our work “to the shadows” and reduced compensation.”

Man, 55, Nizhyn, Chernihiv Region

“In my main occupation, I started working remotely as an independent contractor.”

Bigender, 33, Kyiv

Shrinking incomes and difficult situations often pushed respondents **to look for additional jobs and gigs**. In turn, self-employed respondents reported having to accept more orders for services. Some respondents said that they were **prepared to take up practically any gig** to provide minimum subsistence to themselves and their families.

“I was idle at my main job for three months, in that period I was a volunteer for 2 months and mastered the profession of a loader at a big warehouse. After returning to my main job, I became a loader as well and a researcher at the same time.”

Man, 35, Kharkiv

“My husband and I were never lazy, we had good jobs. But now we take up any jobs that pay anything. Just to make sure we’re able to feed the kid.”

Woman, 33, Zaporizhia

“I lost my job (the building was damaged by a missile). Right now I take any gigs I can.”

Woman, 37, Zaporizhia

“It’s a different occupation in a different city, low-skilled. Less money, while the prices are higher for everything.”

Woman, 60, Mariupol, Donetsk Region

The respondents who were prepared to take any jobs or gigs included many of those who **lost their jobs during the war or lost their main employment** while their additional work did not allow them to provide for themselves and their families. In general, even in the small sample of our survey, the share of people who had lost their jobs or income from self-employment during the war was very prominent.

“I’m left with no job with the kids. The four of us survive on my pension of 2,500.”

Man, 57, Oleshky, Kherson Region

“I was fired from my main job. My additional work became remote and smaller in volume, and it’s all exclusively online.”

Non-binary person, 24, Dnipro

“Since the beginning of the war I haven’t earned anything, no projects. There are requests, but isolated ones.”

Woman, 37, Kyiv

Searching for a new job in wartime is not easy.

“I have no permanent job, it’s hard to find one.”

Woman, 61, Zaporizhia Region

“I’ve been trying to find a job for half a year without any results.”

Woman, 29, Vinnytsia

Of the respondents who have **started new jobs**, many joined the labor market in a different country. New jobs could also be associated with moving abroad or involve remote work.

“The war increased the demand for my specialization on the market. I quit my low-paid Ukrainian jobs and started doing well-paid European jobs.”

Woman, 25, Poltava

“Before the full-scale invasion, I worked in tourism. After the invasion I was essentially left without a job, so I decided to find a new one. [...] Now I work remotely for a foreign company. I feel less happy than at my previous job, but it gives me the feeling of stability.”

Woman, 28, village, Kyiv Region

“It’s almost impossible to find a normal job in Ukraine now, and I barely can afford anything. It’s much easier to find a remote gig in Europe now.”

Man, 19, Kyiv

It should be noted that there is a clear **gender aspect** here. Lack of access to social infrastructure—kindergartens and schools—due to destruction or damage of buildings or due to inability to organize safe conditions and/or safe transportation to schools has increased the childcare and teaching workload of parents, primarily mothers. Women who were forced to leave Ukraine and had not been able to find a school for their child abroad yet were also facing difficulties. In turn, this was a significant obstacle both to fulfilling their duties at their existing jobs

and to returning to the labor market and looking for new jobs, which was often mentioned by our respondents.

“Now I work the same way. But I have fewer hours. That’s bad because I make less money. But it’s also good, because I can only work at night or at dawn. Work can’t be combined with kids: my elder one is on summer break, there’s no kindergarten for my younger one, it’s closed and won’t be open because there’s no proper shelter.”

Woman, 41, Kyiv

“I’ve lost my job. Now I don’t work, I have nobody to watch the kids. I can’t work online for the same reason.”

Woman, 40, village, Chernihiv Region

“My job now is to be a mother to two small kids. The war has changed everything. [...] I’m alone in a strange country and without help, I can only rely on myself.”

Woman, 34, Chernihiv

Issues related to employment, particularly maintaining one’s current level of income, the stability of one’s job itself or one’s current customers, or searching for a new job, were associated with **the feeling of uncertainty** for a significant share of respondents.

“Work has become mostly remote, I had to get an unpaid leave, there is no clear idea about providing myself with work.”

Woman, 29, Zaporizhia

“My work is online, but I don’t know if I’ll still have it from September.”

Woman, 60, Sumy

“One of my projects is now closed, we’re waiting for confirmation of new funding, but we don’t know when we’ll get it. And at my main job [...] I work the same as before the war, if not more.”

Woman, 34, Kyiv

Some respondents also spoke about how the war had significantly affected their labor organization: working hours, workload distribution during the day or the week, workplace (a significant share of

respondents have started working remotely or combining office and remote work), etc.

“I don’t work from 9 to 6 but whenever I can. I work from home, and my boss understands that due to bombings, especially at night, it’s hard to stick to a schedule.”

Woman, 23, Mykolayiv

“The office works one hour less. Sometimes I can work from home.”

Woman, 34, Kyiv

“Work has become remote, but now it should resume in person (I’m a professor), however, there’s no clear action algorithm [in case of danger], there’s a risk.”

Woman, 43, Stryi, Lviv Region

Finally, we should note the tendency to **reconsider the perception of work as such as well as one’s attitude to it**, which can often be noticed in the answers of this wave.

For instance, in their answers, respondents often undermined the perception of work solely as a paid productive activity by mentioning the reproductive work they do as well or by speaking only about reproductive work. For example, some respondents reported becoming unemployed due to the war but helping their neighbors with food shopping or gardening, caring for children or elderly relatives; some said that their job at the moment of taking the survey was making camouflage nets for the Armed Forces.

Respondents also said that they had started questioning the usefulness of their jobs for society during war and for the victory, as well as the place and role of work in their lives.

“I got the feeling that I wasn’t doing anything significant with my work which would lead to the victory, and this demotivates me.”

Woman, Kyiv

“Now when I do something, I always think if it would help the needs of the army.”

Man, 23, Kyiv

“I started wanting to quit my job because I have enough stress in my life without it now.”

Woman, 26, Kharkiv

“I started rejecting some of the not-so-important or needed tasks in favor of others or even rest.”

Woman, 40, Kyiv

“During the war, I realized that it was easier for me to just point-blank leave a job that brings me nothing but stress, because the situation around me is already stressful and I need to take care of myself and my health, and if I have the privilege of finding another job relatively easily, I should use it.”

Woman, 27, Kyiv

3.2 ● Involvement in volunteering

We asked the respondents if their involvement in volunteering and helping others had changed in the six months of the full-scale invasion.²⁰ There were different kinds of changes in the respondents' involvement: some had started to dedicate more time to this work or changed the area they volunteered in, while others were participating less or stopped doing it at all.

Some respondents noted that their participation in volunteering had increased. In particular, they started dedicating more time to this work and became more systemically engaged—for instance, they joined a specific initiative, or their volunteering has even transformed into paid work. In addition, a number of respondents said that the amounts they were donating had increased or that their donations had become regular.

“I’ve started donating much higher sums and constantly, to people I know personally and to verified foundations. I’ve got my first experience of direct volunteering, when you search-buy-send things on your own, but in small volumes to a specific person.”

Woman, 29, Kyiv

“I have more time for volunteering now. I’m engaged in volunteering practically every week: before June, it was both help for the military and humanitarian support. Now it’s only help for the military.”

Woman, 35, Kyiv

A certain share of the respondents, on the contrary, started **helping or joining volunteer initiatives less or stopped doing it at all**. They mentioned that the need for certain types of help, particularly physical labor such as weaving nets or cooking, had decreased, which was why they stopped doing it. This can be due to the fact that the situation has partially stabilized in some regions compared to the beginning of the full-scale invasion. Among other reasons why their participation had decreased or stopped, respondents mentioned having less time, strength or mental energy to engage in volunteering. In addition, some

²⁰ Question formulation: “Please describe how has your involvement in volunteering, helping other people changed in the six months of the full-scale war?”

study participants mentioned their own burnout. Time for volunteering had also decreased due to reduced financial resources and the need to return to work. Another reason why respondents participated in volunteering less was that the situation became more established compared to the beginning of the full-scale invasion, particularly that volunteering was now provided in a more organized manner than during the first month of the war. Some respondents noted that at the beginning of the full-scale invasion they were more active in volunteering physically or on the ground, while now their help is mostly financial.

