

# Profiling of IDP situation in Luhansk Region, Ukraine

## Data-driven approach to durable solutions



## Acknowledgements

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## List of Abbreviations

|             |                                                                                                                           |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CSO</b>  | Civil Society Organisation                                                                                                |
| <b>GCA</b>  | Government-Controlled Area (includes any government-controlled area in Ukraine not limited to Luhansk or Donetsk regions) |
| <b>GDP</b>  | Gross Domestic Product                                                                                                    |
| <b>IASC</b> | Inter-Agency Standing Committee                                                                                           |
| <b>IDP</b>  | Internally Displaced Person                                                                                               |
| <b>JIPS</b> | Joint IDP Profiling Service                                                                                               |
| <b>NGCA</b> | Non-Government Controlled Area                                                                                            |
| <b>NGO</b>  | Non-Governmental Organisation                                                                                             |
| <b>NRC</b>  | Norwegian Refugee Council                                                                                                 |
| <b>SME</b>  | Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise                                                                                         |
| <b>SSS</b>  | NGO Stabilisation Support Services                                                                                        |
| <b>UAH</b>  | Ukrainian Hryvnia                                                                                                         |
| <b>UN</b>   | United Nations                                                                                                            |

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# 1. Executive Summary

The Luhansk State Regional Administration and Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) jointly decided to improve the understanding of future intentions and plans of IDPs, obstacles faced in pursuing durable solutions, as well as vulnerabilities and coping strategies with regard to housing, land and property, access to livelihoods, employment, and social services. The Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS) was requested to provide technical support in the development of methodology and relevant tools.<sup>1</sup>

The profiling was in part motivated by the lack of reliable data on the numbers and conditions of IDPs in the region and the ongoing discrepancy between official IDP statistics and the need to ensure data-driven, evidence-based decision making. The profiling was launched in 2019 and lasted through summer 2020 with the data collection having concluded before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemics.

The profiling was conducted in five urban locations in Luhansk region: Severodonetsk, Lysychansk, Starobilsk, Rubizhne and Kreminna. The collected data paint a profile of urban IDPs in Luhansk region as predominantly work-aged IDP population mostly displaced from urban areas in the non-government controlled areas (NGCA), more likely females and university graduates with not-so-well paid full-time jobs, living in rented accommodation in small household units.

The profiling confirmed the generally known main challenges to durable solutions as adequate housing, be it return, repeated displacements or settlement in another part of the country.

The profiling also confirmed a clear correlation between the IDPs' ability to cross to NGCA and their intention to stay in their present places of displacement, as well as between the lack of access to predictable housing and IDPs' intention to leave their current areas.

A set of recommendations circles around two key topics, namely 1) the need for reliable data as a pre-requisite for relevant national, regional and sub-regional strategies and action plans, and 2) need for more structured inclusion of IDPs into designing and implementing relevant processes and initiatives. Without those, the various strategies and plans already set in motion are likely to remain mostly declarative.

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<sup>1</sup> JIPS technical support on durable solutions analysis to the Luhansk State Regional Administration and NRC, was made possible thanks to the generous contribution from their donors, particularly the United States Government and the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG-ECHO).

## 2. Introduction

As of October 2020, 1.4 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) are officially registered in Ukraine<sup>2</sup> who have been forced to flee their homes in Donetsk, Luhansk regions and Crimea. The exact number of IDPs actually residing on the territory of Ukraine is not known, due to excessive migration and a significant proportion of entries in the official IDP statistics including residents of the non-Government Controlled Areas (NGCA) who had to register as IDPs to be able to claim their lawful social benefits, in particular elderly pensions. Six years into their displacement many genuinely displaced are finding themselves in the situation of protracted displacement and in need of tangible, sustainable and durable solutions.

The Ukraine context is rife with various strategies, programs and action plans, partly in response to the international demand to have a clearly defined vision and structure for various processes that can then be linked to corresponding funding streams. The National Strategy and Action Plan for the Integration of IDPs and Implementation of Durable Solutions to Internal Displacement (IDP Strategy / Action Plan) is currently being re-worked at the central level and should subsequently be transformed into regional and sub-regional action plans and where possible linked to the ongoing de-centralisation process. The adoption of nation-wide strategic documents is important to determine the main priorities in addressing displacement and to set benchmarks for regional and local authorities in developing their action plans and programs. Yet, without proper knowledge of the numbers and conditions of IDPs as well as due budgetary allocations and adequate implementation and monitoring procedures at national, sub-national and sub-regional level, various strategic documents are likely to retain a rather declarative and theoretical character.

The Luhansk region in the Government-Controlled Area (GCA) registers the second largest population of IDPs after the Donetsk region. According to the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, as of October 6, 2020, 281,698 IDPs were registered in the Luhansk region. This number includes 111,665 (40%) men, 170,033 (60%) women and 21,769 (8%) children under the age of 18 years. Out of the total, 35,799 people are working age adults and the majority of the registered IDPs – 202,791 individuals (72%) – are elderly. Less than 3% (7,250) of the registered IDPs receive monthly targeted assistance. The exact number of IDPs actually residing in the Luhansk region is not known.

The Luhansk Regional IDP Action Plan was adopted in June 2019 (Order No. 484) and expires in 2020 – similarly to the National Strategy and Action Plan. In addition, in 2017-2018, Luhansk region implemented a Regional Targeted Program for Support and Adaptation of IDPs (Order No. 65). The main difference between the Action Plan and the Program was that the latter included a budgetary allocation of 856,594 UAH (app. 33,000 USD).

A variety of housing programs have also been enacted in Ukraine to facilitate IDP access to housing either through construction of new units, procurement of housing units by local or regional administrations as temporary housing (mainly to support IDPs with specific professions to remain in a particular area) or various loan and credit schemes. Some of those programs have also been implemented in Luhansk region and were at least theoretically accessible to

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<sup>2</sup> According to the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine.

IDPs, albeit insufficient to cover the existing housing needs or applying criteria and timeframes prohibitive for most.

Most humanitarian assistance programs have in the meantime ceased to distinguish between IDP and non-IDP needs, instead focusing on the areas in the vicinity of the contact line and the needs of the more broadly defined conflict-affected populations. At the same time, little is known about the real composition, situation, and intentions of IDPs residing in the Luhansk region, especially in the urban and semi-urban areas beyond the 5-20 km distance from the contact line. To address this information gap, at the request of the Luhansk State Regional Administration, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) launched in 2019 a pilot profiling exercise with the objective to provide the authorities and the humanitarian and development actors in the region with a broader picture of the IDP needs, perceptions and intentions that may be used for further programmatic planning, advocacy and resource allocation towards durable solutions for IDPs.

The profiling exercise was conducted jointly by NRC and the Luhansk Regional State Administration, primarily represented by the Social Protection Department, in five locations: Severodonetsk, Rubizhne, Lysychansk, Kreminna and Starobilsk. The Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS) provided technical support in the development of methodology and relevant tools.



The profiling aimed at getting a better understanding of the future intentions and plans of IDPs, obstacles faced in pursuing durable solutions, vulnerabilities and coping strategies with regard to housing, land and property, access to livelihoods, employment, and social services. The profiling methodology was developed based on the Interagency Durable Solutions Library and Analysis Guidance, that operationalises the IASC Framework for Durable Solutions for IDPs.<sup>3</sup> The methodology and tools were adapted to the Luhansk context through consultations

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3 The Interagency Durable Solutions Indicator Library

and reviews by the Profiling Technical Working group comprising representatives of UN agencies, NGOs and local authorities in the Luhansk region. The preparatory and methodological works continued throughout the course of 2019.

### 3. Methodology

The profiling exercise focused on urban areas beyond the 20km distance of the line of contact, rooting the methodology and analysis in the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions that applies a range of criteria for measuring the degree with which IDPs have been able to pursue durable solutions. In order to determine specific displacement-related issues, representative samples were made of both IDP and non-IDP populations in all five profiled locations.

The profiling exercise applied different approaches to sampling the IDP and non-IDP respondents, partly to achieve maximum randomization of the responses and partly in response to the lack of access to representative respondent lists due to personal protection laws applicable in Ukraine. Statistically significant samples were selected for both IDP and non-IDP groups with respondents stratified by the five urban locations as well as gender and age groups in each of those location.

The final methodology was developed in cooperation with the head of the Department for social and demographic statistics of the Ptoukha Institute for Demography and Social Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. For non-IDP households the five areas were divided by electoral districts and a randomized respondent recruitment was adopted based on pre-agreed gender and age quotas for each location. The core of IDP respondent households was identified based on a similar stratification and on the basis of lists of beneficiaries of the regional Social Centre for Youth and Family. A partial snowballing approach was then applied to arrive at the desired number of respondents. Due to various data protection limitations, the Social Centre for Youth and Family was the only entity identified as possessing sufficiently broad – and shareable – IDP data. Yet, aware of the potential bias of the received lists and risk of exclusion of certain population strata among the IDPs, the final profiling results were scored and weighted based on an approach developed by the same methodology expert. The weighting did not affect the overall results, although had minor impact on smaller localized sub-samples, which are however not significant for nor presented in this report.

