

WINTERIZATION READINESS ASSESSMENT OF FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE EAST COORDINATION HUB FOR THE 2026–2027 WINTER SEASON

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1. Introduction

Territories experiencing intense hostilities during the winter period face heightened humanitarian risks. Low temperatures, damage to housing and critical infrastructure, disruptions to electricity, heating, and water supply, restricted access to certain settlements, and the reduced capacity of households to meet their basic needs independently create a pressing need for timely and appropriate responses from the government, local self-government authorities, and national and international humanitarian organizations.

Since the onset of the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion in 2022, Ukraine has required continuous large-scale humanitarian assistance. According to estimates by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Ukraine's population was approximately 32.9 million in 2025 and was projected to increase to 33.4 million in 2026. However, these figures should be regarded as estimates, as both the size and the territorial distribution of the population remain highly dynamic due to evacuation, internal displacement, cross-border migration, population returns, and changes in the security situation. IMF data and projections are published in the World Economic Outlook database (1).

Effective winter response planning requires an understanding not only of the overall scale of humanitarian needs but also of their territorial distribution. This requires identifying the needs of end beneficiaries, assessing available resources and household self-reliance mechanisms, and evaluating the response capacity of local authorities at both the oblast and individual hromada levels. To this end, the Relief Coordination Centre (RCC) conducted a field and analytical assessment, the findings of which are presented in this report.

An integral component of the analysis is the nature of the hostilities and their impact on systems that sustain the civilian population.

Changes in Russia's aerial campaign during the 2025–2026 winter period have direct implications for setting humanitarian response priorities. According to an assessment published by the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) on 10 December 2025 (2), Russian forces intensified combined missile and drone strikes against Ukraine's energy infrastructure ahead of the heating season and were likely conducting such attacks at intervals of every seven to ten days in an effort to degrade or disable Ukraine's energy system.

(1) https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/LP@WEO/UKR
(2) https://understandingwar.org/research/russia-ukraine/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-10-2025/

The evolving pattern of these attacks has altered both the structure of winter-related needs and the priorities for targeted assistance. Alongside traditional forms of winter support—such as solid fuel, shelter insulation, winter non-food item (NFI) kits, and cash assistance—the importance of alternative and backup energy solutions has increased significantly. Generators, fuel, charging stations, power banks, and other equipment that enable households, social institutions, and critical infrastructure facilities to maintain operational autonomy became an essential component of both government and humanitarian response efforts in 2025.

An additional factor was the combination of systematic attacks on energy infrastructure with the meteorological conditions of the 2025–2026 winter season. According to REACH (1), this winter was significantly colder than the previous one and was characterized by prolonged cold spells throughout January and February. Freezing temperatures and persistent snow cover hindered mobility, delayed repair and recovery operations, limited humanitarian access to remote and frontline settlements, and reduced civilians' access to healthcare services, markets, heating, and evacuation routes.

The combination of low temperatures, ongoing hostilities, repeated damage to energy infrastructure, and limited recovery capacity creates cascading risks. Power outages can simultaneously disrupt centralized heating systems, water pumping stations, telecommunications, healthcare facilities, transport infrastructure, and other essential services. These impacts are particularly severe in large urban areas, frontline hromadas, and settlements that rely on centralized utility systems.

Consequently, preparedness for the 2026–2027 winter season must extend beyond assessing needs for heating or winter relief items alone. It requires a comprehensive analysis of the interaction between weather conditions, security threats, the condition of housing and critical infrastructure, the availability of energy resources, the capacity of territorial hromadas, and the ability of households to adapt to prolonged disruptions in essential services.

This assessment aims to provide such an evidence base to support the planning of government and humanitarian response efforts in the Donetsk, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts.

(1) REACH. Ukraine Cold Spots Risk Assessment 05.2026.

2. Methodology

The study employs a descriptive-analytical research design aimed at assessing the preparedness of Ukraine's frontline regions for the 2026–2027 winter season. It combines an analysis of government policy on preparations for the heating season with a field-based sociological assessment conducted among households and representatives of territorial hromadas.

Main research question:

To what extent are Ukraine's frontline territories prepared for the 2026–2027 winter season in terms of government preparedness, the capacity of territorial hromadas, and the needs of the population?

The geographical scope of the study covers the Donetsk, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts.

Data sources:

The study is based on three complementary sources of information:

- analysis of legislative and regulatory acts, official documents, and publicly available sources describing government policy on preparations for the winter season;
- standardized household survey;
- standardized survey of representatives of territorial hromadas.

The fieldwork was conducted in July 2026.

Sample

The study included:

1,046 households across the four frontline oblasts;
13 representatives of local self-government authorities, representing 10 territorial hromadas.

The household survey included respondents who had resided in their respective hromada for at least one year and were directly responsible for preparing their household for the winter season.

Data collection

Data were collected using standardized questionnaires, with separate survey instruments developed for households and representatives of territorial hromadas.



The questionnaires covered seven thematic areas:

1. Heating and solid fuel;
2. Electricity supply and backup power sources;
3. Points of Invincibility and community support facilities;
4. Housing insulation;
5. Winter non-food items (NFIs);
6. Cash assistance;
7. Overall priorities for winter preparedness.

Data Analysis

The analytical framework of the study is based on a three-level approach:

Government policy → Capacity of territorial hromadas → Household needs

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. For each thematic area, comparisons were made between the needs reported by households and the capacity of territorial hromadas to address those needs.

Sampling Error and Representativeness

1,046 surveyed households

13 representatives of territorial hromada administrations

The household sample provides a sufficient number of observations for the descriptive analysis of the overall respondent population (n = 1,046). However, the sample is unevenly distributed across the four oblasts. Consequently, findings at the oblast level—particularly for Kharkiv Oblast—should be interpreted with caution.
The survey of territorial hromada representatives was designed as an expert assessment and is not intended for statistical generalization. Nevertheless, it includes responses from 13 representatives of territorial hromada administrations holding positions at different administrative levels.

For the household sample (n = 1,046), the maximum margin of sampling error is ±3.2% at a 95% confidence level, assuming simple random sampling. However, the actual margin of error may be higher due to the uneven distribution of the sample across the oblasts.

Study Limitations

The findings reflect the situation at the time of the fieldwork (July 2026) and may change as the security situation evolves.

The survey of territorial hromada representatives covers only a subset of hromadas across the four oblasts, and the responses reflect the assessments of the individual officials who participated. In addition, the study did not include a technical audit of critical infrastructure. Consequently, the assessment of preparedness is based on the analysis of publicly available sources and the information provided by respondents.

3.

Institutional Preparedness of Ukraine for the 2026–2027 Autumn–Winter Season

Preparations for the 2026–2027 autumn–winter season are taking place in a context where the risk of disruptions to essential services is driven not only by the seasonal increase in energy demand but also by systematic attacks on energy, heating, and municipal infrastructure. In response, the Government of Ukraine is gradually shifting from the traditional sectoral approach to heating season preparedness toward a comprehensive model of territorial resilience. This model encompasses the protection of critical infrastructure, backup power supply, distributed energy generation, alternative heating and water supply systems, the stockpiling of essential resources, and preparedness for prolonged disruptions to critical services.

3.1. Early Planning and Incorporation of Lessons Learned from the Previous Winter

Preparations for the upcoming heating season began as early as February 2026. This early start reflects the government's assessment that Russian attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure are likely to continue regardless of the season. During coordination meetings involving the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development, the Ministry of Energy, oblast military administrations, and energy companies, the regions were instructed to develop their own energy resilience plans, specifying concrete measures, implementation timelines, equipment requirements, and funding sources.

At the initial stage, each oblast was required to identify:

- critical infrastructure facilities requiring priority protection and backup power supply;
- the sequence and timeline for implementing preparedness measures before the start of the heating season;
- additional equipment and funding requirements;
- the resources needed to implement the plan effectively.

Notably, three of the four oblasts included in this study—Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, and Zaporizhzhia—were among the first to submit their energy resilience plans for review.
The interagency review process involved the Office of the President of Ukraine, the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Economy, the State Agency for Restoration and Infrastructure Development, NPC Ukrenergo, NJSC Naftogaz of Ukraine, the National Energy and Utilities Regulatory Commission (NEURC), the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU), and other government institutions (1).

As of 23 February 2026, all oblasts had submitted their proposals (2).
The plans were structured around four main priorities:

- protection of critical infrastructure;
- development of distributed energy generation;
- establishment of alternative power supply systems;
- decentralization of heat supply.

Particular attention was given to ensuring the continuity of heating, water supply, and electricity services. The lists of priority facilities, technical specifications, and estimated implementation costs prepared by the regions were intended to serve not only as the basis for national budget decisions but also for funding requests to international partners.

At the presidential level, preparations for the upcoming winter were defined as part of a nationwide strategy for energy resilience. The strategy envisaged incorporating lessons learned from oblasts and territorial hromadas that had demonstrated greater effectiveness in maintaining essential services during the 2025–2026 winter season. Accordingly, the previous winter was viewed not only as a period of crisis but also as a source of practical approaches that could be adapted and scaled across other regions (3).



3.2. Establishing a Regulatory Framework for Comprehensive Resilience Plans

A key institutional milestone was the adoption by the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine (NSDC) on 3 March 2026 of the decision "On Comprehensive Resilience Plans for Regions and Selected Cities." The decision entered into force through Presidential Decree No. 239/2026, issued on 14 March 2026. Responsibility for overseeing its implementation was assigned to the Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine (4).

(1) https://ukurier.gov.ua/uk/articles/regioni-gotuyut-plani-stijkosti-do-nastupnoyi-zimi/
(2) https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/mizh-planami-ta-realnistyu-k-ukrayina-gotuetsya-1782477091.html
(3) https://www.rnbo.gov.ua/ua/Ukazy/7479.html
(4) https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/239/2026?

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The NSDC decision links preparations for the heating season with energy security, the functioning of the fuel and energy sector, and the protection of critical infrastructure supporting regional essential services. Comprehensive Resilience Plans were endorsed as a key instrument for mitigating threats to the energy sector, ensuring the stable passage of the 2026–2027 autumn–winter season, and maintaining adequate living conditions for the population during a special period.

Responsibility for implementing the plans extends beyond the oblast state and military administrations and the Kyiv City State Administration to a broad range of central government authorities and critical infrastructure operators. These include the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development, the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Economy, Environment and Agriculture, the Ministry of Finance, the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU), the National Energy and Utilities Regulatory Commission (NEURC), the State Agency for Restoration and Infrastructure Development, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, NJSC Naftogaz of Ukraine, and NPC Ukrenergo. The responsible institutions are required to ensure that all measures scheduled for completion before the start of the heating season are implemented on time and to submit monthly progress reports to the National Security and Defense Council and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

The decision also provides for the establishment of a coordination center, chaired by the Prime Minister, to oversee the implementation of the Comprehensive Resilience Plans. The Cabinet of Ministers was instructed to streamline the necessary regulatory procedures, define implementation mechanisms and funding arrangements, and facilitate the mobilization of financial support from international partners (1).

This marked an institutional shift in winter preparedness—from a collection of sector-specific measures to an integrated, interagency governance framework. In practice, each regional resilience plan became a comprehensive planning document that integrates technical requirements, financial estimates, responsible implementing institutions, implementation timelines, and monitoring mechanisms.



3.3. Key Areas of Government Preparedness

The regional Comprehensive Resilience Plans cover four interconnected areas:

1. Physical protection of critical infrastructure, with a particular focus on energy facilities and substations.
2. Deployment of backup and distributed power generation to ensure the uninterrupted operation of critical consumers.
3. Development of alternative heating solutions, including the installation of modular boiler houses and other backup heating equipment.
4. Provision of alternative water supply and wastewater management mechanisms in the event of power outages or damage to centralized utility networks (2).

(1) https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/2392026-58833
(2) https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/mizh-planami-ta-realnistyu-k-ukrayina-gotuetsya-1782477091.html

The content of these plans reflects an understanding of the cascading nature of energy-related risks. Damage to a single electricity infrastructure facility can simultaneously disrupt heating, water supply, healthcare and social services, transportation, telecommunications, and emergency response operations. Accordingly, the objective of preparedness planning is not merely to restore individual facilities but to ensure the continuity of territorial essential service systems as a whole.



3.4. Financing the Comprehensive Resilience Plans

The first phase of government financing commenced in March 2026. The Cabinet of Ministers allocated UAH 12.85 billion for priority interventions under the Comprehensive Resilience Plans. The funding was directed toward 209 critical infrastructure facilities in frontline regions and Kyiv Oblast. Of this amount, UAH 3.5 billion was allocated for the protection of 24 high-voltage substations, to be implemented by the State Agency for Restoration and Infrastructure Development. An additional approximately UAH 9.4 billion was designated for protective structures at distribution substations and other critical infrastructure facilities in frontline oblasts and Kyiv Oblast.

At this stage, the total funding requirement for the regional measures was estimated at UAH 278 billion, or approximately EUR 5.4 billion. It was envisaged that part of these costs would be financed through the state budget, part through co-financing from local budgets, while the remaining funding would be secured through financial and technical assistance from international partners.

As of the end of June 2026, UAH 62 billion in state funding had been allocated for the implementation of selected components of the Comprehensive Resilience Plans. Of this amount, approximately UAH 22 billion had already entered the implementation phase. The principal implementing entities and funding recipients included oblast military administrations, the State Agency for Restoration and Infrastructure Development, Ukrzaliznytsia, Ukrenergo, and other critical infrastructure operators (1).

These figures represent different aspects of the financing framework. The estimate of UAH 278 billion reflects the total funding required to implement the regional Comprehensive Resilience Plans, whereas UAH 62 billion represents the amount of state funding allocated for a defined subset of planned measures. The gap between the overall funding requirement and the allocated state budget underscores the critical role of donor financing, international technical assistance, and co-financing by territorial hromadas in implementing the remaining activities.

(1) https://ukurier.gov.ua/uk/articles/pidgotovka-do-zimi-regionam-nadali-pershi-koshti/

3.5. Restoration of Damaged Generation Capacity and International Technical Assistance

One of the central priorities of the winter preparedness strategy is the restoration of energy generation capacity damaged by Russian attacks. According to information released by the Ministry of Energy and reported in the media, by the end of June approximately 4 GW of the 6.2 GW of damaged generation capacity had been restored. The restoration works were carried out both by Ukrainian energy companies and with the support of international humanitarian assistance. Since the beginning of 2026, Ukraine has received 3,325 pieces of energy equipment from more than 20 countries (1).

At the same time, efforts are underway to build strategic reserves of primary and backup fuel, emergency equipment, and repair materials to enable the rapid restoration of the power system following potential attacks. Energy sector personnel are being prepared to operate under emergency conditions, while scheduled maintenance at power generation facilities is expected to be completed before the onset of seasonal increases in energy demand.

In this context, international assistance plays a structural rather than merely supportive role. It provides access to transformers, generators, cogeneration equipment, spare parts, and other critical components whose manufacturing and delivery lead times may exceed the duration of Ukraine's national winter preparedness cycle.

3.6. Distributed and Backup Power Generation

Before the start of the heating season, the Government plans to commission approximately 1.5 GW of new generation capacity. This primarily includes gas-fired reciprocating engine units, cogeneration plants, and other distributed generation facilities across the regions. However, expert estimates suggest that the energy needs of critical infrastructure alone amount to approximately 2–4 GW. Consequently, even if the planned capacity is fully commissioned, it may not be sufficient to cover the entire potential shortfall, particularly under a scenario involving further large-scale damage to the power system.

An additional constraint is the lengthy procurement and delivery process for energy equipment. According to expert estimates, the period between placing an order and the delivery of certain installations may take at least six months. As a result, even where funding is available, there is a risk that some equipment will not be installed and connected before the start of the heating season.

(1) https://www.rbc.ua/ua/news/mizh-planami-ta-realnistyu-k-ukrayina-gotuetsya-1782477091.html

The pace of installing new generation capacity varies considerably across regions. According to publicly available sources, Dnipropetrovsk, Kyiv, Zhytomyr, Rivne, and Cherkasy oblasts were among the leading regions in this regard. Some oblasts, including Zaporizhzhia Oblast, were reported to be close to meeting their identified distributed generation capacity requirements.

This area of preparedness is of particular importance for the Donetsk, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts. Given the high risk of damage to transmission and distribution networks, distributed generation can ensure the continued operation of hospitals, boiler houses, water utilities, Points of Invincibility, and other critical facilities, even when access to the centralized power grid is disrupted.



3.7. Natural Gas Reserves and Fuel Supply Risks

Another key component of winter preparedness is the accumulation of natural gas reserves. The Government has identified 13.2 billion cubic metres (bcm) as the minimum volume required at the start of the heating season, while the optimal target—taking wartime risks into account—is 14.6 bcm (1).

As of June, Ukraine's underground gas storage facilities contained approximately 12 bcm of natural gas, including around 4.5 bcm of cushion gas. Domestic production was maintained at approximately 37 million cubic metres per day, while current gas imports amounted to roughly 1 million cubic metres per day.

The principal risk remains the possibility of renewed attacks on gas production infrastructure. If current production levels are maintained, the Government's target reserve volumes can be achieved on schedule. However, any significant reduction in domestic production resulting from attacks would require an urgent increase in gas imports. Given the currently limited import volumes and elevated prices on the European market, such a scenario could create additional financial and logistical challenges.

Consequently, the gas component of winter preparedness depends not only on the pace of gas injection into storage facilities but also on the protection of production infrastructure, the ability to rapidly restore damaged equipment, the availability of import routes, and the Government's capacity to finance additional gas purchases without delay.

(1) https://24tv.ua/economy/pidgotovka-do-opalyuvalnogo-sezonu-2026-2027-yak-ukrayina-gotuyetsya_n3045822/

3.8. Monitoring the Implementation of the Plans and Regional Disparities

By the end of June, the average implementation rate of the regional Comprehensive Resilience Plans had reached approximately 40%. Although a substantial volume of work had already been completed, around four months remained before the start of the heating season, and the pace of implementation varied considerably across oblasts.

According to publicly available information, some of the strongest progress was reported in frontline regions, where heightened risk awareness and practical experience gained during previous winter seasons had encouraged earlier preparedness efforts. At the same time, several other oblasts and the city of Kyiv continued to lag behind in specific areas, particularly in the development of backup heating systems and the physical protection of critical infrastructure.

