



DRC Legal Alert on the Evacuation of Civilians in Ukraine: Issue 121 | January 2026

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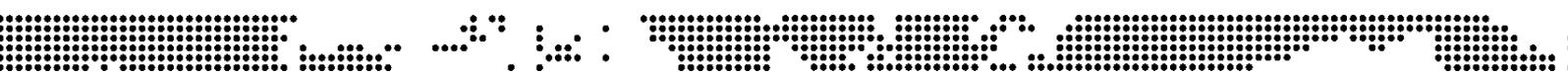
Introduction

In the context of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the evacuation of civilians has become one of the most complex and critical measures aimed at protecting the lives and health of people living in frontline areas or zones of active hostilities. As hostilities approach or continue in these areas, civilian infrastructure is destroyed, basic conditions for safe living are lost, and the risk of injury or death for civilians increases significantly. Against this backdrop, the need to organise evacuations is growing, as evacuation constitutes one of the state’s key obligations to protect the lives and safety of civilians during an armed conflict.

Statistical data

According to the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development of Ukraine¹, since 1 June 2025 nearly 147,000 people have been evacuated from frontline areas, including more than 16,500 children and over 5,000 people with limited mobility.

¹ <https://mindev.gov.ua/news/tryvaie-evakuatsiia-naselennia-z-pryfrontovykh-naselenykh-punktiv>





The largest number of evacuees comes from Donetsk Oblast, approximately 92,400 people, as well as from Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, with over 35,000 evacuees.

Evacuations from other regions include:

- Kharkiv Oblast — over 8,300 people.
- Sumy Oblast — over 4,400 people.
- Kherson Oblast — over 3,700 people.
- Zaporizhzhia Oblast — over 2,800 people.

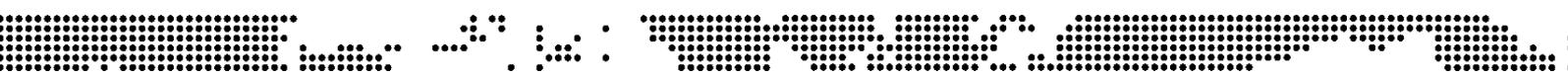
Amid continuing hostilities, the security situation in various frontline and border regions with the Russian Federation is constantly changing. Accordingly, the need for evacuation is regularly reassessed and announced by the competent authorities in the respective areas, depending on the local security situation. Beyond Donetsk, Luhansk, and Kherson oblasts, where mandatory evacuation measures were already in place, **as at the end of 2025 – beginning 2026** mandatory evacuation continues in certain settlements of the following areas:

- Chuhuiv, Iziurm, and Kupiansk rayons of Kharkiv oblast.
- Sumy, Shostka, Konotop, and Okhtyrka rayons of Sumy oblast.
- Synelnykove rayon of Dnipropetrovsk oblast.
- Novhorod-Siverskyi, Semenivka, Snovsk, and Horodnia hromadas of Chernihiv oblast.

In these territories, designated authorities are responsible for conducting evacuations. People seeking up-to-date information can contact the relevant authorities by phone, typically the coordination headquarters overseeing evacuation operations in the respective rayons and oblasts, with contact details available on the official websites of the oblast or rayon state (military)² administrations.

Important: Additionally, the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development operates a **24/7 hotline at 1548**, providing an immediate channel of assistance for those requiring evacuation.

² In Ukraine, under martial law, temporary state bodies known as military administrations may be established. They perform the core functions of regular state administrations but operate with expanded powers to maintain governance, security, and emergency response in extraordinary conditions.





Legal framework

The legal framework governing the organisation and conduct of evacuations in Ukraine is primarily based on the [Civil Protection Code of Ukraine](#) (the Code), adopted in 2012. The Code establishes the basic concepts and types of evacuation and defines the respective powers of state authorities and other actors involved in this process.

The Code defines **evacuation** as *the organised movement or transportation of the population from an emergency zone or an area at risk where there is a threat to life or health. It also provides for the evacuation of material and cultural property where there is a risk of damage or destruction.*

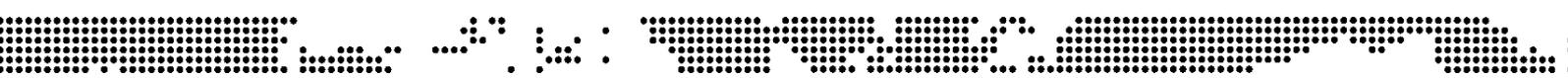
Following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, and particularly after the full-scale invasion in February 2022, the existing legislative framework proved to be insufficiently adapted to the realities of wartime conditions. While the Code contains provisions relevant to emergency situations, it reflects the legal regime of martial law only to a limited extent. Having been adopted prior to the outbreak of hostilities in 2014 and 2022, the Code does not fully address the current security and humanitarian challenges facing Ukraine and therefore requires further updating.

A more operational and better adapted regulatory instrument in the context of wartime conditions is the [Procedure for Conducting Evacuation in the Event of a Threat of, or the Occurrence of, Emergencies, approved by Cabinet of Ministers Resolution № 841 of 30 October 2013](#) (Procedure № 841).

During the period of full-scale invasion, Procedure № 841 has been amended on several occasions. These amendments were intended to clarify evacuation procedures from areas of possible and active hostilities and to strengthen the focus of state policy on protecting the rights and addressing the needs of the civilian population.

