

Voices from **Ukraine**



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An Overview of Gender-Based Violence in Ukraine

Advocacy Brief 2024

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1

INTRODUCTION



Following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation in February 2022, ongoing insecurity and widespread displacement across the country continue. In 2023-2024, the people of Ukraine faced a dramatic escalation of the war, with civilian casualties on the rise and widespread destruction of vital civilian infrastructure impacting essential services. Frontline areas in the East and South have been most heavily affected by bombardment – although no area is deemed safe – with other regions of Ukraine hosting large numbers of displaced populations. Waves of evacuations continued throughout 2024, with recent evacuees moving through transit sites. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are distributed throughout the country, a significant proportion of whom live in collective sites. Electricity shortages due to the targeting of infrastructure; rising prices, limited work opportunities and a scarcity of affordable housing; and overstretched public services have been widely reported, with needs outpacing the available humanitarian assistance. Entering its fourth year, the current phase of the crisis in Ukraine is characterized by growing humanitarian needs and protection concerns, with women and girls and other at-risk groups the most affected.

The prolonged and combined nature of the triad of insecurity, displacement, and economic deterioration has put a strain on household resources, **reducing the coping capacities of women and girls and other at-risk groups in Ukraine and further exposing them to risks of Gender-Based Violence (GBV).** Family separation is widespread, with women heads of household taking on a dual burden, as well as many older women and women with disabilities being left on their own. There is a significant over-representation of vulnerable groups in frontline areas and within collective sites. **Over the past year, different forms of GBV have been significantly increasing due to war-related factors.** Women and girls in Ukraine are facing escalating violence within the household, while also feeling less secure outside the home. **Risks of violence and barriers for survivors to access support are multiplying as the crisis continues, with GBV often deprioritized as attention and resources are directed to the war, making GBV programming even more critical as a life-saving intervention.**

2

KEY FINDINGS



a GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN UKRAINE

I. Key Trends for Gender-Based Violence in 2024



Increasing risks and forms of GBV



**Women and girls feeling
less safe and more insecure**



**Reduced coping capacities
of women and girls**

“It started back in the times of the lockdown and it’s gotten worse during the war. Uncontrolled aggression from the partner.”

Woman with a Disability/Caregiver, Lviv¹

“Alcohol, drugs, strangers - everything poses risk and danger.”

Woman Caregiver in a Rural Area,
Kherson



¹ Quotations from FGDs are cited to the oblast level (rather than the raion or hromada level) in order to preserve anonymity and minimize potential risks in light of the smaller geographical scope in the pilot year. Identifying information of FGD participants is not recorded or included at any point during the data collection and analysis.

GBV on the rise, exacerbated by the effects of the war, including intimate partner violence (IPV)/domestic violence (DV); sexual violence including sexual exploitation and trafficking; physical, psychological, and economic violence; and technology-facilitated GBV (TFGBV).

Women and girls reported **feeling less safe and experiencing increased violence** in families and communities linked to intensifying risk factors from the war. Women and girls in Ukraine continue to face different and often multiple forms of violence. **Most forms of GBV are reported to be increasing due to crisis-related factors**, with the **types of GBV** identified by women and girls as taking place in Ukraine including the following: IPV/DV; physical violence; psychological violence including bullying; sexual violence, including conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and trafficking, and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA); economic violence; denial of rights, resources, opportunities, and services including restrictions on freedom of movement and expression; TFGBV; labour exploitation of women; child marriage, primarily in Roma and rural communities; gender discrimination; and for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Queer/Questioning + Persons/Communities (LGBTIQ+ persons), outing and blackmail.

Women and girls in Ukraine continue to be disproportionately affected by GBV. Those with intersecting social vulnerability factors face heightened risks of violence. Displaced and returnee women and girls; adolescent girls; older women; women and girls with disabilities; Roma

women and girls; and women and girls in rural areas experience elevated risks of experiencing GBV, as well as greater barriers to seeking support in situations of violence. Other groups at high risk of experiencing GBV include LGBTIQ+ persons, as well as Human Immunodeficiency Virus Positive (HIV+) women. While women and girls are the most at risk of and the most affected by GBV, men and boys – particularly from marginalized groups – also face specific risks of sexual violence. Risks of sexual violence for men and boys are primarily associated with detention and torture in areas that had been or continue to be under occupation. Some men also experience mobility constraints from fear of conscription.

GBV most commonly takes place and is increasing in the home; at the same time, women and girls are increasingly feeling insecure outside the home due to growing risk factors.

IPV/DV is the main form of violence experienced by women and girls in Ukraine. Women and girls reported **significantly increasing violence in the home** due to intensifying stressors including: shared living; spending more time at home; financial pressure on households; and scarce work opportunities. The impact on men who were/are combatants; fear of conscription and reduced mobility for un-mobilized men, challenges for some men in meeting social expectations related to their traditional role, and negative coping through using alcohol and drugs have also exacerbated violence within the household.

Women and girls across regions **feel increasingly insecure when moving outside the home** due

to elevated risk factors. Electricity cuts; growing substance abuse; displacement and collective living; lack of accessible transport options, particularly in rural areas; and militarized areas contribute to **heightened risks of sexual violence in public and shared spaces**. Depleting resources and the increasing vulnerability of marginalized households are significantly **increasing risks of sexual exploitation, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), and sex trafficking**.



The growing sense of insecurity for women and girls and the risks of sexual violence outside the home **have a cascading effect on women and girls, first limiting their mobility, which then affects their access to assistance and services, as well as increasing their exposure to violence within the home**.

Growing risk factors related to the protracted crisis are contributing to and exacerbating GBV.

Risk factors stemming from the crisis are **growing and compounding, increasing GBV**. Factors that women and girls identified as increasing the risks of violence they face include: insecurity; displacement and conditions in shared accommodation; restricted mobility and spending more time at home; lack of public lighting; the deteriorating economic situation; and growing militarization in society. These factors combine to contribute to heightened levels of stress and aggression and growing substance abuse within families and communities, including among veterans and servicemen on leave.

Diminished coping capacities of women and girls and other at-risk groups after several years of war are increasing their vulnerability to GBV and making it more difficult for them to cope with and seek support when experiencing violence.

Coping capacities for women and girls in Ukraine have been **significantly diminished**, due to the adverse impact of the war and the scarcity of resources. Insecurity; limited financial means; lack of safe, affordable housing options; and the reduction in provision of humanitarian assistance **increase the dependence of survivors on perpetrators** and multiply the barriers they face to access GBV services.

Women and girls reported that **most survivors remain silent** after experiencing violence



because of fear of shame and retaliation; widespread victim-blaming and normalization of violence; and the perception that they lack options. Survivors often do not seek support out of a desire to protect their children and the family; from lack of awareness regarding violence and how to access services; and because of deprioritization of GBV related to the war.

High barriers to seeking and accessing GBV services for survivors, with pre-existing access barriers becoming more difficult to surmount due to war-related factors.

There is a **lack of awareness of GBV and of how to seek support** among many women and girls – particularly in rural areas – and **harmful social norms on gender** are prevalent in communities. **Victim-blaming and normalization of violence** perpetuate GBV and deter survivors from coming forward to seek services. While awareness of GBV and available services has increased in recent years, **access barriers for survivors to seek help continue to grow** linked to pressures stemming from the war.

Survivors face interconnected barriers to seeking and accessing GBV services, with factors related to the crisis interacting with and reinforcing pre-existing barriers. Access barriers are complex and multilayered, including being unaware of GBV and how to access support; limited availability of services; distance, lack of accessible transport, and poor infrastructure in rural areas; insecurity due to hostilities; fear of judgment and further violence; mistrust of police, authorities, and service providers; concerns


about lack of confidentiality; childcare and household responsibilities; limited recourse to justice; costs associated with certain services; and fines for perpetrators falling on survivors. Three **emerging conflict-related factors** that further exacerbate challenges for survivors to access GBV services are: the fear of male perpetrators within the household being conscripted; idealization of men combatants as “heroes”; and deprioritization of GBV due to the ongoing war.

