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Re•Housing
for Ukraine

Social, temporary and crisis housing:

What Ukraine had when
it faced the full-scale
war



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● Introduction

The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 provoked the biggest **housing crisis** in the country's history. By early July 2022, according to the Ministry of Community and Territory Development (Minregion), Russian troops had destroyed or damaged about 116,000 residential buildings. According to the UN, about 7.7 million people had to leave their homes and move within Ukraine. This revealed certain shortcomings of Ukrainian housing policies which had existed before. At the same time, the current crisis is also an opportunity to reconsider our priorities in housing policies and update their principles.

First of all, the war has demonstrated society's need for **social housing**, meaning housing which is not owned by the people who live in it. Social housing exists to meet the need for affordable and safe housing which, for various reasons, cannot be met on market terms. Social housing is created on a **non-profit basis**—that is, organizations and institutions that own it do not profit from it, using the revenue to expand the housing stocks or cover the operating costs of its maintenance. Social housing can be [owned](#) both by state or municipal institutions and by private non-profits, such as charities or NGOs.

[The draft Plan for the Restoration of Ukraine](#), [presented](#) in July 2022, recognizes that **non-profit housing development must become a foundation of Ukraine's housing policies in the future**. For this purpose, it is proposed to develop a new legislative basis and improve the existing regulations. The document also emphasizes the importance of expanding the amount of housing in public (that is, state and communal, municipal) ownership and stopping the process of privatizing housing built for the funding from state and local budgets or international organizations.

Our work on this brief started before the beginning of the full-scale war. Our goal was to clarify the non-market models of the state provision of housing which remains publicly owned; to describe the system of their functioning, the opportunities and challenges in its development.

All the methods of public housing provision can be called social housing in the broad sense of the term. At the same time, in Ukrainian legislation the category of social housing does not include all the types of housing which can be encompassed by social housing as an analytical category. In view of this, for the purposes of this analysis we have categorized the methods of public housing provision into several types by the length of residence: 1) **indefinite—social housing**, 2) **medium-term—temporary housing** (up to one year with a possibility of extension), and 3) **short-term—“crisis housing”** (one night to several months).

The first two categories are officially listed in Ukrainian legislation as two separate types of housing stock. However, Ukrainian regulations do not feature the term “crisis housing.” Some of the types of housing which we include in the “crisis” category, such as homeless shelters, are included in the social housing category by law. Despite this, shelters are fundamentally different from other types of social housing because they do not allow for long-term residence. Just like other types of shelters, crisis housing, social adaptation or reintegration centers, they should be viewed as transit shelters which can help society to urgently respond to crisis situations, accommodate people and provide them with social aid until there is an opportunity to offer them long-term housing. In addition, the social housing system in Ukraine formally does not include publicly owned housing which has been provided for free-of-charge residence with the right to privatize it but which was not privatized by its residents in the process of mass free-of-charge privatization. Although this housing can be included in the social housing category in the broad sense, we do not consider it in our analysis.

After the full-scale Russian invasion began on February 24, 2022, Ukraine mobilized a lot of crisis and temporary housing. This allowed us to solve the urgent need for shelter for many people. At the same time, the problem of looking for medium- and long-term housing is growing. In order to solve it, we need systemic solutions based on an analysis of the current state and the starting situation with housing policies before the beginning of Russia’s full-scale war against Ukraine. This brief describes the state of social, temporary and crisis housing in Ukraine before February 24, 2022.

We were able to collect most of the necessary information in November–December 2021. For this purpose, we sent public information requests to the Minregion, the Ministry of Social Policies (who redirected it to the National Social Service of Ukraine), to 24 regional state administrations (some of which redirected the requests to communities), and to the Kyiv City State Administration. In addition, we analyzed the existing regulations on social and temporary housing as well as on homeless shelters and shelters for survivors of gender-based violence. In order to verify some of our assumptions and obtain information on how the systems of social, temporary and crisis housing actually worked, we conducted 7 expert interviews with researchers and representatives of government agencies, the civil sector, and international organizations. The interviews were conducted between December 2021 and February 2022; we also conducted one interview in June 2022.

Part 1 ● Social housing

There are different definitions of social housing. In principle, social housing is housing provided by the state, municipalities, non-profit organizations to provide housing to people who cannot obtain it via market mechanisms (purchase or rent). Importantly, social housing is never transferred to its residents' ownership. In some countries, there are or were, at a certain stage of history, opportunities to privatize this housing by paying out its price. However, **the function of social housing is to meet the need for housing without privatizing it** or renting it on commercial terms. At the same time, depending on national policies and their goals, the purpose of social housing can be interpreted differently in different countries.

In Ukraine, the [Law](#) “**On the housing stock of social purpose**” was adopted in 2006. Its adoption can be viewed as a response to the processes of mass free-of-charge privatization of the housing stock inherited from Soviet times. Social housing was supposed to absorb the negative consequences of the emergence of the housing market and guarantee the realization of the right to housing for vulnerable population groups.

The law determines who is entitled to social housing, who manages it, what ways to form the stock and mechanisms of keeping stock of and renting social housing. In July 2008, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted [Decree](#) 682 titled “Some issues of implementation of the Law of Ukraine ‘On the housing stock of social purpose,’” which describes the procedure for putting people on the social apartment registry, calculating the value of a citizen's property, determining the price of rent in a settlement, the procedure for monitoring the income of people on the social apartment registry, and the procedure for providing social housing.

The concept of “social housing” is defined in the Law as “housing of all forms of ownership (except for social dormitories) from the housing stock of social purpose which is provided free of charge to citizens of Ukraine who need social protection based on a rental contract for a certain period.” According to Part 2 of Article 10 of the Law, **the right to be put on the social apartment registry** belongs to people (1) who have no housing or are entitled to an improvement of their housing conditions according to law; (2) whose average joint monthly per-person

income in the past year was lower than the subsistence minimum and the “amount of the mediated cost of renting (leasing) housing in a particular settlement”; (3) IDPs who have no other housing in the territory controlled by Ukraine or whose housing has been destroyed (since 2018).

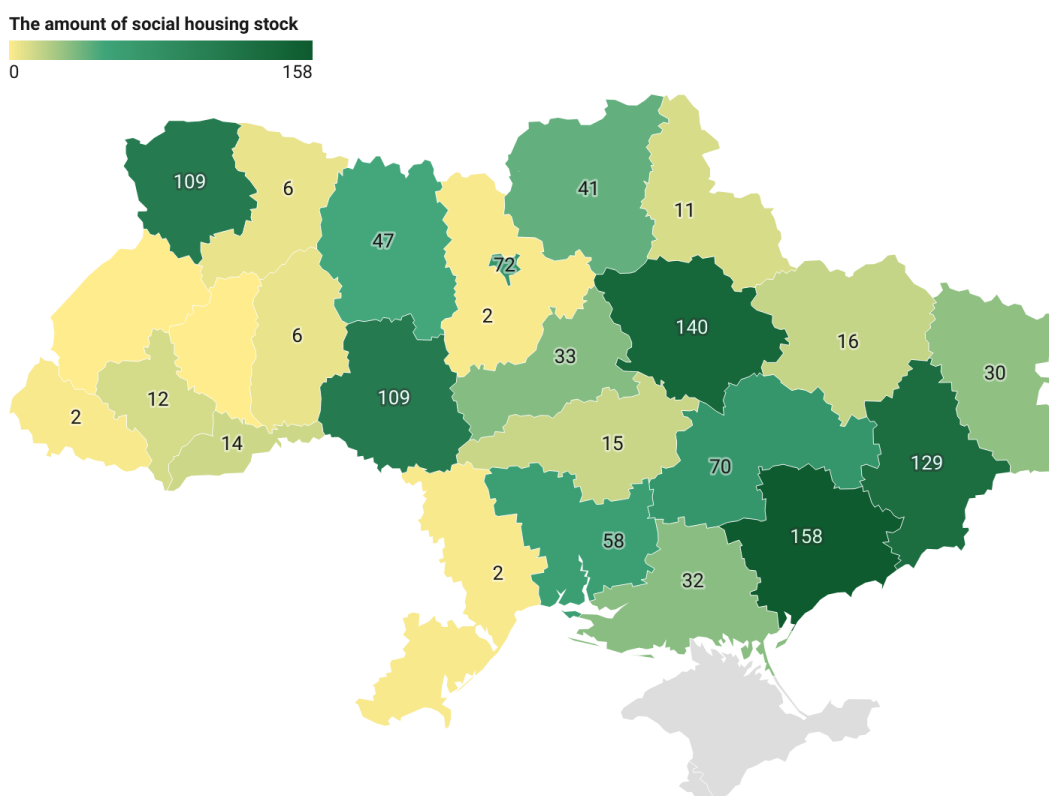
Determination of average monthly joint income takes into account the value of the property owned by an individual and their family members. **The mediated cost of renting housing** is determined by local government bodies by multiplying the minimum rent per 1 square meter by the minimum norm of housing provision. According to the current [Housing Code of Ukraine](#), **the minimum norm of housing provision** is “13.65 square meters of residential area per person, but no less than the level of the average housing area used by citizens in a particular settlement.” The rent calculation does not include utility fees. The amount of mediated cost of rent is to be determined by local governments “based on data from organizations providing services of renting out residential premises, or based on announcements in local media, or based on data from surveys of population.” In fact, in Kyiv, for instance, the amount of mediated cost of renting housing in the first quarter of 2021 [was set](#) by the city administration at 600.03 UAH per person. This amount is rather modest, which limits the number of people who can potentially apply for social housing.