As a result, secondary legislation plays a decisive role in shaping the practical rules for organising and carrying out evacuations under wartime conditions, effectively compensating for the limited adaptability of the primary legislation.

At the same time, despite nearly four years of full-scale war, Ukraine still lacks clearly defined legislative criteria for declaring evacuation specifically in the context of wartime conditions. This creates significant discretion for state authorities and local self-government bodies when making evacuation-related decisions.





In practice, this has resulted in situations where settlements are recognised as unsafe or classified as areas of possible or active hostilities, while decisions to initiate evacuation are not taken in a timely manner.

In order to address certain shortcomings in the legal regulation of evacuation, [Cabinet of Ministers Resolution № 1307 of 10 October 2025](#) introduced amendments to a number of regulatory acts. These changes are aimed at improving evacuation procedures from areas of active and possible hostilities and at strengthening the social protection of evacuated people. Against this background, further analysis of the existing evacuation mechanism—considering the updated legal framework and the specifics of its practical implementation—remains necessary.

Key legislative and regulatory acts governing evacuation

- **Civil Protection Code of Ukraine (2012)** — establishes the general principles of population evacuation, including its types and levels, and delineates the powers of state authorities and other actors involved in the organisation and conduct of evacuation.
- **Procedure for Conducting Evacuation in the Event of a Threat of, or the Occurrence of, Emergencies, approved by Cabinet of Ministers Resolution № 841 of 30 October 2013** — sets out detailed procedures for organising and carrying out evacuation, including the designation of safe areas, arrangements for accommodating evacuated populations, and coordination of evacuation measures.
- **Cabinet of Ministers Resolution № 385 of 27 March 2022** — regulates the temporary relocation (evacuation) of children and persons who reside on a 24-hour basis in institutions located in areas of active hostilities or in nearby settlements.
- **Cabinet of Ministers Resolution № 911 of 9 August 2024, “On Certain Issues Related to the Implementation of Evacuation Measures and Effective Response to Mass Population Movements”** — aims to improve evacuation mechanisms and responses to mass population displacement in crisis situations.
- **Methodology for Planning Evacuation Measures, approved by Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs № 577 of 10 July 2017** — defines approaches to planning evacuation measures at various administrative levels.





- **Cabinet of Ministers Resolution № 934 of 7 November 2018, “On Approval of the Procedure for the Mandatory Evacuation of Certain Categories of the Population in the Event of the Introduction of Martial Law”** — establishes a special procedure for the mandatory evacuation of specified categories of the population.
- **Cabinet of Ministers Resolution № 1432 of 26 October 2001** — regulates the evacuation of the population from zones of radioactive contamination around nuclear power plants, areas at risk of catastrophic flooding, and zones affected by earthquakes.

**This list is not exhaustive but reflects the main legislative and regulatory acts governing the organisation and conduct of evacuation in Ukraine*

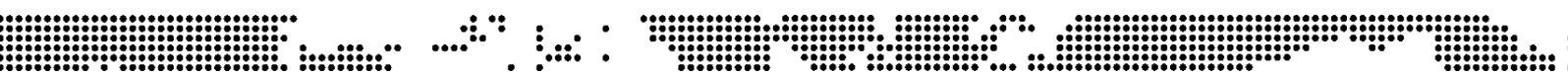
Organisation and conduct of evacuation: actors and response mechanisms

Response actors

The Government plays a central role in coordinating the evacuation process in Ukraine. Overall coordination is carried out through the **Ministry of Communities and Territories Development**.

Given the complexity and multi-level nature of evacuation measures, their implementation is conducted on an interagency basis, involving various actors in accordance with their respective mandates:

- **Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity** — responsible for the provision of social support to evacuees, assistance with accommodation, and facilitation of local integration and reintegration measures.
- **Local state (military) administrations and local self-government bodies** — responsible for organising and implementing evacuation measures at the local level, including the establishment of assembly and transit points, public notification, registration of evacuees, transportation arrangements, temporary accommodation, and provision of basic services.
- **Coordination headquarters** — may be established to ensure interagency coordination of evacuation measures and to provide an effective response to mass population movements. They are responsible for the organisation, planning, and coordination of evacuation activities and may be established at the national, oblast, and local levels, depending on the scale and complexity of the evacuation.





- These headquarters serve as central points for information sharing, resource allocation, operational decision-making, and monitoring the progress of evacuation operations (*for more information, please see the section “Coordination Headquarters” below*).
- **State Emergency Service** — ensures safety coordination, public alert systems, and the technical and operational aspects of evacuation.
- **National Police** — maintains public order, ensures security during evacuation procedures, facilitates safe movement, and deploys personnel to carry out mandatory evacuation of people, including children, when necessary.
- **National Social Service** — coordinates multidisciplinary teams, including social workers, psychologists, legal advisors, and medical personnel, to provide comprehensive assistance to evacuees.
- **International and national non-governmental organisations, including humanitarian organisations** (*voluntarily, with the consent of the leadership of such organisations*) — provide complementary humanitarian assistance, including emergency relief, protection services, psychosocial support, and logistical assistance, but not exclusively.

In October 2025 the Cabinet of Ministers introduced **the State Information System for Evacuation Coordination and Assistance to Persons from Temporarily Occupied and Frontline Areas** ([Cabinet of Ministers Resolution № 1307 of 10 October 2025](#))³. The purpose of this system is to allocate responsibilities among evacuation actors and provide tools to analyse the needs of evacuees. This, in turn, aims to improve access to services at transit centres and temporary accommodation sites.