All in-depth interviews were conducted face to face and took place from December 2019 till February 2020. In total, 2,361 households were interviewed, which included 1,025 IDP households and 1,336 non-IDP households and an interview time ranging from 30 to 75 minutes. IDP households were defined as any households with at least one IDP resident family member. The inclusion of statistically significant sample of non-IDP households aimed to provide a comparative analysis to identify the key vulnerabilities and challenges specifically faced by IDPs as the consequence of their displacement, as opposed to general challenges rooted in socio-economic realities of the region.



## 4. Limitations

The main limitation of the profiling pilot project possibly relates to the time it has taken to structure the exercise compared to the limited timeframe for the data collection stage. This has resulted in a certain fatigue around the piloting exercise, also due to multiple changes of key interlocutors and focal points on all sides of the process. More structural limitations related to:

- Limited access to IDP contacts and initial reliance on data obtained from the Social Centre for Youth and Families which only registers those IDPs who have accessed the centre for any services. The snowball method used subsequently risked excluding IDPs without social connections within the community who might thus possibly not be sufficiently represented in the sample. In order to mitigate against the potential bias, the mentioned weighting was applied in result analysis and did not reveal any discrepancies considered relevant for the present report.
- The enumerators encountered instances of lack of clarity around certain questions, as well as a degree of discomfort and “assessment fatigue” among the respondents, none however that would significantly impact on the presented picture.
- In general, for various reasons, respondents in Ukraine are not always forthcoming to answer questions related to finances and income, while the time of data collection (Dec-Feb) may have further influenced their responses related to housing utility costs, livelihoods and income earning opportunities that are likely to differ through a year cycle.
- Due to COVID-19 pandemics, it was impossible to conduct focus group discussions as originally planned.

Due to some of the stated limitations and to the fact that the data collection was completed prior to COVID-19 pandemic in Ukraine, which has impacted on a number of indicators included in the profiling exercise, the present report refrains from drawing many definitive conclusions and prefers to consider some of the analysis as primarily indicative. As drawing a larger profile picture of the IDPs currently residing in the Luhansk region in a hope that some of the aspects presented in the report may be explored further.

## 5. International Standards and National Frameworks on Durable Solutions

The key international points of reference for supporting pursuit of durable solutions to IDPs include:

- UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998)<sup>4</sup>
- IASC Framework on Durable Solutions (2010)<sup>5</sup>

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4 <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/GPEnglish.pdf>

5 The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons.



A number of other guiding and supporting documents have framed the conversation around IDP solutions including e.g. Framework for National Responsibility (2005)<sup>6</sup>, Principles on housing and property restitution for refugees and displaced persons ("Pinheiro principles", 2005) or the UN Secretary General Decision on Durable Solutions (2011) as well as specific guidance by UNHCR, Brookings-Bern University Internal Displacement project, Protection Cluster, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and others. Finally, in October 2019, the UN Secretary General established the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement<sup>7</sup> that was tasked with finding solutions to the global internal displacement crisis.

According to the Principle 6 of UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (UN GPs), "internal displacement shall last no longer than required by the circumstances". The right of IDPs to a durable solution through their return, resettlement and integration is further articulated by the Principles 28-30. A durable solution is not automatically achieved as soon as the cause of displacement is resolved or disappears: the IASC Durable Solutions Framework describes the process of finding durable solutions as a gradual and complex process and applies eight criteria to measure the progress of their achievement: 1) safety and security; 2) adequate standard of living; 3) access to livelihoods; 4) restoration of housing, land and property; 5) access to documentation; 6) family reunification; 7) participation in public affairs; and 8) access to effective remedies and justice.

According to the Law on Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of IDPs in Ukraine, Ukraine is committed to undertake steps to prevent internal displacement, to protect and to ensure the rights and freedoms of IDPs and to create conditions for their voluntary return or integration.<sup>8</sup> The law does not elaborate these modalities for durable solutions and does not specify the duties of national, regional or local governments, only the coordinating role of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.<sup>9</sup> In 2017, the Government of Ukraine adopted the National Strategy on IDP Integration and Durable Solutions<sup>10</sup>, followed by the 2018 Action Plan<sup>11</sup>. Both documents are expiring in 2020, and the Cabinet of Ministers is expected to adopt new frameworks on durable solutions shortly for the period ending 2023. Those should then be transformed into regional programs and action plans to ensure necessary support to IDPs in finding durable solutions within the territorial responsibility of regional and sub-regional authorities in line with the ongoing decentralization process.

According to all international frameworks, humanitarian and development actors, in collaboration with national and local authorities, should work together to ensure that:

- IDPs are in a position to make a voluntary and informed choices on what durable solution they would like to pursue.
- IDPs participate in the planning and management of durable solutions, so that recovery and development strategies address their rights and needs.

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6 [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/04\\_national\\_responsibility\\_framework\\_Eng.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/04_national_responsibility_framework_Eng.pdf)

7 UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement

8 The Law on Ukraine "On Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of IDPs in Ukraine", No. 1706-VII from 2015, Art. 2.

9 Ibid, Art. 10.

10 The National Strategy on IDP Integration and Durable Solutions until 2020.

11 The Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Strategy of IDP Integration and Durable Solutions until 2020.

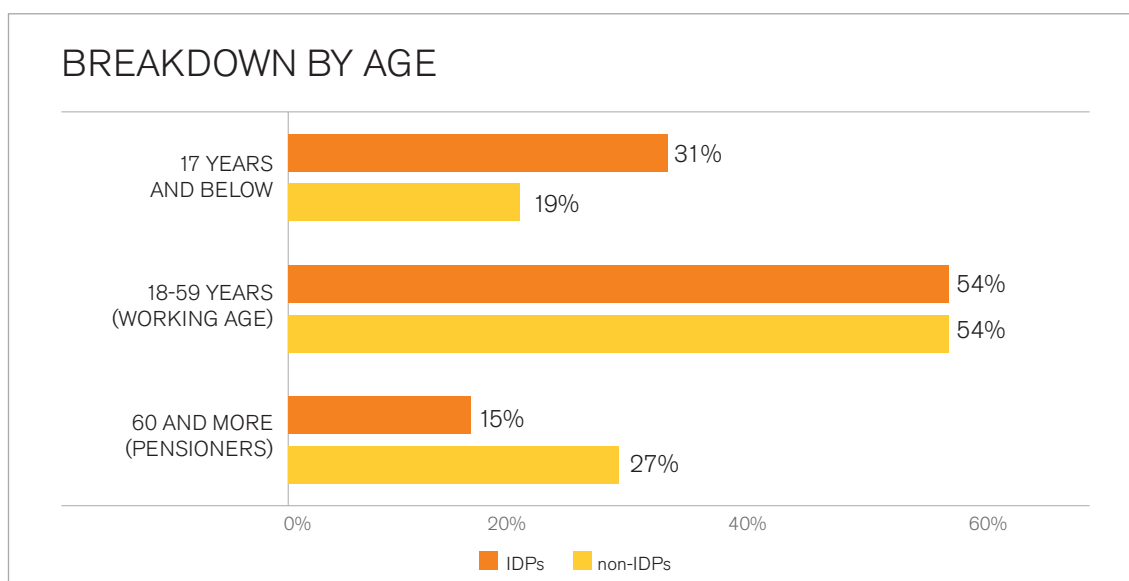
- IDPs have access to humanitarian and development actors.
- IDPs have access to effective monitoring mechanisms. In cases of displacement caused by conflict or violence, peace processes and peacebuilding involve IDPs and reinforce durable solutions.<sup>12</sup>

Within the profiling project, the above-mentioned international standards served as a foundation and shaped the process. In particular, the IASC Framework criteria were used to determine the key topics of the research and have been applied as references when interpreting the findings.