The law determines a number of preferential categories are prioritized for receiving social housing. There are 32 of these categories in total, including, in particular, combat veterans, people with disabilities, orphaned children, families with many children.

Data from the Ministry of Community and Territory development shows that **the existing procedure for putting people on the social apartment registry is ineffective and the available stock of social housing is small**. Information about the existing housing stock of social purpose as of January 1, 2021, demonstrates that only 7,623 people were on the social apartment registry in Ukraine at the time. 1,564 of them were provided with 928 residential units from the social apartment stock. Another 170 apartments were marked as “vacant,” and the most likely reason for this is that they were in a condition unsuitable for residence.

Thus, in total, the housing stock of social purpose included 1,089 housing units. However, for instance, Lviv and Ternopil regions had neither people on the social apartment registry nor units in the housing fund of social purpose. In response to our request, the Ternopil City Council informed us that it did not keep the registry “since there is no housing stock of social purpose in the community.” This situation may signify the unwillingness or inability of local governments not only to manage social housing but to deal with it in general or even to know about the potential need for this kind of housing.

Existing housing stock of social purpose as of January 1, 2021



It is worth separately noting the transitional form of housing known as a “**social dormitory.**” The Minregion’s data on the social housing stock does not include social dormitories. This is likely linked to the fact that the law itself mentions this type of housing ambiguously. On the one hand, the definition of the concept of “social housing” includes the remark “except for social dormitories.” On the other hand, the concept of a “social dormitory” is defined as “social housing provided to citizens

of Ukraine for the period of their registration on the social apartment registry under the condition that this housing is their only place of residence.” In practice, the lack of proper social housing on the balance of communities means that social dormitories can become permanent places of residence.

Communities manage social dormitories in very different ways. Some of them give accommodation in social dormitories to IDPs or young adult orphans. At the same time, social dormitories can be places where social services are provided. Even rental contracts are not signed in some cases, while agreements on the provision of the social service of assisted living are signed instead. For a while, the state issued a [subvention](#) to fund social dormitories for orphans, but the financial responsibility mostly lay with local government bodies; the most active of them looked for resources among international donors.

The law also includes such social service institutions as “specialized houses for war and labor veterans, elderly citizens and people with disabilities,” “specialized houses for the poor and homeless,” “temporary shelters for adults” in the category of social housing. In this analytical brief, we consider some of these institutions in the “crisis housing” category.

The system of social housing provision **works in a decentralized way**. The maintenance, distribution, record-keeping and replenishing social housing stocks is in the purview of local government bodies. The powers of the Cabinet of Ministers, central executive government bodies and local state administrations essentially lie in designing the nationwide program for social housing development and coordinating this program with local social housing development programs adopted by local governments.

The [Concept](#) of the **Social Housing State Program** was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2005 and aimed to solve the problem of providing socially vulnerable people with housing by 2015. The program did not meet its goal. In 2014, the Minregion developed the bill “On adopting the nationwide program of social housing development for 2015–2021.” However, the bill was returned for refinement in the part of

determining the sources of funding in order to take into account the position of the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Finances. They recommended funding the stock from local budgets rather than the state budget. In the end, citing the Cabinet's decrees "[On saving the state funds and preventing budget losses](#)" (2014, expired in 2016) and "[On the effective use of state funds](#)" (2016, valid), the Minregion stopped the preparation of the drafts of new state programs which require additional funding from the state budget. On the one hand, the responsible Ministry realized that there may not be enough funding at the local level to develop social housing. On the other hand, the social housing development program was among the ones that the government was prepared to cut.

Despite the lack of national support, some local governments developed local social housing development programs. As of January 1, 2021, 55 local social housing development programs were planned in 13 regions (other regions and Kyiv had no plans of this kind whatsoever at that point in time).

Local programs for developing (and creating) social housing differed not only in their scale but also in their goals. For instance, the Zymne Territorial Community in the Volyn Region made the [decision](#) in 2018 to create a social housing stock to provide housing for orphaned young adults. Meanwhile, in 2020, Kharkiv [adopted](#) its Program for the Development of Social and Affordable Housing by 2025, whose goal was to provide social and temporary housing to 1,104 families (including IDPs) using funding from the city budget, citizens' own funds, developers' funds, and a [subvention](#) from the state budget for the creation of temporary housing. In general, local social housing development programs are combined or reoriented depending on the available funding.

The problem of filling the stocks is the main obstacle to the effective functioning of social housing. The Law "On the housing stock of social purpose" proposes eight ways to replenish local social housing stocks, including:

- building new housing;

- reconstructing existing units; receiving housing as a gift from non-governmental organizations (including international ones) and private individuals;
- transferring housing expropriated on the grounds of court decisions, or ownerless or derelict housing to communal ownership;
- transfer of a share of residential areas in newly built buildings to local councils by developers;
- transfer of social housing whose construction was funded from the state budget to communal ownership;
- using private housing stock on contractual basis.

Local social housing development programs rarely feature such ambitious options as building new housing. According to the Minregion's data on the approved local social housing development programs, as of January 1, 2021, only Volyn of all regions planned to allocate **600,000 UAH** to building new housing. However, they also planned to allocate the highest amount, 41,144,000 UAH, to purchase already built housing. The second most popular way is to reconstruct and refurbish non-residential units to make them residential (19,897,000 UAH).

The most prevalent among the declared sources of funding for local social housing programs was relying on funding "from other sources": 33,113,000 UAH (in total across Ukraine). Funding from local budgets was declared in the amount of 27,881,000 UAH, and from the state budget in the amount of 13,434,000 UAH. **The total amount of 80,033,000 UAH**, according to 55 local social housing development programs, was supposed to add **108 apartments** to the social housing stock.

Low amounts of funding, limited results of local programs, lack of planned programs in 11 regions can signify **limited institutional capacities or local governments' disinterest in developing social housing**. Nevertheless, the key problem is the lack of a unified state program and funding for social housing.

Opportunities

It is important that **Ukraine has the regulatory basis for developing social housing**. For instance, the Law “On the housing stock of social purpose” recognizes that the state is supposed to provide housing to people who cannot meet their need via market mechanisms.

Importantly, there is the concept of “social housing,” backed by a long history of development and significant international experience.

The law allows for a broad range of mechanisms for the development of the system of social housing provision at the local level, local governments can adopt their own social housing development programs and engage various sources of funding. The experience of creating and managing this housing serves as a basis for the future improvement and development of this mechanism.

Thanks to social housing, 1,500 people who belong to vulnerable population categories were able to receive housing. Under different circumstances, they could have been left without a roof over their head or lived in bad conditions.

The law also allows for public control, although only “over the distribution of social housing,” via supervisory boards. They should be formed “on the principle of equal representation of the local self-government body, NGOs and companies, institutions, organizations with various forms of ownership.” This opportunity for citizen participation in the management of social housing, even if it is not sufficient, has the potential of being expanded and improved.

It is also important that the Law defends the rights of the residents of social housing, although in fact due to the lack of stocks these regulations may not always be followed. First of all, the law makes it mandatory to provide individuals with housing from the first day when they apply for being included in the social apartment registry, if needed, even before the decision on their application is made. Second, the conditions for early eviction are limited: only if after an annual income monitoring the tenant of social housing no longer meets the defined criteria, or by a court decision. Third, if a social housing lease is

terminated, the tenant is given three months to find new housing and vacate the existing unit.