Coordination headquarters

A coordination headquarters is the main interagency body for organising and conducting evacuations at the relevant level. It interacts with evacuation commissions on issues such as route planning, identification of safe areas, monitoring the availability of transport, allocation of evacuees, and arrangements for their temporary accommodation.

³ <https://mindev.gov.ua/news/v-ukraini-zaprovadzhuiut-derzhavnu-informatsiinu-systemu-koordinatsii-evakuatsii>



Levels and powers of coordination headquarters:

- **National-level Coordination Headquarters** (*established by the Cabinet of Ministers*) → coordinates oblast and local coordination headquarters
- **Oblast-level Coordination Headquarters** (*established by oblast and Kyiv state (military) administrations*) → coordinates local coordination headquarters
- **Local-level Coordination Headquarters** (*established by rayon state (military) administrations*) → implements measures on site

For example, on 29 July 2022, the Coordination Headquarters for Evacuation and Effective Response to Mass Population Movements was set up by the Cabinet of Ministers at the national level to oversee and coordinate evacuation processes across the country.

Its composition includes representatives of key ministries involved in the evacuation process, the heads of all oblasts military administrations, and, with their consent, may also include representatives of the Office of the President, the Security Service, the Armed Forces of Ukraine, representatives of JSC "Ukrzaliznytsia," JSC "Ukrposhta," as well as representatives of international humanitarian organisations and civil society organisations.

Following a similar procedure, coordination headquarters may be established at the oblast and local levels.

In 2024, [Cabinet of Ministers Resolution № 911 of 9 August 2024](#) approved the Model Regulation on Coordination Headquarters for Evacuation Measures and Effective Response to Mass Population Movements, so that it could serve as a template for establishing coordination headquarters at the relevant levels.

What can a coordination headquarters do?

1. Receive information from central and local executive authorities, other state bodies, local self-government bodies, enterprises, institutions, and organisations that is necessary to fulfil its assigned tasks.
2. Involve representatives of the aforementioned entities (with the consent of their leadership) as well as independent experts (with their agreement) in its work.



3. To fulfil its assigned tasks:

- Engage non-governmental organisations, including international NGOs, and non-profit organisations that involve volunteers in providing humanitarian assistance.
- Initiate the creation of mobile teams equipped with specialised armoured vehicles to locate and evacuate vulnerable population groups, including people with disabilities, elderly people, and children accompanied by parents, guardians, or other legal representatives, from affected areas and zones of active hostilities.
- Communicate with vulnerable groups regarding their relocation to safe areas and take their interests into account.

Types and Levels of Evacuation

Evacuation may be mandatory, general, partial, temporary, or permanent and can be carried out at the national, oblast, local, or organisational level.

Mandatory Evacuation

In the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine, mandatory evacuation plays a key role in protecting the civilian population. It is declared in situations where, due to armed conflict or the threat of its outbreak, remaining in certain areas becomes dangerous for civilians.

Mandatory evacuation is ordered for the relocation of civilians from:

- **Areas of potential hostilities**
- **Areas of active hostilities**
- **Areas of active hostilities where state electronic information resources are operational⁴, to safe territories.**

⁴ Areas of active hostilities where state electronic information resources are operational are territories where, despite ongoing hostilities, the population can access state administrative services electronically thanks to the functioning of state electronic information resources (for example, through the “Diia” portal), including services such as registration of an entrepreneurship, obtaining extracts, criminal record certificates, registration of residence, and others.





In Ukraine, there is an official [List of Territories](#) where hostilities are taking place (or have taken place) or which are temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation. This List is approved and updated by the Ministry of Communities and Territories Development.

If a territory is included in this List, the local state (military) administrations, together with the relevant local self-government body, convene a meeting of the evacuation commission or the corresponding coordination headquarters (if one has been established).

Specific conditions for mandatory evacuation apply to children (*for more information, please see the section “Evacuation of children” below*). Their mandatory evacuation must now be carried out under all circumstances, even in cases where parents refuse to evacuate.

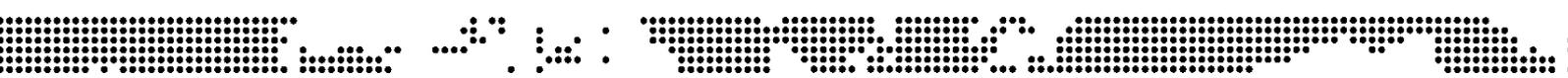
Mandatory evacuation of certain categories of population

Mandatory evacuation may also be applied on a partial basis to certain vulnerable groups who are unable to independently protect their life or health, including persons with disabilities, elderly persons, and other vulnerable populations (so called partial evacuation). However, mandatory evacuation cannot be enforced against such people. If they refuse evacuation, it is not carried out.

On 10 February 2026, [Law No. 4779-IX](#) was adopted, which, among other things, amended the Civil Protection Code of Ukraine (Article 33) to introduce the possibility of conducting *partial mandatory evacuation for certain categories of population who, due to age or health condition, are unable to independently take measures to preserve their life or health, including children, people with disabilities, elderly people, and other categories of population* — based on the decision of regional and Kyiv city state (military) administrations.

From this provision, it follows that the legislator does not establish an exhaustive list of population categories that may fall under partial mandatory evacuation, but sets a general criterion — the inability of a person to independently take measures to preserve their life or health.