“I used to have volunteering and activism. Now I have no mental resource for this and help with money to initiatives I know or donate to buy weapons.”

Woman, 28, Kyiv

“I used to volunteer until I burned out in about three months. Many people and established organizations started doing it better and in a more organized way, while the chaos of the first period of the war has receded.”

Man, 19, Kyiv

Some respondents also noted that the **areas they volunteered in had changed** in general. For example, at first they were more involved in the issue of refugees and humanitarian aid, but by the time of the survey they did more to help the military. In addition, for some of them volunteering had transformed into paid employment.

“I did not volunteer before the full-scale war. In the six months of the full-scale war, I changed the areas of volunteering: for 2 months I was a loader at a big humanitarian aid warehouse, and for 1 month I volunteered at the construction of defense structures.”

Man, 35, Kharkiv

“At the initial stages I volunteered at the train station with refugees, now I focus more on the army and rebuilding (although refugees continue to call me and ask for help).”

Man, 33, Kyiv

“The first three months were more intense, with search for medicine and humanitarian aid. Now I volunteer at an education project for children from refugee families.”

Woman, 32, Bucha, Kyiv Region

“Much less. Plus some projects have become partially paid... Grants were found abroad. I don't know if you can call it volunteering now.”

Man, 31, Kyiv

Some respondents continued to help or engage in volunteering if they could or when they were asked for help. Another part of the survey participants also replied that their **participation in volunteering had not changed** in February–August: they were still providing the same aid as before or still were not joining.

3.3 ● Impact of volunteering

We also asked the respondents how they and their views were affected by the experience of volunteering and helping others.²¹

A prominent tendency among the respondents was that **volunteering had become a way to distract themselves** from the tragic events around them, alleviate stress and support their mental state. It helped them not feel “passive” but, on the contrary, feel like their actions were useful. Some of the respondents who had left Ukraine noted that volunteering helped them not to feel guilty for leaving.

“It’s easier for me this way, I feel involved, it calms me better than inactivity, the feeling that you’ve helped people who need it is important.”

Woman, 29, Zaporizhia

“I think I do it more for myself than for anyone else. I needed to engage myself with something to avoid sitting between four walls all the time, I needed to feel that I could do something so I don’t feel as guilty for leaving the country.”

Woman, 25, Kyiv

“This saved my mental state, I had less time for contemplation and fears.”

Woman, 56, Kharkiv

“It really helps you live through especially difficult news. Weaving nets, packing medical kits, logistics allows you to channel your anger for russians into something constructive.”

Woman, 32, Kyiv

Some respondents emphasized that **volunteering gave them the feeling of contributing to the struggle, victory, and future of Ukraine.**

“By investing effort in supporting Ukrainians, I invest in our future in general and in my own in particular. It’s also about the feeling of involvement in the great processes we are currently living through. The feeling of establishing justice.”

Woman, 27, Kyiv

²¹ Question formulation: “How has this experience of volunteering and helping others affected you and your views?”

"[Volunteering] gave me experience of communication and the feeling of usefulness. We were happy that we were bringing victory closer at least in some way."

Woman, 68, Kharkiv

Some respondents said that they felt the **importance of volunteering and the need to help others**. Volunteering was sometimes defined as a civic duty in the survey answers/ However, some respondents noted that the experience of volunteering had helped them realize that it was impossible to help everyone who needed it.

"You have to volunteer, and it's not a whim, it's a real way to provide (and therefore to receive) help in the conditions of instability."

Woman, 37, Kyiv

"You have to always help, if you have motivation and resources."

Man, 26, Dnipro

"I feel the need to help and support internally displaced people, I'm afraid to even imagine how it is to lose your home and have no resources to cover your basic needs."

Woman, 22, Drohobych

"I've realized that giving something to charity—stuff, money, your time—feels nice, and a significant share of funds exist solely due to donations. That we as a society should follow the example of Scandinavian countries where participating in charity events on weekends is a type of leisure and a way to help your community."

Woman, 29, Lviv

Some answers to this question were about **emotions and feelings experienced by respondents while volunteering**. In particular, some of them noted that they had become more empathetic, sensitive and sympathetic of other people. Others, on the contrary, said that their level of empathy had decreased. In addition, some respondents reported that their mental state got worse due to events that happened as a result of the war to people they were interacting with.²²

²² See more details about feelings in section 4.1, Emotional State.

“More empathy, involvement in helping people, which partially internally covers up the “survivor’s guilt.”

Man, 26, Lviv

“Unfortunately, I’ve become less empathetic. I’m not touched by stories full of pain. I hope this will pass over time.”

Woman, 27, Kyiv

“Realization of the tragedy of the situation from the human side, sadness and disappointment, but also mobilization and even stronger attachment to the country.”

Woman, 26, Rzeszów, Poland

“Constant stress which paralyzed me after each difficult case.”

Woman, 41, Lviv

Volunteering also gave some respondents an understanding of the **capacity to unite in case of need in order to help others and of the importance of unity and joint effort in work**. The surveyed also mentioned the effectiveness of self-organization.

“Experience has shown that self-organization and horizontal social relations are very effective. And that in many situations the people can solve problems, certain issues, and meet needs without involving the government. I’ve started feeling more respect and love for our people. I want a transformation of the state’s functions which would take into account the self-organization experience of Ukrainians and direct democracy traditions.”

Man, 27, Lviv

In addition, some respondents noted that volunteering during the war helped them **realize the importance of social contacts and connections as well as the importance of relationships with other people in general**.²³ The surveyed also said that being involved in volunteering convinced them that any help and any donation amount is important.

“I used to think that there should only be large-scale help. Now I think that any amount, any help is important, however small it is. Together it makes up a big stream. I’ve especially felt it now.”

Woman, 43, Kyiv

²³ See more about relationships in section 2.1, Communication and Relationships with Loved Ones.

A certain share of respondents said that the experience of volunteering had not affected them in any way. Some of them explained this by saying that they had participated in volunteering since 2014 and had not seen any changes since the beginning of the full-scale war, except that the scale of help that needed to be provided had changed.

Part 4 ● Feelings

4.1 ● Emotional state

Just like in the previous waves of the survey, we offered the respondents to assess their own emotional state.²⁴

A rather prominent tendency was that in this wave of the survey respondents were more likely to say that tension and anxiety had become constant companions in their lives. The respondents described their feelings as “**background anxiety**,” “**background stress**,” “general anxiety,” “moderate anxiety,” “**anxious background**”; they said that they were “**living in anxiety**” and that anxiety seemed to be “coming over,” “overwhelming” them.

“Constant anxiety. I do routine stuff, my hearing is always on alert—there’s a bang somewhere... No, that’s thunder, or a passing car. I constantly control the news feed.”

Woman, 63, Kyiv

“OK in general, I’m at a safe place. But I have background anxiety due to the war and the lack of ability to plan my life as usual.”

Woman, 31, Dnipro

“Lack of the feeling of safety creates a constant anxious background, not too high as I feel, but present.”

Man, 42, village, Kyiv Region

“Constant anxiety which really affects my sleep. I let negativity pass through me, which I didn’t use to feel that much before. But OK in general.”

Woman, 41, Kyiv

Respondents were experiencing constant feelings of anxiety and fear for their own safety and for their loved ones, for those who were in temporarily occupied areas, in the army, and for the situation at the front in general. In addition, a significant share of **respondents were concerned about issues related to their economic wellbeing and meeting basic needs** such as housing or medical care, as well as problems related to the approaching winter.

²⁴ Question formulation: “How are you feeling right now? Please describe your state, emotions and feelings.”

"A lot of anxiety and apathy. But certain systemic processes of organizing life have been launched. I allow myself joy and rest, communication with friends. There are many fears about autumn and winter, poverty, hunger.

Woman, 35, Kyiv

"It's hard to live in anxiety. Very lonely. I'm afraid to get sick, there's no medicine or doctors I need.

Woman, 58, Berdyansk, Zaporizhia Region

"Tiredness, fear for the future, I'm afraid to lose my job, I'm afraid to not be able to cope emotionally again.

