

Rapid Protection Assessment

Access to Compensation Mechanisms for Damaged and
Destroyed Housing



Introduction

According to aggregated estimates, around 13% of Ukraine's housing stock has been damaged or destroyed, amounting to at least 60 million m².¹ The largest scale of destruction has been recorded in Donetsk Oblast (over 81,800 housing objects), as well as in Kharkiv (42,600) and Kherson (19,200) oblasts.² In Sumy Oblast, as of January 2026, 4,700 residential buildings have been damaged.³

The war continues to have a devastating impact on civilians through regular shelling and active hostilities in frontline and border areas. In the communities of Kharkiv, Donetsk, Sumy and Kherson oblasts covered by this analysis, this results in ongoing damage and destruction of housing and an increasing need for compensation for affected populations. At the same time, compensation commissions operate under heavy workloads, security-related restrictions on access to certain areas, and a high number of complex cases related to ownership documentation, which complicates timely housing assessments and people's access to the eVidnovlennia mechanism.

Assessment methodology

The assessment was conducted based on a review of data collected through DRCs regular and ongoing protection monitoring (including qualitative and quantitative data collection) as well as some targeted primary data collection with stakeholders involved in the compensation commissions. The assessment is not designed to be an in-depth study but rather a brief snapshot of the key challenges affected people face in accessing housing, land and property (HLP) documentation and compensation for damaged and destroyed housing. The assessment was intended to complement regular and ongoing protection monitoring activities carried out by DRC in the targeted locations.

DRC conducted 20 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with representatives of local self-government authorities and members of compensation commissions in selected communities across Kharkiv, Donetsk, Sumy and Kherson oblasts. The data collection was conducted in December 2025 and January 2026. Overall, the KIIs covered 17 communities across 4 oblasts. In Donetsk region, interviews were conducted in Illinivska (1), Kostiantynivska (1) and Oleksandrivska (1) communities. In Kharkiv region – Balakliiska (1), Kurylivska (1), Savynska (1) and Shevchenkivska (1). In Sumy region – Khotinska (2), Krasnopilska (2), Mykolaivska (1), Sumy (1), Yunakivska (2) and Myropilska (1). In Kherson region – Tiahynska (1), Novoraiska (1), Vysokopilska (1) and Kalynivska (1). The assessment therefore included different settlement types, including cities, urban-type settlements and rural communities.

By role and institutional affiliation, 14 respondents (70.0%) were directly members of compensation commissions (including chairs, deputy chairs and secretaries), while 6 respondents (30.0%)

¹ https://24tv.ua/realestate24/skilki-ukrayintsiv-zalishilis-bez-zhitla-2025-rotsi_n2971271

² <https://sluga-narodu.com/yaki-rehiony-vkhodiat-v-top-5-oblastey-sumnykh-lideriv-za-kilkistiu-zruynovanoho-ta-poshkodzhenoho-zhytla/>

³ <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-regions/3993447-vid-vorozih-atak-na-sumsini-poskodzeni-vze-4700-zitlovih-budivel.html>

represented local self-government bodies involved in related administrative processes at the community level. The respondents included 14 women and 6 men aged 23 to 62.

Data collection was conducted through KIIs. The analysis was based on thematic synthesis of responses, enabling the identification of recurring barriers in the work of commissions and key support needs.

KII questions covered a broad range of Protection topics, however FGD questions focused in particular on Housing, Land & Property (HLP) Rights, and especially access to the Ukrainian E-Recovery scheme for individuals whose homes were damaged or destroyed as a consequence of the conflict.

DRC used a mixture of random and purposive sampling to identify participants for the assessment. All interviews were carried out in person by trained Protection staff. While the assessment aimed to include diversity considerations among the participants, it is not representative of all diverse groups in Ukraine.

Assessment Findings

Overall Context of the Communities and Organisation of Compensation Commissions

Most of the interviewed communities in Donetsk, Kherson and Sumy oblasts operate in the context of active hostilities or areas at risk of hostilities, which directly affects the feasibility of housing assessments, the pace of claim processing and the ability of local authorities to ensure continuity of administrative procedures. Some communities in Donetsk and Kherson oblasts also face additional challenges due to the temporary occupation of parts of their territory, which significantly restricts access to housing assets and complicates the documentation of damage and destruction.