At the same time, the procedure for identifying people with disabilities and other low-mobility population groups living in an emergency zone (including military emergencies) or in a potentially affected area, and organizing their accompaniment, including ensuring evacuation measures, approved by the [Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Resolution No. 282 of 18 April 2018](#) (Procedure No. 282), continues to apply.





Procedure No. 282 applies to people with disabilities and children with disabilities (including those with visual, hearing, musculoskeletal, intellectual, and mental impairments), as well as the following low-mobility population groups:

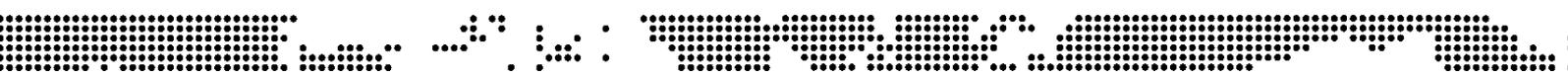
- Large families.
- Foster families, family-type children's homes, and families where children are under guardianship or care.
- Pregnant women and elderly people who do not have able-bodied family members in their place of residence (living alone).
- Families of foster carers (patronage caregivers).
- Families with children placed temporarily.
- Other people who cannot move independently and do not have able-bodied family members in their place of residence (living alone)⁵.

Thus, the measures for identifying and accompanying persons to ensure evacuation under Procedure No. 282 apply to a clearly defined circle of persons, which has the characteristics of an exhaustive list. This approach cannot be considered inclusive, as it does not cover all persons who, due to various objective circumstances, may be unable to take independent measures to preserve their life or health and, accordingly, may require evacuation and proper accompaniment.

In particular, people with severe chronic diseases, mental disorders, temporary mobility impairments, people in difficult life circumstances, or those effectively deprived of family support but formally not falling under the criteria of Procedure No. 282 may remain outside the scope of the defined list.

As a result, a regulatory inconsistency arises: the categories of population that may be evacuated under partial mandatory evacuation according to the new Law No 4779-IX are broader than the

⁵ Detection and accompaniment of such individuals must be ensured by local state (military) administrations and local self-government bodies, which form corresponding teams with the involvement of specialists in social protection, civil protection, healthcare, and child services. The work of the team is carried out based on lists of individuals submitted by civil protection units, social protection authorities, healthcare institutions, child services of local state administrations, local self-government bodies, territorial centres of social services (provision of social services), centres of social services for families, children, and youth, as well as public associations of persons with disabilities. Identification of individuals may be carried out, in particular, through visits to their places of permanent residence or stay.





procedural mechanism for identifying and accompanying certain categories of population established by Procedure No. 282, which may create risks of unequal access to protection and assistance for people who need it.

Separately, it should be noted that the broader concept of “vulnerable population groups” is provided in the [Law of Ukraine “On Social Services”](#) (Clause 3, Part 1, Article 1), which regulates the provision of social services aimed at preventing difficult life circumstances, overcoming them, or minimizing their negative consequences for individuals and families:

Vulnerable population groups are individuals or families who face the highest risk of falling into difficult life circumstances due to adverse external and/or internal factors.

To establish the criteria for classifying people as belonging to vulnerable population groups, the aforementioned Law (Clause 15, Part 1, Article 1) also defines “*difficult life circumstances*” as circumstances that negatively affect a person’s life, health, or development, as well as the functioning of a family, which the individual or family is unable to overcome independently.

The same Law (Clause 15, Part 1, Article 1) additionally sets out factors that may give rise to difficult life circumstances, based on which local social protection authorities are required to assess whether a person belongs to a vulnerable population group:

- Older persons.
- Reduced or lost mobility or cognitive capacity.
- Incurable diseases or illnesses requiring long-term treatment.
- Mental and behavioural disorders, including those related to psychoactive substance use, other forms of dependency, and addictive behaviours.
- Disability.
- Homelessness.
- Unemployment.
- Low income.
- Behavioural disorders in children due to parental divorce.
- Neglect or failure of parents or guardians to fulfil their child-care responsibilities.



- Loss of social ties, including during detention or imprisonment.
- Child abuse.
- Gender-based violence.
- Domestic violence.
- Human trafficking.
- Harm caused by fire, natural disaster, catastrophe, military (combat) operations, terrorist acts, or armed conflict, including in connection with temporary occupation, conflict-related sexual violence, forced transfer or deportation, forced internal displacement, and deprivation of liberty as a result of war.

Thus, the concept of vulnerable population groups is significantly broader in nature, and in practice, given the non-exhaustive categories of population that may fall under partial mandatory evacuation, these vulnerable population groups may also be taken into account when making decisions regarding such evacuation.

At the same time, based on DRC's analysis of the legislation, it remains uncertain whether all people who face such difficult life circumstances are, in practice, duly considered, monitored, and officially classified by local authorities as belonging to vulnerable groups and, therefore, would be subject to partial mandatory evacuation in specific cases.

Since this classification is carried out at the local level, approaches may vary between hromadas. As a result, some persons who meet the criteria for vulnerability may not be identified or prioritized for evacuation, potentially leaving them without timely protection or support.

In practice, when evacuations are announced, the criterion of belonging to a vulnerable population group is not always clearly applied, and evacuations are often carried out without a consistent assessment of vulnerability.

Important: In the context of the legislator introducing the possibility of mandatory evacuation of children and other vulnerable groups of people from areas of active hostilities, questions remain regarding the practical aspects of implementing such measures. It is therefore entirely expected that these matters secondary legislation (bylaws) adopted by the Government, as mandated by the final provisions of Law № 4779-IX.