Challenges

First of all, **the government did not work on developing social housing and filling the social housing stock.** In particular, no nationwide program for the development of social housing was adopted. Thus, the adoption of the Law “On the housing stock of social purpose” de facto did not lead to the creation of a sustainable and functional system for providing housing to socially vulnerable population groups.

Second, **even though local self-government bodies legally had broad powers, communities had varying capacities to develop social housing.** As a result of the existing distribution of powers between the Cabinet, central executive government bodies, local state administrations, and local self-government bodies, the social housing stock was not developing. The system is decentralized, but local governments do not have sufficient capacities to maintain the existing and create new social housing locally. Communities were often ineffective in managing their social housing stock: it was kept in condition unsuitable for residence, was not grown systematically, some regions did not create any social housing stock whatsoever. Some communities, in addition to having no social housing stock, also did not keep a record of the need for it, ignoring the existence of this need. Almost half of the regions had no social housing development programs, and the ones that did have them designed their programs for minimum results and budgets.

Third, **access to social housing in Ukraine raises some questions.** The existing criteria for who can apply for social housing may not cover some of the people who actually need this kind of housing. The application procedure itself is not simple, and completing it and collecting all the required papers may take a lot of time. As a result, the number of people on the social apartment registry was low, although even they were not successfully provided with housing.

Even though the [Cabinet of Ministers' Decree](#) lists the documents required to apply for being put on the social apartment registry, their

exhaustive list is determined by each local self-government body independently. As a result, additional papers can be demanded locally, and the lists of papers vary. For instance, some district administrations in Kyiv additionally request confirmation of living in the city for at least 5 years (except for IDPs), which limits people's right to receive social housing.

The procedure for receiving social housing is long. Even though an application is considered for 30 business days, it can still be impossible to receive an apartment after this period, because social housing stocks are insufficient. Access to social housing is also complicated by the excess bureaucratization of the apartment registry. In addition to the social housing queue, the same individual can also be registered on the general apartment registry of people who need an improvement in their residential conditions; the registry for receiving temporary housing; queues to participate in other government housing programs. The fact that many social categories are entitled to priority assignment of apartments can make access to social housing even more difficult.

Another difficulty may lie in the need to confirm one's right to social housing every year through the procedure of "annual monitoring of the income of citizens on the social apartment registry and their family members, as well as the income of social housing tenants and their family members living in the same household." Just like in the case of registration, passing this monitoring may require spending time to gather the papers.

Finally, **since social housing in Ukraine was not developing, the need for it was often met using housing intended for temporary residence.** With limited resources, it can be difficult to fund and manage two such housing stocks. However, if social housing works properly, access to it is simplified, and the stocks are sustainably replenished, the need for separate but similar types of housing at the state level may disappear.

Part 2 ● Temporary housing

Article 132-1 of the current Housing Code of Ukraine defines temporary housing as **housing units for citizens who have no permanent housing or who have lost it.**

The history of temporary housing in Ukraine is linked to the development of mortgage lending. In the early 2000s, [several](#) legislative acts were adopted in Ukraine to regulate mortgages; in particular, in 2003, the Verkhovna Rada adopted the Law “On mortgage,” and in August 2004, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted the [Concept](#) for the establishment of the national mortgage lending system. In March 2004, the Cabinet adopted [Decree](#) 422 “On approving the Procedure for Forming Housing Stocks for Temporary Residence and the Procedure for Providing and Using Housing Units from the Housing Stocks for Temporary Residence,” which became the main document regulating it. The availability of temporary housing was one of the key conditions for the development of mortgage lending, since these stocks were supposed to protect those unable to repay their mortgage loans.

The Decree also stated that temporary housing can be claimed by **refugees and people who have lost housing due to a natural or other kind of disaster. Additional conditions** for receiving temporary housing are the applicant’s lack of any other housing and income that does not allow them to rent any other housing on their own. Refugees can receive temporary housing only if there are no vacant places at temporary accommodation facilities. **Priority groups** to be provided with temporary housing, according to the document, are families with children, pregnant people, people who have lost their ability to work, and elderly people. The opportunity to receive temporary housing can only be used once. The area of temporary housing is calculated based on the norm of residential area for living in dormitories, that is, at least 6 square meters per person.

The responsibility for forming and maintaining the stock was placed on **local self-government bodies.** They gained the capacity to grow the temporary housing stock, just like the social housing stock, through construction, purchase, reconstruction or transfer to communal ownership. Decree 422 also notes that if the need for temporary housing stock goes away, housing units can be removed from this stock, which

built a kind of temporality into the temporary housing stock mechanism itself. The idea was that when social problems due to which people may need temporary housing are solved, the temporary housing stock will disappear.

The issue of availability of temporary housing became relevant again in 2014 with the occupation of Crimea, beginning of the war in Donetsk and Luhansk Regions, and displacement of people from these territories. In 2014, the Verkhovna Rada [adopted](#) the Law “On ensuring the rights and liberties of internally displaced persons,” making local governments responsible for creating the conditions for the temporary accommodation of the internally displaced. In 2019, the Cabinet of Ministers [adopted](#) Decree 582 “On approving the Procedure for Forming Housing Stocks for Temporary Accommodation of Internally Displaced People and the Procedure for Providing Housing Units from Housing Stocks for Temporary Residence of Internally Displaced Persons,” which established the opportunity for IDPs to receive housing from the temporary housing stock.

Earlier, in 2017, the Cabinet [adopted](#) Decree 769 “On approving the Procedure and Conditions for the provision of a subvention from the state budget to local budgets for taking measures to support the territories negatively affected by the armed conflict in the East of Ukraine.” The program aimed to purchase, build or reconstruct premises for the purpose of creating housing for IDPs. A mandatory condition of participation was that at least 30% of the cost of the measures had to be funded from the local budget. Housing bought or built by government bodies within these programs became part of the temporary stock, and its residents could not privatize it. Participation in the subvention was available to local self-government bodies from various Ukrainian regions. For instance, in the autumn of 2021, the Cabinet of Ministers [distributed](#) a new subvention to purchase housing—30 apartments—for IDPs in 6 regions: Donetsk, Zhytomyr, Ivano-Frankivsk, Mykolayiv, Odesa and Chernihiv Regions.

These subventions in particular became one of the key financial instruments for growing temporary housing stocks in the past few years. For example, according to the data the Mariupol City Council

provided in response to our request, the creation of the housing stock for temporary residence of internally displaced people in this city was mostly funded by the program of providing housing for IDPs with 50/50 co-funding from the state and city budgets. In 2017–2022, local self-government bodies in Mariupol bought 183 apartments for the temporary accommodation of IDPs. They reconstructed two dedicated residential buildings (39 apartments) in 2018 and two more residential buildings (11 apartments) in 2021, also on the conditions of co-funding.

An additional way to fund temporary housing since 2014 has been **financial aid from international organizations**. For example, in 2021, a dormitory for IDPs was [opened](#) in Kramatorsk which was funded mostly by aid received from the European Investment Bank.