Woman, 34, Kyiv

"My soul longs for home, for Ukraine, but it's dangerous there and there's no place to live. In the country I'm in now, there's a housing crisis and we have no place to live either. We've been told we'll be evicted in September. I don't know where I'll go with the kids.

Woman, 34, Chernihiv

Due to this background anxiety, even those who defined their state as calm or noted that they were feeling better than in the previous months experienced elements of emotional instability. Thus, even as they spoke about emotional stability, respondents often noted the **fragility, relative nature of this stability.**

"Mostly level "working" state. Sometimes there's something good and I feel better [...], sometimes, on the contrary, anxiety overcomes me [...]. Deep in my heart I feel a lake of cold rage against Russians which I try not to stir, but I feel that a wave can rise from it very easily if needed, or I'll just "snap."

Woman, 47, Kyiv

"More or less stable. Now there's no desperation anymore, like at the beginning, although sometimes waves of sadness from everything that's going on come over me."

Man, 27, Kyiv

“Compared to the first months, my state is calmer now, emotions are not as tumultuous, I’ve developed adaptivity. But at the same time some emotions cause a strong reaction which I didn’t have earlier, before the war, it’s as if they serve as a trigger.”

Woman, 32, Bucha, Kyiv Region

Just like in the previous waves, generally a significant share of respondents spoke about mood swings, difficulties with emotional management, and experiencing feelings of excessive intensity.

Many respondents said that while in the previous months they felt a certain numbness/dullness of emotions, in the second half of summer they started experiencing **"breakthroughs" of their suppressed emotions.**

“Swings have started, the numbness and shock of the first three months without tears are succeeded by rage, powerlessness, exhaustion, constant anxiety, inability to sleep.”

Woman, 39, Kyiv

“The emotional “frozenness” of the first months has passed. I’ve become more vulnerable, felt the ability to cry for the first time [...]. I’m feeling what “swings” mean, strong emotional exhaustion, sometimes bouts of aggression. At the same time I’ve got back the ability to feel “here and now,” feel joy in the moment.”

Woman, 53, Kyiv

“In the first months war-related feelings seemed to have bounced off me, that’s the defensive reaction I have, I just did what I had to do and wasn’t too worried. But now these emotions have started catching up with me.”

Woman, 26, Kyiv

Similar situations were also described by the respondents who said that they tried to control their emotions consciously.

“I mostly try to keep my face in front of my colleagues, I feel like there’s a switch within me between a normal person and a person whose country is at war. Regularly, once a month I break out in hysteria, usually it happens when I’m left alone after a socially active day or a major event.”

Woman, 25, Kyiv

“Externally calm, internally nervous. I periodically have nightmares. Stresses which I try to suppress within myself.”

Woman, 37, Zaporizhia

Other respondents, in contrast, reported **emotional dullness** and, like in the previous waves, mentioned **tiredness and exhaustion, apathy**, and losing the ability to feel strong emotions. Respondents also often defined this state as depressive or pre-depressive on their own or said that they had been diagnosed with depression. Just like in spring, many spoke about exhaustion from feeling intense emotions in the previous months.

“Emotions have receded a bit, in a way, and I’m not as worried now as in the first months. I realize with my head that people are being killed, but now I have a kind of defensive mechanism. So now I’m a bit like a robot in which emotions are switched back and forth. For example, when you’re with my friends it’s one set of emotions, when you dance to music, it’s a different set. But they’re all as if under anesthesia. Because if I felt every time the full pain that people who lose their family feel, I just wouldn’t be able to stand it.”

Man, 24, Kyiv

“Emotional bottom, I feel nothing for the third month now.”

Woman, 43, Kyiv

“I feel a big hole inside. I only feel feelings when I read about the suffering of our POWs or wounded and killed troops. I don’t feel how the seasons have changed. I’m stuck in February. I can still be moved by animals, birds, and videos of soldiers coming back alive to their families.”

Woman, Kyiv

“Complete burnout. Especially without emotions, gray existence. Pre-depression. On the one hand, I need to go to a therapist, on the other hand, the lack of emotions saves me.”

Man, 30, Zaporizhia

One of the emotions that featured in the survey answers as often in August as in May was **powerlessness**. In the previous wave of the survey, powerlessness mostly referred to inability to plan for one’s future,

respondents associated it with losing agency in their own lives, particularly due to moving to another city or another country. In turn, in August problems associated with instability and planning one's own future in general were mentioned much less often in the answers to questions about emotional states.

Respondents were more likely to talk about the feeling of powerlessness in relation to their inability to influence the course of the war, to prevent the suffering of their loved ones and other people or the crimes that can still be committed by the Russian army. **Powerlessness, grief, pain, and desperation** were the emotions which respondents mostly used to describe their compassion for the suffering of their compatriots.

"I'm a person with an undermined nervous system, I painfully experience the destruction of my country, death of civilians, death of our heroes at the front, the fate of POWs. I can cry several times a day."

Woman, 63, Irpin, Kyiv Region

"Pain from how many Ukrainians suffer and die. Feeling of helplessness and lack of strength for any normal activity."

Woman, 24, Kyiv

"I often [...] have moments of despondency and powerlessness, especially when I think about my occupied hometown, that I may never be able to return there [...]. I don't think that the city will return to Ukraine's control in the nearest years, and I feel terribly powerless. Powerless because I can't protect my loved ones from danger and maybe from mobilization."

Woman, 31, Kyiv

Compassion for compatriots was also closely associated with informational triggers: in reply to questions about their emotions, respondents rather often admitted the important **role of the news in shaping their own emotional experiences**. Respondents described this as "episodes of excitement from the news," "sadness from the news," etc.

"[I feel] calm and completely normal. With descents into shock, outrage and traumatizing empathy from another piece of news, sometimes it really brings me down."

Woman, 29, Kyiv

“Even though I’m safe, I know no mental peace. Every hour I check the news about what’s going on at home, sympathize with my fellow citizens and cry when someone dies. I morally do not allow myself to relax and rest, feel joy from the sun and beauty around me. Hardly anything makes me happy.”

Woman, 24, Kharkiv and Kyiv

“I’m safe, so now I don’t feel the need for protection or survival, but I constantly read the news and worry about the situation at the front and the people near the frontline. Missile strikes on cities, when there are many victims, are really depressing, it feels like these people are just dying in vain, I feel so sorry for them and sorry that it can’t be prevented or helped in any way. Sometimes this turns into constant pain, everything else loses any significance or weight.”

Woman, 34, Kyiv

Despite everything, a rather significant share of the respondents who participated in the third wave of the survey assessed their emotional state as **stable and/or calm**. Respondents often defined their state as stable or simply better specifically in comparison to the previous months of the war; they also mentioned **getting used, in a way, to the war and/or living under evacuation**.

“I’m getting used to the new realities of life during war, but it’s not easy for me at all, I try to do something to distract myself if I can, I talk to loved ones who are fighting, I was at the hospital when my nephew was there.”

Man, 63, Kyiv Region

“I’ve calmed down, accepted reality. I live in it.”

Woman, 56, Kharkiv

“Mundane. The war has become a part of life. There’s less empathy now and more cruelty and orientation towards results.”

Woman, 49, Sumy

“More stable than before because everything new has become usual. Over time you get used to the thought that you’re not home, that you have to build a new life and defend Ukraine from the rear abroad.”

Woman, 24, Kyiv

A prominent trend in the third wave was also the restored feeling of **hope, particularly hope for peace, for Ukraine's victory in the war and the possibility that it will end.** This hope was for many what supported them and helped them cope with their feelings.

"I generally feel calm and confident. I'm worried about the prospect of getting fired, but no more than in peace time. I believe that the situation at the front will be improving."

Woman, 27, Kyiv

"Generally I'm much calmer than in the first months of the war. I'm confident in our victory. I trust the country's leadership. And I believe in the Armed Forces the most. And I try to do my job properly. And be an honest citizen."

Woman, 39, Kyiv

"I'm a lonely person who distrusts their country's government. The AFU are my only hope."