Women and girls – particularly from marginalized groups – face significant barriers to safe meaningful access to humanitarian assistance and services.

There are strong **barriers to safe access to humanitarian assistance for women and girls and other marginalized groups** that can place them at risk and leave them unable to receive aid. Types of access barriers and risks identified by women and girls for humanitarian assistance and services include: insecurity especially in heavily conflict-affected areas; limited availability and in many locations, reduced provision; distance, limited accessible transport and poor infrastructure, chiefly in rural areas; challenges in registration; lack of transparency and alignment with needs-based targeting; information gaps; queues, crowding, and waiting times, increasing exposure to risks of shelling; limited access adaptations for people with mobility constraints and specific needs; staffing shortages for public services; lack of electricity; childcare and household responsibilities; costs; risk of theft and scams; SEA and corruption; mistreatment, discrimination, and stigma (particularly for marginalized groups); and insufficient consultation of women and girls.



II. Types of GBV

Intimate Partner Violence and Domestic Violence (IPV/DV)

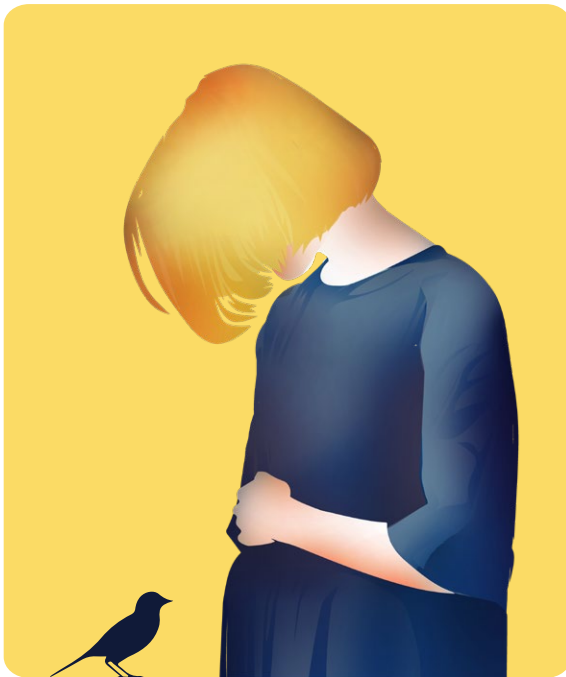
“Domestic violence may have increased as people spend more time at home.”
Adolescent Girl, Kherson

“He gets drunk, comes over, beats her up, and what is she supposed to do about it?”
Displaced Woman with a Disability/Caregiver in a Rural Area, Lviv

“They mostly fight and quarrel in the families, but I think they attempt to act only when it comes to physical violence, otherwise they put up with it waiting for it to pass on its own; they report violence as a measure of last resort when it’s impossible to hide it anymore.”
Woman in a Rural Area, Kharkiv

IPV/DV was identified as the most common form of GBV and reported to be significantly increasing in the context of the prolonged humanitarian crisis. Women in Ukraine face a growing level of violence in the home, mostly in the form of abuse by husbands and intimate partners. Violence towards older women by sons and children was also reported to be on the rise. Violence

against children in the home was also described as growing, with adolescent girls experiencing violence primarily from fathers/parents. Heightened tension and aggression within households were described, escalating both the frequency and intensity of violence. War-related risks contributing to abuse within the family include stress from insecurity and displacement; difficult conditions and crowding in collective living situations; and families spending more time at home because of curfew and lack of lighting, increasing the exposure of women and girls to violence. Growing economic needs and limited employment opportunities were identified as exacerbating the pressure on men and contributing to substance abuse. Increased risks of IPV/DV were associated with households in which men experience limited mobility due to fear of conscription, as well as with men returning on leave or discharged from the military. IPV/DV includes a combination of physical, psychological, sexual, and economic violence, as well as denial of rights, resources, opportunities, and services.



Sexual Violence

“Why wouldn’t you walk in the dark? Out of sheer precaution – who knows what might happen at night, some bunches of youngsters, smoking, so on. Transport connection is so that you need to get to the bus-stop first. These days, I would not walk along the highway on my own because someone might turn up and do something. One day, a guy gave me a ride and started harassing me, so I will never do such a thing again.”

Older Woman in a Rural Area, Kharkiv

“But I’m afraid. There’s a lot of our military. Yeah, our guys. But I don’t know what they’ve experienced, what kind of trauma and what can be expected. I get around the village normally. But still...”

Woman Caregiver in a Rural Area, Kherson

“There was talk of rape in the village. When the [Russians] were there.”

Adolescent Girl with a Disability in a Rural Area, Kherson

Women and girls in Ukraine feel less secure and described increased risks and incidents of sexual violence. Fear of sexual violence was frequently expressed by women and girls in association with collective living and when moving outside the home. Forms of sexual violence cited include rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual abuse of children, sexual exploitation and trafficking, and SEA, as well as sexual violence

online as part of TFGBV. CRSV was reported to have taken place against women and girls during occupation, as well as towards men and boys and LGBTIQ+ persons, particularly in the context of detention. Women and girls identified the lack of public street lighting as greatly contributing to a growing sense of insecurity and reducing their mobility, which in turn affects their access to assistance and services. Other factors cited as increasing risks of sexual violence include collective housing – due to lack of privacy in shared living space with unrelated household members – and growing substance abuse in communities. Women and girls expressed fears about the presence of men and youth under the influence of alcohol and drugs in public spaces, on transport, and in collective sites, as well as on leave from military duty. Heightened risks of sexual violence were also identified along evacuation routes and in heavily militarized areas. Risks of sexual exploitation and SEA were seen as rising because of deepening vulnerabilities and in some areas, absence of humanitarian actors due to access constraints.



Physical Violence

The prevalence and severity of physical violence was reported by women and girls to be increasing driven by crisis-related factors. Physical violence was most frequently referenced as part of IPV/DV. Physical violence was regarded as the form of GBV that is more readily recognized within communities, compared with other “less visible” forms of violence (such as psychological or economic violence). However, physical violence as part of IPV/DV is still frequently ignored and minimized unless it is considered “severe.” In addition to

beating and other forms of physical abuse within households, there were also several reported cases of femicide as part of IPV or related to sexual violence outside the home. Physical violence was described as being greatly exacerbated by growing substance abuse within households and communities. Physical violence against women and girls also takes place at times in public spaces, such as during disputes in distribution queues; as part of bullying in schools; and during incidents of theft targeting women and other at-risk groups. Physical violence was reported to have escalated in families and communities, due to greater stress and aggression in society; the negative influence of alcohol and drugs; people spending more time at home; growing economic needs; and loss of employment. Risks were seen as heightened in contexts of collective living and heavily militarized areas, as well as within families of military personnel.



Psychological Violence

Psychological violence was described as one of the most common forms of violence in the context and often accompanies other forms of GBV. As with physical violence, psychological violence was reported to be significantly increasing due to stress from war-related factors. Psychological violence identified by women and girls takes the form of shouting, insults, humiliation, manipulation, threats, judgment, slander, bullying, and harassment. Verbal abuse frequently goes hand-in-hand with physical violence as part of IPV/DV. Women in Ukraine increasingly experience psychological violence from their husbands and partners. Perpetrators use emotional abuse to isolate and control. Emotional abuse



was reported also to be directed towards older women by their children and children-in-law, as well as towards adolescent girls by their parents. Outside the home, there were reports of incidents of bullying and harassment, particularly towards marginalized groups, such as IDPs, Roma communities, and LGBTIQ+ persons. Women and girls from these groups face heightened risks. In particular, adolescent girls described frequently facing bullying and cyberbullying, including from their male peers. Lack of socialization due to online learning and stress from insecurity were reported to be increasing aggression among children. Despite its prevalence, psychological violence was regarded as being underacknowledged by communities, because it is less visible.