Who decides on evacuation?

Level	Authorities responsible for making the decision
National	Cabinet of Ministers
Oblast	Oblast state (military) administrations; Kyiv and Sevastopol city state (military) administrations
Local	Rayon state (military) administrations; relevant local self-government bodies
Organisational	Heads of business or institutional entities (legal entities)

What are the evacuation authorities and their functions?

Name of authority	Functions and tasks
Evacuation commissions	Responsible for planning evacuations at the relevant level, preparing the population to carry out evacuation measures, preparing evacuation authorities to perform their tasks, monitoring the readiness for evacuation, and receiving and accommodating evacuated people, as well as material and cultural assets.
Evacuation assembly points	Designated for collecting and registering evacuated people and organising their transport to safe areas. They are located near railway stations, sea and river ports, piers, evacuation routes, as well as on existing city squares, in open safe areas, or in secure buildings. In urgent cases, the functions of evacuation assembly points may, by decision of the head of the evacuation commission, be assigned to operational groups.

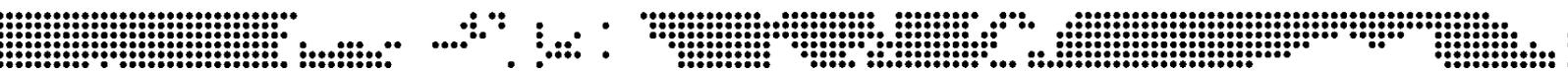




<p>Intermediate evacuation points</p>	<p>Located on the outer boundary of an emergency zone related to radioactive or chemical contamination, for transferring people from vehicles that operated in the emergency zone to decontaminated transport for movement to uncontaminated areas.</p>
<p>Reception evacuation points</p>	<p>Established to receive and register evacuated people, material, and cultural assets, and to send them to places of permanent or temporary accommodation (storage) in safe areas.</p>
<p>Transit centres</p>	<p>Designed for the short-term stay of evacuated people during their movement to temporary or permanent accommodation. They provide registration, lodging, food, medical care, psychological support, legal assistance, assessment of basic social service needs, and organisation of further transport. They are located in specially equipped facilities adapted to the needs of people with limited mobility.</p>
<p>Multidisciplinary team at transit centres</p>	<p>A functionally distinct group of specialists united by a common goal and tasks regarding the organisation of population evacuation and the subsequent placement of evacuees at the transit centre.</p>

Evacuation assembly points, intermediate evacuation points, transit centres, and reception points **maintain communication** with rayon, city, rayon-in-city, hromada, and village evacuation commissions, commissions established at economic facilities, boarding points for transport, pedestrian departure points, as well as medical and transport services.

The work of all evacuation authorities **is overseen** by the body that decides to carry out the evacuation.





Important: According to legislation the deployment and preparation of evacuation authorities at all levels **must not exceed four hours** from the moment the decision to carry out the evacuation is received.

How is preparation for evacuation carried out?

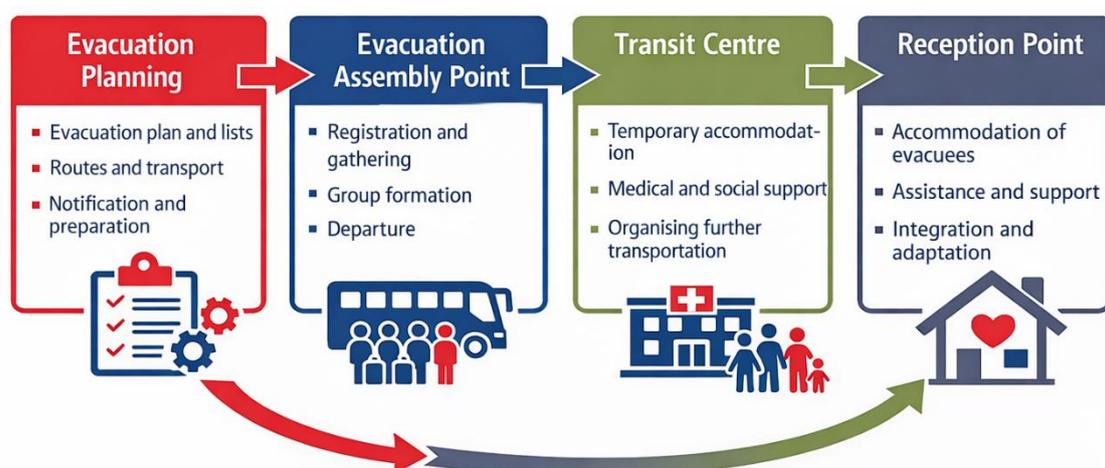
Preparation for evacuation is carried out in advance, regardless of whether a formal decision to evacuate has been taken. At this stage:

- Evacuation authorities are established.
- Evacuation plans are developed and updated.
- Transport routes and embarkation points are determined, and vehicle readiness is checked.
- The population subject to evacuation is registered, and other organisational measures are undertaken.

Conducting evacuation

The actual evacuation begins once the relevant authorised body issues the decision to evacuate. Evacuation authorities at the national, oblast, and local levels, as well as within business and institutional entities, are then established or brought to operational readiness. The planned evacuation measures are subsequently carried out in the prescribed sequence.