Woman, 60, Mariupol, Donetsk Region

4.2 ● Sources of emotional support

In the third wave of the survey, we offered our respondents to share what supported them at that moment and what helped them cope with their feelings.²⁵

The hope that the war would end, the belief that the Armed Forces of Ukraine would be able to gain victory over the Russian army, the feeling of joy from victories at the front and liberated towns were among the most frequently mentioned things that helped respondents cope with their feelings during the war.

“The strength and bravery of Ukrainian defenders. The people’s collective resistance and striving for victory and justice.”

Man, 27, Lviv

“Belief in the victory of Ukraine and justice, good future for regular people.”

Woman, 65, Avdiyivka, Donetsk Region

Apart from hope for victory, the most frequently mentioned sources of support were **spending time and/or talking with loved ones, work, walks in nature, or work in the garden.**

“A word from my family and loved ones whom I unfortunately can’t see now.”

Man, 64, Kyiv

“Talking to other people, hedonistic things for myself: coffee when I need it, a tasty lunch, a pleasant view from the window, an interesting book or lecture, anything.”

Woman, 35, Kyiv

“Long walks through the city from work, to work, to do chores, although I used to allow myself to just go for a walk before.”

Woman, 53, Kyiv

²⁵ Question formulation: “What helps you cope with your emotions and feelings?”

“I have a good family, good kids, good grandkids, good friends, real friends, not just people I know. And a job I love and know how to do professionally. All of this gives me strength.”

Woman, 63, Irpin, Kyiv Region

It should be noted that among the respondents who assessed their emotional state as calm, stable, normal, and/or noted that their emotional state had improved compared to the first three months of the war, the majority **had jobs** at the moment of taking the survey.²⁶ That is, either these respondents had managed to keep their jobs during the war or they had already found a new job, or these were people who combined several jobs before the war and were able to keep at least one of them. Except for a few respondents who had lost their jobs during the war, the rest of the respondents who assessed their emotional state as stable were people who were out of the labor market: retirees and young students.

We can assume that the very fact of having a job could help stabilize one’s emotional state or at least their self-assessment of their state as more stable. This can be related to financial stability provided by work and to the feeling of having a usual environment and a usual routine, such as doing usual work tasks, talking to colleagues, etc.

In this sense, when respondents said they were supported by their jobs, they often meant the work **routine** that structured their schedule as well as **routine work in general**, performing routine actions which were not necessarily related to paid employment. For instance, when they spoke of “work,” respondents often meant reproductive work (caring for family members, housework, helping children with their studies, etc.), work in the garden or volunteering. The answers often mentioned “getting immersed in work,” “keeping hands busy,” trying to take on more tasks at work.

“Work. When I had none, I took up any volunteering. Now it’s work plus volunteering. I barely have any free time.”

Woman, 25, Kyiv

²⁶ Question formulation: “How has the full-scale war changed your work and its nature?”

“Talking to family and work. I try to work more to think less.”

Woman, 42, Odesa

“Physical workload while volunteering, when my hands are busy with the cause, my brain unloads. Plus the garden and growing flowers on the balcony, pets.”

Woman, 43, Kyiv

Survey respondents mentioned **therapy, professional mental health care, and self-care** (such as practicing meditation, breathing exercises, etc.) almost as often as food, walks, work, and talking to their loved ones. Some respondents said that they were receiving help from therapists even before the war and did not interrupt it, others managed to restore it, some said that they asked for this help for the first time during the war.

Although there were people among the respondents who practiced certain mental health practices on their own, the group of those working with professionals and/or taking medicines prescribed by professionals (anti-anxiety meds, antidepressants, vitamin supplements, etc.) was more numerous. It should be noted that asking for professional psychological help was not a very widespread practice in Ukraine before the war.²⁷ The existing health care system in Ukraine mostly does not cover the costs of professional mental health therapy. More often, therapists have a private practice, and paying for their services is not affordable for the majority of the Ukrainian population outside of the residents of big cities with above-average incomes.

Since residents of Kyiv and the four biggest cities (Kharkiv, Odesa, Dnipro and Lviv) were overrepresented in our survey sample and made up a bit under two thirds of all respondents (the same applies to

²⁷ According to the estimates cited by the authors of the [World Bank Report on Mental Health at the Transitional Stage](#): Findings of the Evaluation and Recommendations for Integrating Mental Health Care in the Primary Health Care System and Civil Platforms in Ukraine, up to 75% of people with common mental disorders and the alcohol abuse disorder in Ukraine have no access to professional help. The obstacles to receiving aid mentioned by the authors include stigmatization and shame, lack of information and awareness, high cost of treatment and other factors. The authors especially emphasize the importance of the problem of the lack of access to mental health care services at the level of communities, particularly to professional primary medical care, and not just at specialized psychiatric and narcological institutions.

members of more well-off households), we can assume that this influenced the number of mentions of therapy when discussing what helped the respondents cope with their emotional experiences.

Among other things that support them, respondents also mentioned **films, books, music, favorite hobbies, food, alcohol**. The respondents who said that they found support in alcohol were almost exclusively men.

“Films, books, mostly historic ones, through the realization that these situations have already happened before and we’re not unique.”

Woman, 26, Rzeszów, Poland

“I’ve been drawing for a while, but only recently I discovered oil painting. Thanks to Bob Ross, I learned about new techniques with this paint, plus sometimes I just put on his lessons because they’re incredibly meditative. The gaming industry also helps, in particular the game I’ve been really looking forward to, Elden Ring. [...] on the first days of checkpoint building and volunteering, this game helped me incredibly during anxious evenings.”

Man, 19, Lutsk

“I distract myself with something else, call my grandchildren, watch a film or a sports show if I can.”

Man, 63, Kyiv Region

“Felting. Seriously, stabbing a sponge and wool with a needle is very therapeutic, especially if you imagine a composite image of Muscovites on that sponge. I listen to the new thematic music (Bayraktar, Putin Will Die, Arta, Enemy, etc.).”

Woman, 32, Kyiv

Respondents also noted that in order to cope with emotional experiences, they tried to **accept their emotions, allow themselves to feel and express them**. In addition, respondents spoke about their **attempts to accept the war** and their limited ability to influence its course, and at the same time attempts not to feel completely powerless by outlining the spheres which they can have an influence on.

“It helps to live through them. Be angry when you feel like it. And work a lot and look at the good deeds of our people.”

Woman, 23, Kyiv

“Just the realization that this has to pass. That I’m in this state, that it’s emotionally hard for me, but it’s a part of life. If I try to run away from this pain, it’s running away from life.”

Man, 24, Kyiv

“Generally more or less calm and rational observation of events. Acceptance of everything there is. Understanding that many things happen and will happen despite my wishes and emotions. But wherever I can influence something, I influence it.”

Woman, 36, Brovary, Kyiv Region

As mentioned above, respondents recognized the important **role of the news in shaping their emotional experiences**. So one of the support strategies for some respondents was to **purposefully limit their news consumption and sources of the news**. Respondents often spoke about **detached perception of the news**, which could be an intentional practice or could be associated with the general dullness of emotions and apathy which respondents reported while describing their emotional states.

“I feel rather stable. Now I’m mostly worried about personal troubles, I distance myself a bit from the news and from the emotions they can cause.”

Woman, 25, Lviv

“I had exhausting emotional outbursts of anger, sadness, sometimes elevation. Now I continue monitoring the news and watching everything that happens at the front and in our society, but I’ve started to perceive everything in a more detached, calm way. There’s no strain anymore, and now my head is colder (or I’m just out of emotions, I don’t know).”

Woman, 27, Kyiv

Finally, it should be noted that while speaking about what helped them cope with emotions, some respondents mentioned direct purposeful control of their emotions and often used expressions such as “willpower,” “strength of character,” “self-discipline,” “self-control,”

“character,” etc. Men were much more likely than women to mention this.

“Rationality. Ability to stop thinking about what pushes me into despair.”

Man, 48, Siversk, Donetsk Region

“My mind, willpower, restraint.”

Man, 67, Kharkiv Region

“Ability to switch them off.”

Man, 31, Odesa

At the same time, just like in the previous waves, women’s answers often showed the need to control one’s emotions, “keep it together” for the sake of other people.

“I’m waiting for the victory, trying not to be weak so that my kids aren’t worried.”

Woman, 74, Kyiv

“I keep it together because my kid needs an adequate mom.