Economic Violence

“I know that there’s violence, I faced it, my acquaintance’s children took away her pension and even took her somewhere, I don’t know the details but I understand correctly that this is about violence.”

Displaced Woman in a Collective Site, Kherson

Economic violence towards women and girls was described as widespread. Economic violence often takes place as part of IPV/DV. In particular, economic violence by their husbands against women was described, as well as towards older women by their children, such as by depriving them of their pensions. Increasing financial tensions in families were observed – linked to growing household needs, rising prices, and limited work opportunities – in some cases, exacerbating economic abuse and control. Despite

economic violence commonly taking place, it was reported as being frequently overlooked by communities, with survivors often not realizing that it is a form of violence. Due to mounting constraints, survivors are increasingly financially vulnerable and dependent on perpetrators and the men in their lives.



Denial of Rights, Resources, Opportunities, and Services: Focus on Restriction of Freedom of Movement and Expression

Limitation of the decision-making ability of women and girls was also observed. In some households, men and others in the family control the decisions in women and girls’ lives. While it varies by family, women and girls in Ukraine can face restrictions on their access to resources, opportunities, and services. Some women and girls – particularly from marginalized groups, such as older women, women and girls in Roma communities, and women and girls in rural areas – face restrictions on exercising their rights imposed by family members and communities. Due to widespread family separation, an increasing number of women are stepping into the role of head of household. Nevertheless, many women and girls experience gendered division of domestic and care responsibilities and limited participation in household decision-making. Denial of rights was primarily described in the context of IPV/DV against women and girls by their husbands and fathers/parents, as well as against older women by their children (in-law). There were reports of restrictions on the movement of adolescent girls by their families based on safety concerns. Lack of lighting and collective living are increasing

fears of sexual violence among families and can lead to parental-imposed constraints on girls' movement. Restrictions on freedom of movement and expression are also experienced by LGBTIQ+ persons, who described being afraid of being targeted in public spaces for their appearance, how they dress, or through their display of LGBTIQ+ symbols. Heightened aggression in the public sphere is linked to a backlash towards the greater visibility of diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) and growing militarization in society.



Technology-Facilitated GBV (TFGBV)

“Cyberbullying has increased in the online space, possibly due to the increased use of social media and the Internet.”

Adolescent Girl, Kherson

“Also, perpetrators can disseminate naked photos in social media. My classmate has experienced it.”

Displaced Adolescent Girl, Lviv

The relatively new phenomenon of TFGBV was reported to be on the rise, with women and girls experiencing increasing violence in virtual spaces. Women and girls in Ukraine experience cyberbullying; online sexual violence, threats, and blackmail; and scams and fraud. Cyberbullying was described as widespread and was identified by adolescent girls as a significant concern. Perpetrators of TFGBV send unsolicited

sexual content to women and girls or publicly disseminate their private photos. Growing risks of scams, fraud, hacking, and cloning in virtual platforms were also identified, with older women and those less digitally literate often targeted. At times, perpetrators pose as aid providers and deceive victims with other misleading claims. Fear of online risks makes some women reluctant to access and share information online related to assistance and services. LGBTIQ+ persons also face heightened risks of TFGBV linked to risks of outing and blackmail. There



were documented incidents of LGBTIQ+ persons experiencing invasion of their digital privacy under occupation as part of the targeting of people of diverse SOGIESC. A lack of awareness of risks of violence and how to protect oneself online – as well as gaps in measures to address TFGBV – together with deepening social isolation and financial vulnerability were seen as contributing to growing digital violence and impunity for perpetrators.



Child and Forced Marriage

“Roma have early marriages arranged by parents.”

Woman with a Disability/Caregiver, Lviv

“We see that early pregnancy is considered normal in villages. As an example, we know a 13-year old girl... who is pregnant.”

GBV Expert, Kharkiv

Although child marriage was considered not to be very common in Ukraine, it does take place and was reported to occur mostly in Roma and rural communities. Child marriage is closely correlated with the subsequent occurrence of IPV and denial of opportunities and rights such as education, as well as early pregnancy and associated health risks. Adolescent pregnancy was also identified as taking place mainly in Roma and rural communities, although it is less clear to what degree it is a consequence of child marriage. Pressure on women and control over their decisions related to marriage were cited as

common within Roma communities. While there was less available information within primary data on forced marriage of women more widely in Ukraine, it was recognized that some women have more limited decision-making over their life choices. Forced marriage including child marriage was described as being the result of harmful social norms, lack of community awareness, limited decision-making power among adolescent girls and women, and poverty. From the available data, it is not clear if conflict-related factors are contributing to and exacerbating the risks of forced and child marriage. However, many of the common drivers globally of child marriage in humanitarian settings – such as growing economic needs, insecurity, and disruption in social structures – are becoming more acute.



Gender Discrimination

Discrimination based on gender – interacting with other social factors – was raised as a concern by women and girls in Ukraine. Gender intersects with other vulnerability factors to compound risks of GBV and hinder marginalized women and girls from access to assistance, services, and opportunities. While there were some positive changes noted – such as traditional spaces for men in employment opening up further to the participation of women while men are away – there are also cases in which discrimination has been exacerbated by increased tensions within communities and other crisis-related factors. Women and girls from marginalized groups face barriers stemming from discrimination in the areas of education, employment, housing, and health services. In particular, there were heightened risks of discrimination reported for women

and girls from displaced populations and Roma communities; for older women; for women and girls with disabilities, and HIV+ women, as well as for LGBTIQ+ persons. Older women experience ageism that affects their access to job opportunities. Roma women described facing discrimination over housing and employment. IDP and Roma women and girls, as well as LGBTIQ+ persons, sometimes experience harassment and verbal abuse in public spaces. For instance, displaced women described incidents of backlash or social isolation related to their accent and to speaking Russian. Roma and displaced children are more at risk of experiencing bullying in schools and in social settings, with adolescent girls from these groups especially vulnerable to abuse. HIV+ women in Ukraine were reported to face discrimination by health providers, affecting their safe access to reproductive health services.



Labour Exploitation of Women

“There are risks, cases of labour exploitation in communities in exchange for free accommodation and food.”

GBV Expert, Lviv

Rising cases of labour exploitation and other work-related violence towards women were reported. Risks of labour exploitation for women are growing due to the increasing financial needs of households; limited availability and cost of rental housing; loss of employment and shortage of jobs; family separation; and changing gender

roles. Dignified safe work opportunities are becoming scarcer, because of the protracted conflict and economic deterioration. Some women referenced having lost their jobs due to war-related factors such as insecurity, destruction of buildings and infrastructure, and displacement. As men in many households are away or have limited mobility because of fear of conscription, women were reported to be increasingly seeking to enter the workforce and taking on a dual role. Within this environment, women are facing greater exposure to exploitation and other forms of abuse in the workspace. There were reports of women having to work in exchange for housing and food, as well as experiencing verbal and sexual violence from employers.



Reproductive Coercion and Abuse

Some women and girls in Ukraine have little decision-making power within their families and cannot make autonomous decisions over their bodies and lives, including whether and when to have children. While there was less data available on reproductive coercion and abuse, globally it accompanies IPV/DV and denial of rights. Reproductive control is typically a dimension of IPV, which is recognized to be prevalent in the context of Ukraine. Reports indicate that women and girls in Roma communities often face pressure and have limited decision-making power on marriage and childbearing. There were also some reports of women having a third child to defer conscription for their husbands; this practice needs further investigation. Obstetric violence has been documented as widely taking place against HIV+ women.



Outing and Blackmail

“It’s bullying because of an individual’s orientation. It starts with anything: blackmailing, telling colleagues, ruining a career or something like that. Or just bullying, but already in adult life and at work.”