## 6. Key Findings

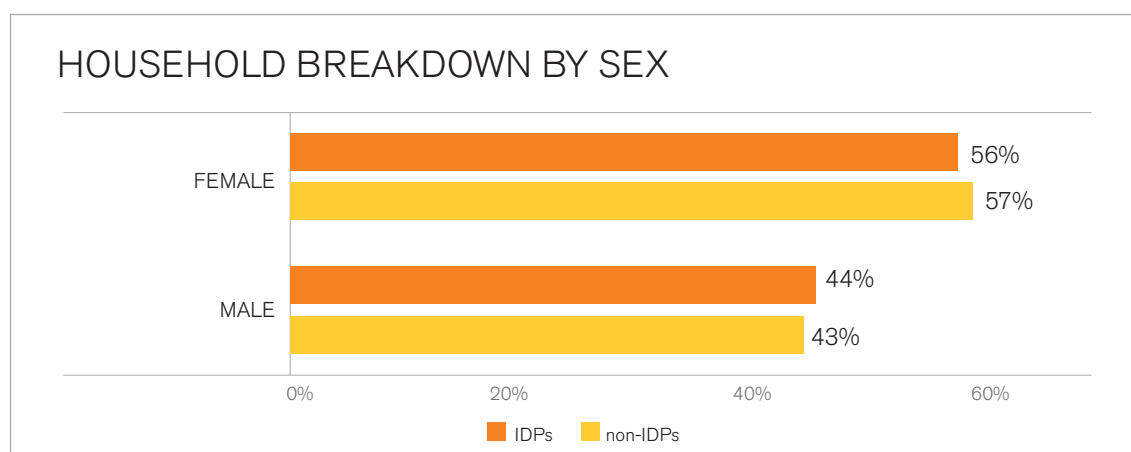
### 6.1. General Household Profile

According to official statistics of IDPs in Luhansk region, 72% of IDPs are elderly people. In reality, the proportion of elderly among the urban IDPs is significantly lower, even below the proportion among the general population. Essentially all informants attributed the lower proportion of the elderly residing in GCA to the lack of affordable housing and the relatively



expensive rental market, which has forced those, who were unable or unwilling to stay with their relatives, to return to their places of origin. Otherwise only minor sex and age differences were noted between the displaced and non-displaced. The average household size among the

<sup>12</sup> IASC Framework on Durable Solutions



respondents was two family members and the majority of household members, both among displaced and host community, were working age adults.

Compared to the official statistics for Luhansk region, the IDP profile sample is significantly younger (15% elderly compared to 72% in official statistics), has a slightly higher male ratio (44% compared to 40%) and correspondingly a greater proportion of children (31% compared to 8%). The sex ratio among the work aged IDPs (18-59 years) is the same as among the whole sample, i.e. 56% are female and 44% are male.

The IDP sample included IDPs from both GCA and NGCA, with the majority constituting the latter (95%) and some differences between the five locations, where Rubizhne had the highest proportion of GCA IDPs (14%) and Severodonetsk the lowest (1%). Most IDPs were displaced from within the Luhansk region (92%) while 8% arrived from the Donetsk region and one interviewed family originated from the Crimea Autonomous Republic. Most profiled IDPs (93%) were displaced from the administrative centres of Luhansk and Donetsk and other urban areas. Kreminna and Lysychansk have the highest proportion of rural IDPs with 11% and 9% respectively.

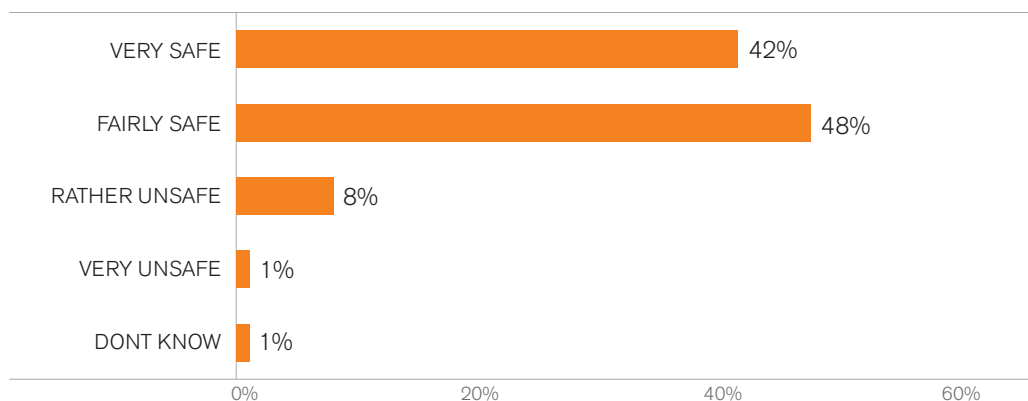
## 6.2. Safety and Movement over the Contact Line

According to the international standards, IDPs who have achieved a durable solution enjoy physical safety on the basis of effective protection by national and local authorities. This includes not only protection against the threats which caused displacement, but also against those which may lead to renewed displacement. Safety is not only defined by risks directly associated with conflict (such as landmines or unexploded ordnances) but may also include persecution on the grounds of displacement, harassment, violent attacks, sexual violence or exploitation, and similar.<sup>13</sup>

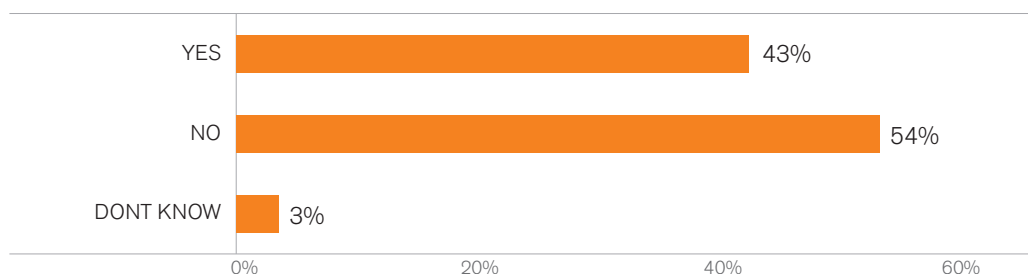
Surveyed IDPs and non-IDPs alike reported similar high sense of safety within their neighbourhoods. 90% of IDPs felt very or fairly safe walking alone. The most commonly mentioned

<sup>13</sup> IASC Framework on Durable Solutions, p. 29.

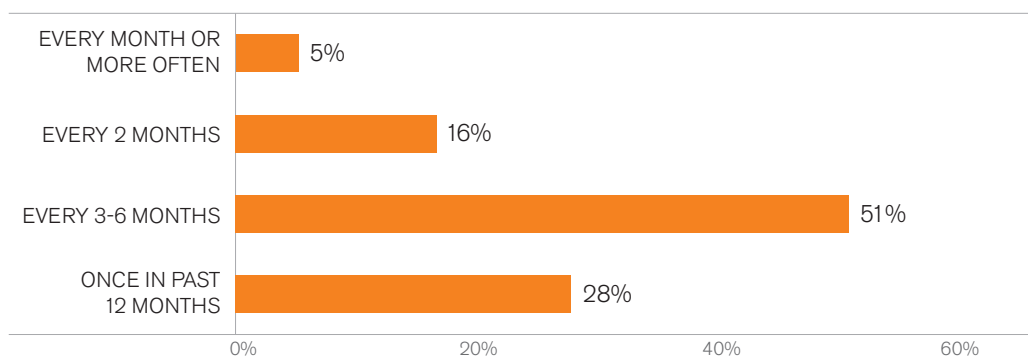
### HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL WALKING ALONE IN YOUR AREA/NEIGHBOURHOOD DURING THE DAY?



### DID ANY MEMBER OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD CROSS THE CONTACT LINE WITHIN THE PAST 12 MONTHS?



### HOW OFTEN HAS SOMEONE FROM YOUR HOUSEHOLD CROSSED THE LINE IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS? (INCLUDES ONLY THOSE WHO CROSSED AT LEAST ONCE)



causes of feeling unsafe related to the lack of street lighting, groups of young people consuming alcohol and the presence of stray dogs. Over 97% stated that they have experienced no security incidents such as verbal or physical assault, theft, or robbery. For the 3% that reported such incidents, the majority (75%) reported the incident to the police.

The profiling revealed some differences in the perception of safety between the five profiled locations. Where 19% of IDP respondents reported to have felt unsafe in Severodonetsk and 13% in Lysychansk, 2% have had the same experience in Kreminna and 4% in Starobilsk.

Since the beginning of the conflict in 2014, the territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions have been divided by a 427-kilometre-long frontline, the so-called “contact line”. As of October 2020, five crossing points were operational between the government controlled (GCA) and non-government controlled areas (NGCA), four of those in Donetsk and one in Luhansk region. The opening of two additional crossing points in Luhansk region is scheduled before the end of the year. For many IDPs the possibility to move freely across the “contact line” is essential to maintain the links with their, often elderly, relatives.

More than a half of the interviewed IDPs (54%) stated that neither they nor their household members had crossed the contact line in the previous 12 months. That finding correlates with the fact that a high proportion of working IDPs are employed within various state structures and many of those are not allowed to visit their places of origin. Of the five profiled locations, household members residing in Starobilsk confirmed to have been the most frequent travellers to the NGCA (57%) while those from Lysychansk (36%) reported to cross the contact line least often.

Of the 43% of IDP households that reported their household members as having crossed the contact line, most (72%) may be considered as travelling to NGCA regularly, i.e. more frequently than once a year. The challenges faced by IDPs during the crossings included long queues and poor conditions at the crossing points. The main reasons for crossing the contact line were stated as visiting family or friends, maintaining houses and apartments, and paying for utility services. Follow-up validation interviews confirmed moderately high fears of lack of housing maintenance and payment of related fees in the NGCA potentially leading to the property being expropriated.