Woman, 36, Kharkiv”

In addition, some respondents admitted that at the moment **nothing was helping them** to cope with emotions.

Part 5 ● Future

5.1 ● Changes in principles and views

In the third wave of the study, we asked the respondents about the influence of the war on changes in their principles and views.²⁸ We purposefully avoided using the phrases “political views” or “views on the war” in the question formulation. So some people spoke about their changing views on their own lives, while others spoke about changes in their sociopolitical views. The key changes noted by the respondents include:

- changing attitude to life priorities and the place of material things among them;
- changing approaches to personal life planning;
- changing attitude to human relations, particularly with family and loved ones;
- changing views on choosing the language of communication and content consumption;
- changing attitude towards Russia and Russians;
- changing ideas about defending one’s views.

Some of the study participants who reported changes in their views on life emphasized in their answers that these changes were forced and caused by the war, but they tried to “cope” with them. Respondents mentioned **reconsidering their values** and said that their **highest priority is the lives and safety of their loved ones, in contrast to material things**. In their answers, study participants mostly did not detail what belonged to “material things,” but they emphasized that while these things used to be important to them, they had lost their significance since the full-scale war began. It is likely that some respondents included their careers, travel and entertainment in this category in addition to property and money.

“Things that used to be important, such as traveling or meeting with friends, no longer play such an important role.”

Woman, 32, Bucha, Kyiv Region

²⁸ Question formulation: “How have your principles and views changed since the beginning of the full-scale war?”

“The most important acquisition is family and friends. Everything material can fit in one backpack.”

Woman, 60, Sumy

Study participants described **new principles they applied in communication with people**. For example, they had begun to express their thoughts more frankly and openly, had become more confident in denying communication to those who did not evoke trust or sympathy, and started to care less about “what people would think.” Some noted a more loyal and tolerant attitude towards people in general, particularly speaking about love for all Ukrainians and desire to help other people. Others, on the contrary, said that they had become less tolerant in communication, and it was harder for them to accept an opposite opinion.²⁹

“I have a better attitude to people (the russes are not people).”

Woman, 32, Vyshneve, Kyiv Region

“I don’t want to waste my time on people and matters which I don’t consider to be important and deserving of it.”

Man, 49, Zaporizhia

For many respondents, it was typical to have a narrower planning horizon, which was also mentioned in the previous waves of the survey. Study participants noted that plans could be “suddenly ruined,” so they **preferred the principle of “living in the present,” “acting here and now.”** Some respondents were stimulated by the limited planning possibilities to implement plans they previously tended to postpone.

“I’ve stopped saving up money and caring about the future.”

Woman, 53, Kyiv

“If you want to do something, do it right now, don’t delay, because “later” may never come.”

Man, 19, Lutsk

In their answers to the question about changing views and principles, a significant share of the respondents described changes in their views on sociopolitical issues. One of the key changes was a **changed opinion on**

²⁹ See more details about changes in communication and relationships in Part 2.

the language issue and content consumption. Some respondents emphasized that the full-scale war gave them a push to switch to Ukrainian, and those who spoke Ukrainian even before had become more radical with regard to the issue of tolerating Russian. Other changes mentioned by the respondents included completely rejecting Russian-speaking content and goods from Russia; higher interest in Ukrainian content, particularly artists and bloggers; developing views on the policy of Ukrainization. Some survey participants explained their rejection of the Russian language with emotional perception, while others reflected on the reasons why people used Russian.

“I used to be able to listen, for instance, to Russian classical music. Now—no way. I used to be able to read articles on Meduza sometimes or listen to some of their podcasts. Complete ban on everything Russian.”

Man, 27, Kyiv

“I’ve gotten rid of my library in Russian and switched to Ukrainian in communication.”

Woman, 43, Kyiv

“Not changed, just reinforced. I’ve lost any interest in Russia, its entire culture and characters back in 2014. But before the invasion I felt like a barbarian or something, who turned away from a “great culture” and wasn’t listening to Dmitriy Bykov. Now I know for sure: my Russophobia was insufficient.”

Woman, 43, Kyiv

Study participants reflected on how **their views on Russia and Russians had changed since the invasion.** Respondents described the range of emotions they felt towards Russians, from hate and rage to disgust and contempt. These changes in the emotional spectrum were accompanied by the establishment of views on further relations with the aggressor country and Russians in general. For example, respondents answered that they had **changed their views on the possibility of dialogue with Russia** in the conditions of war, and now they believed it was best to ignore Russians rather than try to hear their opinions or change their beliefs. Some also said they **no longer believed in the existence of “good Russians”** and had no positive expectations of them whatsoever.

“Rage against the Muscovites has become cold. “I only pity the cats.”

Man, 59, Kyiv Region

“It seems like I no longer want to “consider the problem from different sides” [...], I want to act as if russia/russians do not exist, they’re an empty place.”

Woman, 26, Kharkiv

“I’ve gotten rid of a kind of naivety in my attitude to Russians. I did have hope that there would be no full-scale war, and hope that there would be many opponents of the war among them. I was wrong.”

Woman, 63, Kyiv

Some respondents also reported **changing views on the possibility of concessions to the aggressor**.³⁰ The participants emphasized that earlier they may not have supported armed resistance, but Russia’s full-scale invasion convinced them that it was necessary to save their fellow citizens’ lives. They also said they were convinced that **it was impossible to solve any issues with the aggressors by negotiations**. Some respondents noted that they had started to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine more than before.

“From pacifism to a conviction of the need to use violence, including the armed forces, for self-defense.”

Woman, 38, Käerch (Luxembourg)

“Decisive separation and aggression is the only way to survive. You can be as wise and all-forgiving as you want, but when your enemy is an animal without principles, it only benefits him, he will just laugh, exploit these “wise, light, great” principles, eat you up and go on living in peace, and everyone will shake his hand because you no longer exist. History is written by the winners. If you don’t show teeth, nobody will help you [...]. If they want to destroy you, you have to fight back, not “understand” them. Hate is not always bad. There can be very good reasons for it.”

Woman, 23

³⁰ In particular, according to the findings of a [survey](#) conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology in September 2022, the overwhelming majority of Ukrainians (87%) are not prepared to make any territorial concessions for the sake of stopping the war with Russia as soon as possible.

“Before February 24, I used to live and not think how great it was that we had the AFU.”

Woman, 29, Kyiv

Some respondents answered that **it was not as much their views that had changed as their willingness to express them.** The surveyed explained it like this: it is important not only to believe in your values but to defend them. So the respondents believed that they had become “more principled,” “more harsh and resolute,” and “more categorical” and even “radical.”

In their answers, respondents did not use the phrase “civic participation,” “civic position” or “activism.” Nevertheless, some answers indicate changing ideas about which issues require citizen involvement, and potentially a new readiness to express one’s opinion using the instruments of civic participation.

“I’ve become much more interested in everything that’s happening around me and the sociopolitical life in the country. It’s as if I’ve woken up from slumber.”

Woman, 27, Kyiv

“I’ve realized that I have to spread my thoughts and ideas, and not just within my family and close circle.”

Man, 24

A number of the respondents noted that they had not changed their views or principles since the beginning of the full-scale invasion.

5.2 ● Ideas about the impact of the war on Ukrainian society

We asked our respondents' opinion about how the experience of the war had affected Ukrainian society.³¹

The key aspects specified by the respondents included:

- society's realization of its own strength and influence on decision making ("growing up");
- development of national identity;
- social unity;
- emergent fault lines of potential polarization;
- traumatization;
- radicalization.

Some respondents answered that the **society had "grown up"** and did not always explain what it meant for them. They used the following expressions to indicate these processes: society had become "mature," "tempered," people had developed a stronger "feeling of dignity, internal strength."

According to some respondents, Ukrainians had become more concerned with their responsibility, particularly in defending the territorial integrity and independence of their state. At the same time, people had begun to **realize that they had a significant influence on political processes in the country and on decision making**, so they had become prepared to act resolutely and proactively. Some respondents noted that the Maidan protests and the Revolution of Dignity in 2013–2014 had a similar effect, but the changes happening in society today have affected many more people.