The NSDC decision requiring monthly progress reports by the 10th day of each month establishes a formal mechanism for continuous monitoring. However, the existence of an approved plan and allocated funding does not, in itself, guarantee actual preparedness. Readiness ultimately depends on the completion of procurement processes, equipment delivery, construction and installation works, the commissioning of new generation capacity, the accumulation of strategic reserves, and the preparedness of operational personnel.

3.9. The Role of the Interagency Coordination Headquarters and Lessons from the Previous Winter Season

The institutional model adopted for the 2026–2027 winter preparedness process also builds upon coordination mechanisms that proved effective during the previous heating season. In June 2025, the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development established an Interagency Headquarters for Preparing the Housing and Utilities Sector and the Fuel and Energy Sector for the 2025–2026 Autumn–Winter Season. The Headquarters brought together representatives of the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development, the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Social Policy, the Ministry of Finance, the National Energy and Utilities Regulatory Commission (NEURC), the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU), Naftogaz of Ukraine, associations of local self-government authorities, and relevant parliamentary committees (1).

The Headquarters was responsible for monitoring the preparedness of boiler houses and district heating networks, overseeing the accumulation of natural gas and coal reserves, tracking the restoration of damaged heating infrastructure, and coordinating support for areas facing the greatest challenges. For example, in June 2025, the average level of preparedness was 30% for boiler houses and 33% for district heating networks. Preparations in the city of Kryvyi Rih, where significant heating supply problems had occurred during the previous winter, were placed under weekly monitoring.

(1) https://mindev.gov.ua/news/rehiony-vidzvituvaly-pro-pidhotovku-do-opaliuvalnoho-sezonu

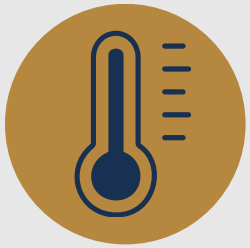
3.10. Analytical Conclusion on Institutional Preparedness



Ukraine's preparations for the 2026–2027 autumn–winter season demonstrate a shift from a predominantly reactive approach focused on responding to damage toward proactive, territorially based resilience planning. The institutional framework brings together strategic leadership from the President of Ukraine and the National Security and Defense Council (NSDC), coordination by the Cabinet of Ministers, sectoral management by the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development and the Ministry of Energy, implementation responsibilities assigned to oblast military administrations and territorial hromadas, the involvement of critical infrastructure operators, and the support of international partners.

At the same time, a gap remains between the approved plans and actual preparedness. As of the end of June, approximately 40% of the planned measures had been implemented. Around 4 GW of the 6.2 GW of damaged generation capacity had been restored, while the planned 1.5 GW of new generation capacity remains below the expert-estimated 2–4 GW required to ensure the resilience of critical infrastructure. Furthermore, the total funding required to implement the Comprehensive Resilience Plans substantially exceeds the level of state funding allocated to date. Additional risks include renewed attacks, lengthy equipment procurement and delivery timelines, uneven implementation capacity across regions, and the potential reduction of domestic natural gas production.

The regional plans already include detailed inventories of priority facilities, technical specifications, implementation timelines, responsible institutions, and financing requirements. As a result, international assistance can be directed not only toward emergency procurement but also toward addressing clearly identified gaps in infrastructure protection, distributed generation, backup heating systems, water supply, and emergency repair and recovery resources. For local self-government authorities, the principal challenge remains converting regional resilience plans into practical preparedness at the level of individual territorial hromadas, critical facilities, and essential service systems.



4.

Temperature Context

Temperature conditions constitute an important contextual factor for the assessment and analysis of winter preparedness. Experience from previous winter seasons highlights the specific challenges facing humanitarian response efforts. At the same time, providing an objective meteorological assessment of the 2025–2026 winter remains difficult. In an interview with UNIAN, Vira Balabukh, Head of the Department of Applied Meteorology at the Ukrainian Hydrometeorological Institute, explained that some meteorological stations are located in territories currently under occupation or within active combat zones, while others have been relocated because of the war. As a result, it is only possible to reliably characterize the climatic conditions of the 2025–2026 winter for Ukraine's western, central, and northern regions, excluding the regions covered by this study (1).

At the same time, according to the President of Ukraine, the winter of 2026 was the harshest experienced in the country in recent decades, with temperatures dropping to –30°C (2).

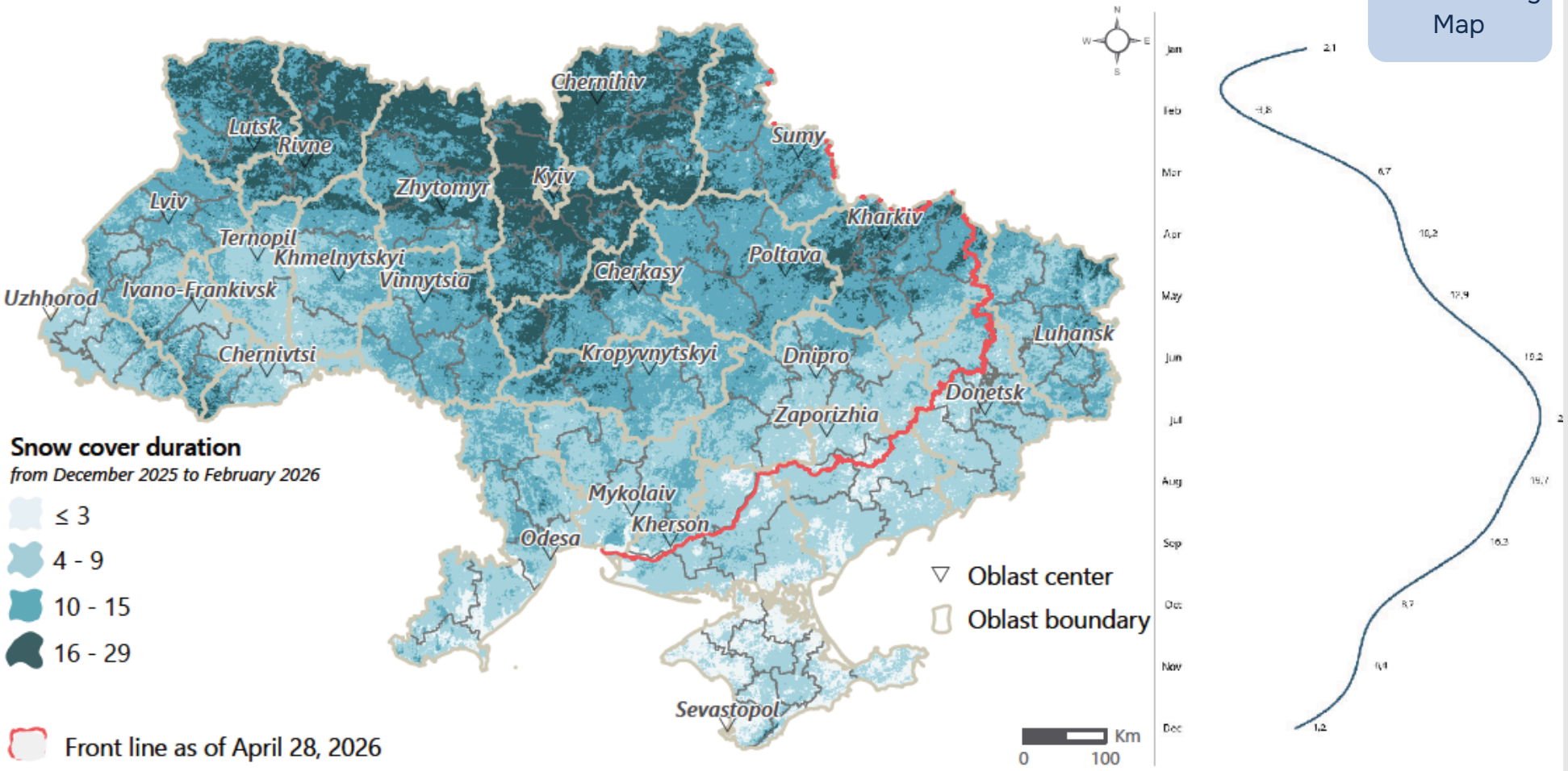
According to the REACH assessment, Kharkiv and Donetsk oblasts face the highest climate-related winter risks among the four oblasts included in this study. These regions experience a combination of prolonged cold periods, the consequences of ongoing hostilities, damage to energy and municipal infrastructure, and limited capacity for rapid infrastructure restoration. In Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, the natural winter hazard is considered moderate; however, overall risk is amplified by the high population concentration, the dependence of major urban areas on centralized heating, water supply, and electricity systems, and the proximity of some districts to the frontline. In Zaporizhzhia Oblast, the climate-related winter hazard is comparatively lower, but the overall winter risk remains high due to the frontline status of the region, damage to energy infrastructure, and disruptions to essential public services.

(1) https://www.unian.ua/pogoda/news/pogoda-ciyeji-zimi-ukrajina-perezhila-dva-rizni-pogodni-scenariji-odnochasno-13310025.html#google_vignette
(2) https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/articles/cly02y4x8rko

The temperature context is an important consideration when interpreting the findings of this study, as the level of humanitarian needs is determined not only by weather conditions but also by the interaction of climatic, security, and infrastructure-related factors. This perspective allows the results to be interpreted considering the actual level of winter risk in each oblast rather than solely on the basis of the needs reported by the population.

Graph 3: Monthly evolution of temperature in Ukraine 2025

REACH Study Map



(2) https://24tv.ua/zima-2026-roku-stala-naysuvorishoyu-za-ostanni-desyatilittya_n3018012

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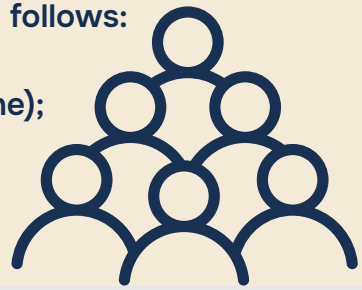
Field Assessment Findings

Additional Methodological Note

The analysis is based on survey data collected from 1,046 households across four oblasts of Ukraine: Zaporizhzhia (735), Dnipropetrovsk (191), Donetsk (95), and Kharkiv (25). It also incorporates data from a standardized survey of 13 representatives of local self-government authorities, representing 10 territorial hromadas.
The household sample is unevenly distributed across the four oblasts and reflects the actual geographical coverage of the field assessment. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted as a descriptive assessment of the surveyed households rather than as statistically representative of the overall population of each oblast.

According to publicly available data, the estimated population of the study oblasts in 2025 was as follows:

Zaporizhzhia Oblast – 1.0 million (territory currently under the control of the Government of Ukraine);
Kharkiv Oblast – 2.0 million;
Donetsk Oblast – 225,000;
Dnipropetrovsk Oblast – 3.2 million (1).



The findings are presented using a needs–capacity analytical framework. For each of the seven thematic areas, the analysis first describes the needs reported by households (needs), then examines what territorial hromadas are able to provide (capacity), and finally assesses the extent to which the available capacity corresponds to the identified needs (comparative analysis).
The purpose of this approach is to identify the specific gap between the needs expressed by residents and the actual capacity of territorial hromadas to meet those needs.

(1) IOM. Ukraine Internal displacement report. 2026.01

5.1. Zaporizhzhia Oblast

The findings indicate a high level of winter vulnerability among households in Zaporizhzhia Oblast across nearly all assessed dimensions. The most critical challenges remain access to solid fuel, insufficient preparedness for prolonged power outages, substantial demand for winter non-food items (NFIs), and the limited financial capacity of households to prepare their homes for the winter season independently. 72.8% of households reported insufficient financial resources or fuel stocks to get through the winter, 81.6% expressed a need for winter NFIs, 52.3% reported that their homes were damaged or required insulation, and 65.4% considered themselves unprepared for the upcoming winter season. In addition, 95.5% of respondents indicated that they would require assistance to prepare for the next winter.

Household energy resilience remains one of the oblast's most significant vulnerabilities. Only 25.6% of respondents reported having any form of backup power supply, while 60.9% had no backup electricity source at all. Furthermore, 85.9% reported a need for additional energy equipment, primarily charging stations (55.4%) and generators (38.8%). In addition, 35.8% of households depend on electricity for both heating and water supply. Although both surveyed territorial hromadas reported relatively adequate backup power arrangements for critical infrastructure, the existing stock of generators is insufficient to meet household-level needs. This points to a substantial gap between the institutional preparedness of critical infrastructure and the actual resilience of households.

The functioning of Points of Invincibility represents another area of concern. 55.8% of households were unaware of the location of the nearest Point of Invincibility, while 50.0% did not know that such facilities existed. Only 7.7% of respondents had actually used one. Just 22.1% reported that they could reach a Point of Invincibility safely and without difficulty, whereas 21.8% stated that they could not access one at all. Meanwhile, 57.6% believed that additional or mobile support points should be established. Data from the surveyed territorial hromadas also reveal uneven patterns of utilization: in one hromada the facilities were used only minimally, while in another their operational capacity had been exceeded. This suggests that the primary challenge is not the number of facilities themselves but rather their uneven geographical distribution, accessibility, and public awareness.

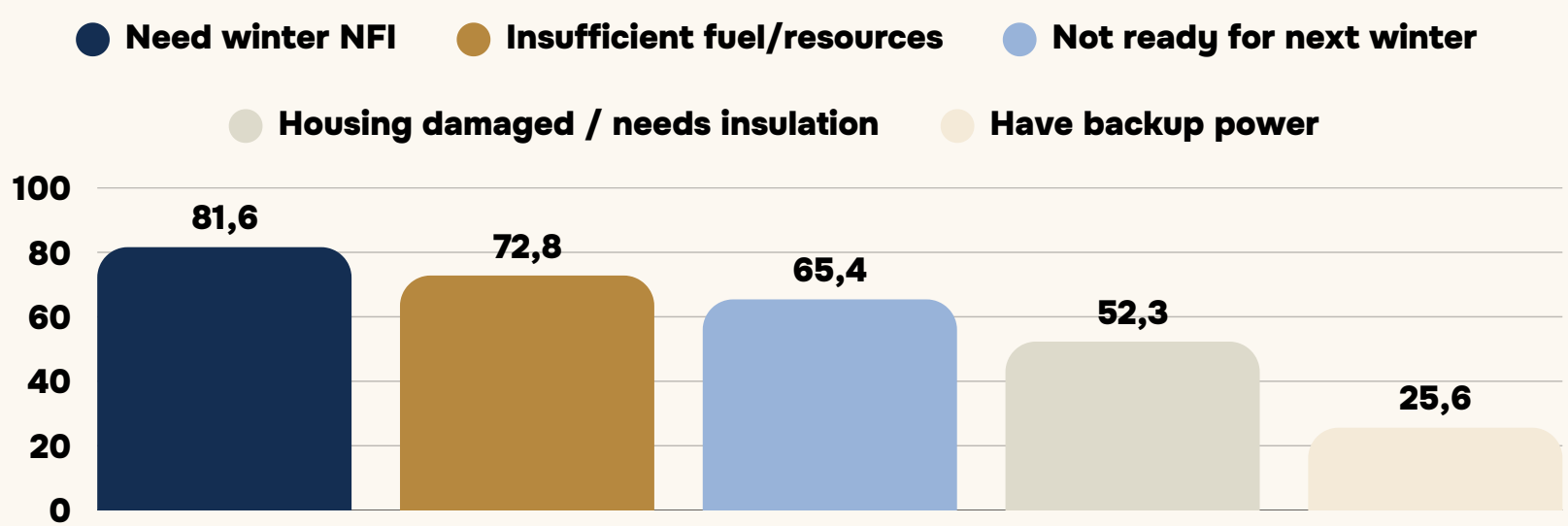
The housing sector also exhibits substantial needs. 52.3% of households reported housing damage or the need for repair and insulation works. Only 50.9% considered their homes sufficiently warm, while 44.9% stated that their homes had been cold during the previous winter. Household financial capacity remains critically limited: 59.0% reported being unable to finance repairs independently, 39.6% indicated that they could cover only part of the required costs, and only 0.7% of households were able to fully finance the necessary works. Representatives of territorial hromadas likewise confirmed significant needs for construction materials, repair funding, and technical assistance. At the same time, information on the full extent of housing damage remains incomplete, complicating the planning of future interventions.

The strongest alignment between household responses and the assessments of territorial hromadas was observed with regard to winter non-food items. 81.6% of households reported needing such assistance, while only 23.6% had received it during the previous winter season. Neither of the two surveyed hromadas had implemented a systematic distribution of winter NFI kits. The most frequently requested items were heaters (46.5%), warm blankets (43.4%), quilts (39.7%), warm outerwear (33.4%), and winter footwear (33.4%). Both households and representatives of territorial hromadas consistently identified a substantial need to expand these assistance programmes.

Multi-purpose cash assistance remains one of the most appropriate mechanisms for supporting the population. During the previous winter, 34.4% of households received cash assistance, whereas 58.7% did not. The assistance received was primarily used to purchase solid fuel (43.6%) and to pay utility bills (17.2%). Looking ahead to the next winter season, 60.8% of households indicated that they would use potential cash assistance to purchase solid fuel, while 21.9% would prioritize utility payments. This pattern closely corresponds to the assessments provided by territorial hromadas. At the same time, the coverage of cash assistance programmes varies considerably between hromadas, indicating unequal access to support across the oblast.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Zaporizhzhia Oblast is characterized by a high level of humanitarian need and a substantial dependence on external assistance. Although some territorial hromadas show relatively stronger performance in addressing specific needs, none has adopted a formal preparedness plan for the 2026–2027 winter season. Most current interventions remain reactive in nature and are unlikely to substantially reduce the projected scale of needs during the coming winter. Overall, the institutional capacity of territorial hromadas remains uneven and insufficient to meet existing household needs independently, underscoring the continued necessity of both government and international support for the oblast.

Key Winter Preparedness Indicators Zaporizhzhia Oblast (%)



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The household survey (n = 735) is representative of Zaporizhzhia Oblast as a whole. The territorial hromada data are based on two case studies: Stepnenska Territorial Hromada (approximately 5,100 residents and 2,500 households) and Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada (approximately 24,000 residents and 6,500 households).