### 6.3. Social Cohesion

Situations of mass displacement tend to impact on availability of affordable and adequate housing stock, access to basic services and employment opportunities. In medium to long term, IDPs seeking durable solutions in a particular area may have an impact on the allocation of local resources and increase the labour market competition. Additional consumer demand also tends to create inflationary tendencies affecting displaced and non-displaced alike, while the economic benefits of having additional intellectual and labour force, consumers/buyers and/or tax-payers in an area are often understated.

The profiling study examined various issues where IDPs may face obstacles and concluded that IDPs themselves rarely attribute their challenges to the fact of their displacement. The list of obstacles was, expectedly, topped by access to housing, where 9% believe that their current challenges

are related to their IDP status. Access to employment comes as second (8%), followed by access to medical services (7%), while the remaining variables scored below 5%. Two percent of surveyed IDPs have confirmed to have faced challenges in interaction with non-displaced neighbours and the general community. While IDPs residing in Severodonetsk reports slightly higher degree of faced challenges, the differences between the five selected locations are overall not significant. As several informants confirmed, the degree of integration and/or social cohesion scoring is most often based on self-perception where responses tend to be filtered by adopted coping strategies, i.e. the respondents do not perceive as an issue something that they have managed to adapt to.

The study also sought to examine the degree of perception of IDPs by the non-displaced and found that ca. a quarter (26%) of the non-displaced view IDP presence as a significant financial burden on the local budgets. At the same time, majority of the non-IDP respondents (88%) expressed sympathy and understanding for the IDP plight and experience and agreed that the IDPs need continued support from the authorities. The same proportion of non-IDPs (88%) perceived that IDPs already enjoy the same access to services as local community members.

## 6.4. Livelihoods and Employment

As another pre-requisite to achieving durable solutions, livelihood opportunities must allow IDPs to fulfil at least their core socio-economic needs, in particular where these are not guaranteed by public welfare programs.<sup>14</sup> Historically, Luhansk and Donetsk regions made up 15.7 per cent of Ukraine's GDP thanks to metallurgy, mining and chemical processing plants. Due to the conflict, both regions have seen those industries shrink, and/or largely controlled by the de facto authorities in the NGCA.<sup>15</sup> The conflict has also significantly impacted on general livelihoods opportunities in both regions. As a consequence of direct or indirect impacts, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) decreased their economic activities by 80-90 percent, leading to a similar percentage of jobs lost.<sup>16</sup>

The displacement dynamic in Luhansk region in particular is often described as urban, industrial displacement into rural, agricultural areas, although several of the GCA towns were specifically constructed to support the industrialisation in Donbass. As already demonstrated and contrary to some assumptions, the majority of profiled IDPs (54%) are working-age adults (18-59 years) with relatively high educational profile: 54% IDPs have obtained university degrees (46% master's and 8% bachelor's) as their highest level of education - and 80% of those (43% of the total) are working-age adults while 20% (11% of the total) are retired. The proportion of university-educated IDPs among work-aged adults is 59% and reaches the highest in Severodonetsk (78%) compared to the lowest of 44% in Lysychansk.

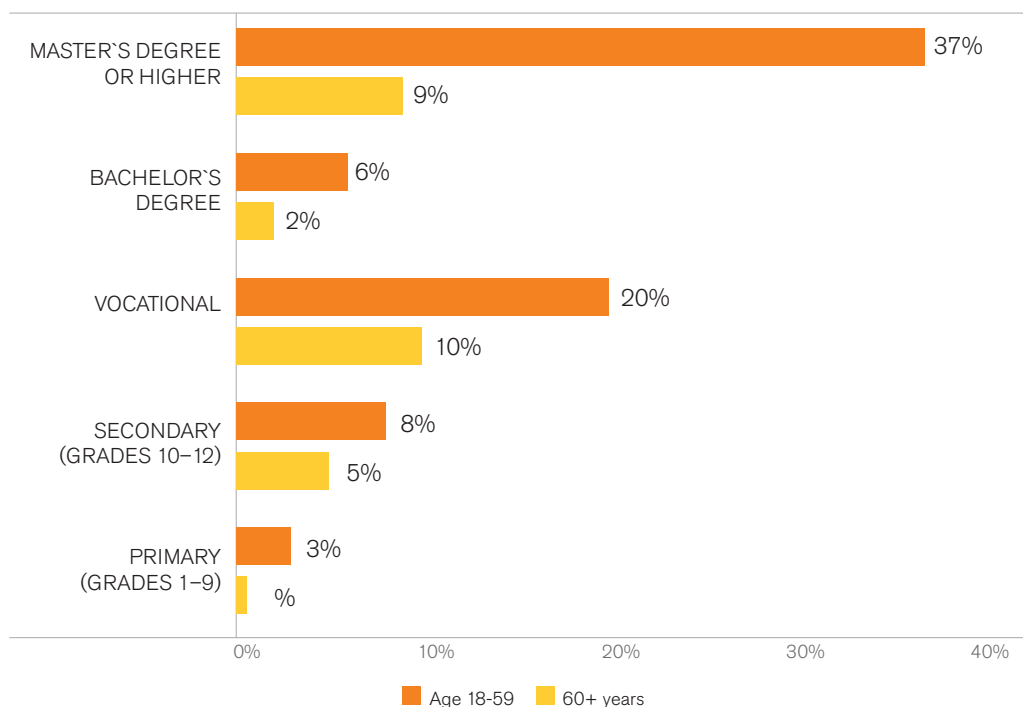
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14 IASC Framework on Durable Solutions, p. 34.

15 Ukraine Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020, p. 11

16 World Bank; European Union; United Nations. 2015. Ukraine Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment: Analysis of Crisis Impacts and Needs in Eastern Ukraine, Volume 1. Synthesis Report. p. 6 World Bank, Washington, DC. © World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/22089> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO.

### WHAT IS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION YOU HAVE COMPLETED? (BY AGE) (INCLUDES ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS OF 18 YEARS AND ABOVE)



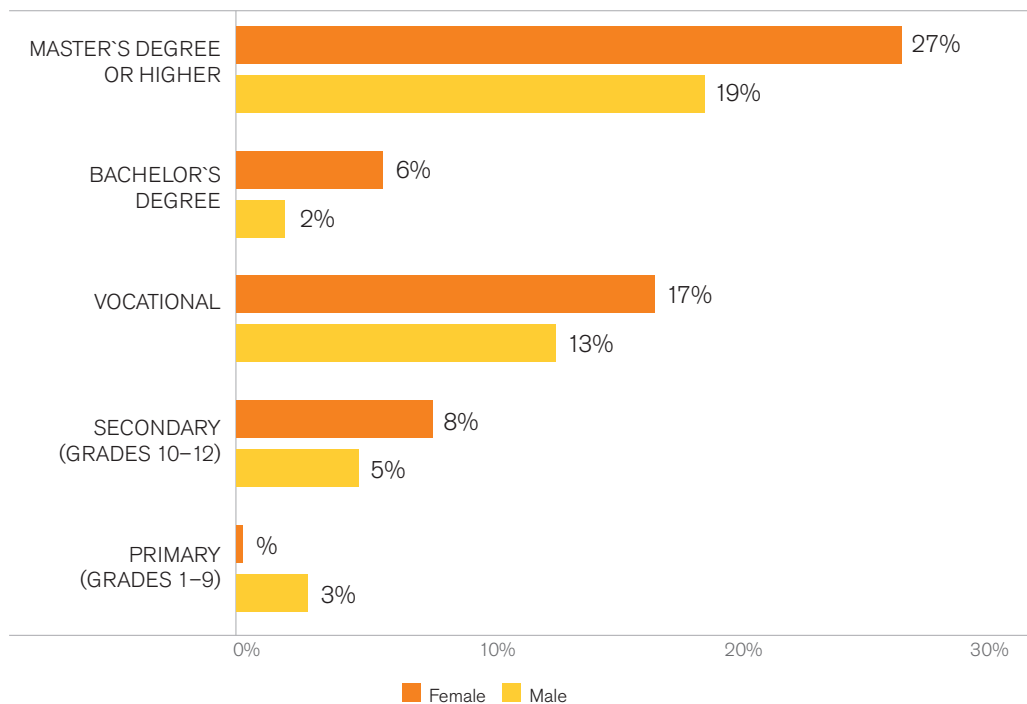
Among work aged IDPs, 60% reported to have worked in the past 4 weeks, most of those (82%) having full-time employment, 10% working part-time, 6% working occasionally and 2% seasonally. The number of occasionally and seasonally employed is likely to fluctuate throughout the year and was potentially underrepresented in the profiling exercise as the data collection was conducted during winter months. Work-aged men are more likely to be employed than work-aged women who also constitute the majority of active job seekers. In terms of geographical differences, IDPs in Lysychansk reported slightly lower employment rates than the four remaining towns, where employment rates are comparable.