Stages of evacuation





Stage 1. Planning and organising evacuation

Planning and organisation of evacuation are carried out by **evacuation commissions**, which, under the law, are responsible for preparing and coordinating evacuation measures. Their main functions include:

1. Evacuation planning

Developing and updating evacuation plans for the population, personnel, and material and cultural assets from areas of possible and active hostilities. Where necessary, evacuation plans are prepared in accordance with legislation on the protection of restricted-access information.

The evacuation of people with disabilities and other groups with limited mobility is addressed in a separate section of the plan.

Lists of individuals subject to evacuation are compiled to be used at the relevant stages of the evacuation process. Such lists are compiled by the local authorities of the respective territories where evacuation is planned, namely by local state (military) administration and local self-government bodies.

2. Preparation and public information

Organising the dissemination of information to the population about procedures at all stages of evacuation and the current security situation in an accessible manner⁶. The State Emergency Service, the National Police, and representatives of civil society and volunteer organisations may also be involved in public information activities.

3. Coordination and interaction

Coordinating the activities of evacuation authorities and liaising with the military command, State Emergency Service, National Police, and other involved actors to ensure the safety of evacuation routes, organisation of transport convoys, and maintenance of public order at assembly points, transit centres, and during other evacuation activities.

⁶ This may include announcements via loudspeaker vehicles, sirens and centralised alert systems, radio broadcasts, SMS messages, messaging apps, social media, official websites of authorities, religious and community organisations, as well as individual notification of people with limited mobility by social workers or designated community representatives.





Additionally, [Cabinet of Ministers Resolution № 1307 of 10 October 2025](#) introduced the **State Information System for Evacuation Coordination and Assistance to Persons from Temporarily Occupied and Frontline Areas**.

The purpose of this system is to allocate responsibilities among evacuation actors and provide tools to analyse the needs of evacuees. This, in turn, aims to improve access to services at transit centres and temporary accommodation sites.

4. Readiness control for evacuation

Checking the preparedness of evacuation authorities, transport, assembly points, and other elements of the system for carrying out evacuation measures.

5. Reception and placement of evacuees

Organising the reception and accommodation of evacuees, as well as material and cultural assets, in safe areas in accordance with approved reception and placement plans.

Stage 2. Evacuation assembly

People designated for evacuation arrive at **evacuation assembly points**, which are set up for the purpose of gathering, registering, and organising their onward movement to safe areas. Assembly points are generally located near evacuation routes, transport hubs, or other safe locations.

Evacuation assembly points exchange information with transit centres using the previously mentioned State Information System for Evacuation Coordination. Based on data from this system, considering route safety, proximity, and available capacity, evacuees are directed to the appropriate transit centres. If placement at a designated centre is not possible, individuals are redirected to the nearest available transit centre.

Stage 3. Transportation to transit centres

A **transit centre** is a distinct element of the evacuation system and is intended for the short-term stay of evacuees during their relocation to temporary or permanent accommodation. Transit centres are established in specially equipped facilities, with provisions made to accommodate people with disabilities and other groups with limited mobility.





According to the Ministry of Communities and Territories Development⁷, as of 2 January 2026, 17 transit centres are operational for receiving evacuated citizens. The centres with the largest intake are located in Pavlohrad and Voloske in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, as well as Lozova in Kharkiv Oblast.

Multidisciplinary teams at transit centres provide a basic support package, which may include:

- Temporary rest areas.
- Food and hygiene supplies.
- Medical and psychological assistance.
- Legal support and guidance on access to state and international financial assistance⁸.

Based on an assessment of individual needs, further transportation to accommodation sites is organised. The stay at a transit centre does not exceed **three days** from registration, or **seven days** if documentation processing is required.

Stage 4. Reception and final placement

In safe regions, **evacuation reception points** operate, where evacuees undergo final registration, are accommodated in temporary or longer-term housing, and receive social, medical, and other forms of state support.

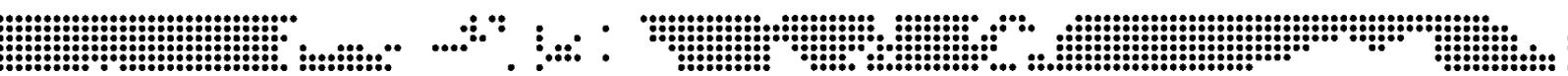
The **State Information System for Evacuation Coordination and Assistance** — administered by the Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity — is used to determine the availability of temporary accommodation for evacuees from temporarily occupied areas, and from zones of active and potential hostilities.

Evacuees are transferred from transit centres to temporary accommodation, healthcare facilities, or social protection institutions in an organised manner through one of the following methods:

- Free travel by rail.
- Specially arranged transport by bus or other means, funded from sources permitted by law.

⁷ <https://mindev.gov.ua/news/iz-prykordonnykh-naselenykh-punktiv-dnipropetrovskoi-ta-zaporizkoi-oblastei-evakuuiut-bilshe-3-tysiach-ditei-z-rodynamy>

⁸ <https://responsiblecitizens.org/dopomoha-evakuovanyam-lozova/>





- Any other method not prohibited by law, including self-arranged transport or assistance from third parties, provided the transit centre administration is informed once the stay is completed.

According to the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development, the total number of bed spaces in temporary accommodation for internally displaced persons exceeds 80,500, of which more than 7,300 remain available. Additionally, oblast military administrations maintain reserve capacity for evacuees. As of 1 December 2025, over 15,400 additional bed spaces were deployed, including approximately 169 spaces specifically for people with limited mobility⁹.