"The open aggression of the occupiers has left nobody indifferent, and now nobody will say "I'm not interested in politics," because it's not politics, it's good and evil."

Woman, 29, Kyiv

³¹ Question formulation: "In your opinion, how has the experience of war affected Ukrainian society?"

"[The experience of the war] has brought an understanding that everything is in our hands (and not just in the hands of politicians)."

Man, 33, Kyiv

While describing how society had "grown up," survey participants expressed hope that it would lead to the establishment of the existing tendencies. First of all, it's higher civil engagement among people, participation in charity and volunteering, and strengthening of civil society. Second, it's a more balanced approach to political participation, particularly to news consumption and voting in elections.

"In my "bubble," everyone was united and patriotic. But now I see many people who used to be uninvolved in civic life but now they've joined it and started volunteering."

Woman, 36, Kharkiv

"I think we've "grown up," started making decisions, realized and finally started to express our civil position, we're getting rid of the inferiority complex."

Woman, 39, Kyiv

Respondents mentioned that the **Russian aggression had accelerated the realization that Ukrainian society was fighting against the ideology of imperialism.** People mentioned the demythologization of the concept of the relationship between Russians and Ukrainians as "brotherly nations." They often used expressions such as "opened our eyes," "saw things clearly" and "lost our illusions" in their answers.

"People saw that Russia wasn't a "friend" or a "brother" and that we should learn history after all."

Woman, 20, Kharkiv/Poltava

"I hope that society has lost its illusions about the "brotherly nation."

Woman, 63, Irpin, Kyiv Region

One respondent wrote that society was in the process of getting rid of the status of a colony. Therefore, this experience is accompanied by the processes of **forming and developing the national identity**, which was often mentioned by many respondents. They emphasized that as a result

of the war many people realized they were Ukrainians, realized their difference from Russians and became more interested in the Ukrainian language, culture and history. They also mentioned overcoming an “inferiority complex,” developing respect for themselves.

“[The experience of the war] has produced russophobia, strengthened us as the nation of Ukraine. I would like it to also produce hatred of imperialism and a tendency towards solidarity.”

Woman, 33, Kyiv

“I think many people’s eyes opened with regard to Russia and its imperial appetites.”

Woman, 32

[The experience of the war] shook us strongly. There’s more understanding of and interest in our identity, the country’s history. More people switch to Ukrainian, there’s more understanding of who Russians are.”

Woman, 41, village, Kyiv Region

The experience of the war makes **Ukrainian society more united and produces solidarity**, as the majority of respondents tend to believe. In reply to this question, study participants used such synonymous words as “cohesion,” “consolidation” and “unity.” People noticed signs of stronger mutual support and grassroots self-organization, spoke about the feeling of closeness with their fellow citizens. According to some respondents, these features were more prominent in the first three months of the full-scale invasion, but later the situation changed and more internal conflicts developed.

“[The experience of the war] has definitely been incredibly uniting and mobilizing. [...] in general, Ukrainians were properly shaken—and, in my experience, they’ve started thinking more, helping more, being more interested and compassionate.”

Woman, 27, Kyiv

“Now there’s a feeling that all Ukrainians are family, even strangers.”

Woman, 27, Zaporizhia

“Ukrainians have really come together, the fact that you’re Ukrainian adds +100 to socialization with a Ukrainian stranger.”

Woman, 24, Kyiv

“We’ve become a single united entity.”

Woman, 63, Dnipro

According to the respondents, the same or similar understanding of the goal has helped unite people. The goal is “higher” and “conscious.”

“Differently... Now the majority have come together for the sake of victory.”

Woman, 68, Kharkiv

“Ukrainian society has shown boundless solidarity and self-organized to fight back against the RF.”

Man, 18, Drohobych, Lviv Region

However, a number of the respondents believed that Ukrainian **society could become more polarized as a result of the war**. To answer this question, they used words such as “gap,” “split,” “division.”

One of the potential fault lines in society, according to these participants, lay in people’s different involvement in the process of transformation of society and the state. Inertia, unwillingness to defend the country and support change can, in some cases, mean readiness to support concessions to the aggressor country, in respondents’ opinion.

“50/50. One part will defend the language, territory, authenticity; demand reform for people and the country. Not to yield to the situation, think, analyze. The other part will be “muddying the water.” The country is facing an internal war between those who are for the idea and those who are for comfort.”

Woman, 51, Kyiv

“[The experience of the war] has made a clearer distinction between supporters of Ukraine and Russia. I hope people will stop believing in empty promises in elections.”

Man, 48, Siversk, Donetsk Region

Some respondents said that divisions can develop depending on how the war has affected people. The problems and needs of those who have

been affected by the fighting—for example lost their loved ones or property, had to leave their permanent place of residence—could not be understandable for the rest of the population.

“[The experience of the war] divided us into victims and non-victims who will not understand each other.”

Man, 31

In addition, study participants mentioned **traumatization as one of the consequences of the war that will have an effect on society**. The consequences of trauma can be complex and unpredictable, requiring a lot of resources and time to overcome them. According to some respondents, the war can influence future generations of Ukrainians.

“[The experience of the war has influenced people] differently, depending on how close a contact they had with the war. There’s a strong psychological trauma among those who have seen it up close.”

Woman, 40

“[The experience of the war] had a strong influence: physical, mental, material. A serious trauma which we have yet to overcome.”

Woman, 49, Zaporizhia

According to some respondents, Ukrainian society had radicalized in response to aggression and daily threats it was facing. A number of respondents noticed these changes even in themselves and spoke about “intolerance of evil” and dehumanization of Russians. But anxiety, distrust and aggression can manifest in specific expressions of intolerance, particularly towards fellow Ukrainians. People reported being afraid that cases of aggressive attitude would become more widespread in society.

“It still seems like the country can radicalize. I’m the most worried about this, but I think that civil society should become stronger and will be able to oppose this.”

Man, 34, village, Ternopil Region

"[The experience of the war] has radicalized, militarized, increased the level of aggression, produced numerous traumas, decreased critical thinking and freedom of speech. I'm afraid that Ukraine may turn into Russia."

Man, 33, Irpin, Kyiv Region

"It scares me that people are forgetting that we're fighting more from love and not from hate (although it also takes place) [...]. If our society forgets it, we'll be surrounded by rage for too long and we won't be able to build the future."

Woman, 20, Odesa

A few respondents noted that radicalization is especially noticeable among internet users, and it is the highest on social media. Conflicts between Ukrainians on popular social media can have signs of hate speech and "cancel culture."

"Now any info point is often perceived as "treason," as a red rag for a bull. That's why Russians successfully use various informational-psychological operations. Ukrainians are very angry and lost, there's no time to think during the war, only a lot of anger and desire to do at least something."

Woman, 20, Hostomel, Kyiv Region

"Personally I've unbanned some Twitter accounts. We'll argue after the war. However, I've banned some others, because being an asshole during the war is disgusting [...]. Some are collecting political points. Others are working their asses off for victory."

Woman, 35, Sumy

A number of respondents **were not prepared to assess if the war affected Ukrainian society and how exactly**. Some did not notice any significant changes and believed that it was "too early to speak" of these changes because the active stage of the war was still ongoing. Finally, **some respondents were observing opposite trends in society** (such as unification and separation) and thought that the war could affect people differently.

5.3 ● Visions of Ukraine's future

At the end of the questionnaire, we asked respondents how they saw Ukraine's future.³²

We can distinguish the following key theses:

- completely breaking off any relations with Russia;
- adhering to the principles of democracy and human rights protection;
- ensuring a fair justice system and fighting corruption;
- upholding of social guarantees by the government, decent salaries and pensions;
- implementing a number of sectoral reforms (education, culture, health care).

Answers to this question show that one part of the respondents proposed their ideas about postwar rebuilding, while the other part were thinking in terms of the present, when Ukraine was still amid the active stage of the war.

Study participants often wrote about their own vision of Ukraine's foreign policies, especially the relationship with Russia after the war or its active stage ends. Their answers **emphasized the need for complete separation from the aggressor state**. Some answers mentioned bringing war criminals to responsibility and getting reparations.