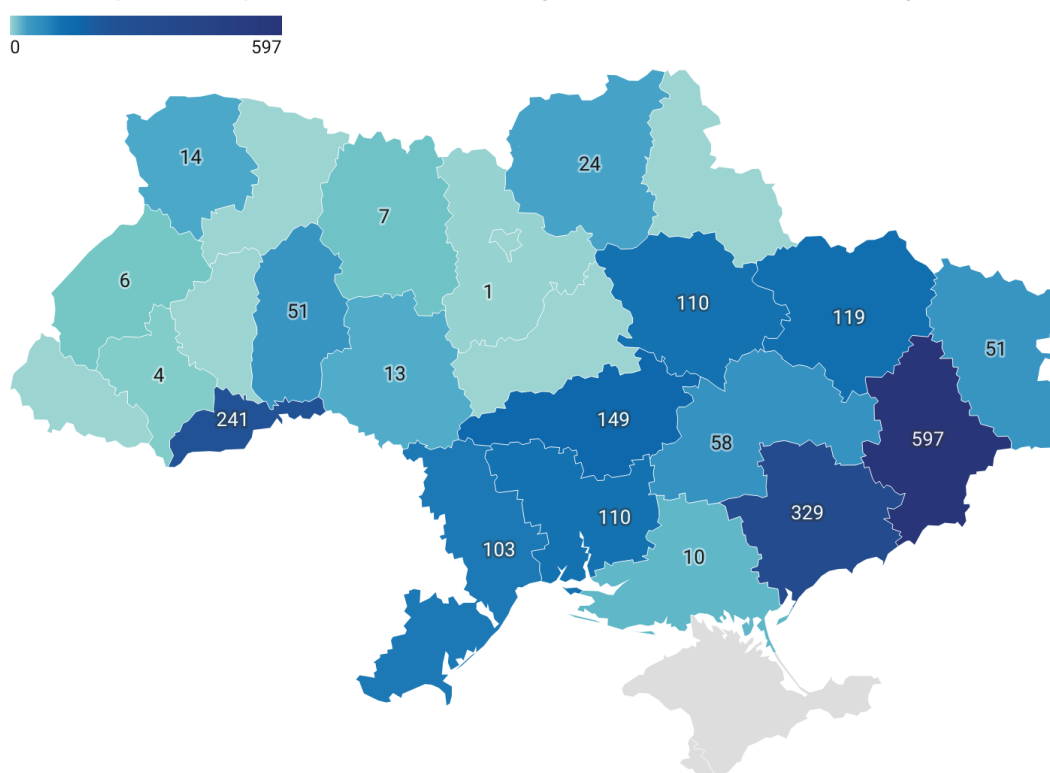
Temporary housing stock also came to include **container towns** built in 2014 in 7 Ukrainian cities—Kharkiv, Pavlohrad, Nikopol, Zaporizhia, Dnipro, Kamyanske, Kryvyi Rih—using funding from GIZ, the German government agency for international development. Although this housing was intended for 3 years, thousands of people were still living there in early 2022. None of the cities could fully provide the residents with other housing. In addition, some local self-government bodies claimed that they lacked money to even maintain these container towns. For instance, in 2019, Pavlohrad [refused](#) to compensate utility fees to container town residents from the city budget, citing lack of funds.

Therefore, temporary housing is housing provided free of charge to people who have no permanent housing or who have lost it. It can be received for **1 year with an option to extend the contract**. The distribution of this housing depends on income, and only low-income people can apply for it. The average monthly total income of a family must be **below the subsistence minimum and the amount of the regional indicator of mediated cost of renting housing**. Since 2014, the temporary housing stock has mostly existed to meet the needs of internally displaced people. However, even among them, usually only IDPs with very low incomes could expect to receive temporary housing.

In almost twenty years of its existence, temporary housing never began to work properly; this mechanism was unable to provide housing to

everyone who might need it. As of January 2021, according to the Minregion, Ukraine had **1,997** temporary housing units, home to **3,363** people, including **1,840** IDPs. Donetsk Region had the highest number of temporary housing units, **587**. The same region also had the highest number of people in the queue to receive temporary housing: in mid-2021, the registry listed 1,535 people, including 1,533 IDPs. The region with the second highest number of temporary housing units was **Zaporizhia Region** with 329 units. Meanwhile, for instance, **Kyiv Region** only had **1 apartment** for temporary residence.

Existing housing stock for temporary residence as of January 1, 2021



In the majority of western and central regions of Ukraine, the temporary housing stock was not formed or was small. For example, **Zakarpattia, Rivne and Ternopil Regions** had no temporary housing units as of January 2021. **Lviv Region** had only 6, **Ivano-Frankivsk** had 4, **Vinnytsia** had 13, and **Volyn** had 14. The highest number of temporary housing units among western and central regions, **241 units**, belonged to the Chernivtsi Region.

As of January 2021, a total of **14** local programs for the purchase or construction of temporary housing were planned in **9** regions; their total funding was supposed to amount to **51,646,000 UAH**. If these programs were implemented, **61** apartments would be added to the housing stock. The majority of the funding was planned to come from the state budget.

In general, the number of planned programs and the amount of funding for temporary housing **were growing**. As of January 2019, local governments planned to implement 5 programs in three regions: Lviv, Donetsk, and Zaporizhia. In July 2020, there were already 11 programs in 8 regions. The growing number of programs is likely linked to a subvention from the state budget which helped local self-government bodies to create such housing. Despite this, the temporary housing stock was growing slowly and grew by only **115 units** in the past three years. This can be a sign of the low capacity of local self-governments to form this housing and the lack of additional incentives from national government bodies.

In January 2021, the “queue” for temporary housing—that is, the registry of citizens in need of a housing unit from the housing stock of temporary purpose—included **4,264 people** throughout the entire Ukrainian territory; **2,274** of them were IDPs. However, these numbers might not have covered the entire actual need for temporary housing due to failure to formally meet the criteria, complexity of the procedures, lack of awareness, or lack of faith in the possibility of receiving housing via this instrument.

Opportunities

First of all, in combination with the social housing stock, temporary housing in Ukraine is one of the **few methods of state provision of housing**. This mechanism has allowed to guarantee the realization of the right to housing for several thousand people all over the Ukrainian territory. It is especially important that temporary housing has become an opportunity to avoid being left out in the streets for vulnerable categories, particularly low-income IDPs who were unable to secure

housing via market mechanisms or other government programs. That is, temporary housing has partially acted as an additional social support system for people who find themselves in difficult life circumstances.

Second, the availability of subventions from the state budget and funding from international organizations became a kind of **incentive for local self-governments** in Ukraine and allowed them to grow their temporary housing stock. Thanks to this, local governments have also gained experience in the management, maintenance, and creation of non-profit housing.

Finally, in contrast to other government programs, temporary housing aims specifically to **grow communally owned housing stocks**. Decree 422 [specifies](#) that temporary housing cannot be privatized. This is one of the main advantages of this mechanism, since the ban on privatization allows local governments to gradually accumulate communally owned housing stocks and increase society's capacity to respond to potential housing crises.

Challenges

First, as we noted above, **the temporary housing stock grew slowly and was unable to provide housing to everyone who needed it**. In addition, the temporary housing system presupposes that a certain share of this housing remains vacant in case of, for instance, a natural or technological disaster. However, according to the Minregion, even regions with relatively big temporary housing stocks hardly had any vacant units as of January 2021. Donetsk Region only had 11, and Zaporizhia Region had 9. Meanwhile, Kharkiv Region had the most vacant temporary housing units (67 apartments and residential units). We can assume that in many cases **temporary housing became permanent** because people were unable to use other opportunities to realize their right to housing. This also indirectly confirms a great need for this kind of housing. An important characteristic of temporary housing is supposed to be “urgency,” that is, the possibility of accessing this housing quickly in case of an emergency. However, due to a lack of

housing, particularly of vacant units, this was difficult to implement in practice.

Second, **the procedure of receiving temporary housing is complex and excessively bureaucratic**, and IDPs are not always sufficiently informed about access to temporary housing. Decrees [422](#) and [582](#) specified the main requirements for people who can apply for temporary housing. In order to register for it, they are supposed to gather all the required papers, particularly to confirm their low income, lack of other housing, and belonging to priority categories (families with many children, people with disabilities, pregnant or elderly people). Since 2019, the distribution of temporary housing is based on a system of points which was established by the new [Decree](#) 495 of April 29, 2022. However, there are reservations about the fairness of the point system—for instance, it significantly limits the opportunities for single-person households to receive temporary housing.

Since temporary housing is only provided for a year with a chance to extend the contract, the need for it has to be confirmed every year. However, it is somewhat easier to extend the contract than to sign a new one; for instance, the point system no longer applies, and one only needs to confirm their low income.

In addition, local self-government bodies also used their own systems for the distribution of temporary housing. For example, in Mariupol, according to experts, housing from the temporary stocks was given as a priority to IDPs who were “useful for the community,” particularly to members of the law enforcement or the military. All these aspects could create additional obstacles in the access to even the small number of temporary housing units.

Third, local governments did not have enough capacity to form and manage temporary housing stocks. Capital investment in non-profit housing stocks require a lot of resources. For these mechanisms of housing provision to work properly, it is required to grow the stocks for many years. Given few incentives from the central government, local governments in Ukraine were unable to complete the tasks set for them. Even co-funding of temporary housing via the subvention from the

central budget was too expensive for some communities, so they were not enthusiastic about participating in this programme.

In addition, due to existing regional inequalities, some communities had fewer opportunities to use the subvention. For example, newly established communities lacked sufficient capacity or experience to prepare all the necessary papers to participate and later to manage the subvention. Sometimes representatives of communities were not sufficiently informed about the opportunity to receive a subvention for temporary housing. Another shortcoming of the subvention was the **limited period of its use.** The money was supposed to be spent within a year, which limited the ways it could be used. For instance, communities were more likely to buy already built housing and less likely to spend the funding on fundamental renovations or reconstructions, because projects of this sort need more time. For small communities in which housing construction is not conducted actively, the **limited period for using the subvention was an additional reason not to apply for it.**

Therefore, the temporary housing system was too decentralized and almost completely placed the responsibility for solving national problems onto local governments, which lacked the resources and capacities for it. At the same time, even the existing mechanism of aid from the central government in the form of a subvention for temporary housing had its limitations, and not all communities had equal opportunities to use it on account of regional inequalities.