Out of the 40% work-aged adults, who reported to be out of job, 22% were actively looking for work, while the rest were on parental leave, retired, students or home makers. Among the active job seekers, IDPs with completed vocational education constituted the largest group (40%), followed by IDPs with master's or higher degree (33% of all active job seekers).

The lack of employment opportunities is affecting displaced and non-displaced similarly, with 8% of IDPs reporting to have faced challenges in finding employment due to their IDP registration, while 1% perceived that employers did not want to hire IDPs. The biggest obstacles in finding employment were indicated as poor working conditions and low pay, lack of available jobs in the area, and available jobs not matching educational qualifications. Access to employment was also the most frequently stated reason for IDPs to prefer moving to a different location.

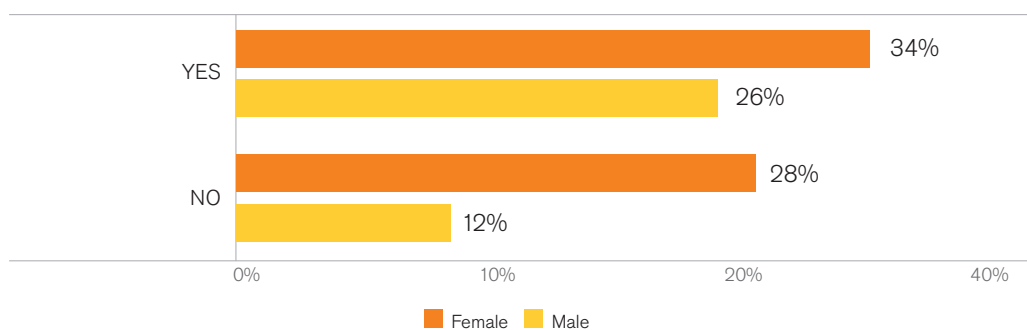


### WHAT IS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION YOU HAVE COMPLETED? (BY SEX) (INCLUDES ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS OF 18 YEARS AND ABOVE)

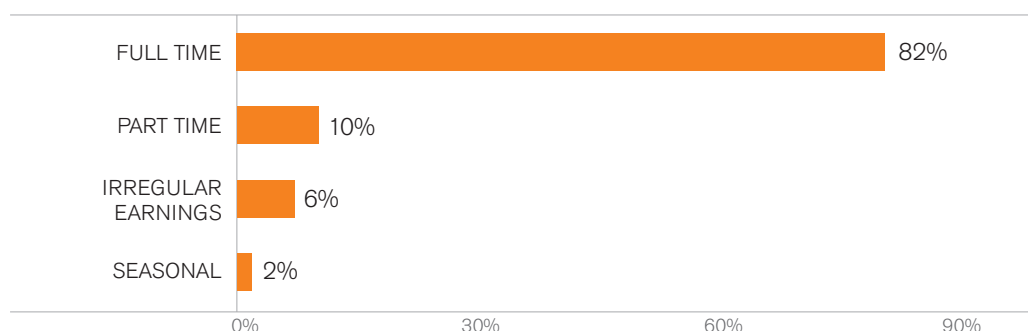


The main sources of income for IDP households are regular salaries (45% of respondents) and pensions (30%). On the other end, 15% stated that they depended on other types of government handouts, including social benefits and IDP targeted assistance.

### HAVE YOU WORKED IN THE PAST 4 WEEKS ? (BY SEX) (INCLUDES ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS OF WORKING AGE)

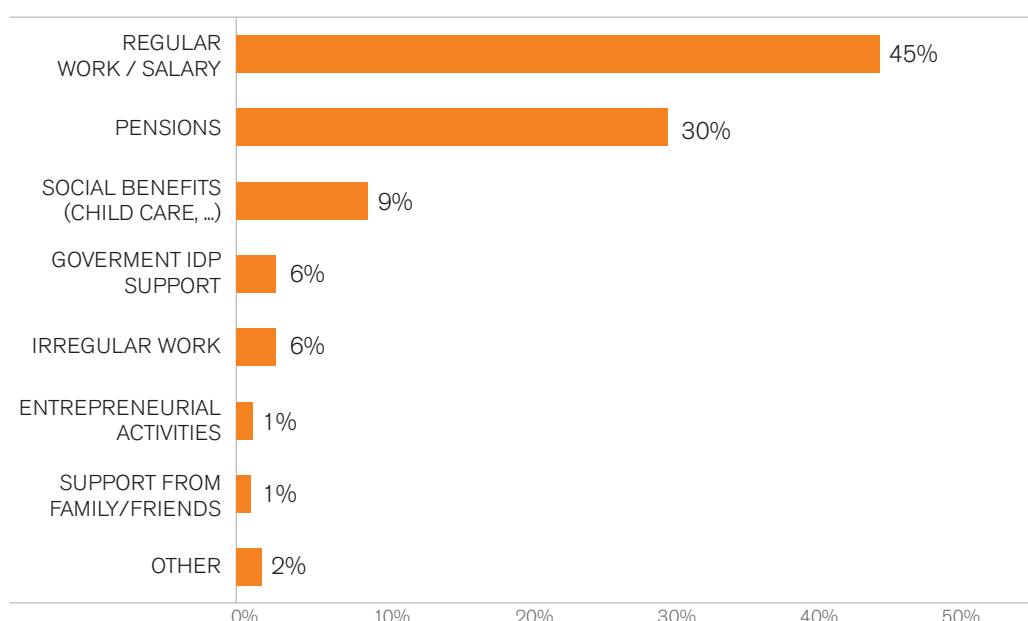


### WHAT WAS YOUR MAIN JOB FOR THE LAST 4 WEEKS? (INCLUDES ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS OF WORKING AGE)



The main cost drivers for IDP households include rent, housing utilities and food. Although 66% of IDPs rent their current accommodation and rental cost is generally considered the top major cost driver - and indeed one of the determining factors for IDPs to potentially stay, move or return to their places of origin - it was not feasible to collect broader reliable data on rental-related expenditures. This was largely due to the IDPs' concerns of repercussions in reporting actual rent fees on their landlords who mostly do not pay relevant taxes. It is however possible to understand monthly expenditures related to various housing utility payments which in the 30 days prior to the data collection averaged at 1,234 UAH (app. 40 USD).

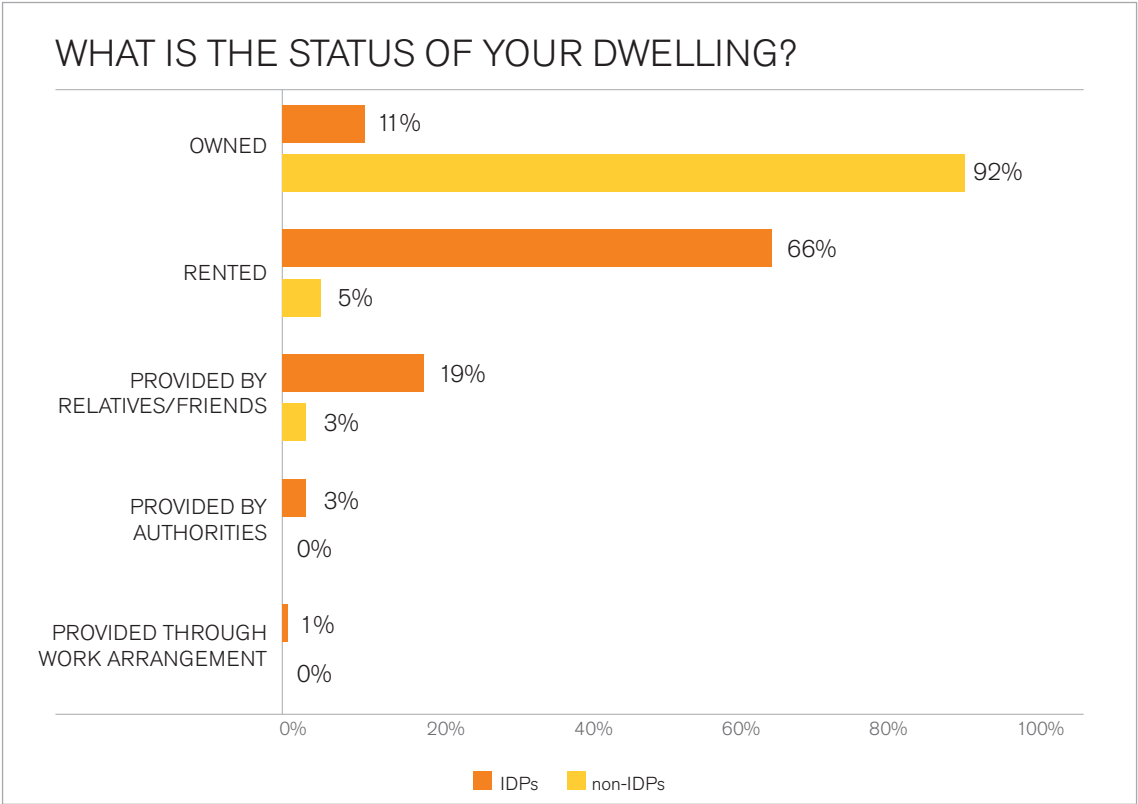
### WHAT IS THE MAIN SOURCE OF MONEY YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAD IN THE PAST 30 DAYS?