1. Heating and solid fuel

1.1. Household Assessment

Across the oblast, 72.8% of households reported insufficient financial resources or fuel reserves to cope with the 2025–2026 winter season. Looking ahead, 95.5% of respondents indicated that they would require assistance to prepare for the next winter. The most frequently requested forms of support were cash assistance for purchasing solid fuel (30.0%) and utility payments (17.4%). Household capacity to independently procure and transport fuel remains limited: only 59.3% reported being able to arrange fuel purchase and delivery without difficulty, 19.8% experienced significant difficulties, and 9.5% stated that they were unable to organize this independently. Furthermore, 63.4% of households indicated that direct fuel delivery would be essential.

1.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

The two case-study hromadas reveal markedly different levels of response capacity. In Stepnenska Territorial Hromada, 1,580 households required heating assistance during the 2025–2026 winter season, of which 1,560 households actually received support—equivalent to 98.7% of the identified need and 62.4% of all households in the hromada. Assistance was provided primarily through cash transfers, although an estimated 10–25% of needs remained unmet. Despite this relatively high level of coverage, the hromada projects that all 2,500 households will require assistance during the 2026–2027 winter season, indicating that the underlying vulnerability remains unchanged.

The situation is considerably more severe in Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada. Of the 3,377 households identified as requiring assistance during the previous winter, only 2,042 households received support, representing 60.5% of identified needs and 31.4% of all households. Between 26% and 50% of identified needs remained unmet. Looking ahead to the 2026–2027 winter season, the hromada estimates that approximately 5,300 households—more than 80% of all households—will require assistance. The estimated requirement for solid fuel is 3 m³ per household, while no secured supply has yet been identified. Importantly, neither of the two surveyed territorial hromadas has adopted an approved winter preparedness plan for the 2026–2027 season.

1.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The oblast-level finding that 72.8% of households lack sufficient fuel resources masks substantial variation between the two case-study hromadas. While Stepnenska Territorial Hromada achieved almost complete coverage of current needs (98.7%), Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada was able to cover only 60.5% of identified demand. However, even in Stepnenska Territorial Hromada—where assistance coverage was nearly universal—the projected need for the following winter remains unchanged, with 100% of households expected to require support again. This demonstrates that current assistance mechanisms do not reduce structural vulnerability but merely address immediate needs within a single winter season. Furthermore, the absence of approved preparedness plans in both hromadas represents a critical institutional gap that cannot be captured through household surveys alone, as household data measure existing needs rather than the planning capacity of local authorities.

2. Electricity supply and backup power sources

2.1. Household Assessment

Household energy resilience presents a similarly challenging picture. 55.3% of respondents reported experiencing daily electricity outages. Only 25.6% of households possess any form of backup power supply, most commonly power banks (59.9%) and generators (23.8%). Meanwhile, 85.9% reported a need for additional energy equipment, primarily portable charging stations (55.4%) and generators (38.8%). Overall, 60.9% of households have no backup electricity source whatsoever and are therefore unable to maintain electricity supply without external assistance. In addition, 35.8% depend on electricity for both heating and water supply, making them particularly vulnerable during prolonged power disruptions.

2.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

Both surveyed territorial hromadas also reported frequent emergency power outages. The availability of backup power for critical infrastructure was assessed as covering "approximately half of critical facilities" in Stepnenska Territorial Hromada and "most critical facilities" in Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada. Local authorities reported having 15 operational generators in Stepnenska Territorial Hromada (all tested and fully functional) and 62 operational generators in Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada (partially tested), providing autonomous operation for approximately 1–3 days and 4–7 days, respectively. Both hromadas identified additional needs for charging stations, fuel supplies, and battery storage systems, while assessing their overall preparedness to ensure the uninterrupted functioning of critical infrastructure as "rather prepared."

2.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

At first glance, the household findings—where only 25.6% possess backup power and 60.9% have no backup electricity at all—appear substantially more severe than the relatively positive self-assessments reported by territorial hromadas. However, these findings reflect different levels of analysis rather than contradictory evidence. Territorial hromadas assess the resilience of critical public infrastructure, such as healthcare facilities, water supply systems, and other essential services, whereas households report on their own access to backup electricity at the household level. The existing fleet of 15–62 community-owned generators was never intended to provide household-level energy security. Consequently, the gap between the finding that most critical infrastructure is equipped with backup power and the fact that 61% of households lack any backup electricity source represents one of the study's most important conclusions. It demonstrates that institutional preparedness does not automatically translate into household resilience, while the existing stock of community generators remains orders of magnitude below the level required to meet household demand.

3. Points of Invincibility and community support facilities

3.1. Household Assessment

More than half of respondents (55.8%) did not know the location of the nearest Point of Invincibility. Actual utilization was extremely limited: only 7.7% of respondents reported using a facility either regularly or on several occasions. At the same time, 50.0% were unaware that such facilities existed, while 34.9% knew about them but had never used them. Among those who did access a Point of Invincibility, the primary purposes were charging electronic devices (49.4%), receiving humanitarian assistance (34.0%), and accessing the internet (26.9%). Only 22.1% of respondents stated that they could reach the nearest facility safely and without difficulty, whereas 21.8% reported being unable to reach one at all. Overall, 57.6% believed that their settlement required an additional or mobile Point of Invincibility.

3.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

The two surveyed territorial hromadas present contrasting patterns of service provision and utilization. Stepnenska Territorial Hromada operated five Points of Invincibility with a combined simultaneous capacity of 100 people. During the 2025–2026 winter season, approximately 200 people used these facilities, exceeding their nominal capacity through the continuous turnover of visitors. The hromada plans to operate the same five facilities during the 2026–2027 winter season and confirmed that some settlements within its territory still lack practical access to a Point of Invincibility. In contrast, Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada operated three facilities with a combined capacity of 200 people, yet no residents used them during the previous winter season. For 2026–2027, the hromada plans to expand the network to three or four facilities. Local authorities reported that all settlements have physical access to a Point of Invincibility, identifying communications equipment and internet connectivity as the only remaining gaps.

3.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The very low utilization rate observed at the household level (7.7%) appears to be driven primarily by limited public awareness, as reflected by the large proportions of respondents who either did not know the location of the nearest facility (55.8%) or were unaware of their existence altogether (50.0%). This finding is reinforced by the experience of Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada, where facilities with sufficient nominal capacity (200 places) remained completely unused throughout the winter season. However, Stepnenska Territorial Hromada presents the opposite picture: despite operating in the same regional context of limited public awareness, the available capacity (100 places) was effectively exceeded, serving approximately 200 users. This suggests that where awareness and demand do exist, existing capacity is already insufficient. The coexistence of complete underutilization in one hromada and significant overutilization in another indicates that the principal challenge is not the overall number of Points of Invincibility, but rather the uneven distribution of facilities, accessibility, and public awareness. This interpretation is consistent with the finding that 57.6% of households believe that additional support points are needed despite the generally low utilization rates.

4. Housing insulation

4.1. Household Assessment

More than half of households (52.3%) reported housing damage or deficiencies requiring repair or winterization. The most frequently identified needs were wall insulation (33.2%), window replacement or repair (27.8%), roof repairs (26.8%), and roof or attic insulation (23.0%). Only 50.9% of respondents considered their homes sufficiently warm during the previous winter, while 44.9% reported that their homes had been cold. Household financial capacity to undertake repairs remains extremely limited: 59.0% stated that they could not finance repairs at all, 39.6% could cover only part of the required costs, and just 0.7% reported being able to fully finance the necessary works. The preferred form of assistance is cash support (53.1%), while the highest priority for improving winter preparedness is comprehensive home insulation (29.4%).

4.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

In Stepnenska Territorial Hromada, local authorities reported damage affecting 70 residential buildings or households, while 130 households required repair assistance. The most common types of damage involved windows, roofs, and walls. The hromada currently has the capacity to provide only emergency repairs and emergency repair materials, while identifying repair works, financial resources, and technical expertise as its most pressing unmet needs. In Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada, the overall scale of housing damage has not been quantified, and no formal requests for repair assistance were recorded. Nevertheless, the hromada identified substantial needs for construction materials, repair financing, and restoration of heating systems.

1.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The oblast-level finding that 52.3% of households reported housing damage or winterization needs cannot easily be reconciled with the relatively small number of damaged households officially recorded in Stepnenska Territorial Hromada (70 households out of approximately 2,500). This discrepancy suggests either that the level of damage in this particular hromada is genuinely lower than the oblast average or, more plausibly, given the hromada's own observations, that official records include only households that actively sought assistance, thereby substantially underestimating the true extent of damage. The complete absence of quantitative data on housing damage in Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada represents an institutional capacity gap in its own right. A territorial hromada that cannot quantify the extent of housing damage cannot effectively plan proportionate repair assistance, regardless of the evidence provided by the oblast-wide household survey.

5. Winter non-food items (NFIs)

5.1. Household Assessment

A total of 81.6% of households reported requiring winter non-food items (NFIs). The most commonly requested items were heaters (46.5%), warm blankets (43.4%), quilts (39.7%), warm outerwear (33.4%), and winter footwear (33.4%). However, only 23.6% of households received this type of assistance during the previous winter season. Among respondents, cash assistance (69.3%) was identified as the preferred modality for meeting these needs. The highest priority beneficiaries were all household members simultaneously (40.9%), followed by older people (25.9%) and children (18.4%). Financial constraints remain a major barrier: 35.4% of households reported being unable to afford these items, while 23.2% indicated that the required goods were simply unavailable in local markets.

5.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

Neither of the two surveyed territorial hromadas implemented winter NFI distributions during the 2025–2026 winter season. The priority items identified by Stepnenska Territorial Hromada included blankets, bedding, and warm throws, whereas Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada highlighted thermal underwear, winter footwear, and warm blankets. For the 2026–2027 winter season, the estimated need amounts to approximately 800 people in Stepnenska Territorial Hromada and virtually the entire population of Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada. In both hromadas, older people and persons with disabilities were identified as the highest-priority beneficiary groups. Stepnenska Territorial Hromada additionally prioritizes people living alone and internally displaced persons (IDPs), while Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada gives additional priority to large families.

5.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The low level of winter NFI assistance reported by households (23.6%) is fully corroborated by the findings from the surveyed territorial hromadas. Neither of the two hromadas distributed winter NFI kits during the 2025–2026 winter season. This represents one of the clearest examples of complete agreement between the two independent data sources across the entire assessment. Both household and hromada data consistently demonstrate that winter NFI assistance reached only a very limited proportion of the population during the previous winter. Furthermore, the scale of projected needs for the 2026–2027 winter season, as estimated by the hromadas, including the expectation that virtually the entire population of Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada will require assistance, is closely aligned with the finding that 81.6% of households reported a need for winter NFIs.

6. Cash assistance

6.1. Household Assessment

During the previous winter season, 34.4% of households received Unified Cash Transfer (UCT), while 58.7% received no cash support. Assistance was used primarily to purchase solid fuel (43.6%) and to pay utility bills (17.2%). Looking ahead to the next winter season, 60.8% of households indicated that they would use future cash assistance to purchase solid fuel, while 21.9% would allocate it to utility payments. Respondents identified cash assistance alone (49.1%) or a combination of cash and in-kind assistance (40.8%) as the most effective forms of support.

Perceptions of local market capacity were mixed. While 47.1% considered local markets sufficiently supplied, 45.3% regarded them as inadequate. Only 16.0% of respondents expected that available assistance would fully meet their winter needs, whereas 55.1% anticipated only partial coverage.

6.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

In Stepnenska Territorial Hromada, 1,540 households received targeted cash assistance for heating during the previous winter season. In Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada, 2,042 households received multi-purpose cash assistance. In both hromadas, the assistance was used primarily for solid fuel and utility payments, mirroring household responses. Local authorities differed, however, in their assessment of households' ability to purchase required goods using cash assistance. Stepnenska Territorial Hromada considered local market capacity to be "rather sufficient," whereas Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada was unable to provide a clear assessment. Both hromadas agreed that cash assistance is less effective in remote settlements, where the limited availability of suppliers restricts households' ability to purchase essential winter goods.

6.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The oblast-wide coverage rate (34.4%) conceals considerable variation between the two surveyed hromadas. While approximately 61.6% of households in Stepnenska Territorial Hromada received targeted heating-related cash assistance (1,540 out of approximately 2,500 households), the corresponding figure in Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada was only 31.4% (2,042 out of approximately 6,500 households). Once again, the oblast-level average masks almost a twofold difference in actual programme coverage between hromadas. At the same time, both hromadas confirmed the same spending priorities reported by households, namely solid fuel and utility payments, indicating that differences relate primarily to the scale of programme coverage rather than the way assistance is used.

7. Overall priorities for winter preparedness

7.1. Household Assessment

Households identified heating (37.5%) and electricity outages (21.6%) as the most significant challenges experienced during the previous winter. Looking ahead, the highest-priority forms of assistance were identified as cash for solid fuel (68.0%), followed by cash for utility payments, portable charging stations, and generators (each 48.6%). Overall preparedness for the upcoming winter remains low: 65.4% of respondents considered themselves unprepared, while only 17.7% felt adequately prepared. The most frequently reported barriers to preparedness were insufficient financial resources (59.8%) and insufficient solid fuel supplies (27.5%). Nearly two-fifths of households (39.3%) rated their own ability to cope with winter at only 1–2 points on a five-point scale, while 36.8% expressed a pessimistic outlook regarding the coming winter season.

7.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

Both surveyed territorial hromadas likewise identified utility costs and electricity outages as the most critical challenges. Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada additionally highlighted the shortage of backup power sources. Shared priorities for the 2026–2027 winter season include ensuring solid fuel availability and strengthening the preparedness of critical infrastructure. Beyond these common priorities, Stepnenska Territorial Hromada identified the expansion of Points of Invincibility as its primary investment priority, whereas Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada prioritized winter NFI assistance. When asked to identify a single highest-priority funding area, Stepnenska Territorial Hromada selected Points of Invincibility, while Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada selected solid fuel assistance. Assessments of future prospects differed considerably: Stepnenska Territorial Hromada rated its outlook at 2 out of 5, whereas Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada assigned a substantially more optimistic 4 out of 5.

7.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The oblast-wide finding that 65.4% of households consider themselves unprepared for the coming winter is broadly consistent with the relatively low optimism expressed by Stepnenska Territorial Hromada (2 out of 5). However, it contrasts sharply with the considerably more optimistic assessment reported by Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada (4 out of 5), despite the latter demonstrating weaker operational performance across nearly all preceding thematic areas—including lower coverage of heating assistance (60.5% versus 98.7%), substantially higher projected needs for the 2026–2027 winter season, no recorded use of Points of Invincibility, the absence of reliable data on housing damage, and comparatively lower coverage of cash assistance relative to the scale of need. This discrepancy suggests that self-assessments provided by local authorities do not necessarily reflect the conditions shaping household perceptions and experiences. Consequently, institutional assessments of preparedness or optimism should not be interpreted as standalone indicators of winter readiness without being examined alongside objective operational evidence across each thematic area.

8.
Overall Analytical Assessment of Zaporizhzhia Oblast



The aggregated household findings for Zaporizhzhia Oblast indicate consistently high levels of unmet needs across virtually all assessed thematic areas. Reported needs include insufficient solid fuel or financial resources (72.8%), lack of backup electricity supply (60.9%), housing damage or winterization needs (52.3%), and demand for winter non-food items (81.6%), demonstrating a broad and persistent pattern of household vulnerability.

The capacity of the two surveyed territorial hromadas to address these needs differs substantially. Stepnenska Territorial Hromada demonstrated relatively strong operational performance, achieving 98.7% coverage of identified heating assistance needs and providing cash assistance to the majority of eligible households. In contrast, Shyrokivska Territorial Hromada consistently showed lower levels of response capacity, covering only 60.5% of identified heating needs, reaching 31.4% of all households through assistance programmes, and providing no winter NFI distributions during the previous winter season.

However, even where current assistance coverage is relatively high, it does not appear to reduce underlying vulnerability. Both territorial hromadas project virtually the same level of assistance needs for the 2026–2027 winter season, while neither has adopted a formal winter preparedness plan. A common characteristic of both hromadas is the limited number of community-owned generators (15–62 units), which is negligible compared with the number of households lacking their own backup power sources. This demonstrates that institutional capacity to protect critical infrastructure does not translate into household-level resilience. Overall, Zaporizhzhia Oblast is characterized by consistently high household needs alongside uneven, largely partial, and insufficiently forward-looking institutional response capacity.

5.2. Dnipropetrovsk Oblast

The findings indicate that Dnipropetrovsk Oblast faces a lower climatic winter risk than the frontline oblasts of Donetsk and Kharkiv, yet it remains a region with substantial humanitarian needs due to its large population, significant number of internally displaced persons (IDPs), and the continuing impact of hostilities on parts of the oblast. At the same time, the household survey demonstrates that for several thematic areas the level of need is not lower—but in fact the highest among the four assessed oblasts.

Specifically, 77.0% of households reported insufficient financial resources or fuel reserves for winter, 89.8% required additional backup power equipment, 84.2% needed winter non-food items, 73.4% were unable to finance housing repairs independently, and only 14.7% had received multi-purpose cash assistance during the previous winter season. Furthermore, 70.0% of households considered themselves unprepared for the upcoming winter season. These findings are based on a sample of 191 households, providing a stronger empirical basis for interpretation than the smaller samples collected in Kharkiv and Donetsk oblasts.

One of the oblast's principal challenges remains energy resilience. Nearly three-quarters of households (71.6%) reported experiencing almost daily electricity outages. Only 31.6% possess any form of backup power supply, while 89.8% require additional equipment, particularly portable charging stations, which were requested by 70.9% of households. In addition, 44.7% of households depend on electricity for both heating and water supply, making them particularly vulnerable during prolonged power interruptions.

The evidence from territorial hromadas does not suggest substantially stronger institutional preparedness. Tomakivska Territorial Hromada does not maintain consolidated information on the number of operational generators available within the hromada, while in Pokrovska Territorial Hromada, one respondent reported that only three generators were available despite acknowledging significant shortages of backup power for healthcare facilities and water supply systems. Both hromadas identified additional needs for generators, charging stations, and battery storage systems. These findings indicate that residents remain vulnerable to prolonged electricity disruptions not only at the household level but also, to some extent, because of institutional capacity constraints.

Heating-related needs likewise remain critical. 77.0% of households reported insufficient financial resources or fuel reserves, while 96.9% indicated that they would require assistance during the 2026–2027 winter season. Only 31.7% of households stated that they could independently arrange the purchase of solid fuel without difficulty, 27.2% were unable to organize fuel delivery at all, and 69.4% reported that direct fuel delivery would be essential.