Finally, Ukraine did not have and still does not have a coherent legislative foundation for regulating and managing temporary housing stocks. Temporary housing is partially regulated by the current Housing Code. Some aspects of the existence of the temporary housing stock are enshrined in bylaws, specifically Cabinet of Ministers Decrees 422 (valid), 582 (expired in 2022), the new [Decree](#) 495 on “Some measures for forming housing stocks intended for temporary residence of internally displaced persons” (valid), and in the Law “On ensuring the rights and liberties of temporary displaced persons.” The mechanism for funding temporary housing via a subvention is provided by [Decree](#) 769. Since two different Decrees regulating temporary housing were valid until February 24, some communities had an unofficial distribution into a

“general” temporary housing stock created according to Decree 422 and an “IDP stock” created according to Decree 582.

The functions of temporary housing partially overlap with the functions of social housing, and in general the simultaneous **existence of two non-profit housing stocks to provide for the needs of vulnerable groups has been creating misunderstandings and difficulties in their management.** Even in the [communications of the responsible Ministry](#) and among the people involved in the management of temporary housing, sometimes there is confusion as to which stocks are discussed, and they often call all communally owned housing “social housing.” The temporary housing system was probably conceived as temporary and was supposed to be eliminated after solving the problems it was intended to deal with. This approach has proven to be a double-edged sword: on the one hand, it quickly created conditions for forming temporary housing, but on the other hand, it did not ensure a coordinated and clear system for building and supporting these housing stocks.

Part 3 ● Crisis housing

Ukrainian legislation does not include the term *crisis housing*. In this brief, we use it to mean housing provided to a person in case of an acute, urgent need for the period of 1 night to 6 months. We need this category to describe the system of urgent support for people who have no housing. Equivalents to the term *crisis housing* in other countries include *crisis accommodation*, *emergency housing*, or *shelter*.

Shelters are the first step of aid in the *Transitional Housing Progressions (Staircase of Transition)* approach.¹ Shelters in this system are the first level of aid for people who have no housing. A [shelter](#) is a habitable covered living space providing a secure and healthy living environment with privacy and dignity.

In the UK, [emergency housing](#) means a short-term housing option provided to individuals while they are waiting for other kinds of aid. Emergency housing can include apartments, hostels or hotels. Australia uses the term *crisis accommodation*, which involves a range of specialized services for homeless people, people at risk of losing shelter, or people who have overcome an emergency. This housing can also be [used](#) by those who are escaping domestic violence.

A special feature of crisis housing is its inclusion in the social protection system. Because people who need crisis housing may also need mental health, medical, or legal counseling. This kind of comprehensive aid is needed to make sure that these people can continue living a full and independent life outside crisis housing in the future.

Crisis housing aims to help vulnerable population groups, such as homeless people and survivors of violence. In our paper, we will focus on how crisis housing works to support these population groups specifically. At the same time, we are aware that the number of vulnerable groups in need of crisis housing is much higher, and some people can belong to several groups at once and need special help.

¹ Busch-Geertsema, V. (2013). *Housing First Europe: Final Report. Bremen/Brussels: European Union Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity.*

3.1 ● Crisis housing for homeless people

According to Ukrainian law, homeless people are defined as people who are in the social state of homelessness—that is, those who have no housing whatsoever which would be intended or suitable for residence. Homeless people and children have all the rights and liberties enshrined in the Constitution and Ukrainian laws (including the right to housing).

Social protection institutions for homeless people, according to the [Law of Ukraine](#) “On the foundations of social protection for homeless people and children,” include:

- **Night accommodation shelters.** These facilities allow homeless people to stay the night without undergoing a medical examination. Their aim is to decrease the number of people spending nights in the streets.
- **Reintegration centers for homeless people.** Their key difference from night accommodation shelters is that these centers allow one to stay during the day. The main function of these facilities is to provide social services. Their main goal is to gradually return a homeless person to an independent and full life. That is why workers in these centers can help homeless people to restore their lost papers or master new professional skills.
- **Social hotels.** Accommodation in these hotels is paid, and they accept homeless people who work or have another permanent legal source of income which is, at the same time, insufficient for renting or buying housing.

According to government data, as of January 1, 2021, the network of institutions providing social services to homeless people included 45 facilities with 1,765 places, in particular:

- 23 night accommodation shelters/departments (including 17 in communal and 6 in non-governmental ownership) with 896 places;

- 16 reintegration centers (departments) for homeless people (including 10 in communal and 6 in non-governmental ownership) with 709 places;
- 6 social hotels (including 4 in communal and 2 in non-governmental ownership) with 160 places.

Facilities for homeless people are created not only by local governments but also by NGOs and charities. They can operate differently from communal facilities. We do not analyze the work of non-government shelters in this brief.

Homeless people can receive social services, such as access to crisis housing, **both for a fee and free of charge**. The key services of this kind are:

- **“providing shelter”**: a bed with utilities and amenities, plus necessities (bedsheets, hygiene items), food and information support regarding social protection issues;
- **“assisted living”**: providing not only accommodation but also opportunities for studying and development, information support and help with the interaction with other professionals and services.

According to the [Law of Ukraine](#) ““On the foundations of social protection for homeless people and children,” in order to solve the issue of housing for homeless people and people at risk of homelessness (a group which, in particular, includes residents of dormitories and individuals who do not own housing and live in rental housing), local governments are supposed to ensure the development of social-purpose housing stocks.

The [Law](#) “On the housing stock of social purpose” specifies two categories of facilities which can provide temporary accommodation to homeless people, in particular:

- **a specialized house for the poor and homeless**: a facility that aims to fully provide poor and homeless citizens with premises for residence, food, basic medical, legal, social, mental and everyday aid, as well as help with employment;

- **temporary shelter for adults:** a facility which is supposed to provide citizens without a determined place of residence with temporary housing, food, as well as monetary, medical, legal, social, mental and everyday aid; this facility also has to help homeless people to restore their documents and find a job.

There are certain special characteristics of the [provision of crisis and temporary housing to individuals released](#) from serving their sentences in prison who have no housing of their own. The current [Housing Code of Ukraine](#) proposes that these people should take residence at social dormitories and social hotels or at social adaptation centers established by local governments. In theory, housing of this kind should be provided to the released individuals until they can rent or purchase housing on their own, or until they can reclaim the housing they had before they were imprisoned. According to government data, there were the following facilities for released individuals functioning in 2020:

- 2 centers for social adaptation of released individuals (including 1 in communal ownership and 1 in non-governmental ownership) with 45 places;
- 3 specialized boarding houses (in communal ownership) with 217 places;
- 5 units in boarding houses (in communal ownership) with 185 places;
- 6 units in facilities for homeless people (including 3 in communal and 3 in non-governmental ownership) with 226 places.

Of the 1,800 people released from detention in 2020, 137 needed to be accommodated at centers for social adaptation of released individuals, and 274 had to be accommodated at facilities for homeless people.

Opportunities

First of all, it is important that Ukraine **has the legal framework to provide housing to homeless people**. According to the law, a homeless person has the right to independently apply for a facility providing the service of temporary shelter (that is, for a night shelter) and receive accommodation free of charge, without providing any additional papers

the first night of their stay. This regulation is intended to simplify access to shelter in situations when one has no ID papers or medical records, but they need a place to spend the night. In addition, one can be referred to a facility of this kind as a result of social patrolling. That is, if the social protection system functions properly, social workers and law enforcement officers should send a person sleeping in the street to a more protected night shelter, so that nobody is left without a roof over their head.

Second, the law presupposes the provision of not only accommodation but also other kinds of aid. For instance, some types of social protection facilities for homeless people, such as night shelters, have to sign regulated **service provision contracts** with people living in them. These contracts state that the resident receives not only crisis housing, but also **additional services**. Upon application, night shelter workers are supposed to fill out a form with the client's consent, familiarize them with the terms and conditions of staying at a night shelter, which they certify with a signature, and send them to restore their papers and register at the Center of Registration of Homeless Persons if this is needed. Medical workers are also supposed to conduct an examination. Restoring documents and obtaining medical records is considered to be necessary for someone to be able to apply for long-term accommodation in a different type of crisis housing, such as a social hotel.