LGBTIQ+ Person²

LGBTIQ+ persons expressed fear of being “outed” and the associated consequences of their SOGIESC being disclosed to others without their consent. Outing was identified as a common risk and form of violence enacted against LGBTIQ+ communities. Outing can take place to family and friends of LGBTIQ+ persons or through viral dissemination. Risks of outing were considered higher within small and closed communities, such as in rural areas. Outing is often tied to other forms of violence such as blackmail, bullying, and harassment. LGBTIQ+ persons indicated significant concerns about their digital protection and privacy. Under occupation, they were documented to have experienced coercion forcing them to out themselves and others from their community, including invasion of privacy and deprivation of their right to property (e.g. taking phones); interrogation; and torture. There were also reports of family members and service providers disclosing the HIV+ status of women without their consent and blackmailing them.

² Citations throughout the Advocacy Brief for the quotes from FGDs conducted with LGBTIQ+ communities do not include the oblast in order to further protect anonymity and mitigate risks.

III. Locations of Violence

“It’s dangerous everywhere, you can’t say there’s more or less violence in that place. There are no street lights, so it’s dangerous.”

Woman Caregiver, Kherson

“Violence can happen in the street, among friends. / At home, by parents. / In the school. / At work.”

Adolescent Boys in a Rural Area, Lviv

“Violence is most often committed at home, behind closed windows.”

Displaced Woman in a Collective Site, Lviv

“The main concerns include the possibility of violence at home and on the streets due to darkness as there’s no light in many places due to shelling.”

Adolescent Girl, Kherson

“Violence can happen anywhere, but it’s especially dangerous for girls being in dark hours, parks, squares, staircases and elevators in apartment buildings.”

Displaced Adolescent Girl, Lviv



Women and girls in Ukraine face increasing risks of GBV in many of the places they visit in their daily lives. The widespread nature of the violence faced by women and girls affects their mobility and ability to navigate and lead their everyday lives. Growing risks of GBV and insecurity faced by women and girls in different spaces restrict their movement – particularly at night – and affect their safe access to assistance and services. Locations in which women and girls experience violence in Ukraine include in **the home, collective sites, streets, abandoned areas, public and common spaces, public transport, schools, the workplace, online/virtual spaces, distribution sites and service facilities, and heavily militarized areas.** Risks of GBV are elevated in these places, constraining the ability of women and girls and at-risk groups to freely and safely move around their community.

Women and girls in Ukraine are subjected to violence both within and outside the home. The home was identified as the space in which women and girls face the highest risk of GBV and experience the most violence. At the same time, women and girls increasingly feel insecure outside the house, causing them to limit their movement outside and in shared and public spaces, especially when it is dark. Women and girls cited safety concerns across different types of locations, attributed to lack of lighting, growing consumption by men and youth of alcohol and drugs, and – principally in rural areas – limited accessibility of transport. As families are spending more time indoors, these factors also aggravate violence within the home. Increasingly, women and girls feel less safe on the streets, in public spaces, and on transport, confining

themselves to the house during the hours of darkness. Abandoned and remote areas increase the level of risk. Women and girls also feel uncomfortable in crowded spaces due to the greater likelihood of sexual violence, as well as the risk of gatherings of people being targeted by shelling. Rising levels of violence were identified in collective and transit sites. Heightened risks were also reported in heavily militarized and insecure areas near the frontlines, with some women and girls expressing concerns due to the presence of large numbers of unfamiliar men. Increased violence was observed in schools and online learning spaces, with adolescent girls experiencing bullying. In addition, there is greater risk of exploitation and abuse for women in the workplace.

Distribution Sites and Service Facilities:

Increased exposure to risks of shelling due to waiting times and gathering of people, disputes in queues, and risks of sexual violence on the way to and from; growing risks of SEA; in some cases, mistreatment and violence by personnel, particularly in schools and health facilities



Online and Virtual Spaces:

Increasing TFGBV, including cyberbullying, online sexual violence, and scams



Locations of Violence where Women and Girls Face Heightened Risks of GBV



Home: Rising intimate partner violence (IPV)/domestic violence (DV), in particular violence towards women by husbands/partners, as well as DV towards women, adolescent girls, and older women by family members

Schools and Learning

Spaces: Bullying and harassment towards adolescent girls, particularly from marginalized groups

Collective and Transit Sites: Increasing IPV/DV and risks of sexual violence, particularly related to Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) facilities



Streets and Abandoned Areas: Growing sense of insecurity and risks of sexual violence



Public Spaces: Growing sense of insecurity and risks of sexual violence in different public spaces (e.g. parks, stairs, elevators, bomb shelters); bullying, discrimination, and other violence towards marginalized groups such as displaced people and Roma communities, with women and girls from these groups at heightened risk, as well as LGBTIQ+ persons



Means of Transport: Growing sense of insecurity and risks of sexual violence and theft on both private and public transport (e.g. trains, buses, taxis, stations, transport connections), including during displacement



Workplace: Increasing risks of labour exploitation of women and sexual violence in the work environment

Militarized Areas: Concerns about the heavy presence of military men and risks of sexual violence; fears of CRSV near frontlines and CRSV occurring in previously and currently occupied areas





IV. Risk Factors Contributing to Violence

“Also a new factor is the increase of stress due to uncertainty and difficult living conditions, which can contribute to increased violence.”

Adolescent Girl, Kherson

“I never go out in the evening where there is no lighting, where there are few people, no traffic, no buses.”

Displaced Women with a Disability/Caregiver in a Rural Area, Lviv

“We are concerned...the situation is worsening in the community, as most people have lost their jobs, abuse alcohol or drugs.”

Woman, Kharkiv

“The economic situation affects the increase in violence. As well as drugs.”

Man in a Rural Area, Lviv

“For IDPs, the situation has been exacerbated by the lack of housing for mothers with children who have to live in a shared space, and sometimes in the same room, with other families.”

Displaced Adolescent Girl, Lviv

“The situation with boys and men, in general, is that during the occupation and after de-occupation many lost their jobs and just, as they say, went downhill, started to drink alcohol and not only...”

Woman Caregiver, Kherson

“The main risk is that the military men are everywhere.”

Woman, Kharkiv

“Society normalizes violence.”