However, some respondents' answers can signify that they would not consider these steps to be sufficient to guarantee Ukraine's safety: people wrote about two desirable scenarios which could be complementary. According to the first scenario, postwar Ukraine would intensify the defense of its border with Russia and Belarus—for example, by building a “wall” or “electrified fence”; it would implement a strict visa regime and allocate a lot of resources to developing its own military industrial complex. In the respondents' opinion, in this scenario Ukraine would have to be prepared for future wars if it is attacked by neighboring states. The second desirable scenario mentioned by the

³² Question formulation: “What is important for you personally to see in Ukraine's future?”

respondents is one in which Russia would cease to exist as such—for example, by splitting into smaller state entities.

“A figurative concrete wall and a moat with crocodiles on the border with Russia: a strict visa regime, cultural and economic separation, preparedness for the next possible wars.”

Woman, 38, Kyiv

“Ukraine will only have a future if Russia does not exist.”

Woman, 33, Odesa

According to our respondents, it is important to prevent any future possibility of Russians or people loyal to them influencing political processes in Ukraine. People hoped that pro-Russian political parties and movements would stop existing and that there would be no traitors of the state.

“Unity, freedom, no traitors of the state.”

Woman, 29, Zaporizhia

“So that our descendants remember not to deal with Russians. How many times can we fall into the same trap?”

Woman, 26, Oleksandriya, Kirovohrad Region

In the future, **study participants wanted to see Ukraine as a democratic state in which the values of human rights and freedoms are key.** This opinion among a certain share of the respondents is associated with fears of possible radicalization in society. Respondents listed the principles and values they viewed as components of democracy: freedom of thought and speech, free media, rule of law (equality before the law), honest elections and transfer of power. These statements were expressed by people representing different generations.

“Mandatory upholding of human rights and possibility of transfer of power.”

Woman, 23

“I have kids, grandkids... I want each of them to find a place for themselves to fit their personal abilities and therefore gain the

respect of people around them. This is only possible in a free society.”

Man, 74, Kharkiv

A number of respondents noted that tolerance was important for them. Some respondents specifically mentioned the principles of respect for the rights of LGBT+, women, ethnic and national communities.

“It is important for me that society becomes more sensitive and inclusive for people with varying experiences.”

Woman, 27, Mariupol, Donetsk Region

“So that Ukraine is a home for all its citizens regardless of the language they speak, and not just for ethnic Ukrainians. So that they finally stop dividing people into who is a bigger patriot and who is smaller.”

Woman, 37, Kyiv

Respondents listed the specific reforms and initiatives that were important for them personally, such as support for war veterans and their families, development of critical thinking among schoolchildren and adults, restoration and support of culture and art institutions.

Another issue that was deemed important was **the government’s upholding of social guarantees, decent salaries and pensions, and support for people affected by the war.** In the respondents’ opinion, these issues had been brewing for a while, but as a result of the war, the number of people who will need help from the government has increased.

“Help and care [is needed] by children without parental care, elderly people, people with limited abilities, so that everyone who has fought can find their place in society.”

Woman, 61, Ivano-Frankivsk

“I want everyone to have a decent job and salary. I want health care to be really free. And pensions for people to be decent, so they aren’t starving.”

Woman, 58, Berdyansk, Zaporizhia Region

Probably **the highest demand for reform was about ensuring integrity, transparency and accountability** during Ukraine’s restoration and the

postwar period. In particular, respondents were convinced that it was important to successfully complete the justice and anti-corruption reforms. A public management reform was also mentioned, along with personnel decisions that would give competent people access to public offices.

“Fighting corruption; election transparency and full information about candidates before voting; upholding laws and clear responsibility for breaking them.”

Woman, 41, village, Kyiv Region

“Nationwide success which is only possible in the case of ensuring justice (which we don’t have, we have total injustice), and first of all overcoming corruption that is an obstacle to this.”

Man, 49, Zaporizhia

“Courts and laws, more transparent procedures. I want to see livestreams from court hearings.”

Woman, 37, Kyiv

“Out with corruption!”

Woman, 67, Lviv

Responses about Ukraine’s future included two fears expressed by the participants. First was the **fear of becoming similar to Russia and Russian society**: atomized and undemocratic, intolerant and unable to control the actions of government bodies. So as they described the direction in which Ukrainian society should be moving in and the spheres in which progress needed to be made, respondents referred to Russia’s negative experience. According to them, democratic values and reforms can become a “secret weapon” against Russia and an important factor for protecting the country in the future.

“[It is important] not to forget that Russia fights ineffectively due to total corruption and treating their own people as meat. If we avoid this (respect for human rights and zero tolerance for corruption and nepotism), it will be easier in the future.

Man, 25

"[It is important to have] more control by the people over the government's actions. Because we are not "little people."

Woman, 27

"[It is important to] raise the requirements for the quality of doctors (without snake oils and miracle cures) and educators. Education reform programmes. But quality reform, not what we have now. Raise the requirements for everyone teaching children, so we don't get the same situation as in Russia (zombification of the people)."

Woman, 42, Irpin, Kyiv Region

"We must build a new European open society where the most important value will be human life, so we don't forget all the sacrifices brought to us by Russia. The value of life, human rights and freedoms, respect for others, tolerance—these should be parts of our identity, our secret weapons against Russians, a way to mentally separate ourselves from them, from myths about a brotherly nation, because these are the things that separate us from them."

Woman, 20, Hostomel, Kyiv Region

Another concern about Ukraine's future shared by the respondents was **losing the chance to implement the necessary changes**. In their opinion, Ukraine was at a crisis point from which it could complete the severance of its colonial ties to Russia and implement the necessary reforms. A potential obstacle to this is a certain immaturity of society that "believes populists," "allows the revanche of pro-Russian forces," an immaturity that causes the country to "roll back to the past." Some study participants compared this situation to what they had felt during and after the Maidan in 2013–2014.

"To keep this fire from dying away and keep us from missing our chance to change and rebuild a Ukraine that is truly free from the Soviet-Imperial heritage, like our people love to backtrack and fall for populists five years after each constructive reform and each turn towards Europe. Just not now, now this will kill us."

Woman, 32, Kyiv

"Don't miss the chance, like it happened after the Maidans."

Man, 27, Ivano-Frankivsk

“To avoid devaluing what thousands of people have died for. So that we build Ukraine.”

Woman, 53, Kropyvnytsky

● Conclusions

Based on the survey we conducted, we can draw the following key conclusions regarding the experiences and feelings in Ukrainian society in August 2022.

The experience of the war was all-encompassing, permeating all spheres of life, so different experiences could coexist for people at the same time. Based on the findings of the [previous wave of the survey](#), conducted in May, we identified a trend showing that only a certain share of people had fully or partially gotten used to their changed everyday lives in war conditions. Meanwhile, in this wave of the study we noticed that the same respondents spoke about combinations of different experiences. A number of survey participants felt both **settlement of their everyday lives** and return to their usual routines and **emotional instability and uncertainty of life** at the same time. The stabilization of the everyday lives of a certain share of respondents could be characterized as “**stability in changeability**” due to the feeling of anxious reality, preparedness for unpredictable events, and impossibility of planning long-term. Respondents shared their emotions and concerns which were both positive and negative. The impact of the war differs, so we could speak about intersectionality which manifests in the intersection of general factors, such as the security or economic situation, and individual experiences, particularly associated with everyday life, feelings, relationships.

The majority of the answers suggest that there is a trend towards **unity and solidarity** in Ukrainian society, both short- and long-term. Despite this, some answers indicate the existence of certain **differences** in opinions and views. They could be affected by differences in experiences, the intensity of emotions, and the long-term feeling of uncertainty. Survey participants mentioned conflicts caused by social media activity and discussions around the news as factors that could lead to polarization in society. This is also associated with the tendency towards oversaturation with information and attempts to limit the time one spends monitoring the news.

The answers of survey participants indicate that people have started to live with the conscious thought that the war would **last a long time**. This thought caused different emotions. Some people tried to manage

them but were only successful to some extent, so not everyone could deal with their internal feelings. As a result, some respondents experienced intensive emotional states and emotional instability. This overlapped with uncertainties in other dimensions of life, and managing one's own emotions affected other spheres of activity. At the same time, some respondents looked for ways to get support and opportunities to distract themselves from the feelings related to the war, particularly by talking to others and volunteering.