In the end, the system of services for homeless people is nominally rather diversified and provides a varied toolkit for different situations and/or needs. For instance, in addition to services provided free of charge, homeless people have the opportunity to apply for paid accommodation at a social hotel. One can pay for their stay at a social hotel on their own, or it can be done by a different individual or legal entity, e.g. an NGO or charity which helps homeless people. The sponsorship format is intended to help homeless people who cannot pay for a social dormitory on their own to have more stable and long-term housing than a stay at the night shelter. However, it can be difficult to find an organization or activists willing to help with paying for accommodation, it may not be accessible to everyone who needs it—far

from it. The ability of charities and non-governmental organizations and initiatives and the capacity of social hotels can be very limited.

Challenges

First of all, the available information about the number of homeless people does not allow us to assess the true need for housing.

According to the government's data, 8,057 people were registered by centers for registering homeless people in 2020, while 9,358 received shelter services. Registries of homeless people are kept by local self-government bodies. They only take into account the people who register on their own at centers for registering homeless people.

However, the *de facto* number of homeless people in big Ukrainian cities can be much higher. For instance, in Kyiv, [according](#) to the Kyiv City State Administration, 3,412 people were listed in the registry in 2020. However, NGOs that work with homeless people claim that their number could have been much higher, reaching about 10,000 people.

Second, the network of social protection facilities for homeless people does not cover their need for housing. For example, in Kharkiv Region, 1,941 people were registered in 2020, while only 96 places were available for them (including 48 in night accommodation shelters, 24 in reintegration centers, and 24 in social hotels). Some cities had no such facilities at all or had just one or a few, including some outside the city or on the outskirts, places that are hard or simply impossible to reach for homeless people by themselves. Even in the cities where facilities for the homeless did operate, access to them was limited. For instance, Kyiv only has one municipal Social Care House which can accommodate only 150 people on a paid basis. Even though formally the system for providing homeless people with housing is diversified and proposes various approaches for various situations, there are not enough such facilities.

Third, access to some of these facilities is overly complicated for homeless people. For example, reintegration centers only allow people in if they have their medical records. In theory, if someone has no excerpts from their medical records, center workers must refer them to

a hospital or clinic. However, this does not always happen in practice. De facto, people without medical records are often unable to receive crisis housing.

An additional difficulty is that homeless people themselves may not know in advance if the facility they apply for is a “night accommodation house” or a “reintegration center,” and therefore, if they need their medical records. However, charities and NGOs that provide aid to homeless people often try to simplify this process and help homeless people obtain crisis housing. In addition, **municipal and communal facilities do not accept people under the influence of drugs or alcohol** or with clear symptoms of disease.

According to the law, social protection facilities for homeless people must cooperate with other facilities (e.g. health care facilities) if someone with a disability or an elderly person applies for their services. If a medical examination reveals that someone has a serious illness (such as tuberculosis, AIDS, cancer, or mental health disorders), **social protection facilities must refer them to health care facilities**. Since a high number of homeless people have chronic illnesses, some communities have tried to accept them for permanent care at hospitals, health centers, or homes for disabled people. On the one hand, this allows homeless people to obtain the required medical care. On the other hand, this approach does not help solve the issue of access to housing and can mask the problem of homelessness. Sometimes homeless people do not receive proper treatment or experience discrimination. Finally, when their basic treatment is over, people may not be referred to a reintegration center but rather returned to the streets.

The period of stay at crisis housing has always been limited. Although these limits are not formally defined, some facilities allow people to stay for up to 24 or 30 days in a row. Homeless people rarely manage to find permanent housing within this period, and they may end up having no roof over their heads again.

According to the approach of giving shelter as a service, a homeless person (“client”) signs a service provision agreement which has a defined

period of validity but can be terminated prematurely (for example, in case of refusal to receive a social service, referral to other facilities or permanent accommodation centers, or violation of internal regulations by the “client”). Termination of service provision by a center for reintegration of homeless people must technically end with full reintegration of the “client,” that is, after they return to full independent life or receive housing. The maximum period of a “client’s” stay at a social hotel is [determined](#) according to an agreement signed between the facility administration and the “client” in each case individually, while taking into account the recommendations of the social work specialist (social worker) of the reintegration center who gives a referral.

In fact, however, homeless people are in a situation of extreme vulnerability and have no capacity to defend their rights in situations when the balance of power, resources and information is not in their favor. In the conditions of underfunding and low salaries in the social sphere, the rights of homeless people can be violated, and help may not be provided or may be provided incorrectly, not to the full extent, and especially not end with their return to a full independent life or obtainment of housing.

Finally, the existing system of providing housing to homeless people is not sufficiently integrated with other mechanisms of ensuring the right to housing, particularly with the systems of social and temporary housing. Formally, homeless people can apply for social or temporary housing. However, due to insufficient size of these stocks and bureaucratic procedures (such as collecting papers to confirm one’s low income) homeless people have no access to this type of housing. Essentially they can only expect to be accepted to crisis housing, so crisis solutions often become permanent for them.

3.2 ● Crisis housing for survivors of gender-based violence

Shelters, crisis rooms, day social and mental health help centers, specialized primary social and mental health consulting services, mobile brigades and other facilities and institutions are defined in regulations as specialized support services for survivors of domestic violence and violence based on their sex. In this brief, we focus on the work of shelters and crisis rooms, since they are the ones that provide short-term housing.

According to [Decree 655](#), a **shelter for survivors of domestic violence and/or violence based on their sex** is a specialized support service for survivors of domestic violence and/or violence based on their sex. A **crisis room** is a specially equipped room at a [day center](#) for short-term accommodation of survivors of violence. Unlike shelters, crisis rooms are not separate structures but rather operate at day centers for social and mental health help.

One can live at a shelter for 3 months with an option to extend this period for up to half a year. A crisis room can accommodate people for up to 10 days with an option to extend their stay to 20 days. However, sometimes this is not enough time to solve a problem, and people have to stay longer at shelters or crisis rooms. Even when one's official term of stay at a shelter ends, they may need separate housing away from the abuser.

The decentralized nature of the system of creating help services for survivors of gender-based violence has affected the number of shelters and crisis rooms in different cities. As of July 2022, Ukraine [had](#) 40 shelters and 33 crisis rooms. At the same time, one region could have several shelters and another could have none. For example, Zaporizhia Region had no shelters while Lviv Region had 4. The situation with crisis rooms is similar: there are 6 in Khmelnytsky Region and zero in Kharkiv Region, for instance.

The main documents that regulate the work of shelters and crisis rooms in Ukraine are the [Law of Ukraine](#) “On preventing and combating domestic violence,” [Law of Ukraine](#) “On ensuring equal rights and opportunities of women and men,” [Law of Ukraine](#) “On social work with families, children, youth,” the [Typical Regulations](#) for a Shelter for Survivors of Domestic Violence and/or Violence Based on Their Sex, the [Typical Regulations](#) for a Specialized Service of Primary Social and Mental Health Consulting of Survivors of Domestic Violence and/or Violence Based on Their Sex.

The Typical Regulations define how a survivor of violence can apply for a stay at the shelter. For this they need to obtain a referral from local government bodies, the National Police, a mobile brigade for social and mental health help, or a Social Service Center for Family, Children and Youth. They also have to prepare a personal statement to be accepted to a shelter and, if available, a copy of their ID. Underage children can live at a shelter with their mother, father or legal guardian, and in case they are not 18 yet but they are legally married. After an applicant prepares an application for a place in a shelter, local government bodies must make a decision within three working days. The applicant can already stay at the shelter during this period. Accommodation at a shelter is free of charge, but the Typical Regulations specify that shelters can provide paid social services.

Responsibility for establishing shelters is placed on local governments. Other actors—companies, institutions, NGOs, international organizations, individuals—can participate in the establishment and maintenance of shelters on the basis of public-private partnership. In particular, some shelters in Ukraine are created by NGOs. The system of their funding, management, and internal organization differs from the facilities established by local governments. However, in this brief, we focus on how **public** facilities operate.

In 2021, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted [Decree](#) 398 on issuing a subvention from the state budget to local budgets for the establishment of a special network of support services for survivors of violence. The Ministry of Social Policies is appointed as the main manager and the agency responsible for implementing the program. The

subvention was targeted at the reconstruction and renovation of existing premises, the purchase of the required items, equipment and vehicles (to set up mobile social and mental health help brigades). While making the decision on whether to provide a subvention, the data on the number of the population, the number of applications, and the number of already available beds should be taken into account; this is supposed to account for the need for shelters and help distribute the money to places where the need is the highest.