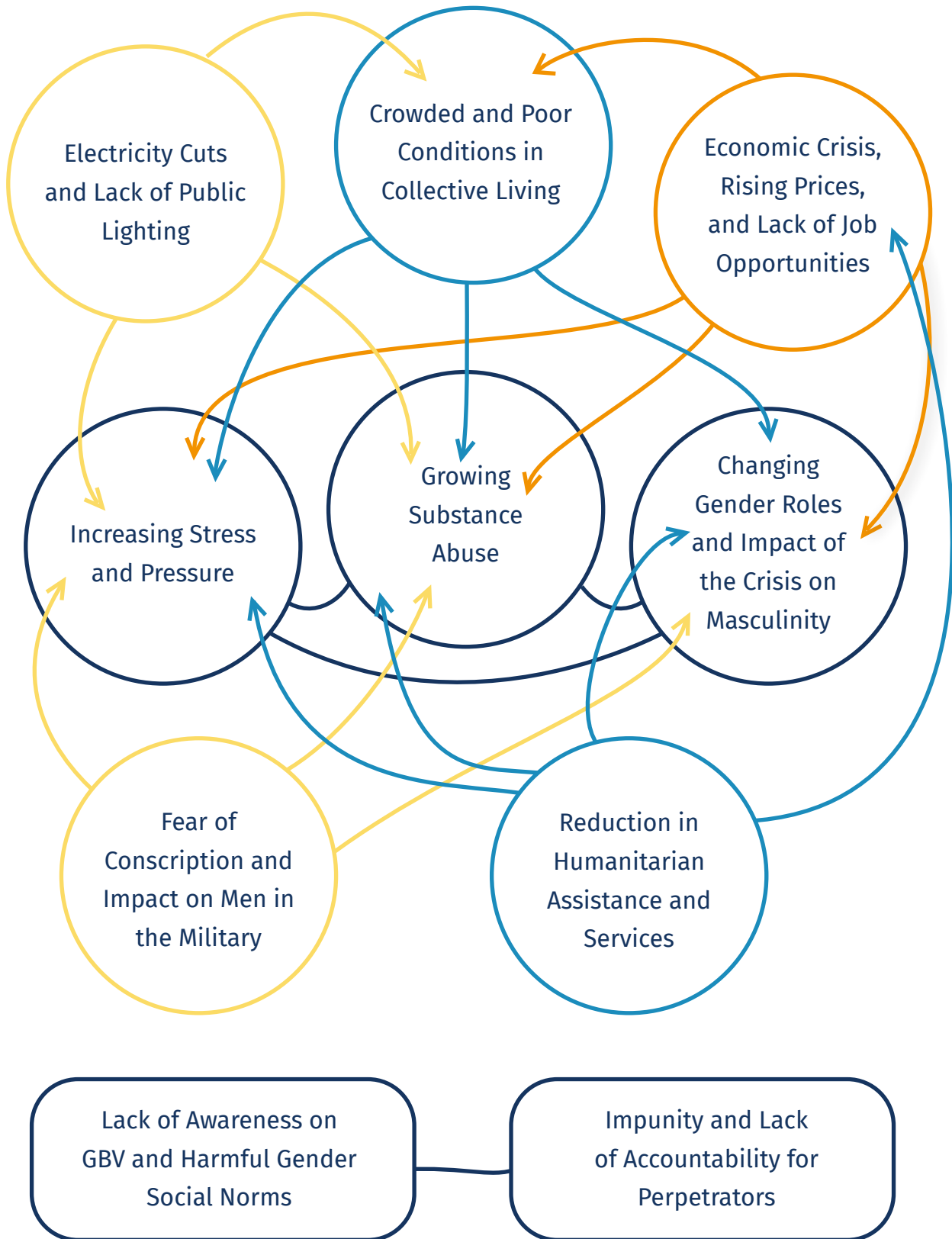
LGBTIQ+ Person



Factors contributing to GBV were reported to be significantly increasing in the context of the ongoing war. A combination of growing risks is leaving women and girls in Ukraine more exposed to GBV and posing challenges for them to cope with violence and seek support. GBV risks related to the humanitarian crisis include: **crowding and lack of privacy for displaced households in collective living; insecurity and displacement; cuts in public lighting; economic deterioration; a shortage of job opportunities; the growing level of stress and aggression; and increasing substance abuse in communities,** particularly by men as a form of negative coping. **The impact on men mobilized in the military forces and limited availability of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) support; fear of conscription and reduced mobility for men who are not mobilized; changing gender roles; growing militarization in society; and deprioritization of GBV due to the war efforts** also play a role in exacerbating GBV.

GBV risk factors are closely interconnected and compound each other to exacerbate the vulnerability to violence of women and girls and other marginalized groups. **Lack of awareness of GBV; harmful gender norms such as victim-blaming attitudes and normalization of violence; and impunity for perpetrators** continue to underly and contribute to the widespread nature of IPV and other forms of GBV.

Factors Contributing to and Exacerbating Risks of GBV





V. Coping Strategies when Experiencing Violence

“Changes in society, displacement, loss of social ties affect cases of domestic violence. If previously women might have left the abuser, now she makes the decision to tolerate it.”

GBV Expert, Kharkiv

“Many [survivors] are afraid of being judged or fear revenge from the abuser.”

Adolescent Girl, Kherson

“We aren’t used to wash our dirty linen in public and many tolerate.”

Displaced Woman in a Collective Site, Kherson

“A survivor will be ‘punished’ twice [if she approaches somebody], and then people will also invent/make something up, [say] that ‘this was her fault.’”

Older Woman in a Rural Area, Kharkiv

“Some don’t perceive it as violence and live with it all their lives. For some reason, women are more likely to be silent, and just for one purpose - to save the family.”

Woman, Kharkiv

“The lack of economic opportunities adversely affects the commitment to make changes in life, to resist violence.”

LGBTIQ+ Person

Coping capacities for women and girls in Ukraine were reported to have significantly diminished over the past years related to the war. Growing stress factors that increase risks of GBV also reduce the capacities of women and girls to cope with violence and access services. **Depleting financial resources; lack of availability and cost of housing; limited job opportunities; insecurity; displacement; family separation; and electricity cuts** deepen the vulnerability of women and girls and their dependence on the men in their lives and reduce their resilience. **Risks of conscription for men; the perception of men in the military as heroes; and fear of being alone during insecure times** further discourage women and girls experiencing violence from turning to someone and seeking support.

Women and girls and other survivors in Ukraine are most likely to stay silent when experiencing violence. Reasons survivors stay silent when experiencing violence include: **fear of further**

“They don’t know what to do in these cases. Neither are they aware of where to turn.”

Roma Adolescent Boy, Zakarpattia

“I think most women don’t try to somehow cope with the impact of violence, they’d rather sit quietly at home or go to their parents/friends to ride out while their husband is in an agitated state.”

Woman with a Disability/Caregiver
in a Rural Area, Kharkiv





Reasons Why Survivors Stay Silent

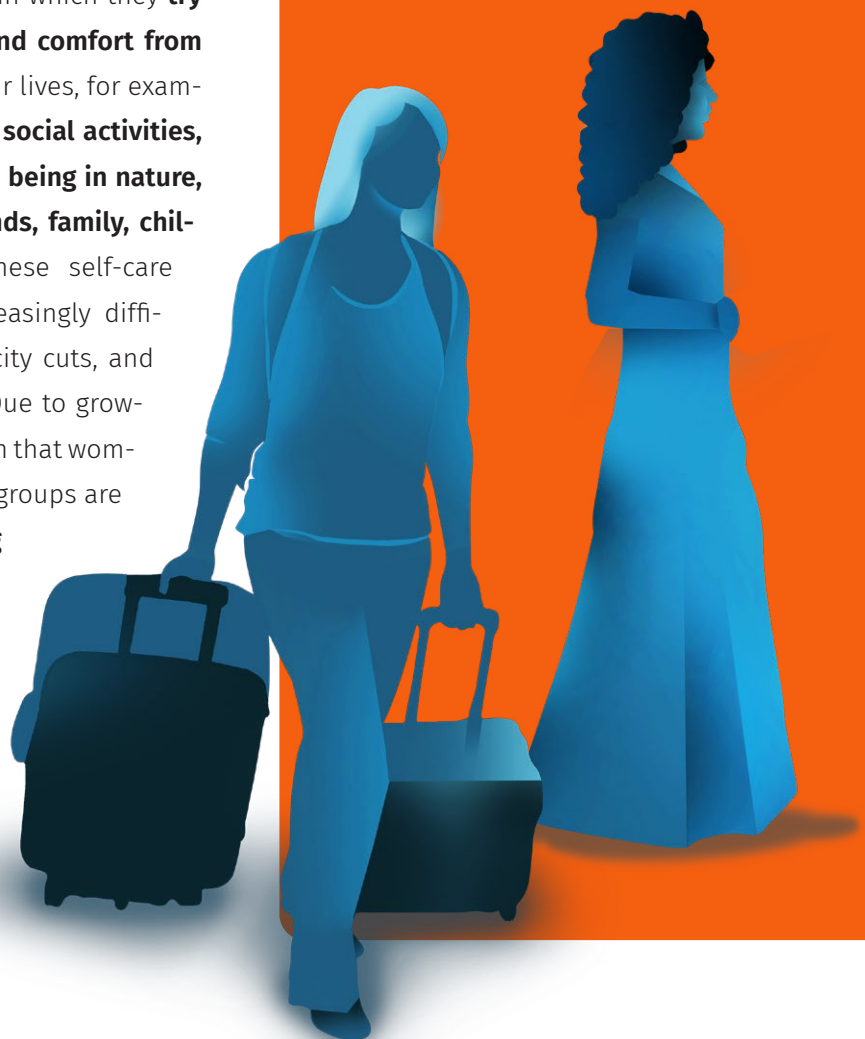
- ▶ Fear and Avoiding More Violence, Retaliation, and Rejection
- ▶ Shame, Stigma, and Customs
- ▶ Victim-Blaming and Normalization of Violence
- ▶ Unawareness of Rights, GBV, and How to Seek Help
- ▶ Perception of a Lack of Options
- ▶ Dependence on Others/Perpetrators
- ▶ Mistrust of Police, Authorities, and Service Providers
- ▶ Protection of Children and Family

violence and retaliation; shame, stigma, and customs; victim-blaming and normalizing violence; being unaware of their rights and how to seek support; feeling they lack options due to dependence on the perpetrator; mistrust of authorities; and trying to protect their children and keep the family together. These reasons are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