The war-related **uncertainty, fear and instability** belonged to the main **concerns** of survey respondents. The lives of many of them were directly affected by the war. Some were forced to escape from bombing or had lost their houses, others joined the Armed Forces, still others continued to volunteer. Some people remained under occupation. For some, the biggest shock in the past three months was the death of a loved one at the front, and they were trying to find ways to cope with this loss. A number of the surveyed mentioned being able to survive a bombing or fighting near their home as the most important event. Thus, the safety of family and loved ones, as well as one's own safety were among the key concerns. In addition, respondents noted that they were worried about the lack of money, about losing their jobs, about the beginning of the school year and organization of classes, about physical and mental health, international support for Ukraine, and the hypothetical risk of a change in the country's political direction.

Despite everything, in the three months from May to August some respondents also experienced many **pleasant and long-awaited events**. The ability to find comfort and joy in the conditions of constant anxiety and worries was important for maintaining both physical and mental health. The participants mentioned that traveling, both within Ukraine and abroad, brought them joy. For others, the most important event was their children getting accepted to a university. For others it was having children or grandchildren. Other important events mentioned in the survey were weddings, proposals, pregnancy planning. However, pleasant events and achievements often went alongside concerns about the war, health and wellbeing, uncertainty of the future, loneliness and separation. This shows that even in the conditions of a supposedly

“normal” life with partial restoration of usual routines people still experienced the war painfully as a tragic event.

The full-scale war became a uniting experience for many people. It increased people’s need for **communication**, allowed them to establish and reevaluate their relationships with family and friends or even restore long-lost contacts. In these conditions, every conversation became more valuable and important; respondents noted that they had become more attentive and sensitive in communication.

The war has become a shared challenge for Ukrainian society, it helped increase cohesion, so the feeling of **unity** manifested in relationships not only with family or friends but also with people you barely know or even strangers. Respondents noted that it was now easier for them to ask for help without the need for a long “preface” or explanation. The amount of remote communication increased, which was a comfort and a challenge at once. Some managed to keep in touch remotely while others noted that calls or texting could not replace in-person meetings and conversations. For this reason, people often felt lonely and isolated, especially in the case of elderly respondents.

Geographic proximity started playing a key role in communication. In the conditions when many people moved to different cities or countries, many established social ties had been broken or damaged. On the one hand, this could lead to less communication. On the other hand, it could be a reason to form new contacts and meet new people. Respondents mentioned resuming communication with old friends or becoming closer to people with whom they used to have a colder relationship. In addition, the war has encouraged some people to meet and establish contact with their neighbors. At the same time, the high anxiety and stress levels caused by the war could negatively affect communication. For some, the war had become an experience that increased their distrust of other people.

A kind of “**integration**” of **tension and anxiety into everyday life** is one of the most prominent trends we observed in the answers of the respondents of the August survey. The two key sources that caused the feelings of permanent, background anxiety and stress were fear for the physical safety, both one’s own and one’s family’s, as well as problems

associated with economic welfare and its stability, especially in view of the approaching winter. While describing their **emotional state**, even those respondents who spoke about its normalization often noted its fragility; and many of those who directly mentioned the instability of their state were no longer able to control their emotions like they did in the first months of the war.

Among **things that supported them and helped them cope with emotional distress**, respondents were the most likely to mention time spent together with their loved ones, their work, nature walks, or tending the garden near their house or summer house, as well as food. In addition, a significant share of the respondents also spoke about therapy, films, books, music, hobbies, and alcohol. Speaking of sources of support, respondents described their attempts to accept the situation as it is and allow themselves to experience their own emotions; they also shared how supporting it was for them to have hope that the war would end and to have faith in the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Everyday life and routines are closely related to other spheres of human life, so whether respondents defined their everyday lives as settled was affected by whether they had a job, long-term housing, and ability to plan the future. One of the trends that manifested in this wave of the survey more clearly was that everyday life in wartime, with constant air raid alarms and curfews, was gradually becoming “the new normal.” Due to this, some people did not respond to air raid sirens as actively as during the first months. At the same time, study participants mentioned that they took curfew and air raid alarms into account while moving around the city and using public transit. In addition, the tendency to pay more attention to basic needs—sleep, food—continued.

The most widespread consequences of the war’s impact on **work** as an aspect of life, which we can distinguish in the answers of survey respondents (except for those who had not experienced a significant impact of the war on the conditions or compensation for their work), include losing paid employment or income from it; reduced income, either accompanied by decreased workload or in spite of an increased workload. A number of answers, especially among internally displaced people and people from less well-off households, show a tendency for

such families to exhaust their financial resources. Having lost their job or a significant share of their income, these respondents were ready to accept practically any job or gig offers.

Involvement in **volunteering and helping others** changed differently for different respondents over the six months of the full-scale invasion. Some started spending more time engaged in these activities or changed the area they volunteered in. Others, in contrast, became less engaged or stopped participating altogether. Various factors were mentioned as reasons, including lack of time or resources, particularly financial ones; burnout; reduced need in certain areas of activity; stabilization of volunteering. For a certain share of the respondents, their participation had not changed at all.

Volunteering and helping others affected different respondents differently. They often noted that volunteering was an opportunity for them to **distract themselves** from the events around them, overcome stress while helping others. It was also important for the surveyed to feel like they **contributed to the struggle for Ukraine's victory** through volunteering. Some respondents also said that they generally realized the importance of volunteering and the need to help others. For a number of the survey participants, helping other people was accompanied by strong emotions. Some reported becoming more empathetic towards people, others said the opposite. Moreover, volunteering gave some participants a feeling of unity and cohesion as well as an understanding of the importance of social contacts. According to a certain share of the respondents, particularly those who were involved since 2014, the experience of volunteering since the beginning of the full-scale war had not had any new influence on them.

The key changes in their own **principles and views** since the beginning of the full-scale war that were noted by the respondents included changed attitudes to life priorities and the place of material things among them; changed approaches to planning; changed attitudes to human relationships; changed views on choosing the language of communication and content consumption; changed attitude towards Russia and Russians; changed ideas about defending one's views.

While noting the **practical lessons** they learned during the full-scale war, respondents focused on different things. Preparedness for **unpredictable events** was one of the most frequent answers to this question. Many people's attitude towards material stuff had also changed: they realized that they needed much fewer things than before, and for some material things lost value whatsoever. There is a tendency to prioritize one's own life and the life of one's loved ones in contrast to material values. Among other things, respondents also learned a lesson about the need to learn certain skills: driving, first aid, civil defense, foreign languages. In addition, understanding the importance of caring for their health, both mental and physical, became a lesson for a number of respondents.

While describing the **changes that had happened to Ukrainian society** since the beginning of the full-scale war, respondents often pointed out a trend towards **unity, "growing up," giving up colonial narratives**. According to some respondents, the experience of mutual support and self-organization involved a higher number of people than during the Revolution of Dignity in 2013–14 and created conditions for increased civic participation by the people. Ukraine and Ukrainian society, as the respondents noted, was fighting to "finally completely break away" from Russia. One of the most prominent signs of this, according to survey participants, was the development of national identity: people switching to Ukrainian, showing a higher interest in Ukrainian culture and history.

A certain share of the respondents believed that Ukrainian society could become more **polarized** as a result of the war or had already become more polarized. They defined the main fault lines as the division between the "affected" and "unaffected" due to the uneven impact of the war on people, or between the mostly "active" and "passive" citizens, because the latter can be prepared to make concessions to Russia. Respondents expressed wariness of further radicalization of society, which could manifest in growing aggression and intolerance, and more internal conflicts, particularly on social media.

While describing how they saw the **foreign and domestic policy of the state** in the future, respondents spoke about the importance of maintaining the principles of democracy and human rights, a fair justice

system, anti-corruption measures, and competent governance. Some answers also referred to providing a decent standard of living and opportunities for self-realization for everyone: health care, education, employment and social policies. Respondents expressed concerns about the risk of losing the “ardor” for change, which would mean that thousands of people died in vain. While describing desirable reforms, respondents noted that these domestic political changes were necessary in order to avoid becoming similar to Russia and in order to secure the breakup with the colonial past.