Russia's war against Ukraine has drawn the attention of international organizations to the growing number of cases of gender-based violence. Since 2020, the Cities and Communities Free of Domestic Violence [project](#) by UNFPA has been active in Ukraine, involving 30 cities. The project involves training events for local experts as well as support for the establishment and development of shelters, day centers, crisis rooms. 11 shelters had been created by April 2021 with UNFPA's support. By the beginning of 2022, the project's operations were already aimed more at non-financial support for shelters and crisis rooms. This was associated with the growing role of local governments that had started to fund the opening and maintenance of shelters from public budgets.

Opportunities

First of all, it is important that there are different **forms of help for survivors of violence: crisis rooms, shelters, day centers for social and mental health help, mobile brigades**. Different types of help provide ways to cover various requests. For instance, mobile brigades can work in places where people cannot get help from a shelter.

Second, **positive dynamics can be observed in decision making with regard to opposing and preventing violence**. For example, the Law "On preventing and combating domestic violence" became valid in 2018. In 2021, the state subvention for the creation of a network of specialized support services started working, and the State Social Program for Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence and/or Violence Based on Sex until 2025 was approved. In 2022, Ukraine ratified the Council of

Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (also known as the Istanbul Convention).

In addition, Ukraine has interested **civil society actors who work in the field of combating violence**. The presence of other agents in addition to the state broadens the perspective on problems in the field of preventing and combating gender-based violence and helps with the search for solutions. There are also a number of examples of successful civil initiatives which successfully demanded that local governments open a shelter in their city. Thus, by using the instruments of social pressure or collaboration, civil society can influence the measures taken to combat gender-based violence.

Challenges

First, **the number of shelters for survivors of gender-based violence is still insufficient**. [The Council of Europe](#) recommends having one rape crisis center per 200,000 women; one women's counseling center per 50,000 women. The number of [existing aid facilities](#) (40 shelters and 33 crisis rooms) is lower than these recommendations. Therefore, it is likely that a significant share of people who need help do not receive it.

Access to shelters is especially a problem for women who live in rural areas. The lack or low number of shelters in villages can, on the one hand, be explained by their low population. In addition, it is hard to ensure the privacy of the building's location in a village. At the same time, women in rural areas have to do more in order to reach a shelter in the city since it requires additional time and money. This can become an obstacle because economic violence is often a part of domestic violence.

Second, **a large share of responsibility for crisis housing for survivors of violence is placed on local governments**. This makes the support system vulnerable if local governments are not interested or do not have the resources to open and maintain these facilities. This leads to an imbalance between the existing shelters and the demand for them. The state subsidy aims to solve this problem, but it is impossible to receive and use unless the local government shows initiative.

A consequence of decentralization is also the lack of data on the quality of help at municipal shelters. According to the civil sector's assessments, it is not always provided properly and sometimes uses controversial approaches. The lack of a system for monitoring and assessment makes it more difficult to analyze and review policies.

There is a need for the standardization of requirements or recommendations for organizing shelters. For example, some of them may have different levels of protection, particularly with or without external surveillance cameras. There have been cases when shelter addresses were publicly accessible online, which exposed to danger everyone receiving help there.

Third, there are a number of problems with access to the existing shelters. One of them is that people with certain illnesses and under the influence of alcohol or drugs cannot stay at the shelter. People who are vulnerable based on several characteristics can have limited access to help. In particular, this applies to women living with drug addiction. Since they cannot live at shelters, they must be referred to other facilities. However, survivors of domestic violence need specialized expert support. Thus, women with drug addiction can be excluded from the general support system. That is why sensitive solutions must be developed to help take these situations into account and provide quality support to various categories of people.

In addition, women can stay in shelters together with their children, but they cannot leave a child there unsupervised. In order to go to work, women need to have someone to watch their children. Lack of opportunities to do that can create obstacles to these women's employment.

In most cities, only people registered in those cities can receive help at municipal shelters. Given that a rather significant share of the Ukrainian population do not live at their place of registration, this makes it impossible for them to access help.

LGBTQI+ people can experience domestic violence due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. The lack of shelters for them in the

public social protection system exacerbates the vulnerability of LGBTIQ+ people.

In view of the disproportionate number of cases of violence against women versus men, affirmative action towards women (creating shelters aimed at women) is justified. However, since cases of violence against men, although less numerous, also exist, the need for shelter for them may also require attention in the future.

● Conclusions

In the past thirty years, housing policy in Ukraine aimed to expand the institution of private property. As a result, the mechanisms of social, temporary, and “crisis” housing were developed poorly and were not a priority in public policies. The systems for the provision of different kinds of public housing work independently of one another, and there is no unified strategy for their development.

Responsibility for public housing provision in Ukraine is distributed between various government bodies at different levels. The Ministry of Community and Territory Development, which shapes and implements housing policies in Ukraine, is central among them. The State Fund for Facilitating Youth Housing Construction implements national (and, in some cases, local) housing provision programs, particularly by providing discount loans. At the same time, social and temporary housing stocks as well as various kinds of crisis housing are developed and administered by local government bodies that can also implement their own housing programs. Subventions for the construction or purchase of housing for the temporary housing stock for internally displaced persons are administered by the Ministry of Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories; the same Ministry also partially deals with the issues of housing for internally displaced persons. The issues of homelessness and gender-based violence are the purview of the Ministry of Social Policy. Thus, at the local level, departments of local governments can work with shelters as well as social and temporary housing.

Temporary and social housing stocks have been formally functioning in Ukraine since the mid-200s. Both tools are intended to provide support to people in difficult life circumstances and guarantee the right to housing for those who cannot purchase or rent housing on their own. The existence of these stocks is an important step because they attest to society’s need for non-profit housing. However, **the simultaneous existence of two stocks with similar functions and goals creates new challenges and misunderstandings in housing policy.** The functions of temporary housing partially overlap with the functions of social housing. These two concepts are often mixed up even by those who are responsible for their development. In the case of temporary housing, the

lack of coherent legislation is an indicator of the “temporary” nature of the mechanism itself. The temporary housing system was likely meant to vanish once the social problems it aimed to tackle were solved. This approach, on the one hand, made it possible to quickly create the conditions for forming the temporary housing stock, but on the other hand, it failed to provide a coordinated and comprehensible system for the development and maintenance of this stock. In the end, despite the assumed expectations, the problems whose emergence caused the need for temporary housing have not disappeared—on the contrary, their number is only growing. Temporary housing, both as a housing provision mechanism and as housing itself, has de facto become permanent.

The administration of social and temporary housing as well as the records of the need for this housing have always been fragmented and inefficient. According to Ukrainian law, if someone does not own any housing and cannot rent it on their own, the government has to provide for their housing needs. The current Housing Code of Ukraine, adopted back in the USSR, still has a regulation on keeping the “housing queue,” that is, a record of citizens who require an improvement in their housing. Even though the record has not been kept in a centralized manner for a while now, it is still a valid mechanism through which people can receive housing from the government free of charge. As a part of the mass free-of-charge privatization procedure, they can privatize this housing within a few years. Thus, the public housing stock ends up in private hands over time. In addition to the “general” housing queue, with the emergence of temporary housing the government started keeping a separate record of people who need it, and passing the law on social housing also encoded the existence of another “queue.” The same people can be registered in all three of the queues at the same time. This creates extra workload for local government agencies and makes it more difficult to assess the need for social and temporary housing.

As of January 1, 2021, the Ukrainian social housing record listed 7,623 people, and the temporary housing record listed 4,264 people, including 2,274 IDPs. This number is probably much lower than the actual need.

The process of registration can be resource-intensive; plus people are required to confirm their entitlement to social or temporary housing every year. The established criteria, the record-keeping process, and the low probability of obtaining housing lead to the situation when some of the people who need help are not registered in the queue. Some communities just ignore this need in general and do not keep a list of people who need social housing.

Social and temporary housing provision was rather decentralized, that is, local governments were the ones responsible for developing and maintaining the stocks. On the one hand, this approach allowed local governments to assess the need for this housing and develop it independently. On the other hand, they were often incapable of maintaining and funding these stocks on their own. The significant decentralization of social and temporary housing management proved to be a burden for local governments. Thus, some of the housing units could end up unsuitable for residence. In addition, the transparency and accountability of municipal housing management was insufficient. Even though the mechanism of public supervision of housing distribution existed, there were no special procedures for public participation in housing management. These mechanisms could include supervisory or public councils, or resident unions representing their interests.