Evacuation of children

The evacuation of children from areas of potential and active hostilities has long been accompanied by significant practical challenges, primarily due to the refusal of parents or other legal guardians to relocate children to safer territories. As a result, children remained in high-risk areas, exposing their lives and health to serious danger. This situation required legislative improvement to ensure the possibility of prompt evacuation of children in such circumstances, regardless of the position of their legal representatives.

Mandatory evacuation of children – challenges and recent legislative changes

On 5 November 2025, the Cabinet of Ministers introduced amendments to Resolution № 841 to ensure the mandatory evacuation of children from areas of active hostilities. Key provisions included:

- Decisions on the mandatory evacuation of children are adopted by oblast military administrations and the Kyiv City Military Administration based on a written proposal from the relevant military command and are subject to approval by the Coordination Headquarters established by the Cabinet of Ministers.
- Mandatory evacuation of children **was required to be carried out together with their parents or other legal guardians**. This requirement, however, significantly complicated the

⁹ <https://mindev.gov.ua/news/iz-prykordonnykh-naselenykh-punktiv-dnipropetrovskoi-ta-zaporizkoi-oblastei-evakuuiut-bilshe-3-tysiach-ditei-z-rodynamy>





evacuation process. In cases where parents or legal guardians refused to leave dangerous areas, implementing mandatory evacuation decisions became practically impossible. Without consent from legal representatives, the state authorities were limited in their ability to promptly relocate children to safe territories.

- **However**, the only legal mechanism available in such situations was the **general procedure for the immediate removal of a child in the event of a direct threat to their life or health, as provided for in Part 2, Article 170 of the Family Code of Ukraine**. By its nature, this procedure is time-consuming, involves multiple procedural steps with the participation of the prosecutor and the court, and is not adapted to rapid evacuation situations.

In order to address this issue, **on 10 February 2026 Parliament adopted [Law No 4779-IX](#)**, which provides that:

Period	Key Provisions
<p>Before adoption of the Law No 4779-IX</p>	<p>Evacuation of children from areas of potential or active hostilities was only possible if they were accompanied by their parents or other legal guardians.</p>
<p>After adoption of the Law No 4779-IX</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mandatory evacuation of children to safe areas is carried out with the accompaniment of parents (one of the parents), another family member, relative (grandmother, grandfather, adult siblings, stepfather, stepmother), other legal representatives of the child, or, with their consent, without accompaniment or with other persons. 2. In the event that parents, other family members, relatives (grandmother, grandfather, adult siblings, stepfather, stepmother), or other legal representatives of the child refuse to accompany the child during mandatory evacuation, and this refusal is documented by a police officer via video recording, the evacuation of children to safe areas is carried out forcibly without the accompaniment of such persons. 3. Children living in areas of potential hostilities – may be evacuated without parental or guardian accompaniment through mandatory





evacuation conducted by the guardianship and custody authorities, with the support of the National Police, even in cases where parents or legal guardians refuse.

4. **Children living in areas of active hostilities** – may be evacuated without parental or guardian accompaniment through mandatory evacuation is carried out forcibly by the National Police.
5. After evacuation, children are transferred to guardianship and custody authorities.

Following the mandatory evacuation:

6. If parents, other family members, relatives (grandmother, grandfather, adult siblings, stepfather, stepmother), or other legal representatives of a child **refuse to accompany the child during the mandatory evacuation** of children from settlements located in areas of active hostilities, **the child may be taken from the parents without terminating their parental rights.**
7. **For a period of six months from the date the child is taken**, the parents or other legal representatives **have the right to apply to the guardianship and custody authority to request the return of the child and to provide documents confirming their residence in an administrative-territorial unit or hromada** that is not part of the territories of active hostilities and/or occupied by the Russian Federation, as included in the [List of territories where hostilities are ongoing \(or have taken place\) or that are temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation](#), which is approved in accordance with the procedure established by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, as well as other documents specified in the [Procedure for the activities of guardianship and custody authorities related to the protection of children's rights](#), approved by the Cabinet of Ministers.
8. If the parents or other legal representatives do not exercise the right to request the return of the child, **the guardianship and custody authority shall file a petition with the court for the termination of their parental rights in accordance with the procedure established by law.**



As stated by the legislator, these legal changes aim to ensure unconditional mandatory evacuation of children under any circumstances, prioritizing the child's life above all else.

If parents ignore evacuation measures and this failure directly endangers the life or health of a child, **criminal liability may arise under Article 166 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine** (*Malicious failure by parents, guardians, or custodians to fulfil statutory duties of care for a child or for a person under guardianship or custody, resulting in serious consequences*).

Important: In the context of the legislator introducing the possibility of mandatory evacuation of children and other vulnerable groups of people from areas of active hostilities, questions remain regarding the practical aspects of implementing such measures. It is therefore entirely expected that these matters secondary legislation (bylaws) adopted by the Government, as mandated by the final provisions of Law № 4779-IX.

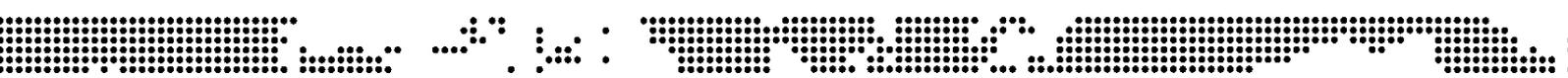
Evacuation of children and other people residing or staying 24/7 in certain institutions during martial law

This issue is regulated by [Resolution № 546 of the Cabinet of Ministers, dated 1 June 2023](#) (Resolution № 546).