Compensation commissions for damaged and/or destroyed property are operating in all interviewed communities. The most common practice is to have one commission, typically comprising approximately 7 to 16 members. However, in some communities responsibilities are divided between several commissions, including separate commissions for reviewing claims related to damaged property, destroyed property, and for conducting housing assessments (damaged/destroyed objects). This approach was reported in Balakliiska and Savynska communities, while in Shevchenkivska community the existence of separate commissions for damaged and destroyed property was also confirmed. KIs further indicate that even where multiple commissions exist within a community, their membership often remains the same or overlaps significantly. Similarly, in Krasnopilska community two separate commissions operate; however, some members participate in the work of both for example, in Savynska community, a key informant noted:

Commission members largely combine their work in the commission with their core professional

“Each commission includes around 10–11 specialists; however, these are largely the same individuals who perform roles across multiple commissions.”

duties, which creates additional workload and may affect the timeliness of claim review. For instance, in Balakliiska community a respondent reported that commission-related work is carried out alongside their main responsibilities in their position.

Housing Damage/Destruction and the Burden on the eVidnovlennia Mechanism (KII)

KIs confirm that in some frontline communities, the scale of damage to the housing stock is critical and, in some cases, is approaching near-total destruction or damage of residential properties. In particular, a representative of Khotinska community stated:

“I can’t give you any figures, but 100% of the houses have definitely been damaged, not a single one is intact, and 90% of them have been destroyed.”

houses have been recorded as damaged, as well as 12 multi-apartment buildings damaged and 10 multi-apartment buildings destroyed. Overall, this affects 4,966 households. Nearly 100 per cent of the housing stock has been affected. In Myropilska community, 80% of housing has been affected.

Given significant differences in the completeness of available data across communities and oblasts, quantitative figures on housing damage, submitted claims and the volume of assessments are presented in the tables below based on KII results. Data for Sumy Oblast are not provided due to the lack of detailed information and given that, as a result of the security situation, some communities have been relocated and estimating the scale of destroyed and damaged housing remains challenging. In some cases, assessments are conducted remotely, as further outlined in the section on remote assessments.

Kharkiv Oblast – Housing damage/destruction and submitted compensation claims (based on KII data)

Community	Damaged houses *multi-apartment	Destroyed houses *multi-apartment	Applications submitted		Examined		Awaiting examination
			Damaged	Destroyed	Damaged	Destroyed	
Kurylivska (active hostilities area)	5,137 *32	570 *n/a	83	382	83	60	320
Balakliiska	4,000 *256	200 *7	5,000	560	3,000	127	10
Savynska	390	70	381	67	446	379	67
Shevchenkivska (active hostilities area)	n/a	n/a	181	14	181	14	40

*n/a — data not provided during KII.

Kherson oblast – Housing damage/destruction and submitted compensation claims (based on KII data)

Community	Damaged houses *multi-apartment	Destroyed houses *multi-apartment	Applications submitted		Examined		Awaiting examination
			Damaged	Destroyed	Damaged	Destroyed	
Kurylivska (active hostilities area)	1,238 *5 (apartments)	2,888 *16 (apartments)	23	724	3	161	520
Kalinivskaya	602 *1	39 *0	184	124	111	92	57
Novorayska (active hostilities area)	837 *21	23 * n/a	77	46	224	10	741
Vysokopil'ska	1,993 *28	621 *4	2,077	700	1,997	685	15

*n/a — data not provided during KII.

Donetsk Oblast – Housing damage/destruction and submitted compensation claims (based on KII data)

Community	Damaged houses *multi-apartment	Destroyed houses *multi-apartment	Applications submitted		Examined		Awaiting examination
			Damaged	Destroyed	Damaged	Destroyed	
Illinivska (active hostilities area; parts under temporary occupation)	4,503 *12	n/a *10	0	672	0	135	1,485

Oleksandrivska (potential hostilities area)	421*	n/a *0	35	11	111	92	8
Kostiantynivska (active hostilities area; partially occupied)	42,054* * n/a	58	3,231	0	2,975*		1,775

*n/a — data not provided during KII.

* 4,503 and 421 are reported as the number of affected properties (not specified as destroyed or damaged).