While coping strategies are individual to each survivor and can vary, the most common strategies used in the context by survivors who experience violence are **staying silent and avoidance and de-escalation**. Some women and girls also **seek support from others, primarily family and friends in their inner circles**. Less frequently, women and girls **seek services and address violence**, such as through divorce. Women and girls shared a variety of ways in which they **try to find a measure of relief and comfort from the violence and stress** in their lives, for example, **engaging in hobbies and social activities, listening to music, exercising, being in nature, and spending time with friends, family, children, and pets**. However, these self-care strategies are becoming increasingly difficult due to insecurity, electricity cuts, and lack of accessible transport. Due to growing challenges, there is concern that women and girls and other at-risk groups are increasingly **turning to coping strategies with potential risks of harm**, such as substance abuse, survival sex, running away from home, school drop-out, and replicating violence towards others (such as with their children).

VI. Affected Groups at Heightened Risk of Violence

Groups identified to be at heightened risk of GBV include: **IDP and returnee women and girls, particularly those residing in collective and transit sites; adolescent girls; older women; women and girls with disabilities and women caregivers of people with disabilities; Roma women and girls; and rural women and girls, as well as LGBTIQ+ persons**. While less data is available, **HIV+ women and people engaged in sex work/ transactional sex** were also identified as



being at high risk of experiencing violence and discrimination. Additionally, these groups face reduced capacities to cope with the violence they experience, together with greater barriers to accessing humanitarian assistance and GBV services. For women and girls with several intersectional vulnerability factors, GBV risks and access barriers are greatly multiplied.

Women heads of household and pregnant and lactating women also face specific access barriers and risks accessing

humanitarian assistance and services.

Male survivors have more limited entry points and also face barriers to access GBV services. There is limited data currently available with respect to GBV covering **refugees, asylum-seekers, and Third Country Nationals** remaining within Ukraine following the full-scale invasion.





b GBV RESPONSE AND ACCESS BARRIERS FOR SURVIVORS TO GBV SERVICES

I. Reach of GBV Programming in Ukraine



REACH OF GBV SERVICES AND PROGRAMMING IN 2024³

745,856



Number of People Reached with GBV Programming and Services

83,330



Dignity Kits Distributed

396,002



People Reached via GBV Awareness-Raising

1,388



Number of GBV Awareness Campaigns (through social media, websites, TV, and radio)

309,274



Number of People Supported through Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS)

125,942



Number of People Reached with Psychosocial Support Services (mobile and static, individual and group) for GBV Survivors and Those At-Risk

6,637



Number of GBV Service Providers Trained to Meet Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (GBViE) Minimum Standards

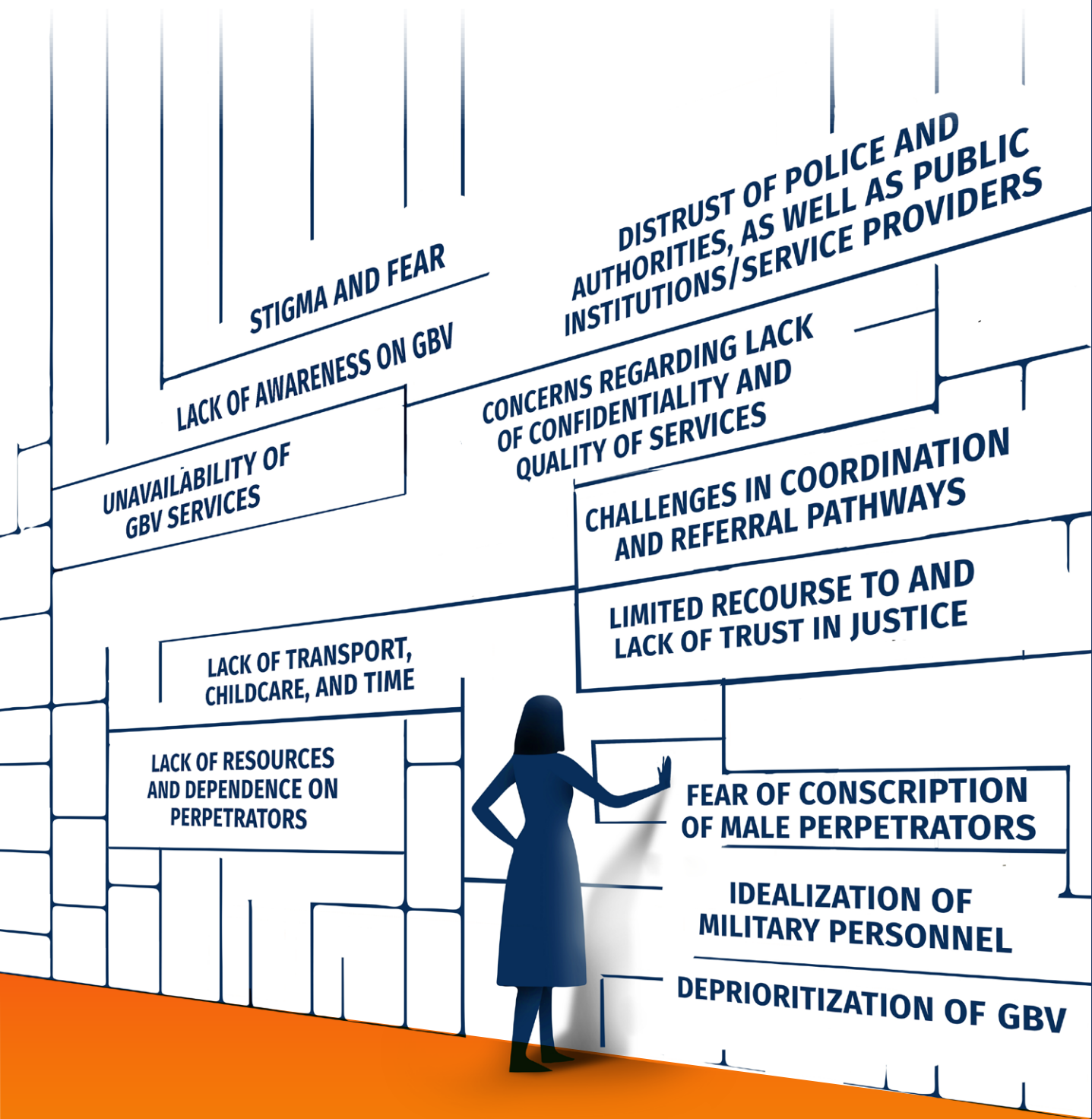
3,322



Number of (Non-GBV) Humanitarian Actors Trained on GBV Risk Prevention and Mitigation

³ GBV AoR Ukraine. [GBV AoR 5Ws Dashboard](#): January to December 2024.