The evacuation procedure applies to healthcare, education, social protection, and social service institutions where children and other persons reside or stay full-time, including specialised children's institutions, boarding schools, care homes, geriatric and psycho-neurological facilities, and other institutions specified in Resolution № 546.

During martial law, mandatory evacuation applies to children and other persons residing on a full-time basis in institutions located:

- Within 2 km from facilities of strategic importance to the national economy and defence.
- Within 100 km from the administrative boundary with temporarily occupied territories or the line of active hostilities.
- Within 50 km from the state border of Ukraine with the Russian Federation or the Republic of Belarus.





People eligible for temporary relocation under Resolution № 546 include:

- Orphans and children deprived of parental care.
- Children residing in or enrolled in institutions regardless of status.
- Elderly persons and persons with disabilities receiving inpatient social or palliative services.
- Adults and families with children in difficult life circumstances who temporarily reside in institutions providing social services.

Important: during martial law, such institutions may continue to operate without 24/7 residence, provided that suitable civil protection or dual-purpose shelters are available, while ensuring the provision of educational, social, medical, and rehabilitation services.

Refusal of evacuation

An adult has the right to refuse mandatory evacuation. Such a refusal must be submitted in writing.

By signing the refusal, the individual confirms their informed decision to remain at their place of residence and acknowledges that refusing evacuation may pose a real threat to their life and health, including the life and health of children or other persons under their care, guardianship, in a foster family, under a patronage caregiver, or in a family-type children's home.

Signing a refusal does not prevent the individual from evacuating at a later stage should circumstances change or a relevant decision be made.

Records of all written refusals are maintained and stored by local state administrations or local self-government authorities responsible for organising evacuation measures.

Participation of humanitarian organisations in evacuation

Legal status and role of humanitarian organisations

Resolution № 841 provides for the involvement of humanitarian and volunteer organisations in the implementation of evacuation measures. Such involvement is voluntary (based on consent) and does not relieve state authorities of their responsibility for organising and coordinating evacuation.





Participants may include, in particular, non-governmental organisations (including international NGOs accredited in Ukraine), representatives of international intergovernmental organisations, as well as non-profit organisations and volunteers operating under the Law of Ukraine “On Volunteer Activity.”

Within their respective competencies, local state (military) administrations, and local self-government bodies are responsible for organising interaction with these organisations during evacuation.

In practice, humanitarian organisations play a key role in the evacuation process, providing support and carrying out specific evacuation tasks at all stages — from preparation and public information to transportation and initial assistance after relocation.

Important: The involvement of humanitarian organisations cannot be mandatory and is carried out exclusively with the consent of the management of such organisations. Where a humanitarian organisation is involved in evacuation activities, it is required to comply with the applicable legislation of Ukraine governing evacuation procedures.

Voluntary approach and protection of the population

The Protection Cluster Recommendations¹⁰ on evacuation emphasise voluntariness, child protection, the best interests of vulnerable groups, and unobstructed access to assistance, highlighting the responsibility of humanitarian organisations to provide support both during and after relocation, without coercing people to evacuate, even at the request of authorities.

According to these recommendations, the fundamental principle of humanitarian evacuation is voluntary movement, which requires informed and conscious consent from civilians to be relocated.

Limitations on humanitarian involvement

Humanitarian organisations do not make decisions regarding the announcement of evacuation and do not participate in forced displacement of civilians, as such decisions fall exclusively within the authority of the state. Where the state implements mandatory evacuation under national law and international obligations, humanitarian organisations may provide support only after relocation is

¹⁰ https://globalprotectioncluster.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/guidance_on_humanitarian_evacuation_-_ukr-july_2024.pdf





complete or assist with evacuation provided that people being relocated have given voluntary consent.

Evacuation of children and other vulnerable groups

Special attention is given to situations involving children. Humanitarian organisations must not persuade or coerce parents or legal guardians to evacuate children against their will and cannot facilitate transportation of children or families without voluntary consent.

Where people refuse evacuation, decisions regarding subsequent measures — including compulsory evacuation or separation of children from legal guardians — remain the responsibility of the relevant state authorities.

Conclusions

The current legal and regulatory framework in the field of evacuation remains partially fragmented and does not always ensure predictable decision-making, particularly in the context of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. The Civil Protection Code of Ukraine requires further revision, as it does not fully address the challenges posed by wartime conditions.

The revision of evacuation procedures and the continued development of transit centre systems represent important steps toward enhancing the humanitarian effectiveness of evacuation and ensuring adequate support for evacuees.

Overall, the evacuation system requires comprehensive reform to ensure a rapid response, the protection of vulnerable groups, and adequate state support following relocation. In the context of ongoing hostilities, strengthening the evacuation framework should remain a priority of state policy to secure both immediate protection and the long-term resilience of affected communities.

At the same time, the state has begun to take steps to adapt evacuation legislation to the realities of martial law, including recent amendments concerning the mandatory evacuation of children. In this context, it is expected that the Government will take the necessary steps in the coming months to define the practical aspects of implementing such mandatory evacuation through secondary legislation (bylaws). Further efforts aimed at improving legal clarity, institutional coordination, and implementation mechanisms will be essential to ensure the effectiveness of the evacuation reforms.





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