* 2,975 is reported as the total number of assessments due to a lack of detailed information in the KIIs.

These figures highlight not only the scale of recovery needs, but also the increasing workload placed on compensation mechanisms and commissions responsible for facilitating people's access to the eVidnovlennia programme.

Access to Legal Aid for the Population and for Commissions

The assessment findings indicate uneven access to legal aid for both the affected population and compensation commissions. In a limited number of communities, a lawyer is available; however, in most cases legal support is provided by local authorities' staff, Administrative Service Centres (CNAPs), or partner organisations. At the same time, in some community's free legal aid is entirely unavailable, creating additional barriers for applicants.

In Tiahynska community, key informants reported that no legal support is available and that consultations are effectively provided by village council or CNAPs staff who are not qualified lawyers. This creates additional workload for staff and limits the ability to address complex cases requiring specialised legal knowledge and practical expertise. In Novoraiska community, legal aid was identified as an urgent need due to high demand from the population for support with compensation-related procedures.

In Yunakivska and Myropilska communities, no lawyer or free legal aid services are available. As a result, residents mainly receive consultations from lawyers employed by humanitarian organisations. While this type of support partially addresses existing needs, it depends on the presence of partners and does not always ensure regular and sustainable legal assistance. Key informants also noted that legal support is particularly important for applicants at higher risk of exclusion, including older people and individuals with low digital literacy, who may face difficulties using electronic services and preparing the required documentation.

In communities with restricted access to certain areas or where security conditions remain unstable, the need for legal consultations increases further, as the process of verifying damage and preparing claims is often complicated or delayed.

It was also emphasised that commissions involved in implementing compensation procedures require support as well. In Donetsk Oblast, members of the Illinivska and Kostiantynivska commissions reported a lack of training materials and external support, particularly with regard to legal consultations and case management for complex claims. This may affect the quality of claim review and make it more difficult to make decisions in cases requiring legal assessment.

Key Challenges for Applicants When Submitting Compensation Claims

KII findings indicate that applicants face challenges at every stage of submitting compensation claims for damaged or destroyed housing — from preparing documentation and submitting a claim to completing verification steps and meeting procedural requirements after a decision has been issued. These difficulties often result in delays in processing, suspension of claims, or rejection of compensation requests.

Overall, respondents most frequently highlighted the following barriers:

- Issues with ownership documentation (missing documents, incomplete documentation, or documents that do not meet formal requirements);
- Ownership rights not recorded in the State Register of Real Property Rights (SRRPR) or inconsistencies between registries;
- Inheritance-related challenges, including pending inheritance cases that prevent the proper formalisation of ownership rights, as well as limited access to notarial services;
- Limited understanding of the distinction between “damaged” and “destroyed” housing, which can lead to rejected claims and the need to re-submit the application under the correct category;
- The requirement to obtain co-owners’ consent when submitting a claim and, in some cases, for subsequent actions related to the property (including transfer or disposal).

A separate group of challenges relates to digital barriers, including limited access to electronic services, low levels of digital literacy, lack of technical devices, or difficulties using the Diia platform/application to submit claims.

In Kalynivska community, respondents reported no access to Diia, as well as a lack of key administrative services, including a notary, land surveyor and state registrar. To access these services, residents must travel to other locations, including Kherson (approximately 75 km), Mykolaiv (approximately 85 km) or Velyka Oleksandrivka (approximately 40 km). Similar challenges were reported in Novoraiska community, leading to delays in document collection, additional financial costs, and increased risks of submitting incomplete documentation or making administrative errors — all of which may result in claim rejection or prolonged processing.

In Myropilska community, respondents explicitly noted that some residents do not have smartphones or the application and may also lack basic documents, including an identification code (tax number).

In Khotinska community, respondents additionally reported technical failures in Diia and cases where the system does not retrieve data from registries, resulting in repeated submission attempts, delays and the need for further support to complete the process.