Similarly, the average food expenditures were at 2,268 UAH (app. 80 USD). While heating expenditures in particular may exceed 50% of a household budget during winter months, when the presented data was collected, the overall utility costs are likely to be significantly lower during the rest of the year.

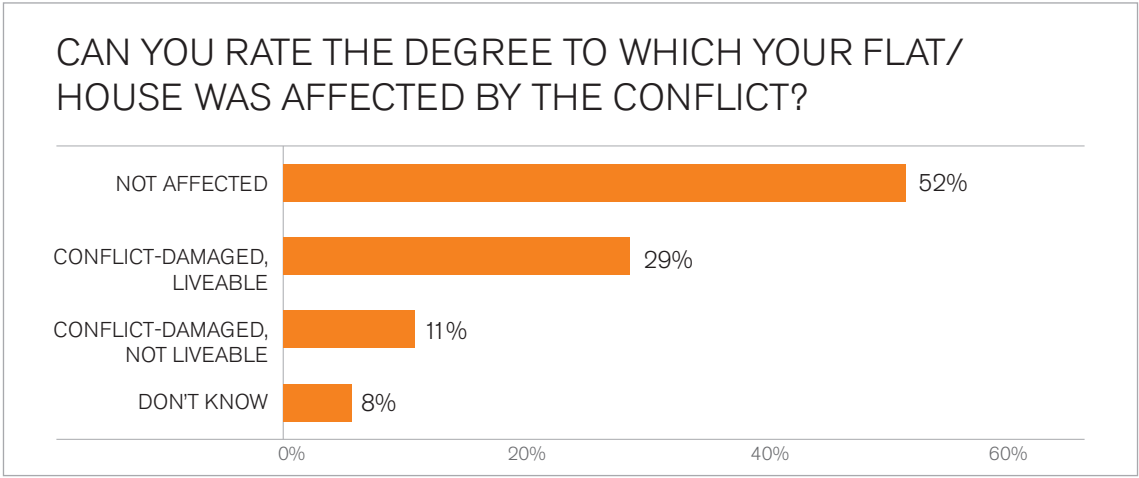
### 6.5. Housing, Land and Property

The key major difference between IDPs and non-IDPs relates to housing ownership and security of tenure. Where 92% of non-IDP households reported to own their housing, the response rate among IDPs was 11%. Most IDPs reported to rent (66%) or stay in accommodation provided by their relatives or friends (19%). Around 3% of IDPs reported to reside in housing provided by the authorities. A comparison between the five surveyed locations shows a significantly higher percentage of IDPs living in accommodation provided by relatives and friends in Starobilsk (32%) compared to 10% in Severodonetsk and 16% on average in the remaining three towns. Also, property ownership levels among IDPs are markedly lowest in Severodonetsk.



Over 80% of IDPs stated that they were satisfied with the quality of their housing. Main concerns regarding adequacy of IDP housing related to issues with heating and insufficient living space area. A small proportion of IDP households (4%) stated that they had been evicted in the previous 12 months, the main reason described as the owner’s wish to stop renting out.

Most profiled IDPs (95%) had resided in the NGCA and 72% left behind some property (primarily apartments or houses) in the locations they had lived prior to their displacement. Of those, 89% stated that they possessed documents that prove ownership or possession, 6% stated the documents had been lost and 2% never had the documents in the first place. The profiling exercise however did not verify what documents the IDPs had on hand. NRC's experience in provision of legal assistance in Eastern Ukraine has repeatedly demonstrated that not only are many IDPs not aware what documents presently constitute a proof of property ownership, a significant number believes that other documents, such as technical drawings and similar, fulfil such function. The 89% above therefore potentially describe the level of confidence in having due property ownership documents rather than the fact itself.



Of the 72% that left their property behind, 95% reported the location of their property was in the NGCA. A small number of IDPs left behind agricultural land (6%) and business assets/ livestock (2%) where they lived prior to displacement. Close to a half (47%) of the IDPs who owned property in the NGCA stated that they would consider giving up that property if provided with property in GCA.

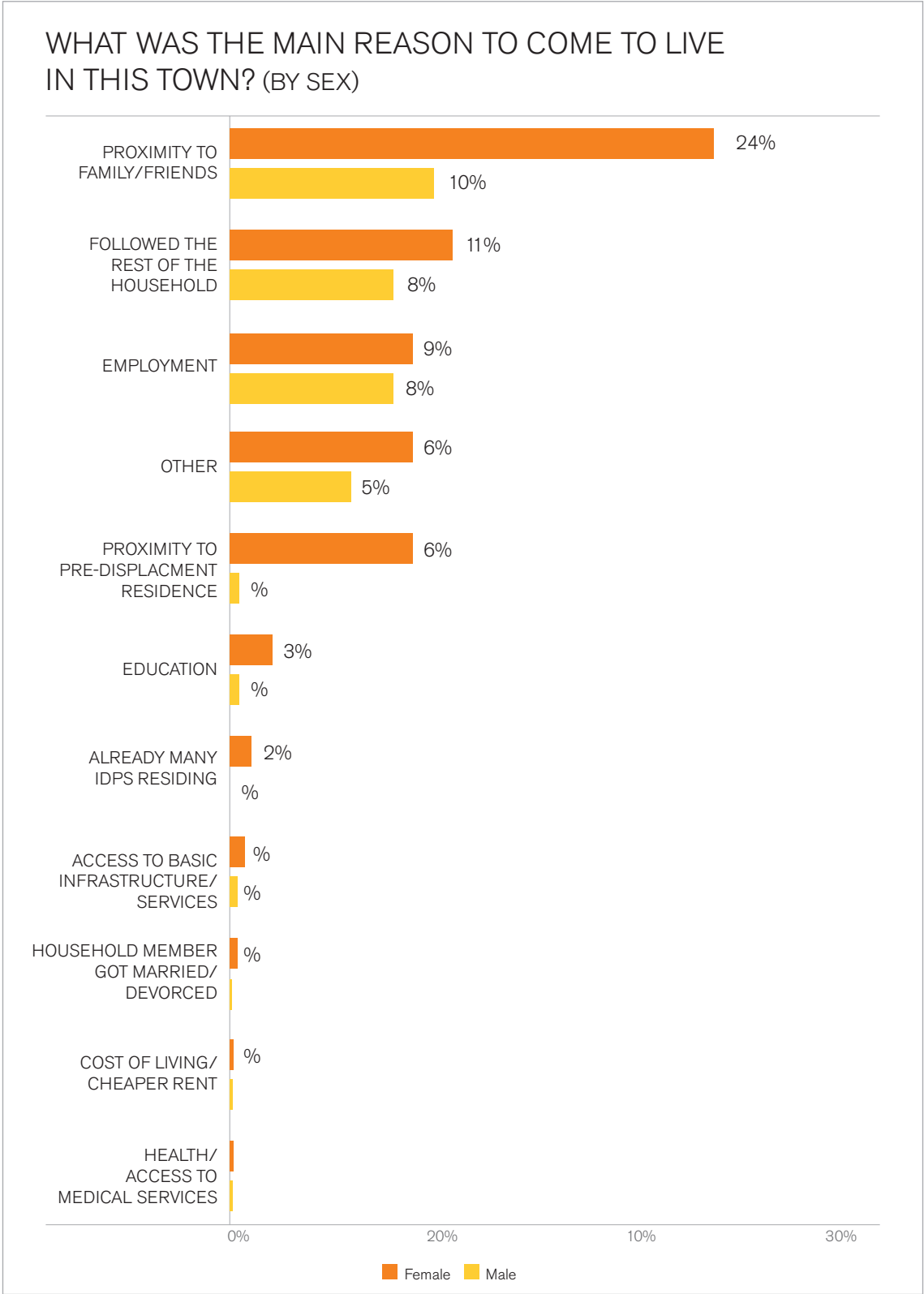
Whether the IDPs cross the contact line or not, they report a confident degree of knowledge regarding the status of their property in NGCA. About a half of the IDPs state that their property was unaffected by the conflict while 8% do not have information about the status of their property.