In Tomakivska Territorial Hromada, approximately 4,000 households required heating assistance during the previous winter season, of which up to 3,000 households received support—equivalent to approximately 75% of identified needs and 31.2% of all households within the hromada. In Pokrovska Territorial Hromada, however, estimates of programme coverage varied substantially. One respondent reported that 1,355 out of 3,800 households requiring assistance received support (35.7% of identified need), while other respondents indicated that all 2,300 identified households had been assisted. Such inconsistencies suggest not only uneven access to assistance programmes but also weaknesses in administrative data management and reporting at the hromada level.

Housing repair and winterization needs also remain substantial. 58.2% of households reported housing damage or other housing-related deficiencies, a proportion higher than that observed in Zaporizhzhia Oblast. The most frequently identified needs include wall insulation (40.6%), roof repairs (35.3%), and door repair or replacement (28.2%). Only 40.5% of households considered their homes sufficiently warm during the previous winter, while 54.2% reported that their homes had been cold. Financial capacity to undertake repairs remains extremely limited, with 73.4% of households reporting that they are unable to finance repair works independently.

Significant information gaps also exist at the institutional level. Tomakivska Territorial Hromada does not maintain data on the number of damaged households but estimates that up to 1,000 households may require repair assistance. In Pokrovska Territorial Hromada, the number of damaged households was reported as ranging between 430 and 458, while projected repair needs for the upcoming winter varied widely—from 300 to 2,400 households, depending on the respondent. Such inconsistencies considerably complicate evidence-based planning for financing requirements, procurement of construction materials, and the provision of technical support.

The need for winter non-food items (NFIs) is not only substantial but the highest among the four assessed oblasts, with 84.2% of households reporting a need for this type of assistance. The greatest demand is for warm blankets (62.6%) and quilts (56.4%). Despite these high levels of need, only 23.4% of respondents received winter NFI assistance during the previous winter season. Most households (68.4%) identified cash assistance as their preferred modality for meeting these needs. More than half of respondents (55.1%) indicated that all household members simultaneously require winter items, while 42.3% reported that they lack the financial means to purchase the necessary goods independently.

Both surveyed territorial hromadas implemented winter NFI distribution programmes during the previous winter season. In Tomakivska Territorial Hromada, approximately 300 households received assistance, while in Pokrovska Territorial Hromada, winter NFIs were distributed to approximately 3,000 individuals. However, projected needs for the 2026–2027 winter season remain substantially higher, reaching up to 1,000 households in Tomakivska Territorial Hromada and between 4,000 and 6,951 people in Pokrovska Territorial Hromada. These findings indicate that although assistance programmes are in place, their scale remains considerably below the level of actual demand.

UCT remains one of the principal mechanisms for supporting vulnerable households; however, its overall coverage in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast is the lowest among the four assessed oblasts. During the previous winter season, only 14.7% of households reported receiving UCT. The assistance was used primarily to pay utility bills (17.5%) and purchase medicines (14.3%). Looking ahead to the next winter season, 39.9% of households indicated that they would use potential cash assistance to purchase solid fuel, while 37.8% would prioritize utility payments. At the same time, 36.8% of respondents considered local market capacity insufficient to adequately meet winter-related needs.

Representatives of the surveyed territorial hromadas reported that cash assistance had reached up to 1,000 households in Tomakivska Territorial Hromada and between 1,355 and 2,000 households in Pokrovska Territorial Hromada. However, one respondent from Pokrovska Territorial Hromada stated that residents had not received such assistance at all, highlighting a further example of inconsistencies in administrative reporting. Based on the highest reported estimate, UCT coverage in Pokrovska Territorial Hromada could have reached approximately 46% of households, substantially exceeding the oblast-wide household estimate of 14.7%. This discrepancy requires additional verification and suggests that administrative reporting and household survey findings should be interpreted together when assessing programme coverage.

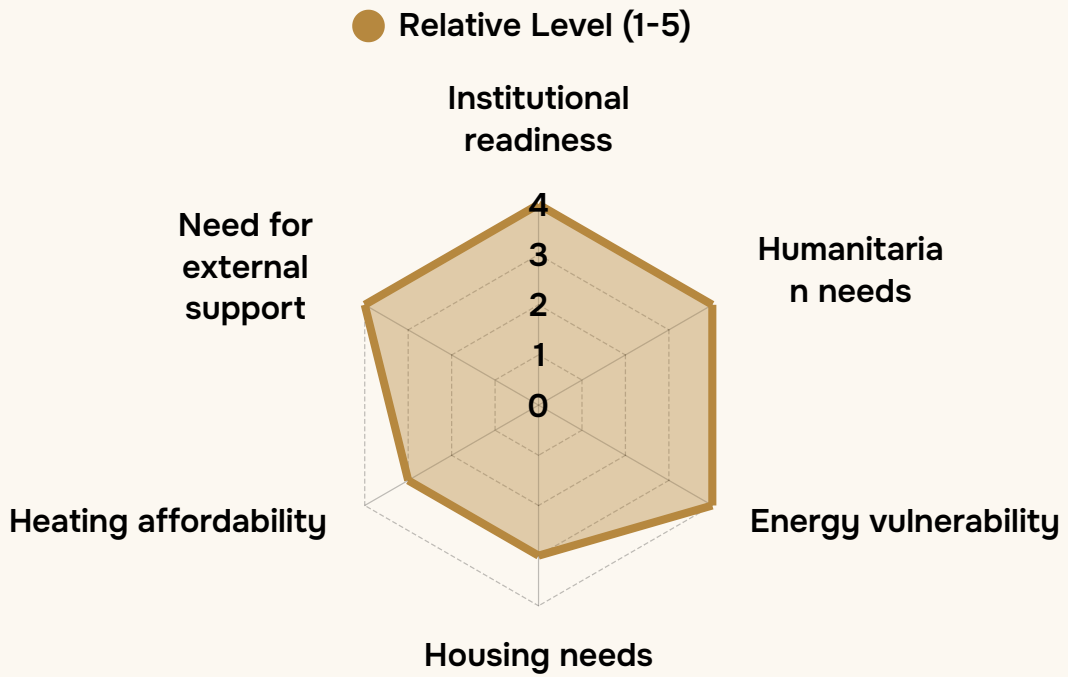
Overall, the findings demonstrate that Dnipropetrovsk Oblast cannot be characterized as a region with relatively low winter vulnerability. On the contrary, for several key indicators it exhibits the highest level of household needs among all four assessed oblasts. Specifically, 77.0% of households reported insufficient fuel resources, 89.8% required additional backup energy equipment, 84.2% needed winter non-food items, 73.4% were unable to finance housing repairs independently, and 70.0% considered themselves unprepared for the upcoming winter season.

At the same time, representatives of territorial hromadas expressed considerably more optimistic assessments of local preparedness. The average optimism rating was approximately 3 out of 5 in Tomakivska Territorial Hromada and 4.3 out of 5 in Pokrovska Territorial Hromada. This divergence between household perceptions of vulnerability and local authorities' self-assessments is the most pronounced observed across the entire study.

The combination of high population density, dependence on centralized utility systems, the continuing risk of attacks on energy infrastructure, limited coverage of humanitarian assistance, and inconsistencies in administrative reporting indicates that Dnipropetrovsk Oblast requires not only continued government and international support but also significant improvements in local systems for needs assessment, data management, and verification. These improvements are essential for ensuring that future winterization assistance is effectively targeted and proportionate to the actual scale of humanitarian needs.

This chart compares household needs with the preparedness and response capacity of territorial hromadas across the key indicators identified in the assessment.

Qualitative Winter Preparedness Profile Dnipropetrovsk Oblast



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The household survey (n = 191) is representative of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast as a whole. The hromada-level findings are based on two case studies: Tomakivska Settlement Territorial Hromada (14,311 residents; 9,629 households) and Pokrovska Rural Territorial Hromada (6,951 residents; 4,370 households). It should be noted that multiple respondents within both hromadas provided contradictory information, which affects the reliability of several institutional indicators.

1. Heating and solid fuel

1.1. Household Assessment

A total of 77.0% of households reported insufficient financial resources or fuel reserves for winter—the highest proportion among all assessed oblasts. Almost all respondents (96.9%) indicated that they would require assistance during the next winter season. Only 31.7% of households reported being able to organize fuel purchases independently without difficulty, while 27.2% were unable to arrange fuel delivery at all. Furthermore, 69.4% stated that direct household delivery of fuel would be essential, representing the highest proportion recorded across the four oblasts.

1.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

In Tomakivska Settlement Territorial Hromada, approximately 4,000 households required heating assistance during the previous winter season, of which up to 3,000 households received support—equivalent to 75% of identified needs and 31.2% of all households within the hromada. Assistance included direct delivery of firewood and pellets, cash assistance, and utility cost compensation, while an estimated 10–25% of needs remained unmet. Looking ahead to the 2026–2027 winter season, demand is expected to remain at approximately 4,000 households, with projected solid fuel requirements increasing to five tonnes of briquettes per household, although no secured supply has yet been identified.

Findings from Pokrovska Rural Territorial Hromada are considerably less consistent. One respondent reported that 3,800 households required assistance, of which only 1,355 households received support—representing 35.7% of identified need, the lowest reported coverage among all surveyed hromadas. By contrast, two other respondents stated that 2,300 households required assistance and that all of them had been supported. Neither territorial hromada has adopted an approved winter preparedness plan for the upcoming season.

1.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The household survey indicates the highest level of fuel insufficiency among all assessed oblasts (77.0%). If the lowest estimate from Pokrovska Territorial Hromada (35.7% coverage) is accurate, it implies a 64.3 percentage-point gap between identified needs and institutional response capacity. Conversely, if the alternative estimates indicating 100% coverage are accepted, the picture changes entirely. The extraordinarily wide range of reported coverage (35.7%–100%) within a single hromada represents the most significant internal inconsistency identified anywhere in the study. Until these discrepancies are resolved, no single measure of institutional capacity for Pokrovska Territorial Hromada can be reliably compared with the oblast-wide household findings, and resolving these inconsistencies should take precedence over using the existing figures for operational planning. By contrast, the more internally consistent findings from Tomakivska Territorial Hromada (approximately 75% coverage) suggest a relatively stronger—though still incomplete—local response capacity.

2. Electricity supply and backup power sources

2.1. Household Assessment

A total of 71.6% of households reported experiencing almost daily electricity outages, a higher proportion than in Zaporizhzhia Oblast. Only 31.6% of households possess backup power sources, while 89.8% require additional equipment, particularly portable charging stations, which were requested by 70.9% of respondents—the highest proportion among all assessed oblasts. Additionally, 44.7% of households depend on electricity for both heating and water supply.

2.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

Both respondents from Tomakivska Territorial Hromada confirmed widespread electricity-related challenges but provided differing assessments regarding the availability of backup power for critical infrastructure. Notably, the hromada does not maintain consolidated information on the number of generators available, with respondents stating that the responsible department does not possess such data. In Pokrovska Territorial Hromada, assessments ranged from "almost no critical facilities are equipped with backup power" to "almost all critical facilities are equipped." One respondent reported that the hromada possesses only three generators, while simultaneously acknowledging shortages of backup power for healthcare facilities and water supply systems. Both hromadas identified additional needs for generators, charging stations, and battery storage systems.

2.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The household findings, where only 31.6% possess backup power and 89.8% require additional equipment, are reinforced rather than mitigated by the institutional evidence. The absence of basic information on generator stocks in Tomakivska Territorial Hromada, together with the reported availability of only three generators in Pokrovska Territorial Hromada despite acknowledged shortages for essential services, indicates that institutional preparedness itself remains under-resourced and insufficiently documented. Rather than compensating for household vulnerability, these findings suggest that vulnerabilities extend across both household and institutional levels.

3. Points of Invincibility and community support facilities

3.1. Household Assessment

A majority of households (68.9%) reported knowing the location of the nearest Point of Invincibility, a substantially higher proportion than in Zaporizhzhia Oblast. Approximately 19.5% had used these facilities during the previous winter season, primarily for charging electronic devices (63.8%), internet access (28.1%), and receiving humanitarian assistance (27.6%). Around 40.5% stated that they could reach the nearest facility without difficulty. Nevertheless, 54.9% believed that their locality still requires an additional or mobile Point of Invincibility.

3.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

Tomakivska Territorial Hromada operated 24 Points of Invincibility—the largest network among all surveyed hromadas—and plans to maintain the same number during the 2026–2027 winter season. These facilities are equipped with heating, generators, drinking water, and communication equipment. The hromada nevertheless confirmed that some settlements still lack practical access and identified fuel, heaters, and furniture as priority needs. Pokrovska Territorial Hromada operated five Points of Invincibility, but respondents provided contradictory information regarding future plans, ranging from reducing the network to a single facility to maintaining all five, highlighting another planning issue requiring clarification at the local level.

3.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The relatively high levels of public awareness (68.9%) and moderate utilization (19.5%) correspond well with the extensive network of 24 facilities operating in Tomakivska Territorial Hromada, suggesting that broader geographical coverage contributes to stronger accessibility compared with Zaporizhzhia Oblast. At the same time, the unresolved disagreement regarding future plans in Pokrovska Territorial Hromada represents a planning risk that cannot be detected through household surveys, which capture only current access and awareness rather than institutional preparedness for future seasons.

4. Housing insulation

4.1. Household Assessment

A total of 58.2% of households reported housing damage or housing-related deficiencies requiring repair or winterization - a higher proportion than observed in Zaporizhzhia Oblast. The most commonly identified needs include wall insulation (40.6%), roof repairs (35.3%), and door repair or replacement (28.2%). Only 40.5% of households considered their homes sufficiently warm during the previous winter, while 54.2% reported that their homes had been cold. Household financial capacity is the weakest among all assessed oblasts, with 73.4% reporting that they are completely unable to finance repair works independently.

4.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

Tomakivska Territorial Hromada does not maintain records on the number of damaged households, with respondents stating that the relevant department has no such information. Reported types of damage include windows, roofs, and insufficient insulation, while the hromada estimates that up to 1,000 households will require repair assistance during the next winter season. In Pokrovska Territorial Hromada, housing damage was reported for 430–458 households, with 320–430 households having received repair assistance. Projected needs for the 2026–2027 winter season range from 300 to 2,400 households, depending on the respondent.

4.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The highest reported prevalence of housing damage among all assessed oblasts (58.2%) and the lowest household capacity to finance repairs (73.4%) are consistent with the weak administrative evidence available at the hromada level. Tomakivska Territorial Hromada lacks even basic quantitative information on housing damage, while estimates provided by respondents from Pokrovska Territorial Hromada vary by a factor of eight (300–2,400 households). Together, these findings indicate that the ability of local authorities to quantify and monitor housing damage lags significantly behind the scale of need identified through the household survey.

5. Winter non-food items (NFIs)

5.1. Household Assessment

A total of 84.2% of households reported requiring winter non-food items (NFIs)—the highest proportion among all four assessed oblasts. The greatest demand was for warm blankets (62.6%) and quilts (56.4%). Despite this level of need, only 23.4% of households received winter NFI assistance during the previous winter season. Cash assistance (68.4%) was identified as the preferred modality of support. More than half of respondents (55.1%) stated that all household members simultaneously require winter items—a higher proportion than observed in Zaporizhzhia Oblast. Additionally, 42.3% reported lacking the financial means to purchase the required goods independently.

5.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

Both surveyed territorial hromadas implemented winter NFI distributions during the 2025–2026 winter season. Tomakivska Territorial Hromada provided assistance to approximately 300 households, while Pokrovska Territorial Hromada distributed winter NFIs to approximately 3,000 people. The most frequently requested items included warm outerwear, blankets, bedding, and warm throws. Projected needs for the 2026–2027 winter season amount to up to 1,000 households in Tomakivska Territorial Hromada and between 4,000 and 6,951 people in Pokrovska Territorial Hromada, with the higher estimate effectively corresponding to the entire population of the hromada.

5.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

Unlike Zaporizhzhia Oblast, where neither surveyed hromada implemented winter NFI distributions, both surveyed hromadas in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast did provide assistance during the previous winter season. Nevertheless, the oblast-wide household finding remains low (23.4% of households receiving assistance), differing only marginally from Zaporizhzhia Oblast (23.6%). This indicates that although assistance programmes were operational, their scale remained substantially smaller than the level of need reported by households, with 84.2% continuing to require winter NFIs.

6. Cash assistance

6.1. Household Assessment

Only 14.7% of households received UCT during the previous winter—the lowest coverage rate among all assessed oblasts. Assistance was used primarily for utility payments (17.5%) and medicines (14.3%). Planned spending for the upcoming winter is more evenly divided between solid fuel (39.9%) and utility costs (37.8%). More than one-third of respondents (36.8%) considered local market capacity insufficient, representing a less favourable assessment than that recorded in Zaporizhzhia Oblast.

6.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

Both surveyed territorial hromadas confirmed that residents had received UCT. Tomakivska Territorial Hromada reported assistance reaching up to 1,000 households, although respondents differed in their assessment of whether this level of support was sufficient. Pokrovska Territorial Hromada reported assistance reaching between 1,355 and 2,000 households, while one of the three respondents denied that residents had received UCT at all, directly contradicting the other responses. In both hromadas, cash assistance was reported to be spent primarily on utility payments, food, medicines, and fuel.

6.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The extremely low household-reported UCT coverage (14.7%) is difficult to reconcile with the absolute figures reported by the surveyed hromadas. Tomakivska Territorial Hromada reported up to 1,000 beneficiary households, while Pokrovska Territorial Hromada reported 1,355–2,000 households, although one respondent denied any distribution altogether. Given approximately 4,370 households in Pokrovska Territorial Hromada, the upper estimate of 2,000 beneficiary households would correspond to approximately 46% programme coverage—far above the oblast-wide household estimate of 14.7%. This discrepancy once again demonstrates that the internal inconsistencies in administrative reporting within Pokrovska Territorial Hromada prevent reliable comparison between institutional data and household survey findings for this oblast.

7. Overall priorities for winter preparedness

7.1. Household Assessment

Households identified electricity outages (33.3%) as the most difficult challenge during the previous winter. Overall preparedness for the upcoming winter is the lowest among all assessed oblasts, with 70.0% of households considering themselves unprepared. The most frequently reported constraints are insufficient financial resources (49.2%) and insufficient fuel supplies (27.5%), while the reported shortage of backup power equipment (12.7%) is twice as high as in Zaporizhzhia Oblast. More than half of respondents (52.4%) rated their own ability to cope with winter at only 1–2 points on a five-point scale, indicating very low household resilience.