Remote Assessment of Destroyed/Damaged Housing

Remote assessment is a particularly important mechanism for compensation commissions that, due to the security situation, do not have physical access to certain areas. In communities across Sumy Oblast, remote assessments are used to varying degrees depending on security conditions and the

workload faced by commissions. According to KII data, approximately 800 assessments were conducted in Khotinska community, of which 459 were remote. In Yunakivska community, the commission reported issuing more than 700 assessment acts, noting that some properties may have been repeatedly damaged or shifted from the category of “damaged” to “destroyed”, which further complicates the commission’s work and the assessment of damage. Respondents also highlighted a significant volume of claims (approximately 100 applications per month), creating sustained workload pressure on commission members.

A separate challenge identified was the limited ability to obtain official data from state authorities to confirm the level of housing destruction for remote assessments. In Yunakivska community, respondents reported difficulties obtaining information for remote assessments from relevant state institutions, as written requests remained unanswered. As a result, the commission is often forced to rely primarily on information provided by residents, which may affect the quality of remote assessments and the accuracy of conclusions. A representative of Yunakivska community reported: In Myropilska community, the commission conducts an average of 30–40 assessments per month,

“We don’t conduct remote surveys ourselves, we get information from people...”

and it was also reported that 60 remote assessments had been carried out. In Tiahynska community, remote assessments are used as one of the commission’s key working tools — 68 remote assessment acts have been issued, indicating that procedures have been adapted to operate under high security risks. In Novoraiska community, remote assessments were also initiated due to the presence of settlements located in areas of active hostilities. In Illinivska community, the local administration submitted requests to state institutions to obtain remote sensing materials and cartographic data for remote assessments. However, respondents reported that the imagery provided was of insufficient quality, did not capture the necessary angles and did not allow for an adequate assessment of the level of destruction or confirmation that a property had been destroyed. It was also noted that the available materials cannot be used to conduct an up-to-date assessment of housing damage under current conditions.

As a result, in many cases remote assessments are carried out on the basis of information provided by residents, including reports prepared by private construction experts. This approach creates additional financial pressure on affected families who have already lost their housing, as the cost of a private expert report may range from UAH 5,000 to 25,000.

At the same time, respondents emphasised that for remote assessments to be applied effectively, communities require additional resources and support to ensure the full functionality of compensation commissions. Key needs included:

- access to technical specialists, including architects, builders or other qualified professionals who can support assessments and the preparation of technical documentation;

- strengthening the material and technical capacity of commissions (equipment for documenting damage and working in remote areas, including tablets);
- increased legal support for applicants with complex cases (including where documentation is missing or supporting materials have been fully lost);
- the need for training and methodological guidance on remote assessment procedures.

Recommendations

For humanitarian organisations:

- Strengthen access to legal aid in underserved communities, including through regular outreach visits by lawyers as part of mobile teams, organising legal consultations at CNAPs/starosta offices, and expanding remote consultations through accessible legal platforms.
- Provide enhanced legal case management for complex cases, including those involving lost documentation, co-ownership, inheritance, missing or inconsistent data in the State Register of Real Property Rights (SRRPR), and other legal barriers that prevent claim submission or processing.
- Expand community awareness on compensation procedures by developing clear, easy-to-use printed materials (leaflets/guidance notes) explaining compensation mechanisms, required documentation, common mistakes, and the difference between procedures for “damaged” and “destroyed” housing. In addition, develop practical methodological guidance/a handbook on compensation procedures (including remote assessments) in cooperation with commissions from communities with stronger implementation experience.
- Consider providing support to the most vulnerable households to cover the costs of technical documentation or expert assessments in exceptional cases where claims cannot be submitted or processed without such evidence.

For local authorities and compensation commissions:

- Strengthen the operational capacity of commissions by providing essential technical equipment (tablets, photo/video documentation tools) and, where possible, engaging technical specialists (architects, builders, engineers) to ensure accurate damage assessments and the preparation of technical documentation.
- Strengthen the systematic training of commission members and CNAPs staff by organising trainings and methodological support on compensation procedures, documentation requirements, and practical approaches to handling complex or non-standard cases.

For state authorities:

- Establish or reinforce a mechanism that enables commissions to access up-to-date and high-quality data needed for remote assessments (satellite imagery, cartographic materials, and a standardised request/coordination procedure), taking into account the needs of communities facing significant security constraints.
- Improve the availability of administrative services at community level, including through mobile/outreach formats for notaries, state registrars, and land surveyors, to reduce financial and time costs for applicants and speed up document collection for compensation procedures.