II. Barriers to Accessing GBV Services



“Many people do not understand that they are being subjected to violence.”

LGBTIQ+ Person

“Most women keep silent, don’t recall. If it’s happening at home, they probably don’t want the kids to suffer because of it.”

Displaced Adolescent Girl in a Rural Area, Lviv

“You can’t go to the police because everyone is a relative of each other or a friend.”

Displaced Woman in a Rural Area, Lviv

“Survivors keep silent, don’t report to the police...because there was an experience when the police didn’t take a report.”

Woman with a Disability/Caregiver, Lviv

“Access to professional mental health therapists, as there’s no trust to public ones, especially in terms of confidentiality, and private ones are very expensive. You have to choose between providing for your family and seeing a mental health therapist.”

Displaced Woman, Lviv

“You have to go to [another location] to receive services, but for this you have to get there first. The bus goes to the centre of the hromada once a week. We are isolated. If all services are there, then transport issues should be addressed as well.”

Woman in a Rural Area, Kharkiv

“There has to be something for children at the same time when services are offered for women because there’s no place to leave children.”

Woman with a Disability/Caregiver, Lviv

“There is no place for a woman to go, shelters you are speaking about are scarce and you can stay there for a limited period of time, so they come back. So there should be more of those.”

Displaced Woman in a Collective Site, Kharkiv

There are steep barriers facing survivors coming forward to disclose GBV and seek services safely. Barriers are layered, with many newly emerging and growing obstacles for survivors to access GBV services due to the crisis. Access barriers to specialized GBV services for women and girls in Ukraine continue to rise, due to depleting resources for households and prioritization of the war efforts.

Survivors who have experienced violence are reluctant to come forward due to significant **fears of judgment, shame, and retaliation. Normalization of violence and victim-blaming** are prevalent in communities, with survivors often experiencing negative consequences if they disclose abuse. **Insecurity, distance, and lack of transport; electricity cuts; and lack of childcare and limited time related to household responsibilities** pose compounded constraints for survivors in accessing GBV services, especially in heavily conflict-affected and remote areas. Family separation and online learning of children

have further exacerbated these constraints. **Depleting financial means for households and challenges finding employment opportunities and affordable housing** further limit survivors' ability to leave situations of abuse. At times, survivors have to **pay fines for perpetrators**, as they fall on the household.

Women and girls have **significant fears related to confidentiality and expressed mistrust of police, authorities, and service providers**, particularly for public services. They often felt that interventions would not resolve and only worsen situations of violence, citing **impunity for perpetrators**. Women and girls indicated that survivors often face disparagement and **lack of support from police** and have **limited recourse to legal protection and justice**. This deters other women from coming forward, as they feel they will experience more harm by reporting violence. Particularly if **perpetrators are associated with the military, the humanitarian response, or in positions of power**, survivors are reluctant to come forward. **Concerns that perpetrators will be conscripted and sent to fight** also prevent women and girls from seeking help. In general, **deprioritization of GBV** was reported by communities and GBV experts. They pointed to resources and attention at the national level shifting away from addressing GBV, as well as pressure from communities to stay silent on violence until after the war.

Gaps in GBV specialized services were identified in many areas of Ukraine, reducing the likelihood that survivors will be aware of violence and raising access barriers for those who do try to seek support. Availability of GBV services is **limited in heavily conflict-affected regions due to access-related constraints**, while also

decreasing in non-frontline regions because of reprioritization of resources to the frontlines. Across Ukraine, safe spaces for women and girls and GBV services were reported to be **less commonly found outside urban centres**. Even when support for survivors is available in their area, many women and girls and other at-risk groups have **limited awareness of available GBV services and how to access them**.





ACCESS BARRIERS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS AND GBV RISKS IN HUMANITARIAN SECTORS

Despite the growing needs, communities across regions reported a **reduction in the availability of humanitarian assistance and services** over the past year. Women and girls in Ukraine frequently described **struggling to meet basic needs for themselves and their families** and **limited provision of aid in their areas** especially for food, hygiene and dignity kits, cash and voucher assistance, and housing assistance. Access barriers were identified by women and girls, notably for health services, as well as risks of GBV reported in collective and transit sites, Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) facilities, and schools.

Women and girls face obstacles to being able to access and benefit from humanitarian assistance safely, with many access barriers and risks rising due to the prolonged crisis. Insecurity was cited by women as one of their main fears when accessing aid, particularly in heavily conflict-affected areas. Gatherings of people contribute to women's sense of insecurity and **exposure to the risks of shelling. Crowded lines at some distributions** increase the waiting time and pose difficulties for people with mobility constraints, as well as exacerbating tensions, at times leading to disputes. In some cases, distributions are **first come, first served, leaving vulnerable people without assistance** and contributing to resentment within communities. Women and girls face significant **challenges at the registration stage**, in particular older women without access to smartphones or with limited digital literacy.

Women and girls also described a **lack of transparency in eligibility criteria** for certain assistance and services, together with **inconsistent alignment with needs-based targeting**. Women and girls – especially older women, women and girls with limited mobility, and women and girls in rural areas – also face **difficulties accessing information** about humanitarian assistance and services in a timely manner.

Distance and lack of accessible transport are significant access barriers for women and girls, especially in remote areas, compounded by **insecurity and electricity cuts**. Women and girls often have **limited time** to access assistance and services due to the **gendered division of household responsibilities**, including **care of children and other dependents**. Women are increasingly having to **take on dual roles** and shoulder additional burdens due to men being away or having limited mobility; lack of family support structures; and online learning of children. **Cost** was also identified as making access difficult, related to transport costs and fees for services. Households are increasingly unable to afford essential items and services, in some cases, having to borrow money from others. In particular, women and girls described challenges obtaining medication, medical treatment, food, affordable accommodation, hygiene and dignity items, and child and adult diapers. **Seasonal extreme weather conditions** further exacerbate risks and barriers for vulnerable women and girls and other at-risk groups.



“The difficulty [to access] is the remoteness.”

Woman with a Disability, Kharkiv

“The risks are always present, even when we receive bread, many people gather, and the process is not very well organized. Crowds of people, it’s always a high risk to become a target for shelling.”

Older Woman in a Rural Area, Kherson

“I received humanitarian assistance three to four months ago. I’m not able to walk, they bring assistance to the beginning of the village, it’s not convenient for me to walk and I can’t ask someone.”

Woman with a Disability, Kharkiv

“There’s no humanitarian assistance, dignity kits, they were distributed at some point at the beginning of the war, but they are not distributed now.”

GBV Experts, Lviv

“Lack of information on available humanitarian assistance and distribution points, difficulties in registering for such distributions, long queues, inaccessible to the local population.”

Displaced Woman, Lviv

“Whereas recently the assistance was distributed near the market without warning, without informing the population, those who came first received assistance, and people queued [and only received] one for every 10 people.”

Woman, Kharkiv

“Assistance to women and girls is... enough only for a short period of time, in particular, this concerns hygiene. In 2022, clothes, hygiene items and food were provided.”

Woman, Kharkiv

“There’s no help, I buy everything at my own cost, rehabilitation – at own cost, medication - at own cost, everything - at own cost.”