## 6.6. Future Intentions

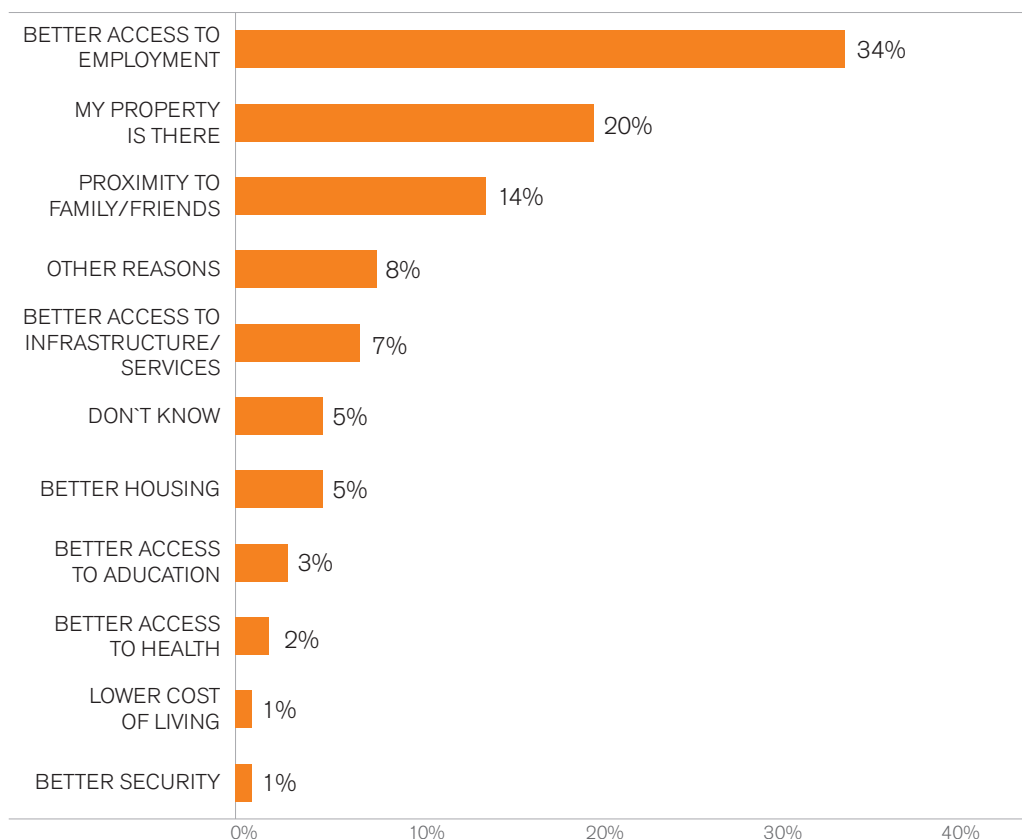
The right to a durable solution provides that IDPs themselves determine, depending on their circumstances, whether they want to return, integrate, or settle elsewhere in the country. Such choices are to be respected and supported by other actors: national or local authorities, humanitarian and development agencies.<sup>17</sup> Good understanding of the intentions and movement

<sup>17</sup> IASC Framework on Durable Solutions, p. 12

drivers of IDPs is important for the local authorities to plan their response not only in terms of types and scope of actions necessary in various locations but also to address potential pull or push factors related to IDP movements in general. A thorough knowledge of IDPs' rationale for opting for a particular durable solution helps address potential obstacles to achieving those.



## THINKING ABOUT THE PLACE YOU PREFER TO MOVE TO, WHAT ARE THE MAIN REASONS FOR PREFERING TO LIVE THERE?



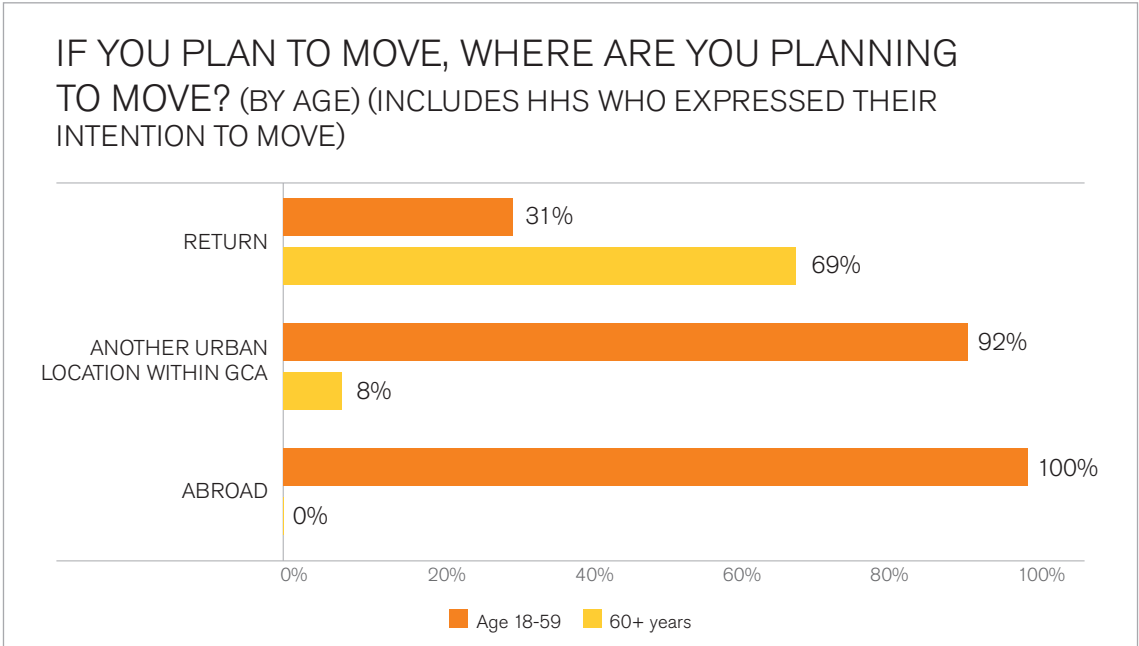
Most urban IDPs (93%) presently residing in the Luhansk oblast used to live in urban locations before displacement: 42% in the administrative centres of Luhansk and Donetsk, 47% living in other urban locations in NGCA and 4% living in urban locations in the GCA. More than three-quarters (79%) arrived in their current locations in 2014 and 2015. They have chosen their places of residence primarily due to their proximity to family and friends (34%), preferences of the rest of their household (19%) and employment opportunities (17%).

About a half (49%) of the profiled IDPs stated that they intended to stay in their current locations while 13% were unsure about or did not want to share their plans. 37% of IDPs expressed an intention to leave at some point, with 8% of those having immediate specific plans to move within the upcoming 6 months. A comparison between the locations shows that close to 50% of households surveyed in Starobilsk and 47% of households in Lysychansk expressed their intention to leave at some point, followed by Rubizhne (39%), Severodonetsk (29%) and Kreminna (24%).

Of the 37% who stated they wanted to leave their current location, 40% intend to return to their places of habitual residence, 36% to another urban location within the GCA and 11% are

considering going abroad. The remaining 5% were undecided. The main factors influencing the decision to relocate were better access to employment (34%), own property (20%) and proximity to family and friends (14%).

Almost 70% of the IDPs who expressed their intention to return to their places of origin were 60 years and above and rely on pensions as their primary source of income. The main stated reasons to return was abandoned property. Of the IDPs who intend to move to another location within the GCA, 92% are of working age (18-59 years), rely on salaries as their primary source of income and are mainly driven by better access to employment opportunities. All of the IDPs who stated they wanted to move abroad were of working age and were mostly dependent on social benefits such as unemployment and childcare and partial income from entrepreneurial activities. Access to higher and/or predictable income and lack of livelihoods are the key push factors among the IDPs for seeking opportunities elsewhere including abroad.



Over a half of IDPs (61%) who stated that they intended to return to their places of origin in NGCA would not consider giving up their property claim in NGCA if provided property in GCA compared to 19% who would consider giving up their property and 20% not being sure. More than 80% of those who intend to return have maintained regular contact with NGCA, having crossed the contact line at least every 6 months (15% crossed every month, 27% every 2 months and 42% every 3-6 months).

Among those IDPs who intend to move to another location within GCA, 77% would consider giving up their property claim in NGCA if provided property in GCA. Majority of respondents within this group (57%) have stated that they had not crossed the contact line in the previous 12 months.

## 7. Location-Specific Trends

In many aspects the five profiled towns are similar to each-other, in others they tend to differ. The profiling did not specially aim at creating location-specific profiles, yet some differences and trends may be extrapolated. As an example, Severodonetsk has relatively highest education levels among work aged IDPs on one hand and relatively highest perception of unsafety on the other. Close to all profiled IDPs in Severodonetsk come from urban areas, are more likely to face challenges in accessing their rights and least likely to live in their own accommodation among the five towns. They also have relatively lower intention to leave the area in the foreseeable future.

Lysychansk has the highest proportion of children, above-average rural IDP population and IDPs originally from Donetsk region. It also has comparatively lower education levels among work aged IDPs, lowest employment rates and relatively higher perception of unsafety. Also, relatively high percentage of IDP residents expressed their intention to leave Lysychansk with the second lowest rate of return intention.