7.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

Both surveyed territorial hromadas identified utility costs and electricity outages as the most critical challenges for the coming winter season. Pokrovska Territorial Hromada additionally highlighted damaged and poorly insulated housing as a major concern. Shared priorities for the 2026–2027 winter season include solid fuel provision, strengthening backup power capacity, and cash assistance. Notably, both hromadas identified UCT as the single highest funding priority if only one intervention could be financed. Representatives from both hromadas considered the current oblast winter preparedness plan to be "rather consistent" with local needs, reflecting a moderately positive assessment. Reported optimism levels ranged from 2 to 5 out of 5 in Tomakivska Territorial Hromada (average 3.0) and from 3 to 5 out of 5 in Pokrovska Territorial Hromada (average 4.3).

7.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The highest level of household pessimism among all four assessed oblasts (70.0% of households reporting that they are unprepared) contrasts sharply with the comparatively optimistic assessments expressed by local authorities (average optimism scores of 3.0 in Tomakivska Territorial Hromada and 4.3 in Pokrovska Territorial Hromada). This represents the most pronounced divergence between household perceptions and institutional self-assessments observed anywhere in the study. The findings suggest that even where local authorities perceive moderate or relatively favourable prospects—possibly based on planned interventions or partial infrastructure improvements—the lived experience of households remains substantially more challenging. Consequently, institutional optimism should not be interpreted as a standalone indicator of household winter preparedness without being validated against household-level evidence.

8. Overall Analytical Assessment of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast



Dnipropetrovsk Oblast exhibits the highest levels of household needs among all four assessed oblasts across nearly every thematic area covered by the assessment. It records the highest prevalence of insufficient fuel resources (77.0%), the greatest demand for backup energy equipment (89.8%), the highest need for winter non-food items (84.2%), the lowest household capacity to finance housing repairs independently (73.4% unable to do so at all), and the lowest coverage of multi-purpose cash assistance (14.7%).

Assessing the actual capacity of the two surveyed territorial hromadas to respond to these needs is particularly challenging due to the quality and consistency of the available administrative data. In Pokrovska Territorial Hromada, reported coverage of heating assistance ranges from 35.7% to 100%, depending on the respondent, while Tomakivska Territorial Hromada does not maintain systematic records on either damaged households or the exact number of UCT beneficiaries.

Where administrative information is available, it both confirms and complicates the interpretation of household findings. On the one hand, the absence of consolidated information on generator stocks in Tomakivska Territorial Hromada and the reported availability of only three generators in Pokrovska Territorial Hromada—despite acknowledged shortages affecting healthcare facilities and water supply systems—support the conclusion that institutional preparedness remains insufficient. On the other hand, the relatively large absolute numbers of reported UCT beneficiaries within the surveyed hromadas contrast sharply with the lowest oblast-wide household-reported coverage, reflecting differences in administrative recording practices and further limiting direct comparability.

Perhaps the most striking finding is the substantial divergence between household perceptions and institutional assessments. While 70.0% of households reported being unprepared for the coming winter —the highest proportion observed anywhere in the assessment—local authorities expressed moderate to relatively high levels of optimism, with average preparedness ratings ranging from 3.0 to 4.3 out of 5. This represents the most pronounced mismatch between household needs and institutional perceptions identified across the four assessed oblasts.

Overall, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast combines the highest levels of household vulnerability with the least reliable and most internally inconsistent institutional data on response capacity. As a result, the oblast should be regarded not only as a priority for additional humanitarian assistance but also as the highest priority for strengthening local data collection, verification, and administrative reporting systems, thereby enabling future winterization planning to be based on consistent and reliable evidence.

5.3. Donetsk Oblast

The household needs assessment for Donetsk Oblast is based on interviews with 95 respondents and demonstrates that winter vulnerability is both multidimensional and closely interconnected. A total of 89 out of 95 households (93.7%) confirmed that they require assistance to prepare for the upcoming winter season. At the same time, 68 households (71.3%) considered themselves either largely or completely unprepared for winter, while only approximately 12 households (12.8%) described themselves as prepared.
The principal constraint remains households' limited financial capacity. Approximately 61 households (63.8%) identified insufficient funds as their main preparedness gap, while a further 23 households (24.5%) reported insufficient solid fuel. This high level of fuel-related vulnerability reflects the prevailing heating structure: approximately 49 households (51.6%) rely on stove heating, 30 (31.6%) use individual gas heating, 22 (23.2%) use wood-fired solid fuel boilers, and around 21 households (22.1%) use fuel briquettes or pellets. During the previous winter, 61 households (64.2%) reported that their financial resources or fuel stocks had been insufficient, while only five households (5.3%) considered themselves fully supplied. The most frequently requested forms of assistance are cash for solid fuel, reported by approximately 51 households (53.2%), and cash for utility payments, reported by around 46 households (47.9%).

The challenge is not limited to affordability. Approximately 16 households (17.0%) are completely unable to organize the purchase and delivery of fuel independently, while a similar number face substantial difficulties in doing so. Among respondents who answered the question on fuel logistics, 70.0% stated that direct household delivery is essential.

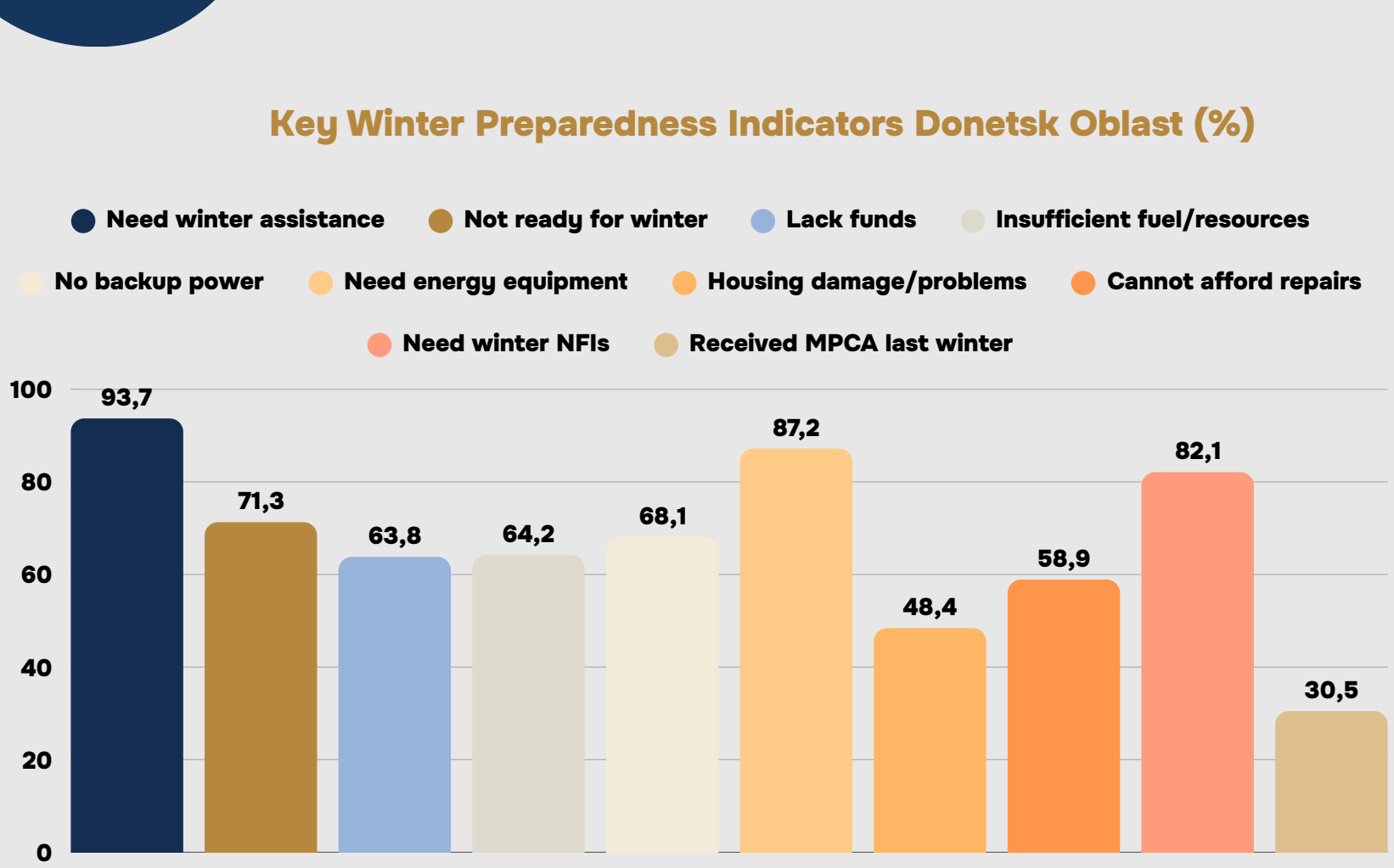
Energy vulnerability is similarly acute. Approximately 34 households (35.8%) experienced electricity outages several times per week, while 15 households (15.8%) reported almost daily outages. For 39 households (41.1%), the longest outage lasted more than 24 hours. The consequences of power cuts are cascading: approximately 71 respondents (74.7%) reported losing mobile connectivity or internet access; 49 households (51.6%) were unable to use household appliances; 48 (50.5%) experienced interruptions to water supply; 43 (45.3%) were unable to charge mobile phones; 38 (40.0%) were unable to work or study; and approximately 35 households (36.8%) lost access to heating.
Only around 30 households (31.9%) have access to backup power, while 65 households (68.1%) have none. Approximately 83 households (87.2%) reported a need for additional equipment, particularly portable charging stations and generators.

Vulnerability is further compounded by the dependence of essential household systems on electricity: around 40 households (42.6%) require electricity for both heating and water supply.
Housing-related needs also remain substantial. Approximately 46 households (48.4%) reported damage or deficiencies that could make winter living conditions more difficult. The most common needs include window repair or replacement, sealing cracks, wall insulation, roof repairs, and repairs to stoves and chimneys. Households have extremely limited capacity to finance such works independently: around 56 households (58.9%) are completely unable to pay for repairs or insulation, a further 37 households (38.9%) can cover only part of the costs, and just two households (2.1%) are able to finance the required works in full.

Approximately 78 households (82.1%) reported a need for winter non-food items (NFIs), particularly heaters, warm blankets, quilts, bedding, warm clothing, and winter footwear. However, only around 29 households (30.9%) received this type of assistance during the previous winter, while 66 households (69.1%) were not covered. Approximately 71 respondents (74.2%) identified cash assistance as the most convenient modality for purchasing winter items. Its effectiveness, however, is constrained by both low purchasing power and limited local market availability: around 27 households (28.3%) lack the financial means to purchase the required items, while 22 households (22.8%) reported that such goods were unavailable locally.

Only approximately 29 households (30.5%) received UCT during the previous winter, while 61 households (64.2%) received no such support. Most potential recipients indicated that they would prioritize spending on solid fuel and utility payments, yet 61.7% expected that a single payment would cover only part of their winter-related expenditure.
Overall, the findings demonstrate that household needs in Donetsk Oblast cannot be addressed through a single assistance modality. The most appropriate response would combine multi-purpose and targeted cash assistance with direct fuel delivery, the provision of portable charging stations and generators, housing repair and insulation programmes, and the distribution of winter NFIs. The scale of unmet need is substantial: 89 of the 95 surveyed households require assistance, 68 consider themselves unprepared for winter, 65 lack backup power, 78 require winter NFIs, 61 did not have sufficient resources for heating, and 56 are entirely unable to finance essential housing repairs independently.

Key Winter Preparedness Indicators Donetsk Oblast (%)



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The analysis draws on two primary datasets: a survey of 95 households residing in Donetsk Oblast and two questionnaires completed by representatives of local self-government authorities. The household sample is concentrated primarily in Cherkaska and Slovianska territorial hromadas, with a smaller number of responses from Kramatorska Territorial Hromada and other settlements. The local government questionnaires were completed by a representative of Cherkaska Settlement Territorial Hromada and by a respondent who identified the administrative area only as "Kramatorsk District," without specifying a particular hromada. Given the uneven territorial coverage, the findings describe the surveyed households and the two administrative units included in the assessment but should not be interpreted as statistically representative of Donetsk Oblast as a whole.

1. Heating and solid fuel

1.1. Household Assessment

Heating represents the principal source of winter vulnerability among surveyed households. Stove heating is used by 49 of the 95 households (51.6%), individual gas heating by 30 households (31.6%), wood-fired solid fuel boilers by 22 households (23.2%), and pellets or fuel briquettes by 21 households (22.1%). Only 13 households (13.7%) are connected to centralized heating. As some respondents use more than one heating source, these categories overlap; nevertheless, the overall pattern demonstrates substantial reliance on individual heating systems and solid fuel. During the previous winter season, 61 households (64.2%) reported that their financial resources and fuel stocks had been insufficient. Of these, 39 households (41.1%) responded "rather insufficient," while 22 households (23.2%) stated that their resources had been completely insufficient. Only five households (5.3%) considered themselves fully supplied. Assistance for the upcoming winter is required by 89 of the 95 surveyed households (93.7%).
The most frequently requested forms of support were cash for solid fuel, identified by 51 households (53.2%), and cash for utility payments, reported by 46 households (47.9%). Fuel briquettes or pellets were requested by 24 households (25.5%), while 23 households (24.5%) required direct delivery of firewood.

Among the 83 respondents who identified a preferred modality for fuel assistance, 46 (55.4%) preferred cash for independent procurement, 20 (24.1%) preferred in-kind fuel delivered directly to their homes, and nine (10.8%) preferred a combined modality. However, only 47 of 88 respondents (53.4%) were able to find a supplier and arrange delivery without difficulty. A further 16 respondents (18.2%) were unable to do so at all, while 15 (17.0%) faced substantial difficulties. Among the 90 respondents who answered the question on fuel logistics, 63 (70.0%) stated that direct delivery of in-kind fuel was essential.

1.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

Both local government representatives confirmed that heating assistance had been provided to residents during the 2025–2026 winter season. Cherkaska Territorial Hromada reported that 2,388 households required assistance and 1,985 households received it. Support included direct delivery of firewood, pellets, and cash assistance. For the upcoming season, the hromada estimates that all 2,550 households will require assistance, while confirmed resources currently cover only 236 households. Identified needs include coal, firewood, and pellets, while the principal risks are insufficient funding, damaged roads or bridges, and security constraints. The winter preparedness plan remains under development.

The representative of the second administrative unit reported that assistance was provided primarily in cash and that less than 10% of needs remained unmet. No winter preparedness plan for 2026–2027 has been approved. At the same time, the questionnaire records both projected needs and required solid fuel volumes for the next season as zero, despite also identifying insufficient funding and fuel provision as priorities. These zero values should therefore be interpreted with caution. Both respondents identified insufficient funding as the primary constraint, although they differed in their preferred response modality: one prioritized cash assistance, while the other favoured a combined approach.

1.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

Household and local government findings are aligned in identifying heating and fuel as the highest-priority area of intervention. The high prevalence of stove and solid fuel heating, the 64.2% of households that lacked sufficient resources during the previous winter, and the 93.7% requiring future assistance all support the prioritization of fuel assistance by local authorities.

At the same time, administrative data point to a substantial future coverage gap. In Cherkaska Territorial Hromada, confirmed resources currently cover only a small proportion of projected needs. Household preference for cash assistance cannot be applied uniformly: approximately one-third of respondents are either unable to arrange fuel procurement independently or face significant difficulties, while 70.0% require direct delivery. The most appropriate response is therefore a segmented model combining cash assistance for households with access to functioning markets and transport capacity with in-kind fuel delivery for people with limited mobility, residents of remote settlements, and households exposed to heightened security risks. The absence of finalized local preparedness plans further increases the risk of delayed procurement and logistics.

2. Electricity supply and backup power sources

2.1. Household Assessment

Electricity disruptions were both frequent and prolonged. A total of 34 households (35.8%) experienced outages several times per week, 15 households (15.8%) almost daily, and a further 15 households (15.8%) approximately once per week. For 39 respondents (41.1%), the longest outage lasted more than 24 hours. Another 13 households (13.7%) remained without electricity for 12–24 hours, while 16 households (16.8%) experienced outages lasting 6–12 hours.

The most common consequences were the loss of mobile connectivity or internet access, reported by 71 households (74.7%); inability to use household appliances, reported by 49 households (51.6%); disruption of water supply, reported by 48 households (50.5%); inability to charge devices, reported by 43 households (45.3%); inability to work or study, reported by 38 households (40.0%); loss of heating, reported by 35 households (36.8%); and inability to cook, reported by 33 households (34.7%).

Only 30 of 94 respondents (31.9%) had access to a backup power source, while 64 respondents (68.1%) had none. Most available devices were power banks, which cannot operate water pumps, heating systems, or refrigeration equipment. Additional equipment was required by 82 of 94 households (87.2%), with the highest demand for portable charging stations and generators.

For 40 of 94 households (42.6%), electricity is simultaneously essential for both heating and water supply, while for another 24 households (25.5%), it is critical for water supply alone. Household autonomy remains limited: 42 of 95 households (44.2%) have no backup power at all, 17 households (17.9%) can remain autonomous for no more than six hours, and only four households (4.2%) can sustain essential functions for more than 24 hours.

2.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

Both surveyed administrations identified frequent emergency outages as the principal problem experienced during the previous winter and reported that almost all critical facilities were equipped with backup power. The two administrative units reported having 10 and 27 operational generators, respectively. One respondent stated that all generators had been tested, while the other reported that only some had undergone testing. Available fuel reserves were estimated to support generator operation for 1–3 days in one administrative unit and for more than seven days in the other.

Both respondents identified additional fuel as a priority need, while Cherkaska Territorial Hromada also reported a need for additional generators. In the event of a prolonged blackout, one respondent anticipated disruptions to water supply, mobile communications, and internet access, while the other did not specify which services would be at risk. Assessments of overall preparedness also differed: Cherkaska Territorial Hromada considered itself fully prepared, whereas the second representative was unable to provide a definitive assessment.