Displaced Woman with a Disability/Caregiver in a Rural Area, Lviv

EXAMPLES OF BARRIERS AND RISKS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS TO ACCESS HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES

Insecurity and electricity cuts

1



Lack of time due to care and household responsibilities

2



Crowding, waiting time, and disputes in queues

6



5



Lack of timely information about assistance or service



7

Facing discrimination, bullying, and verbal abuse

8

Un-adapted provision modalities and heavy items to carry



Challenges to reach distribution or service point due to distance, poor infrastructure, and lack of accessible transport, with risks of sexual violence on the way to/from

3



4



Difficulties registering for assistance or service; vulnerable women and girls not always included in targeting

Dignity concerns



9

10



Risks of SEA, theft, and scams

13



Lack of consultation and feedback directly from women and girls to inform programming

11



Lack of trust in public institutions and authorities and fears about confidentiality

12



Not able to afford fees for services

Women and girls reported a **lack of systematic adaptation – both of the type of humanitarian items provided and the distribution methods** – to the specific needs and access barriers of different groups, particularly those with mobility concerns. Some older women, women with disabilities, and women with care responsibilities are **not able to reach distribution points and service facilities**, or to **carry heavy items**. There were reports of certain **items not being appropriate or expired**, leading to dignity concerns. In some cases, **lack of distribution of hygiene kits for the household in parallel to dignity kit provision for women and girls** – and **unclear communication about which kits target women and girls** – contribute to resentment in communities. **Limited numbers and shortages of staff for public services** have been exacerbated by the conflict and are reported to affect the timeliness of service provision. There is **limited availability of specialists**, such as for health, MHPSS, and legal support, especially in rural and heavily conflict-affected areas. Some women and girls expressed **mistrust of public services**, referencing **delays, quality concerns, bureaucracy, and corruption**. Certain groups can also face

discrimination and stigma when seeking to access services – such as IDPs, Roma communities, and LGBTIQ+ persons – with women and girls from marginalized groups facing multiple and compounded barriers. Discrimination, bullying, and verbal abuse were reported in particular in schools and health facilities. Growing risks of **theft of assistance** were cited, as well as **scams and fraud** linked to promises of support targeting older women and other at-risk groups.

SEA was identified as an increasing risk due to the worsening vulnerabilities and the more limited reach to and monitoring presence in access-constrained areas. Significant barriers were reported for survivors to come forward to disclose cases of SEA, namely the **power imbalance; lack of awareness regarding SEA and disbelief that it occurs; suppression of criticism of humanitarian efforts during the war; and fear of jeopardizing provision of aid**. Across locations, there has been **limited meaningful participation of women and girls** and other at-risk groups, with many women and girls indicating they have not been previously consulted to inform the design of humanitarian programming.





3

RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR DONORS AND POLICYMAKERS

- 1. Increase resourcing and elevate prioritization of GBV** within humanitarian planning and national initiatives and policies, **supporting expansion of GBV programming in both frontline and non-frontline areas**, including Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS), GBV case management, and other specialized services.
- 2. Advocate for national initiatives to prevent violence** within families of veterans and military personnel.
- 3. Advocate on public safety measures to be taken by the Government and local authorities** to minimize risks of GBV and increase the sense of security for women and girls and other at-risk groups, in particular: investment in street lighting; accessible infrastructure and transport; and expanded presence of police and security cameras in public spaces.
- 4. Keep legislative reform on the agenda and promote alignment with global commitments on GBV**, working towards gender-responsive legal frameworks, together with **supporting effective implementation** of existing laws addressing GBV.
- 5. Increase funding opportunities for women's rights organizations (WROs)**, together with **structured, phased capacity-building on GBV in emergencies (GBViE) programming**.
- 6. Invest in building capacities on and systematize meaningful consultation with women and girls and other at-risk groups within GBV and humanitarian programming**, including expanding **Voices from Ukraine** nationally and systematically integrating participatory assessment with women and girls within evacuations and collective sites.

FOR HUMANITARIAN SECTORS

- 1. Address barriers and risks faced by women and girls to safely access humanitarian assistance and services** through adapted provision modalities developed in consultation with them, such as transport support, home delivery, assigned pick-up times, mobile provision, childcare, and flexible vouchers.
- 2. Promote targeted approaches within humanitarian assistance and services in order to effectively meet the needs of at-risk women and girls**, including displaced women and girls, adolescent girls, older women, women and girls with disabilities, Roma women and girls, pregnant and lactating women, and women heads of household.
- 3. Support gender-sensitive and inclusive needs-based targeting and address barriers to registration** for women and girls and other at-risk groups to be able to receive humanitarian assistance and services.
- 4. Integrate recommendations from GBV safety audits and improve safety and dignity considerations for women and girls and other at-risk groups within collective and transit sites.**
- Continue to **promote initiatives within schools addressing violence**, with **integration of awareness-raising about GBV, Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), and Child Protection – including of technology-facilitated GBV (TFGBV) – within schools and learning spaces** with children, adolescents, and their parents/caregivers.
- 6. Increase cash and voucher assistance (CVA) and livelihood support for at-risk women and girls with a gender-sensitive and inclusive lens**, with expanded provision of emergency cash assistance as part of and administered through GBV case management.
- 7. Expand awareness-raising about Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and invest in operationalizing PSEA Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) across sectors to identify and mitigate SEA risks and diversify available channels for feedback and response mechanisms** to be accessible for women and girls and other at-risk groups.



FOR GBV ACTORS



1. **Diversify safe entry points** to GBV services and support for GBV survivors and **increase the availability of and access to GBV specialized service provision** – particularly GBV case management – with attention to areas that are heavily conflict-affected, supporting displaced populations, and rural.
2. **Invest in capacity-building of GBV service providers** to ensure a quality survivor-centred approach, with a **dedicated capacity-building and sensitization initiative focused on public service providers, police, and authorities**.
3. **Increase awareness-raising about GBV and available services for survivors and tackle harmful social norms underlying GBV**, investing in community-based approaches and diversifying communication and engagement channels.
4. **Expand availability of and strengthen safe spaces for women and girls** – in particular to reach areas outside urban hubs supporting heavily conflict-affected and displaced populations currently without existing Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS) – and **integrate comprehensive GBV service provision within safe spaces**.
5. **Strengthen psychosocial support (PSS) programming for at-risk women and girls** to support their well-being, skills, and empowerment; raise awareness of GBV and available services; and build trust, **investing in a structured GBV curriculum**.
6. **Strengthen approaches and increase activities targeting older women and adolescent girls** within GBV programming, focusing on emerging types of GBV affecting them such as technology-facilitated GBV (TFGBV) and sexual exploitation and trafficking.
7. Pilot an approach in the Ukrainian context to **engage men and boys in accountable practice to prevent violence** and **build allies among community and religious leaders to address harmful social norms and facilitate access to GBV services for survivors**.
8. **Expand provision of dignity kits and support regular distribution** to at-risk women and girls to address gaps in coverage, particularly in rural areas.
9. **Support women/girl-led initiatives raising awareness of and addressing GBV in their communities** within GBV programming, including support for community-led initiatives in Roma and LGBTIQ+ communities.

HOPES AND DREAMS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN UKRAINE

“We hope there will be no violence at all. It’s important to create an environment where violence is unacceptable and everyone’s aware of the consequences.”

Adolescent Girl, Kherson

“We are the generation that is willing to learn and change society. We want to be aware ourselves and be able to help others.”

Displaced Adolescent Girl, Lviv

“We have talked about violence: what violence is; where to turn in case of violence; that you shouldn’t stay silent but break the circle of violence instead.”

Woman with a Disability, Kharkiv

“I know who I want to be. Dream and hope.”

Adolescent Girl with a Disability in a Rural Area, Kherson

“Be proactive. Know your rights.”

Displaced Woman with a Disability/Caregiver, Lviv

“One shouldn’t be afraid to fight.”

Woman in a Rural Area, Kharkiv



For further information about GBV trends and the needs, risks, and experiences for women and girls in Ukraine, refer to the [*Voices from Ukraine Report 2024*](#)

Developed by the United Nations Population Fund
GBV Area of Responsibility Ukraine

For more information on the response to GBV in Ukraine refer to:

<https://ukraine.unfpa.org/en>

<https://response.reliefweb.int/ukraine/gender-based-violence>

For more information on **Voices from Ukraine** refer to:

[Voices from Ukraine Resources: UNFPA](#)

[Voices from Ukraine Resources: GBV AoR](#)



UNFPA. *Voices from Ukraine 2024: GBV Advocacy Brief.*

December 2024.