Starobilsk has the highest proportion of IDP households (the majority of those are originally from Luhansk NGCA) living in accommodation provided by relatives or friends, highest rates of IDP household members crossing the contact line, yet also the highest percentage of IDP households who intend to leave the area. As the positive correlation between the possibility to cross the contact line (retaining some form of physical contact with the areas of origin) and intending to stay has been rather firmly demonstrated by the profiling, the data seems to suggest that there is correlation between the predictability of one's housing solution and the intention to stay in one location. Starobilsk also has relatively higher proportion of university educated work aged IDPs.

Rubizhne and Kreminna mostly profile along the general averages with barely any outliers. Kreminna has relatively more rural IDPs and IDPs from GCA, highest perception of safety and lowest proportion of households with the intention to leave the area. Rubizhne has the highest proportion of work aged IDPs with completed vocational education and relatively higher proportion of IDPs who have arrived from Donetsk region. Rubizhne also has proportionally the lowest number of households who are thinking to return.

## 8. IDP Councils

The profiling exercise was conducted in cooperation with multiple international and national, non-governmental and governmental stakeholders with the primary objective to support local decision making in Luhansk region in devising various strategies aiming to support durable solutions for IDPs. The Social Protection Department of the Luhansk Regional State Administration remained the main interlocutor for this exercise within the administration and a central stakeholder in the creation of a regional IDP Council that emerged within the administration in spring 2020 with the support from the local NGO Stabilization Support Services (NGO SSS).



NGO SSS has been implementing its pilot IDP Council project in four regions of Ukraine (Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia) to promote IDP participation in planning and management of durable solutions and nation-wide democratization process. In the best spirit of IDP Guiding Principles<sup>18</sup> the IASC Framework on Durable Solution, the IDP Councils were created as advisory, mediating and IDP-representative bodies, under the umbrella of various existing governance structures. The IDP Councils are meant to serve as platforms for facilitated dialogues between authorities, host and IDP communities, and to ensure proper consultations with and engagement from IDPs in devising regional or local legislative and policy proposals affecting IDP rights, legitimate interests and prospects to achieve durable solutions. Each of the IDP Councils formed during the NGO SSS pilot project was embedded within a different body of their respective sub-national or sub-regional governance structures (regional, city, municipal council etc.).

The Luhansk IDP Council is an advisory body established under the authority of the Luhansk Oblast State Administration by Order of the Head of Luhansk Oblast State Administration No.176 “On the Establishment of the Regional IDP Council” from February 28, 2020. Accordingly, the main tasks of the IDP Council include the monitoring of the problems of IDPs in the region, promoting their rights, providing proposals to regional policies, and communicating with executive bodies, local self-government bodies on displacement-related issues. The Luhansk IDP Council is chaired by the Head of the Social Protection Department and comprises several department heads from the regional administration and a number of IDP civil society organisation representatives.

As the Luhansk IDP Council formed in parallel to the conclusion of the profiling exercise, they became a natural counterpart to validate and operationalise the data collected throughout the profiling process. NGO SSS and NRC continue to support the Luhansk IDP Council by equipping them with demand-driven and evidence-based tools to be used in advocating in the development of regional policies enhancing IDP integration.

## 9. Conclusions

In a situation when official IDP statistics do not strictly disaggregate between IDPs and non-IDP residents of NGCA, country-wide strategies are unlikely to be rooted in adequate understanding of the scope and nature of the needs they aim to address. Localised and issue-specific, regional and/or sub-regional, data collection processes can substitute for the lack of reliable centralised data, be used to support strategic approaches, and feed into evidence-based and data-driven decision making.

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18 According to the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, Principle 28 “Special efforts should be made to ensure the full participation of internally displaced persons in the planning and management of their return or resettlement and reintegration.”

It is generally acknowledged that many IDPs, in particular in major cities, have been able to integrate spontaneously, without additional need for external assistance, yet there is little evidence or knowledge about this process. Integration is mostly measured on the basis of self-perception and feeling “at home” and the risks are that those perceptions are largely influenced by IDPs adopting various coping strategies to work around unresolved obstacles to equal enjoyment of citizen rights. Regardless their self-perception of integration, IDPs are required to remain registered to access pensions and other social services and instances persist when IDP certificates are requested without any legal justification (e.g. in bank institutions). As a result, non-IDPs permanently residing in the NGCA are requested to “imitate” displacement, while integrated IDPs in GCA cannot refute their registration in order to continue accessing their rights.

If based on official statistics, the IDP profile in Luhansk region considers 281 thousand individuals, 72% of whom are elderly, while in reality, the number of actually residing IDPs in the region is significantly lower with the majority urban IDP population being of working age. The present profiling exercise did not aim to determine the exact number of IDP residents in Luhansk region, merely emphasizes the need to establish reliable data and focus any IDP-supporting strategies towards a different population profile than officially presented.

Similarly, the largest proportion of resident urban IDP population in Luhansk region includes working-age university graduates, majority of whom are female. University graduates also constitute the second highest percentage of active job seekers in the region with sub-standard job quality and inadequate pay cited as the most frequent obstacles to finding sustainable employment.

Although some obstacles to equal access to rights remain between IDPs and non-IDPs, those are reported in limited number of cases only and primarily seem to point to individual experiences rather than systemic issues. One major difference relates to access to adequate and affordable housing linked to household livelihoods, as housing expenditures (rent and utility cost) often constitute the largest proportion of household budgets. They are also perceived as the main reason for many, especially elderly, to choose to reside in their habitual places of residence in the NGCA while retaining their IDP registration.

Five to six years into their displacement, close to 40% of IDP households in the five locations in Luhansk region are considering leaving their current places of residence, primarily in search of viable livelihoods opportunities. Most are hoping to move to other urban locations within GCA, with a minor portion planning to move abroad. The profiling identified a clear positive correlation between the IDPs' ability to cross the contact line and their intention to stay within their areas.

The profiling study was not conclusive on major differences in access to employment for IDPs or non-IDPs, at least partly related to the relatively high percentage of IDPs employed in the state sector. It does however point towards a potential discrepancy between the professional background of unemployed IDP residents and available job opportunities, possibly relevant for entities engaged in professional re-training and similar activities.

## 10. Recommendations

While it is the primary responsibility of the national authorities to support IDPs in finding durable solutions, any effective process is not possible without involvement of IDPs themselves in the decision- and policy-making processes affecting their well-being. The process of finding durable solutions is multi-sectoral, involves a range of actors and is not possible without reliable baseline data about the numbers and needs of IDPs. It must take into account the intentions of IDPs, obstacles they face in their pursuit of those intentions, their particular vulnerabilities and displacement-related needs. It is crucial to place IDPs in the centre of this process – both in terms of understanding their needs and intentions, and by ensuring their participation in relevant policy making.

The profiling exercise aimed at improving the local knowledge about the IDP needs and intentions, benchmarked against the realities of local, non-displaced populations. It should be viewed as a pilot exercise towards improved understanding of localised displacement realities that may be replicated horizontally and vertically. The following set of recommendations includes some of the lessons learnt from the profiling pilot as well as direct experiences of interviewed IDPs:

To the national authorities:

- To review the approach to IDP registration, including by separating IDP registration from registration of NGCA residents collecting pensions in GCA.
- To establish procedures by which information related to actual IDPs is collected and updated, including preferences, needs and locations of IDPs' actual residence.
- To map obstacles faced by IDPs in accessing existing housing programs and expand those to include various categories of IDPs and housing solutions.
- To develop and to implement a comprehensive compensation framework for IDPs.
- To ensure sufficient budgetary allocations are made for the implementation of the National strategy on IDP integration and durable solutions.
- To support regional and sub-regional authorities in due strategic and budgetary processes aimed at facilitating durable solutions for IDPs.
- To document and showcase best practices from various areas in Ukraine related to data-driven, inclusive decision making and programming related to durable solutions for IDP.

To the authorities in Luhansk region:

- To continue engagement and consultations with IDPs to increase their participation in decision-making through the established IDP Council and other platforms (meetings, consultations, focus group discussions etc.).
- To develop and adopt the Luhansk Regional Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for the Integration of IDPs and Implementation of the Durable Solutions to Internal Displacement for the upcoming period.

- To develop and adopt the Luhansk Regional Targeted Programme for IDP Integration with adequate financial allocations and to ensure that specific IDP needs and perspectives are reflected in other regional programs.
- To ensure that all regional and local programs are based on reliable information about the locations and needs of IDPs actually residing in the GCA and, to that effect, to determine the needs for additional data and engage in data collection/needs analysis, as needed.
- To support ATCs in planning for durable solutions and establishing IDP councils or similar structures that can provide relevant inputs to local strategies and budgetary decisions.

To the international community:

- To support the national, sub-national and sub-regional authorities in all of the above and condition such support by access to reliable baseline data.
- To engage in localised data collection, in cooperation with local authorities and based on their needs, to support inclusive, evidence-based, data-driven decision making.
- To support the authorities and IDPs in addressing key pressing needs related to housing and livelihoods.



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