2.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

At the level of critical infrastructure, the surveyed administrative units demonstrate comparatively stronger preparedness than households. Local authorities reported that almost all essential facilities have access to backup power, while 68.1% of surveyed households have no backup power source at all. This creates a two-tier vulnerability: even where selected municipal or social facilities remain operational, households may still be left without electricity at home, while power outages simultaneously disrupt access to water, heating, communications, and opportunities to work or study.

The need for generator fuel identified by local authorities is consistent with the risk of limited institutional autonomy. However, household demand is considerably broader and includes portable charging stations, generators, and battery storage solutions. Winter preparedness should therefore support both the operational autonomy of critical infrastructure and the household-level autonomy of the most vulnerable population groups. Particular attention should be given to testing the entire generator fleet and establishing guaranteed fuel reserves sufficient for at least several days of operation.

3. Points of Invincibility and community support facilities

3.1. Household Assessment

Awareness of Points of Invincibility is high: 81 of 95 respondents (85.3%) knew the location of the nearest facility. However, only 32 households (33.7%) had used one during the previous winter: 24 households (25.3%) had used them several times and eight (8.4%) had used them regularly.

The functions considered most important were charging electronic devices, identified in 65 of 91 responses (71.4%); internet access, reported in 45 responses (49.5%); access to humanitarian assistance, reported in 37 responses (40.7%); drinking water, reported in 18 responses (19.8%); and information services, reported in 15 responses (16.5%).

Among 94 respondents, 48 (51.1%) could reach the nearest Point of Invincibility without difficulty, while 28 (29.8%) experienced some difficulties and seven (7.4%) were unable to reach one independently. For 19 respondents (20.2%), the journey took more than 30 minutes or required travel to a neighbouring settlement. User assessments were generally positive: 24 respondents stated that the facilities fully met their needs, while 23 considered them largely adequate.

Nevertheless, 55 of 94 respondents (58.5%) believed that an additional or mobile Point of Invincibility was definitely or probably needed. Reported gaps included insufficient seating or space for prolonged stays, inadequate sanitation, a lack of charging points, and limited opportunities to obtain hot drinks or prepare food.

3.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

Across the two surveyed administrative units, a total of 11 Points of Invincibility operated during the previous winter: five in one administrative unit and six in Cherkaska Territorial Hromada. For the upcoming season, one administration plans to reduce its network from five facilities to one, while Cherkaska Territorial Hromada intends to maintain all six. Their reported simultaneous capacities are 80 and 150 people, respectively.

One questionnaire reported 2,500 users over the winter season, a figure exceeding the stated population of the administrative unit and therefore requiring verification. Cherkaska Territorial Hromada reported 250 users. Both respondents assessed the facilities as generally well equipped, while simultaneously identifying fuel shortages. Cherkaska Territorial Hromada also reported insufficient furniture and space for people to remain at the facilities. Estimated autonomy was four to seven days in one administrative unit and more than seven days in the other. Cherkaska Territorial Hromada acknowledged that some settlements or population groups lack practical access to a Point of Invincibility, while the second administration reported no such gap.

3.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

High public awareness does not necessarily translate into full accessibility. Almost half of surveyed households either experience difficulties reaching a facility, cannot travel independently, or do not know its exact location. The finding that 58.5% require an additional or mobile facility is consistent with the territorial access gap acknowledged by Cherkaska Territorial Hromada.

The planned reduction from five facilities to one in the second administrative unit presents a particular risk, unless it reflects a data-entry error or a change in the security situation. Even where facilities are assessed positively, insufficient fuel could rapidly reduce their operational autonomy. Priority should therefore be given not only to the formal opening of Points of Invincibility but also to geographical coverage, mobile solutions, realistic capacity planning, accessibility for people with limited mobility, and guaranteed fuel supplies.

4. Housing insulation

4.1. Household Assessment

A total of 46 of 95 households (48.4%) reported housing damage or deficiencies that could make winter living conditions more difficult, while a further seven households (7.4%) were unable to assess the condition of their homes.
Among respondents who answered the detailed question on required works, the most frequently reported needs were window repair or replacement, identified by approximately 30 households (38.0%); sealing cracks, reported by 20 households (25.3%); wall insulation, reported by 18 households (22.8%); roof repairs, reported by 18 households (22.8%); roof or attic insulation, reported by 14 households (17.7%); and repairs to stoves or chimneys, also reported by 14 households (17.7%).
During the previous winter, 27 of 94 households (28.7%) reported that their homes had not been sufficiently warm. Household financial capacity is critically limited: 56 of 95 respondents (58.9%) are completely unable to pay for repairs or insulation, 37 (38.9%) can cover only part of the costs, and just two households (2.1%) can finance the necessary works in full.
Among 94 respondents, 61 (64.9%) identified cash assistance as the most convenient modality, 16 (17.0%) preferred a combination of cash and construction materials, and 14 (14.9%) preferred works to be carried out by a specialized organization. The highest-priority interventions were housing insulation, identified in 29 of 87 responses (33.3%); window repairs, identified in 27 responses (31.0%); and repairs to stoves or chimneys, identified in 14 responses (16.1%).

4.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

Administrative data indicate sharply different reported levels of housing damage. One questionnaire stated that approximately 80% of the housing stock had been damaged, that 550 households required repair assistance, and that 500 households received support. For the upcoming season, projected need was reported as covering 100% of households.
In Cherkaska Territorial Hromada, the field recording the total number of damaged houses contained a value of zero. However, the same questionnaire reported that 37 households had required repairs and that all had reportedly received assistance, while 25 households were expected to require support during the next season. This internal inconsistency suggests that the zero value more likely reflects the absence of an updated assessment than the actual absence of housing damage.
Both administrations identified damaged windows and roofs as common problems, while heating systems and doors were also mentioned. One administration reported no capacity to carry out repairs directly, while Cherkaska Territorial Hromada stated that it could undertake only emergency repairs. Identified needs include construction materials, repair funding, implementation capacity, and technical expertise. The preferred response modalities were cash assistance to households or a combination of several forms of support.

4.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

Almost half of surveyed households reported housing-related problems, while 97.8% are unable to finance the necessary works in full. This is consistent with the limited capacity of local authorities, which either cannot undertake repairs or are able to provide only emergency assistance.

Household preference for cash assistance is important but cannot be applied universally. Damage to roofs, heating systems, and structural elements requires technical assessment, qualified contractors, and quality control. A differentiated response model is therefore most appropriate: minor repairs and insulation measures can be supported through targeted cash or vouchers, while more complex damage should be addressed through construction materials, technical supervision, and contracted repair works. The inconsistencies in administrative figures also demonstrate the need for a unified housing damage registry and a standardized needs assessment methodology.

5. Winter non-food items (NFIs)

5.1. Household Assessment

A total of 78 of the 95 surveyed households (82.1%) reported requiring winter non-food items (NFIs). Among respondents who specified their priority needs, heaters were the most frequently requested item, identified by approximately 53 households (65.4%), followed by warm blankets (46 households; 56.8%), quilts (36 households; 44.4%), bedding (31 households; 38.3%), warm outerwear (24 households; 29.6%), thermal clothing (22 households; 27.2%), and winter footwear (18 households; 22.2%).

Despite this high level of need, only 29 of 94 respondents (30.9%) received winter NFI assistance during the previous winter season, while 65 households (69.1%) received no such support. Among those who did receive assistance, only five respondents reported that it fully met their needs, whereas 24 indicated that it covered them only partially.

The preferred assistance modality is cash assistance, selected by 69 of 93 respondents (74.2%) to enable households to purchase the items they need independently. A further 12 respondents (12.9%) preferred a pre-packaged winter kit, while six (6.5%) favoured vouchers.

In 45 of 91 households (49.5%), winter NFIs are required for all household members. Children, older people, and persons with disabilities were identified as the population groups with the greatest needs.

Households also reported significant barriers to purchasing winter items independently. Among 92 respondents, 26 households (28.3%) lacked sufficient financial resources, 21 (22.8%) reported that the required items were unavailable on local markets, and 25 (27.2%) stated that only a very limited range of products was available. By contrast, only 12 households (13.0%) were able to purchase the required items without difficulty.

When asked to prioritize a single form of winter NFI assistance, 35 of 93 respondents (37.6%) selected heaters, 24 (25.8%) prioritized blankets and warm throws, and 18 (19.4%) identified warm clothing as their highest priority.

5.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

At the administrative level, one respondent reported that approximately 2,000 beneficiaries received winter non-food items (NFIs) during the previous winter season. However, this figure exceeds the reported population of the administrative unit and therefore requires clarification regarding the unit of measurement or reporting period. Cherkaska Territorial Hromada was unable to confirm that winter NFI distributions had taken place.

Projected needs for the 2026–2027 winter season amount to 1,200 people in the first administrative unit and 1,584 people in Cherkaska Territorial Hromada. The first respondent identified warm outerwear, thermal clothing, and winter footwear as the most urgently required items, while Cherkaska Territorial Hromada prioritized thermal clothing and blankets.

Significant unmet needs remain for warm clothing, winter footwear, thermal clothing, blankets, and warm throws. Although the two administrative respondents identified priority beneficiary groups somewhat differently, they consistently highlighted older people, persons with disabilities, low-income households, households with children, large families, people living alone, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) as the groups requiring the greatest level of support.

5.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The gap between identified needs and previous assistance coverage remains substantial. While 82.1% of surveyed households require winter non-food items (NFIs), only 30.9% reported receiving such assistance during the previous winter season. Administrative estimates likewise indicate considerable demand for the upcoming winter, although reported figures on previous distributions require further verification before they can be used for planning purposes.

Households most frequently prioritized heaters, blankets, and warm throws, whereas local authorities placed greater emphasis on warm clothing, winter footwear, and thermal clothing. These differences should not be interpreted as contradictory. Rather, they reflect two complementary perspectives: households describe the practical challenges of maintaining adequate living conditions inside the home, while local authorities tend to focus on the most visible needs of vulnerable population groups.

Limited availability of winter items on local markets further constrains the effectiveness of cash assistance alone. Consequently, cash assistance should be complemented by voucher programmes or in-kind distributions in locations where local markets are not functioning or where essential winter items are unavailable.

The findings also suggest that winter NFI assistance packages should not follow a universal approach. Instead, assistance should be tailored to household composition and heating arrangements, ensuring that support reflects the specific needs of different household types and local living conditions.

6. Cash assistance

6.1. Household Assessment

During the previous winter season, 29 of the 95 surveyed households (30.5%) received UCT, while 61 households (64.2%) did not receive any such support. A further five respondents were unable to answer the question. Among recipients, cash assistance was used primarily to cover utility payments, solid fuel purchases, medicines, and food.

If provided with a new cash transfer, 51 of 93 respondents (54.8%) indicated that they would prioritize purchasing solid fuel, 24 respondents (25.8%) would use the assistance to pay utility bills, and seven respondents (7.5%) would invest in housing repair or insulation.

When asked about the most effective form of assistance, 43 of 93 respondents (46.2%) preferred cash assistance alone, while an almost identical proportion—42 respondents (45.2%)—favoured a combination of cash and in-kind assistance.

Cash assistance was considered most necessary for solid fuel, identified in 62 of 93 responses (66.7%), followed by utility payments (46 responses; 49.5%), medicines (43 responses; 46.2%), warm clothing (34 responses; 36.6%), and housing repair and insulation (30 responses; 32.3%).

Households expressed mixed views regarding the capacity of local markets. Among 94 respondents, 51 (54.3%) considered local markets to be fully or generally adequate to meet winter-related needs, whereas 39 respondents (41.5%) regarded them as largely or completely inadequate.

Only 18 of 94 respondents (19.1%) expected that a single cash transfer would fully cover their essential winter needs. By contrast, 58 respondents (61.7%) believed that it would provide only partial support, indicating that although UCT is viewed as an important assistance modality, it is generally insufficient on its own to address the full range of winter-related household needs.

6.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

At the administrative level, both respondents confirmed that residents received UCT during the 2025–2026 winter season. Cherkaska Territorial Hromada reported that assistance reached 854 households, while the representative of the second administrative unit was unable to provide an estimate of the number of beneficiaries.

According to local authorities, cash assistance was used primarily for the purchase of solid fuel, utility payments, housing repair and insulation, and winter non-food items. The priority beneficiary groups identified by both administrations include older people, persons with disabilities, low-income households, large families, and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Assessments of local market capacity differed. One respondent considered local market availability insufficient to adequately support cash-based assistance, whereas Cherkaska Territorial Hromada assessed market conditions as generally adequate.
Both respondents regarded cash assistance as an effective response modality overall. However, Cherkaska Territorial Hromada noted that under conditions of security restrictions or disrupted logistics, in-kind assistance or direct household delivery may be more appropriate than cash alone.
In the view of both administrations, multi-purpose cash assistance is most effective when used to cover utility costs, solid fuel purchases, and winter-related household items, reflecting the principal expenditure priorities identified at the household level.

6.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The findings indicate broad agreement between households and local authorities that UCT is one of the most effective winter response modalities, particularly for covering the costs of solid fuel and utility payments. At the same time, 45.2% of surveyed households explicitly preferred a combined assistance model, while 41.5% considered local markets insufficient to fully support cash-based interventions. These findings reinforce the concerns raised by local authorities regarding the impact of security constraints and logistical disruptions on the effectiveness of cash assistance.
Accordingly, UCT is likely to be most effective in areas where markets are functioning and households have reliable access to vendors, transport, and essential goods. In locations where these conditions are not met, cash assistance should be complemented by targeted in-kind support or direct household deliveries. In addition, transfer values should be adjusted to reflect the actual cost of a minimum winter household basket, rather than relying on standardized payment amounts.
The relatively low level of previous coverage—only 30.5% of surveyed households received UCT during the previous winter season—combined with the finding that 61.7% of respondents expect a cash transfer to cover only part of their winter needs, suggests that a single standard cash payment is unlikely to provide adequate winter preparedness. A more appropriate approach would be either higher targeted transfer values or multiple seasonal cash instalments aligned with the progression of the winter heating season.

7. Overall priorities for winter preparedness

7.1. Household Assessment

Households identified heating-related challenges as the most significant difficulties experienced during the previous winter season. Among the 95 surveyed households, 28 respondents (29.5%) identified heating as their primary challenge, followed by electricity outages (26 respondents; 27.4%), utility costs (20 respondents; 21.1%), and shortages of solid fuel (16 respondents; 16.8%).

When asked to identify the three most important forms of winter assistance, respondents most frequently selected cash assistance for solid fuel (58 of 94 respondents; 61.7%), charging stations, generators, or other backup power sources (57 respondents; 60.6%), and cash assistance for utility payments (51 respondents; 54.3%). Other forms of support—including direct household delivery of solid fuel, winter non-food items (NFIs), and housing repair or insulation—were each selected by approximately 28–29% of respondents.

When required to identify a single highest-priority intervention, 57 of 94 respondents (60.6%) chose cash assistance, while 25 respondents (26.6%) prioritized solid fuel, and nine respondents (9.6%) selected backup power equipment.

Overall household preparedness for the upcoming winter remains low. Sixty-seven of 94 respondents (71.3%) considered themselves unprepared for the next winter season, including 46 respondents (48.9%) who reported being somewhat unprepared and 21 respondents (22.3%) who considered themselves completely unprepared. By comparison, only 12 respondents (12.8%) regarded themselves as prepared, and only one respondent reported being fully prepared.

The principal barriers to winter preparedness remain financial. Among 94 respondents, 60 (63.8%) identified lack of financial resources as the greatest obstacle, followed by insufficient solid fuel (23 respondents; 24.5%) and lack of backup power equipment (seven respondents; 7.4%).

Households rated their own capacity to cope with winter challenges at an average of 2.7 out of 5, while 38 respondents (40.0%) assigned themselves a score of 1 or 2, indicating limited resilience and a low capacity for self-recovery without external assistance.

Perceptions of local government preparedness were mixed. Among 94 respondents, 35 (37.2%) considered local authorities' winter preparedness measures to be fully or generally responsive to community needs, 27 respondents (28.7%) viewed them as inadequate, and 32 respondents (34.0%) were unable to provide an assessment, suggesting a substantial degree of uncertainty regarding local preparedness efforts.

7.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

At the administrative level, the most critical challenges experienced during the previous winter were identified as access to solid fuel, the affordability of utility payments, damaged or insufficiently insulated housing, and logistical and security constraints affecting the delivery of assistance.

Looking ahead to the 2026–2027 winter season, both administrative respondents identified solid fuel support and UCT as their highest priorities, while one administration also highlighted the need for winter non-food items (NFIs). Notably, when asked to identify the areas where needs remain unmet, both respondents again cited solid fuel and cash assistance, indicating that existing resources are insufficient to meet anticipated demand, although the wording of the survey question may have influenced respondents' interpretation.

According to local authorities, the most common requests received from residents relate to utility payments, solid fuel, multi-purpose cash assistance, and winter non-food items. When asked which single intervention should be prioritized if funding were available for only one activity, one administration selected solid fuel assistance, while Cherkaska Territorial Hromada prioritized multi-purpose cash assistance.

Assessments of the regional winter preparedness plan differed. One administration considered the oblast-level plan to be fully aligned with local needs, whereas Cherkaska Territorial Hromada was unable to assess its adequacy.

Finally, both administrative respondents rated their level of optimism regarding the region's future at 2 out of 5, reflecting cautious expectations and limited confidence in near-term improvements, even among local government representatives.

7.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The findings demonstrate a high degree of alignment between household and administrative perspectives regarding winter response priorities. Both groups consistently identified solid fuel, UCT, utility costs, and energy resilience as the most critical areas requiring support. However, local authorities placed comparatively less emphasis on household backup power solutions, despite households ranking charging stations, generators, and other backup power sources almost as highly as solid fuel assistance. This difference likely reflects the administrative focus on maintaining critical infrastructure, which is generally better equipped with backup power than private households.

The finding that 71.3% of surveyed households consider themselves unprepared for the upcoming winter, combined with the fact that 63.8% identify insufficient financial resources as their principal constraint, indicates that winter assistance should begin well before the onset of the heating season and be delivered at a scale sufficient to address widespread unmet needs.

The inability of one-third of respondents to assess the adequacy of local government preparedness measures also suggests a need for stronger public communication. Local authorities should improve awareness of winter preparedness plans, beneficiary selection criteria, and available assistance programmes to ensure that households understand both the support available and the mechanisms for accessing it.