In general, there was not enough sustained investment in social and temporary housing stock at the national level. That is why the number of housing units in these stocks was low. Communities had to adopt programs with minimum effectiveness, look for short-term aid from international donors, plug the gaps in one stock at the expense of the other.

In the past few years, funding for developing temporary housing stocks was allocated from the state budget via a targeted subvention to local governments. This was one of the main mechanisms for growing the stocks. However, it also had its limitations, because under the conditions of regional inequalities not all communities had equal opportunities to use the subvention. At the same time, no centralized state funding for the development of social housing was allocated at all in the past few years.

As a result, the social and temporary housing stocks were small. As of January 1, 2021, there were only 1,098 units of social housing and 1,997 units of temporary housing in Ukraine in total. Unfortunately, a significant share of this housing has ended up in the temporarily occupied territories after the full-scale war began. For example, the highest number of temporary housing units in Ukraine were located in the Donetsk and Zaporizhia Regions, and Mariupol was one of the leaders in developing its housing stock after 2012.

Marginalization of social and temporary housing was embedded in the system proposed by the current legislation. This housing is intended exclusively for “socially unprotected categories” (which later also de facto included internally displaced people), some of whom also need social services. The existing social and temporary housing is sometimes in a poor condition or has no shared spaces or individual rooms for all the residents. The issue of integration of the people who live in this housing into the community are also often ignored. Both at the national and at the local level, people who apply for social and temporary housing are viewed as a “problem” that needs to be “solved,” in contrast to other people who can afford to rent or buy housing.

Ukraine also has housing which we label as “crisis housing,” even though this term does not officially exist in Ukrainian law. Its main purpose is to provide short-term shelter and support to people in an emergency. To achieve this goal, crisis housing must be integrated with other public housing provision systems, e.g. with the social and temporary housing system. When the period of living in crisis housing ends, a person may need different, long-term housing. However, this transition did not usually happen in Ukraine. Reasons for this include the fragmented nature of housing policies, scattered responsibility for different types of housing among different government bodies, and insufficient social and temporary housing stocks.

Just like in the case of social and temporary housing stock, responsibility for “crisis” housing was borne by local governments. In the case of shelters for survivors of domestic violence, this system was successfully developed and improved in the past few years thanks to a [subvention](#) from the state budget and support from international

organizations. However, the number of such shelters is still insufficient and does not allow to fully meet the need for them: in July 2022, there were 40 shelters and 33 crisis rooms in Ukraine. Meanwhile, the system of homeless shelters in Ukraine is not developed properly, and the problem of homelessness does not receive proper attention from local and national government bodies. In 2020, 8,057 homeless people were registered in the entire territory of Ukraine, while various facilities for them only provided 1,765 spots. And the real number of homeless people can be much higher, according to volunteers and NGOs.

In general, the state system for housing provision in Ukraine includes tools which are supposed to guarantee the right to housing for people who, for whatever reason, cannot meet their need for housing through market mechanisms. In theory, this approach involves a system of steps according to which, for instance, a homeless person first receives “crisis” housing, such as a bed in a shelter, and then they will be able to receive temporary or (later) social housing in which they will live until they are able to rent or purchase housing on their own. However, the transition from one type of housing to another usually does not happen because different mechanisms are not coordinated properly, are inconsistent or poorly developed.

The described system of social as well as crisis and temporary housing in Ukraine today matches what Jim Kemeny² labels as the **dual model** in his categorization. This is the cause of some of the shortcomings described above. Here are the main features of this system:

- the stocks are owned and managed by central or local government bodies;
- the stocks are formed as an afterthought;
- the stocks exist to meet the needs of low-income people, and the distribution of housing depends on income;
- to receive housing, one has to pass a complicated bureaucratic procedure.

² Kemeny, J. (2006). Corporatism and Housing Regimes. *Housing, Theory and Society*, 23(1), 1–18.

Since people are less likely to support government programs whose products they themselves cannot use, social housing in dual systems is often underfunded and therefore remains in a poor state. Thus, the treatment of residents of social housing is paternalistic, they are viewed as people who cannot help themselves and need care.

In contrast to this system, Kemeny identifies the so-called **integrated model** which he deems more effective. The foundations of this system could serve as a theoretical basis for updating the housing policy in Ukraine. The main features of this integrated model include:

- the stocks are owned and managed by both public or municipal companies and private owners (housing cooperatives, associations, non-profits) which create social housing on a non-profit basis;
- the housing can be claimed by broad groups of people, not only the most vulnerable;
- since the housing can be claimed by broad groups of people, the procedure for obtaining it is simplified, and marginalization of this housing can be avoided;
- since social housing is integrated in the housing sector, it “competes” on the market with other types of rental housing and therefore indirectly affects the price and establishes the desired standards of rent in the for-profit sector.

Of course, we should distinguish between short-term and long-term goals for the development of social housing in Ukraine. Today, in the conditions of the war and a housing crisis, the main goal is to guarantee the right to housing for the most vulnerable groups of people. The first priority is to provide housing to everyone who has lost their homes as a result of the war and cannot provide themselves with other housing on their own. For this purpose, we should expand publicly owned social housing stocks and build an effective and coordinated system for managing them. This system, on the one hand, will give local governments enough opportunity and power to manage this housing, and on the other hand, will guarantee stable financial support for the development of social housing from the central government. In the future, access to social housing should be extended, and conditions for

engaging non-governmental actors in the construction and maintenance of this housing should be created.

● Suggestions

1. Combine the social and temporary housing stocks and create a unified publicly owned social housing stock.
2. Create a Unified State Registry of Citizens Who Need an Improvement of Housing Conditions instead of a range of separate lists and “queues.”
3. Reconsider the criteria and procedures for the provision of social and temporary housing so as not to exclude anyone who really needs help with housing. It is worth abandoning the practice where people have to work to collect references about information which could be obtained by integrating public registries, providing access to them, or by interdepartmental cooperation. At the same time, in order to make this possible, record-keeping bodies must have sufficient resources to hire as many people as necessary to accept and process all applications.
4. Improve the system of social housing management at the local level, particularly by creating dedicated communal institutions, further professional training, creating opportunities for international exchange of experience, and spreading best practices.
5. Improve the transparency, participation and accountability of the social housing management system not only at the stage of housing distribution but also at the stage of management, particularly by creating supervisory boards and unions of residents of social housing.
6. Adopt a state social housing development program and increase state support for communities so they can effectively develop and manage their social housing stocks. In particular, funding should be provided to develop social housing, including via the subsidy mechanism.
7. Create a Unified State Registry of Social Housing which will encompass the information about all the available social housing in Ukraine.
8. Consider the issue of appropriateness of determining/creating a single government body that will be responsible for social housing

at the national level, particularly for administering state funding, collecting and publishing information about the need for housing and the number of housing units. Possible options to consider include repurposing and updating the State Fund for the Facilitation of Youth Housing Construction for these functions, or establishing a separate Ministry of Housing Policy (which can also take over the issues of utilities and housing maintenance).

9. Develop and adopt a new Concept of State Housing Policy in Ukraine and update other housing legislation on its basis. Among other things, [the new housing policy](#) must pay attention to the system of state housing provision for those who cannot meet their need for housing on market terms, without the right to privatize housing received from the state. The need for social housing should be viewed not as a temporary problem which is possible to solve in the future but as a permanent and integral part of the housing provision system in Ukraine. In addition, the program should also address the problem of homelessness and include measures aimed at reducing and preventing homelessness.
10. Develop a concept for the development of the crisis housing system in case of emergencies and natural disasters which has to be integrated with other types of housing in order to provide people in need with all the necessary support and opportunities to move from short-term to affordable and decent long-term housing.
11. Develop the system for the monitoring, assessment, and methodological support of shelters and crisis housing facilities, particularly in order to collect data, spread best practices, share experience internationally, provide further professional training.
12. Increase the inclusivity of government aid to people who need crisis housing, particularly by reconsidering the existing rules and procedures and by providing government support and funding to NGOs which provide help and shelter to certain social categories.
13. Provide support, particularly financial support, to communities for developing the system of aid and crisis housing for homeless people, particularly via the subsidy mechanism.

14. Continue and intensify state support for communities for the purpose of creating a crisis housing system for survivors of gender-based violence, particularly via the subsidy mechanism.