Given the limited number of administrative respondents, these findings should be complemented by additional verification at the level of each territorial hromada before detailed operational planning. Nevertheless, the available evidence already provides a strong basis for an integrated winter response package combining solid fuel assistance, multi-purpose cash assistance, household energy resilience measures (including backup power solutions), housing repair and insulation, winter non-food items (NFIs), and mobile Points of Invincibility. Such a comprehensive approach would address the interconnected risks affecting household winter preparedness while increasing overall community resilience.



8. General Overview of Donetsk Oblast

The findings from 95 surveyed households and two representatives of local self-government demonstrate that winter vulnerability in the assessed communities of Donetsk Oblast is driven not by a single factor, but by the cumulative effect of financial hardship, dependence on solid fuel, prolonged electricity outages, limited household energy autonomy, housing damage, and insufficient coverage of humanitarian assistance.

The scale of these vulnerabilities is reflected in several key indicators. Eighty-nine of 95 households (93.7%) reported requiring some form of winter assistance, 82 of 94 households (87.2%) identified a need for additional household energy equipment, 78 of 95 households (82.1%) required winter non-food items (NFIs), 67 of 94 households (71.3%) considered themselves unprepared for the upcoming winter season, and 64 of 94 households (68.1%) lacked any form of backup power supply.

At the same time, 56 of 95 households (58.9%) reported being unable to afford essential housing repairs, while 60 of 94 respondents (63.8%) identified insufficient financial resources as the principal barrier to winter preparedness.
The assessment also highlights uneven institutional capacity across the surveyed communities. Local authorities generally possess generators, Points of Invincibility, and practical experience in coordinating winter assistance, yet their response capacity remains heavily dependent on external funding, fuel availability, logistics, and humanitarian partners, while their ability to finance or implement housing repairs independently is limited.

The most significant systemic gap identified by the assessment lies in the disparity between institutional preparedness and household resilience. While critical infrastructure is generally considered to be comparatively well equipped with backup power, most households remain without backup energy solutions, leaving them highly vulnerable to cascading disruptions affecting electricity, water supply, heating, telecommunications, and access to information during prolonged outages.

A second structural gap concerns the delivery modality of humanitarian assistance. Although households overwhelmingly prefer cash assistance, a substantial proportion of respondents lack access to functioning local markets or face logistical barriers that prevent them from purchasing or transporting essential winter goods. These findings indicate that cash-based interventions alone cannot fully address winter needs in all locations, reinforcing the need for flexible delivery models tailored to local market functionality and access constraints.

5.4. Kharkiv Oblast

The findings indicate that Kharkiv Oblast remains one of the most winter-vulnerable regions included in this assessment. The combination of proximity to active frontlines, sustained attacks on energy infrastructure, prolonged electricity outages, and severe winter temperatures creates a complex humanitarian situation in which winter-related needs extend well beyond the provision of solid fuel or winter non-food items (NFIs) alone.

The findings for the oblast should, however, be interpreted with caution, as the household survey covered only 25 households. The administrative component included representatives from four territorial hromadas: Tsyrkunivska Territorial Hromada (population 3,347), Lypetska Territorial Hromada (population 46), Iziumska Territorial Hromada (population 28,800), and Kupianska Territorial Hromada (population 777). The latter is located within an area of active hostilities, and consequently most quantitative indicators were unavailable. For this reason, the analysis places greater emphasis on the qualitative consistency between household-reported needs and the assessments provided by territorial hromadas than on quantitative comparisons.

One of the defining characteristics of Kharkiv Oblast is the population's high dependence on uninterrupted electricity supply. Seventy-six percent of surveyed households (76.0%) reported experiencing electricity outages on an almost daily basis, while 64.0% identified power outages as the most difficult challenge during the previous winter. Furthermore, 76.0% of respondents reported losing heating as a direct consequence of electricity outages, reflecting the dependence of gas-fired heating systems on electrical power. Only 24.0% of households have access to backup power sources, representing the lowest level of household energy autonomy among all assessed oblasts. At the same time, 48.0% of households depend on electricity for both space heating and water supply, further increasing their vulnerability during prolonged power interruptions.

Despite gradual improvements in backup power provision for critical infrastructure, the level of preparedness across the surveyed communities remains highly uneven. Tsyrkunivska Territorial Hromada reported that most critical facilities are equipped with backup power systems and currently has nine generators, providing an operational autonomy of 4–7 days. Lypetska Territorial Hromada, by contrast, has no centralized electricity supply, yet possesses 15 generators with fuel reserves sufficient to maintain operations for more than seven days.

Iliumska Territorial Hromada has 16 generators, although their operational autonomy is limited to 1–3 days. The community identified frequent electricity outages, an insufficient number of backup power sources, and fuel shortages as its principal energy-related challenges. No quantitative information was available for Kupianska Territorial Hromada due to ongoing active hostilities. Consequently, although some communities have established backup power capacity for critical infrastructure, household access to autonomous electricity sources remains inadequate, and the level of institutional preparedness varies considerably across the assessed territorial hromadas.

Significant challenges also persist in relation to household heating. Among surveyed households, gas-fired heating is the predominant heating source (56.0%), followed by district heating systems (36.0%). Sixty percent of households (60.0%) reported requiring assistance to prepare for the upcoming winter season—the lowest proportion among the assessed oblasts. However, among those requiring support, 68.4% identified cash assistance to cover utility payments as their primary need, rather than assistance for purchasing solid fuel. This finding reflects the predominance of gas and centralized heating systems in the surveyed areas, where household heating costs are driven primarily by utility expenditures rather than fuel procurement.

At the community level, the situation is highly heterogeneous. Tsyrkunivska and Lypetska Territorial Hromadas reported that all registered heating assistance needs had been fully covered. In Iziumska Territorial Hromada, the reported coverage of registered heating needs also reached 100%. However, assistance recipients accounted for only 15.1% of all households in the community. This suggests that the reported coverage rate reflects only registered beneficiaries and may therefore mask a substantially larger volume of unmet needs among households that were not included in assistance programmes.
No comparable information was available for Kupianska Territorial Hromada due to ongoing active hostilities.
Under these conditions, UCT remains the most flexible modality for supporting household heating needs. However, its effectiveness depends on comprehensive identification of vulnerable households, the functionality of local markets, and the ability to physically transport goods and services to frontline communities.

Housing conditions remain another important area of concern. At the household level, only 24.0% of surveyed households reported that their homes had sustained damage, while 64.0% considered their dwellings to be adequately warm. On the surface, these represent the most favourable housing indicators among the four assessed oblasts. However, these findings should be interpreted with caution, as they do not adequately reflect conditions in the most severely affected frontline communities, where the scale of housing damage and winterization needs is substantially greater than captured by the household sample.

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Data provided by local authorities present a considerably more severe and uneven picture. In Tsyrkunivska Territorial Hromada, 156 households were reported to have sustained housing damage, of which 88 households applied for repair assistance. In Lypetska Territorial Hromada, all 36 households required housing repair assistance during the previous winter season. In Iziumska Territorial Hromada, 58 damaged households were identified, 48 of which received repair assistance.

The most critical situation was reported in Kupianska Territorial Hromada, where, according to the community representative, virtually all residential buildings have been damaged or destroyed. Despite the scale of destruction, no households received housing repair assistance. This represents the most severe housing situation among all ten territorial hromadas included in the assessment.

These findings indicate that the oblast-level estimate of 24.0% of households reporting housing damage should not be interpreted as a comprehensive representation of housing needs across Kharkiv Oblast. Rather, it most likely reflects the composition of the household sample, which included very limited representation from settlements located within areas of active hostilities. The need for financial support for housing repairs also remains substantial: 48.0% of surveyed households identified housing repair or insulation as one of their priority uses for cash assistance.

Demand for winter non-food items (NFIs) at the household level is comparatively lower than in the other assessed oblasts, with 48.0% of respondents reporting a need for this type of assistance. Among households requiring support, the highest demand was for heaters (53.3%) and warm blankets (46.7%).

However, humanitarian coverage of winter NFIs varies considerably across the assessed territorial hromadas. Tsyrkunivska Territorial Hromada reported distributing winter NFI kits to 200 beneficiaries, whereas Lypetska, Iziumska, and Kupianska Territorial Hromadas reported no winter NFI distributions during the previous winter season.

The relatively low oblast-level estimate of demand for winter non-food items (NFIs) also masks substantial disparities between communities. Iziumska Territorial Hromada projects that 15,000 people will require winter NFI assistance during the 2026–2027 winter season, representing the largest absolute caseload among all territorial hromadas included in the assessment. In Kupianska Territorial Hromada, local authorities anticipate that virtually the entire remaining population will require winter NFI support, despite the fact that no winter NFI distributions were carried out during the previous winter season.

Accordingly, priority assistance should continue to target older people, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons (IDPs), large families, and residents of communities located in close proximity to active hostilities.
UCT remains an important mechanism for supporting households, although previous coverage among surveyed households was limited. During the previous winter season, only 12.5% of surveyed households reported receiving cash assistance. The principal intended uses of future cash assistance are utility payments, identified by 88.0% of respondents—the highest proportion among all assessed oblasts—followed by housing repair or insulation (48.0%).

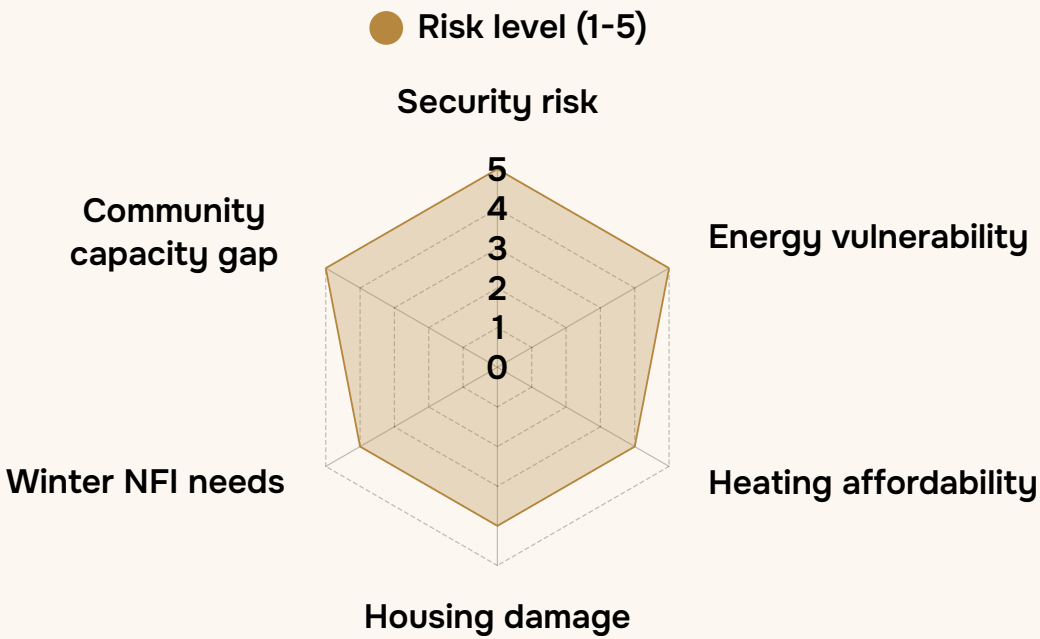
Administrative data indicate substantially broader coverage than reported by the household survey. Tsyrkunivska Territorial Hromada reported providing multi-purpose cash assistance to 806 households, Lypetska Territorial Hromada assisted all 28 households identified as requiring support, and Iziumska Territorial Hromada reported assisting 2,160 households. No comparable information was available for Kupianska Territorial Hromada due to the ongoing security situation.

Overall, the findings indicate that Kharkiv Oblast is characterised by the combination of high humanitarian needs and significant security risks, both of which substantially constrain the ability of local authorities to ensure comprehensive winter preparedness using their own resources.
At the aggregate level, the oblast appears to perform comparatively well. Fifty-six percent of surveyed households (56.0%) considered themselves prepared for the upcoming winter season, while 24.0% reported being unprepared. Twenty-four percent (24.0%) of households reported housing damage, and 48.0% identified a need for winter non-food items (NFIs).
However, these aggregate indicators conceal critical localised vulnerabilities. These include the complete absence of centralized electricity supply in Lypetska Territorial Hromada, the limited operational autonomy of generators in Iziumska Territorial Hromada (only 1–3 days), the 22.7-fold overload of the community's Points of Invincibility, the near-total destruction of the housing stock in Kupianska Territorial Hromada, and substantial unmet humanitarian needs across the most severely affected frontline communities.

Despite ongoing efforts to strengthen the resilience of critical infrastructure, the scale and geographical disparity of winter-related needs exceed the current capacities and resources of local authorities. These findings underscore the continued need for government support and targeted international humanitarian assistance, particularly in the areas of household backup power solutions, housing repair and insulation, winter non-food items (NFIs), UCT, and targeted support for communities located in areas of active hostilities.
A comprehensive and geographically differentiated response will be essential to reduce winter-related risks and strengthen household resilience across the most conflict-affected parts of Kharkiv Oblast.

This chart compares household-reported needs with the level of community preparedness across the key indicators identified by the assessment.

Qualitative Winter Preparedness Profile Kharkiv Oblast



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Household-level data (n=25) should be interpreted as indicative rather than representative. Community-level data cover four territorial hromadas: Tsyrkunivska (3,347 residents), Lypetska (46 residents—the smallest community in the overall sample), Iziumska (28,800 residents), and Kupianska (777 residents, located in an area of active hostilities, with most quantitative fields left incomplete).

1. Heating and solid fuel

1.1. Household Assessment

Household heating is primarily provided through gas-based systems (56.0%) and district heating (36.0%). Only 60.0% of surveyed households reported requiring heating assistance for the upcoming winter season—the lowest proportion among all assessed oblasts. Among households requiring support, the predominant need is cash assistance for utility payments (68.4%), rather than solid fuel.

1.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

Community-level findings reveal substantial differences in both the scale and coverage of heating assistance. Tsyrkunivska Territorial Hromada reported that 1,056 households required heating support, and all received assistance, achieving 100% coverage of identified needs. These beneficiaries represent 68.8% of all households in the community, with no unmet need, making Tsyrkunivska the best-performing community in terms of overall coverage among all assessed territorial hromadas.

In Lypetska Territorial Hromada, 28 of the community's 36 households required assistance, and all received support, likewise resulting in 100% coverage.

In Iziumska Territorial Hromada, 2,380 households were identified as requiring assistance, and all received support, corresponding to 100% coverage of registered needs. However, these households represent only 15.1% of the community's total 15,780 households—the lowest level of coverage relative to the overall population among all assessed territories. Local authorities further project that the number of households requiring heating assistance will increase to 7,825 during the 2026–2027 winter season, indicating a substantial deterioration in expected humanitarian needs.

No comparable data were available for Kupianska Territorial Hromada due to the ongoing security situation and active hostilities.

1.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The relatively favourable household-level findings—where only 60.0% of surveyed households reported requiring heating assistance, the lowest proportion among all assessed oblasts—are broadly consistent with the complete coverage of identified needs reported in Tsyrkunivska and Lypetska Territorial Hromadas. However, this apparent picture contrasts sharply with the situation in Iziumska Territorial Hromada, where the reported 100% coverage of registered needs in reality represents assistance to only 15.1% of all households in the community.

This constitutes the most important analytical finding within the Kharkiv chapter. The comparatively positive oblast-level picture is likely driven by the inclusion of smaller, better-served communities such as Tsyrkunivska and Lypetska, and therefore does not adequately reflect the substantially larger and likely underrepresented population of Iziumska Territorial Hromada, where the actual level of unmet need is likely to be considerably higher than suggested by the registered caseload.

The absence of quantitative data for Kupianska Territorial Hromada, resulting from active hostilities and restricted access, represents an additional and critical analytical limitation. Rather than indicating an absence of need, this data gap is itself a strong indicator of the humanitarian constraints affecting the most severely conflict-affected communities and suggests that the true scale of unmet winter assistance needs is likely underestimated at the oblast level.

2. Electricity supply and backup power sources

2.1. Household Assessment

Seventy-six percent (76.0%) of surveyed households reported experiencing near-daily power outages during the previous winter season. The loss of heating was identified as the most significant consequence by 76.0% of respondents, reflecting the widespread dependence of gas-fired heating systems on electricity for operation.
Household energy resilience remains particularly weak. Only 24.0% of households reported having access to backup power, the lowest proportion among all assessed oblasts. In addition, 48.0% of surveyed households depend on electricity for both heating and water supply, highlighting the high level of exposure to prolonged power disruptions and the critical importance of expanding household backup power solutions in Kharkiv Oblast.

2.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

Community-level findings reveal substantial variation in the resilience of local electricity systems. In Tsyrkunivska Territorial Hromada, most critical facilities are equipped with backup power, supported by nine generators providing an estimated 4–7 days of operational autonomy.

In Lypetska Territorial Hromada, centralized electricity supply is entirely unavailable. However, the community maintains 15 generators capable of sustaining operations for more than seven days, representing the highest level of backup autonomy among all assessed communities and partially offsetting the absence of grid electricity.

In Iziumska Territorial Hromada, local authorities reported the broadest range of electricity-related challenges, including frequent power outages, insufficient backup power capacity, and fuel shortages. The community has 16 generators, only some of which have been fully tested, providing an estimated 1–3 days of operational autonomy—the lowest level of resilience among communities for which data were available.

No comparable information was available for Kupianska Territorial Hromada, as the area remains within an active combat zone.

2.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The lowest rate of household access to backup power among all assessed oblasts (24.0%) and the high proportion of households simultaneously dependent on electricity for both heating and water supply (48.0%) are further reinforced by the community-level findings. The limited operational autonomy of Iziumska Territorial Hromada (1–3 days) and the contrasting case of Lypetska Territorial Hromada, where the complete absence of centralized electricity is sustained only through an extensive generator fleet, demonstrate that electricity supply—not the availability of solid fuel—constitutes the principal winter vulnerability in Kharkiv Oblast.

The convergence of household- and community-level evidence independently supports the same conclusion: strengthening energy resilience should remain the primary priority for winter preparedness interventions. This finding is consistent with household responses identifying power outages (64.0%) as the most significant winter challenge, exceeding concerns related to heating or fuel availability.

3. Points of Invincibility and community support facilities

3.1. Household Assessment

Awareness of Points of Invincibility was exceptionally high, with 96.0% of surveyed households reporting that they knew the location of their nearest facility—the highest level of awareness among all assessed oblasts. However, actual utilization remained limited, with only 16.0% of households reporting that they had used a Point of Invincibility during the previous winter season.

3.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

Community-level findings reveal substantial differences in the availability and operational capacity of Points of Invincibility across Kharkiv Oblast. Tsyrkunivska Territorial Hromada maintains four operational facilities with a combined capacity of 100 people (approximately 80 occupied under current conditions). These facilities are fully equipped and are planned to remain operational during the upcoming winter season.

In Lypetska Territorial Hromada, no Points of Invincibility are currently operational or planned. Given the community's very small size (36 households), this absence is broadly consistent with the local context.

In Iziumska Territorial Hromada, six Points of Invincibility are available with a combined simultaneous capacity of 150 people. Despite this limited capacity, the facilities reportedly served 3,400 individuals during the previous winter season, indicating the highest demand relative to available capacity among all assessed communities—approximately 22.7 times their nominal capacity over the reporting period. At the same time, the facilities are capable of operating autonomously for less than one day, highlighting significant limitations in their resilience during prolonged power disruptions.

No comparable information was available for Kupianska Territorial Hromada because of active hostilities and restricted access.

3.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The combination of near-universal household awareness of Points of Invincibility (96.0%) and their relatively limited utilization (16.0%) is strongly supported by the community-level findings. In Iziumska Territorial Hromada, Points of Invincibility operated under exceptionally high demand, serving approximately 22.7 times their nominal simultaneous capacity over the winter season. This suggests that, despite widespread awareness, a substantial proportion of households may have been unable to access these facilities when needed because of limited operational capacity. At the same time, Lypetska Territorial Hromada had no Points of Invincibility, reflecting its very small population size.

Taken together, these findings indicate that the gap between high awareness and comparatively low utilization is primarily explained by capacity constraints and uneven geographical availability, rather than by a lack of public awareness or willingness to use the facilities.

4. Housing insulation

4.1. Household Assessment

Only 24.0% of surveyed households reported that their homes had sustained conflict-related damage—the lowest proportion among all assessed oblasts. In addition, 64.0% of households considered their homes to be adequately warm for winter conditions, indicating a comparatively favourable level of housing adequacy and thermal comfort despite the ongoing conflict.

4.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

Community-level findings reveal considerable variation in housing conditions across Kharkiv Oblast. In Tsyrkunivska Territorial Hromada, 156 households were reported to have sustained housing damage, of which 88 households applied for repair assistance.

In Lypetska Territorial Hromada, all 36 households required housing repair assistance during the 2025–2026 winter season, reflecting the widespread impact of conflict-related damage despite the community's small population.

Iziumska Territorial Hromada reported the widest range of housing damage types among all assessed communities. A total of 58 households were identified as having damaged homes, while 48 households received repair assistance.

The most severe situation was observed in Kupianska Territorial Hromada. According to the key informant, virtually all residential buildings have been damaged or destroyed as a result of ongoing hostilities, while no households received housing repair assistance. This represents the most critical level of housing destruction recorded across all ten assessed communities in the four-oblast assessment.

4.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The lowest household-level housing damage rate among all oblasts (24.0%) sharply contradicts the findings from Kupiansk hromada, where virtually all buildings are reported to be either damaged or destroyed—the worst housing conditions recorded across the sample of 10 hromadas in four oblasts. This represents the clearest example in the report where the oblast-level household indicator masks a hidden extreme: the sample of 25 households almost certainly did not include, or included very few, households from the active combat zone. As a result, the oblast's apparent status as having the "best housing conditions" is an artifact of who could be safely surveyed, rather than an accurate reflection of the situation in its most severely affected hromada.

5. Winter non-food items (NFIs)

5.1. Household Assessment

Only 48.0% of surveyed households reported requiring winter non-food item (NFI) assistance, representing the lowest level of need among all assessed oblasts. Among households requiring support, the most frequently requested items were heaters (53.3%) and warm blankets (46.7%).

5.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

Community-level findings reveal substantial disparities in NFI coverage. Tsyrkunivska Territorial Hromada distributed winter NFI kits to 200 beneficiaries during the previous winter season. In contrast, Lypetska, Iziumska, and Kupianska Territorial Hromadas reported no winter NFI distributions.
Despite the absence of distributions, Iziumska Territorial Hromada projected a requirement for 15,000 beneficiaries during the 2026–2027 winter season, representing the largest absolute demand for winter NFIs among all communities included in the assessment. In Kupianska Territorial Hromada, the projected need extends to virtually the entire remaining population (777 people), despite the fact that no winter NFI assistance has previously been provided. These findings indicate substantial unmet needs in the most conflict-affected communities that are not reflected in the comparatively favourable oblast-level household results.

5.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The comparatively low household demand for winter NFIs (48.0%)—the lowest among all assessed oblasts—is broadly consistent with the relatively stronger conditions observed in some communities, particularly Tsyrkunivska Territorial Hromada, where winter NFI distributions were implemented. However, this favourable oblast-level picture is contradicted by the community-level findings from Iziumska and Kupianska Territorial Hromadas.

Iziumska Territorial Hromada projects a requirement for 15,000 beneficiaries during the 2026–2027 winter season, representing the largest absolute demand for winter NFIs across all communities included in the assessment. At the same time, Kupianska Territorial Hromada anticipates that virtually its entire remaining population (777 people) will require winter NFI assistance, despite no previous history of winter NFI distributions.

These findings suggest that the relatively favourable household-level results are not fully representative of the most severely conflict-affected communities. Instead, they indicate substantial localized unmet needs that remain masked within the aggregated oblast-level figures.

6. Cash assistance

6.1. Household Assessment

Only 12.5% of surveyed households reported receiving UCT during the previous winter season. Among households requiring financial support, the greatest demand was for utility payments (88.0%)—the highest proportion recorded across all assessed oblasts—followed by housing repair and insulation (48.0%).

6.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

Community-level findings indicate that UCT was implemented unevenly across the assessed communities. In Tsyrkunivska Territorial Hromada, 806 households received cash assistance, primarily to cover solid fuel purchases and utility costs. In Lypetska Territorial Hromada, all 28 households identified as requiring financial support received UCT. Iziumska Territorial Hromada reported assistance to 2,160 households, with cash transfers mainly used for solid fuel, utility payments, and medicines. No comparable information was available for Kupianska Territorial Hromada, as the relevant survey question was not completed due to the operational context.

6.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The low proportion of surveyed households reporting receipt of UCT (12.5%), despite 88.0% identifying utility payments as their highest financial priority, appears broadly consistent with the community-level findings, while also highlighting important differences in how assistance is captured across data sources. In Iziumska Territorial Hromada, for example, 2,160 households were reported to have received cash assistance, indicating that UCT reached a substantial number of beneficiaries even though the aggregated household survey suggests comparatively limited coverage at the oblast level.

Rather than representing a direct inconsistency, this divergence is more likely explained by differences in reporting methodologies. Household survey findings reflect self-reported assistance received by surveyed households, whereas community-level data are based on administrative records of assistance delivered, which may capture a broader beneficiary population and different reporting periods. Consequently, the two datasets should be viewed as complementary, providing different perspectives on the scale and distribution of UCT across Kharkiv Oblast.

7. Overall priorities for winter preparedness

7.1. Household Assessment

Overall, households in Kharkiv Oblast reported the highest level of perceived winter preparedness among all assessed oblasts. Fifty-six percent (56.0%) of surveyed households considered themselves to be generally prepared for the upcoming winter season, while only 24.0% reported feeling unprepared, the lowest proportion recorded across the assessment.

Despite this relatively positive self-assessment, power outages were identified as the most significant anticipated challenge by 64.0% of households, far exceeding concerns related to heating (12.0%). These findings suggest that household preparedness is increasingly constrained by the reliability of the electricity supply rather than by access to heating systems themselves, reinforcing the assessment's broader conclusion that energy resilience remains the principal winterization challenge in Kharkiv Oblast.

7.2. Assessment of Territorial Hromadas

Community perceptions of preparedness varied across the assessed hromadas. Lypetska Territorial Hromada reported the highest preparedness score (5) among all communities included in the assessment, despite the complete absence of centralized electricity supply—a result that local respondents themselves identified as counterintuitive. Tsyrkunivska Territorial Hromada reported a preparedness score of 4, while both Iziumska and Kupianska Territorial Hromadas assigned a score of 3, with the latter maintaining this level despite ongoing active hostilities.

Across all three communities for which planning data were available, the highest priority for the 2026–2027 winter season was the provision of solid fuel. At the same time, UCT was consistently identified as the preferred funding modality in all three communities, reflecting a shared preference for flexible financial support to address winter-related needs.

7.3. Comparative Analysis of Household Needs and Hromada Capacity

The highest level of self-reported household preparedness among all assessed oblasts (56.0% of households considering themselves prepared for winter) is broadly consistent with the high preparedness ratings reported by three of the assessed communities (scores of 4–5). However, the preparedness score assigned by Kupianska Territorial Hromada (3 out of 5) appears inconsistent with the community's objective conditions, including the near-total destruction of the housing stock and the absence of reliable electricity supply, as documented elsewhere in this assessment. This discrepancy is likely to reflect adaptation of local expectations to prolonged conflict conditions, rather than an objective measure of winter readiness.

The comparatively favourable oblast-level household findings should therefore be interpreted with caution. Given the very small household sample (n = 25) and the operational constraints affecting Kupianska Territorial Hromada, it is unlikely that the survey adequately captured households from the oblast's most severely affected community. Consequently, the conclusion that Kharkiv Oblast appears to be the best-prepared oblast is likely influenced by the underrepresentation of the most conflict-affected areas, where comprehensive household data could not be collected because of active hostilities.



8.
Overall Analytical Assessment of Kharkiv Oblast

At first glance, Kharkiv Oblast appears to demonstrate the most favourable winter preparedness profile among all four assessed oblasts, recording the lowest proportion of households with damaged housing (24.0%), the lowest reported need for winter NFIs (48.0%), and the highest share of households considering themselves prepared for winter (56.0%). However, comparison with the community-level findings indicates that this apparently favourable picture is largely driven by sampling limitations rather than reflecting the overall situation across the oblast.

The community-level evidence reveals pronounced disparities that are not captured in the aggregated household results, particularly in the most severely conflict-affected areas. These findings suggest that the oblast-level indicators are disproportionately influenced by relatively stable and better-served communities, while the conditions in communities experiencing the greatest humanitarian needs —where data collection was constrained by active hostilities—are only partially represented. Consequently, the overall household findings should be interpreted with caution, as they are likely to underestimate the true scale of winter vulnerabilities across Kharkiv Oblast.

Kupianska Territorial Hromada—an area of active hostilities—is virtually absent from the quantitative household data. Where information is available, however, it records the worst housing conditions in the entire assessment, with almost all houses damaged or destroyed and no housing repair assistance provided. Iziumska Territorial Hromada illustrates a clear gap between formal and actual coverage: 100% of the “registered need” for solid fuel in fact represents only 15.1% of all households in the community, while the Points of Invincibility operated at 22.7 times their nominal capacity.

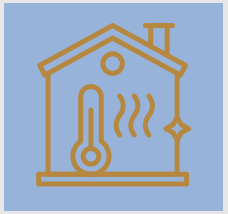
Against this background, the lowest level of household access to backup power (24.0%) among all assessed oblasts, combined with the highest proportion of households simultaneously dependent on electricity for both heating and water supply (48.0%), indicates that electricity supply, rather than solid fuel or housing conditions, constitutes the oblast's principal winter vulnerability. Overall, the “best-performing” oblast-level household picture conceals some of the most severe humanitarian situations identified anywhere in the assessment, particularly in Kupianska and, to a lesser extent, Iziumska Territorial Hromadas. Consequently, for Kharkiv Oblast it is particularly important not to rely solely on aggregated household indicators without validating them against community-level evidence.

6.

Recommendations for Donors, International and National Humanitarian Organizations

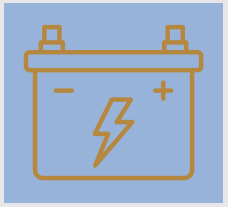
The analysis demonstrates that, despite the winter preparedness measures implemented by the government and local communities, significant gaps remain between the needs of the population and the existing capacity to meet them across all assessed oblasts. Based on the findings of this assessment, the following key recommendations are provided for international donors and humanitarian organizations to strengthen preparedness and response efforts during the 2026–2027 winter season.

Heating and solid fuel



Programmes providing solid fuel, heating assistance, and the targeted delivery of fuel to the most vulnerable population groups in frontline communities should be prioritized. Alongside seasonal assistance, efforts should also focus on strengthening the capacity of communities to plan winter response activities in advance and to establish local fuel reserves.

Electricity supply and backup power sources



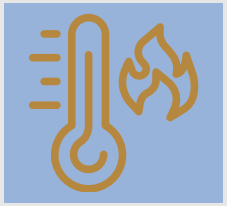
Expanding access to backup power sources for both critical infrastructure and households should be a priority of the humanitarian response. Support should be provided for the procurement of generators, charging stations, battery storage systems, power banks, and fuel reserves, with particular attention given to areas where the provision of essential services is highly dependent on electricity supply.

Points of Invincibility and community support facilities



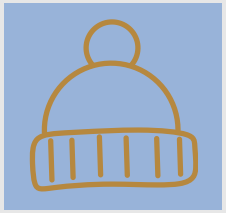
Support should be directed towards improving the accessibility and effectiveness of the Points of Invincibility through the development of mobile formats, enhanced geographical coverage, and strengthened public awareness. Particular attention should be given to equipping these facilities with backup power, communication equipment, internet access, and the capacity to provide basic humanitarian services.

Housing insulation



It is recommended to expand programmes supporting the repair and insulation of damaged housing through the provision of construction materials, cash assistance, or technical support for repair works. Priority should continue to be given to households that lack the financial capacity to secure minimum safe living conditions during the winter season.

Winter non-food items (NFIs)



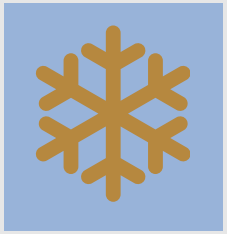
The provision of winter non-food items (NFIs) should be expanded, with a particular focus on the most in-demand items, including heaters, blankets, warm throws, winter clothing, and other essential items that help maintain adequate living conditions during the winter season. The composition of assistance packages should be tailored to the local needs of communities and informed by the findings of regular needs assessments.

Cash assistance



UCT should remain one of the principal humanitarian response modalities, particularly for covering expenditures related to solid fuel, utility payments, housing repairs, and the purchase of winter items. The coverage of UCT programmes should be expanded while ensuring effective coordination with other forms of humanitarian assistance and alignment with local market conditions.

Overall priorities for winter preparedness



Winter preparedness requires a comprehensive approach that combines support for households, strengthened institutional capacity of communities, and the protection of critical infrastructure. Donor funding should be directed towards interventions that simultaneously enhance community resilience to prolonged disruptions of essential services, reduce reliance on emergency assistance, and complement the implementation of national and regional winter preparedness plans.



7. Overall Conclusions

The assessment provided a comprehensive evaluation of the preparedness of Ukraine's frontline areas for the 2026–2027 winter season by integrating three interconnected levels of analysis: national policy, the capacity of territorial hromadas, and the actual needs of households. This approach made it possible not only to identify the scale of humanitarian needs, but also to assess the extent to which existing national and local response mechanisms are capable of addressing them, while identifying gaps between institutional planning and the actual living conditions of the population.

The analysis of the institutional dimension indicates that the government's preparation for the winter season has become more systematic compared to previous years. The development of comprehensive resilience plans, the early start of preparedness activities, interagency coordination, dedicated funding for critical infrastructure, and the expansion of backup power generation provide a stronger foundation for enhancing the overall resilience of the regions. At the same time, the assessment shows that a significant gap remains between approved plans and their practical implementation, driven by the scale of needs, limited financial resources, lengthy equipment procurement timelines, uneven capacities across individual territorial hromadas, and the risk of renewed attacks on energy infrastructure.

An important element in interpreting the findings was the temperature and security context. The assessment is based on the premise that the level of winter risk is determined not only by projected weather conditions, but primarily by the combined effects of low temperatures, ongoing hostilities, damage to critical infrastructure, and the ability to maintain the uninterrupted provision of essential services. As a result, similar population needs may represent different levels of humanitarian priority depending on the degree of infrastructure resilience within a given area.

The field assessment confirmed that households across all assessed oblasts continue to face substantial needs related to heating, backup power sources, housing insulation, winter non-food items (NFIs), and UCT. A significant proportion of respondents lack sufficient financial resources to prepare for the winter season independently, indicating that the population remains highly dependent on government and international humanitarian assistance. At the same time, the survey of representatives of territorial hromadas demonstrates that, despite accumulated response experience and the implementation of various preparedness measures, local governments generally do not possess sufficient resources to fully meet existing needs without external support.

The comparison of the two surveys showed that the largest gap exists not between the assessments of communities and households, but between the scale of household needs and the actual capacity of territorial hromadas to address them. In most cases, representatives of local self-government authorities identified the same challenges reported by residents, including insufficient resources for heating, the need for backup power sources, the necessity of housing repairs, shortages of winter non-food items (NFIs), and the limited financial capacity of households. At the same time, the assessment identified several areas where institutional assessments do not fully correspond with the actual use or availability of services, particularly regarding the accessibility of the Points of Invincibility, the availability of backup power sources at the household level, and the registration of damaged housing stock. These comparisons made it possible to identify not only humanitarian needs, but also specific institutional gaps requiring further strengthening.

Overall, the findings indicate that, as of July 2026, Ukraine's frontline areas continue their preparations for the 2026–2027 winter season within an established national planning framework. However, the practical effectiveness of these preparations will largely depend on continued funding, the timely implementation of planned measures, the capacity of territorial hromadas, and the scale of international humanitarian assistance. Under the current conditions, the most effective approach remains a comprehensive response that combines the strengthening of critical infrastructure, the enhancement of community capacity, and targeted support for households based on identified needs. The integration of these three dimensions—national policy, institutional capacity, and the actual needs of the population—provides the most comprehensive understanding of regional preparedness for the upcoming winter season and establishes an evidence base for humanitarian response planning.

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