UN WOMEN

FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

Humanitarian Update: Sumy Region, Ukraine

Reporting Period: April-September 2025

Photo credit: NGO 'Girls'/Yana Batarina

I. Situation Overview

Ukraine is affected by a complex, protracted humanitarian crisis resulting from Russia's full-scale invasion of the country in 2022. The invasion and ongoing aggression have caused massive human casualties and widescale damage to civilian infrastructure, forcing people to flee in search of safety and assistance. As of September 2025, 5.7 million Ukrainians are living abroad as refugees;[1] another 3.7 million people are internally displaced.[2]

The war is disproportionately affecting women and girls, limiting their access to security, livelihoods, education, healthcare, and participation in decision-making.

While all of Ukraine is affected by armed hostilities, Ukrainian communities in the regions bordering Russia experience the brunt of the aggression and elevated severity of humanitarian needs.[7] The people of Sumy region are among some of the most affected in Ukraine due to the oblast's geographical position along the border with Russia and proximity to the Kursk oblast in Russia, where the two militaries are engaged in fierce fighting for control of parts of the territory. Fighting has intensified through the summer and into September as Russia seeks to establish a buffer zone in northern Ukraine along the international border.[8]

Out of the **12.7 million people** who need humanitarian assistance in 2025, **6.7 million are women and girls**[3]

Since February 24, 2022, at least **4.403 women** and **313 girls** have been killed, 11,415 and 850 girls injured[4]

2.4 million people, predominantly women, are at high risk of gender-based violence—including conflict-related sexual violence.[5]

57% of IDPs are women and girls in households consisting exclusively of IDPs[6]

1. UNHCR. September 2025. Ukraine Refugee Situation.
2. IOM. April 2025. Displacement tracking matrix: Ukraine.
3. UN OCHA. January 2025. Ukraine humanitarian needs and response plan 2025.
4. Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. August 2025. Protection of civilians in armed conflict - August 2025.
5. UN OCHA. April 2025. Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan Ukraine - Humanitarian Programme Cycle 2025. pp.65-66.
6. IOM. April 2025. Ukraine Internal Displacement Report General Population Survey Round 20., pp.3-8
7. UN OCHA. January 2025. Annex: people in need, planned reach and severity maps by population group.
8. Institute for the Study of War. September 2025. Russian offensive campaign assessment, September 21, 2025.

Key Developments in Sumy Region (April – September 2025)

- Escalating displacement, with 14.047 people newly displaced during the reporting period.[9]
- Intensification of damage to civilian infrastructure during the reporting period.[10]
- Intensification of shelling along the Sumy border.[11]
- Evacuation of 11 additional communities, increasing depopulation of frontline communities.[12]
- Targeting of major regional population centers, including a 13 April missile attack that struck a crowded civilian area, killing 31 civilians and injuring 105.[13]
- Continuing civilian casualties, including 43 civilians killed (26 women, 15 men, 2 boys) during the reporting period and another 129 injured (70 women, 45 men, 7 girls, 7 boys).[14]

Sumy Region Affected Population

- **588,793 people in need** in Sumy region.[15]
- **91,612 registered IDPs** in the Sumy region.[16] About **60% of them are women and girls**; older women (age 61+) are the most prominent demographic group among the displaced; there are nearly twice as many older women registered as IDPs than men.
- More than one-third of IDPs (**33,236**) are concentrated in Sumy city – comprising approximately **12.5%** of the city's population.[17]
- **1,034 IDPs** reside in **27 collective sites** in Sumy region.[18] The collective site population includes four key categories of at-risk individuals: people experiencing anxiety and depression (**49%**), people with disability (**12%**), single parents with three or more children (**8%**) and people whose monthly income from all sources is below the subsistence level (**2%**).[19] Women constitute the majority of collective site residents.

9. IOM. September 2025. Ukraine: registered IDPs dashboard.
10. ACAPS. 2025. Country analysis: Ukraine. During the reporting period there were 361 reported instances of damage to civilian infrastructure.
11. IOM. September 2025. From evidence to action: meeting urgent needs in Sumy Region.
12. Ibid.
13. United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. April 2025. Protection of civilians in armed conflict- April 2025.
14. UN Women calculations based on monthly reports from the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine between April and August 2025.
15. UN OCHA. January 2025. Ukraine humanitarian needs and response plan: plan overview.
16. IOM. September 2025. Ukraine: registered IDPs dashboard.
17. IMPACT Initiatives. May 2025. Frontline assessment—displacement and humanitarian needs in Sumy city, Sumska oblast, Ukraine – 24 April 2025.
18. CCCM Cluster. As of 15 September 2025. Ukraine: collective sites online mapping.
19. CCCM Cluster, REACH, and UNCHR. Ukraine situation overview: population profiling in collective sites – August 2025.

II. Humanitarian Needs and Priorities of Women and Girls

In the aftermath of the April 13 missile strike in Sumy city, the Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA) Working Group, co-chaired by UN Women, convened a qualitative consultation with six women's rights organizations to capture reported immediate needs and protection risks faced by affected populations, particularly women and girls.

Key reported issues:

- **Mental Health and Psychosocial Support:** Participants reported widespread stress, anxiety, and grief among women, especially those displaced from frontline areas. Disruption of daily life and prolonged insecurity have eroded coping capacities. Local organizations noted that sustained exposure to trauma is also affecting their staff, who lack access to mental health and wellness services.
- **Cash Assistance:** Many women reportedly lack savings or disposable funds to manage emergencies and require cash assistance to meet urgent protection and basic needs.
- **Livelihoods and Economic Security:** Women described displacement, market disruption, and limited job opportunities as drivers of increasing dependency on aid. Livelihood support was repeatedly cited as key to restoring autonomy.
- **Housing and Shelter:** Women reported growing difficulty in finding safe and affordable accommodation, as limited housing stock and rising rents strain host communities. IDPs from Sumy region urgently need temporary or stable housing solutions in safer areas.
- **Access to Services and Protection:** Respondents highlighted persistent barriers for women—particularly **elderly, single mothers, and women with disabilities**—to access healthcare, legal aid, psychosocial support, and social protection. The role of trusted local organizations and case managers was underlined as essential for referrals and information.
- **Protection Risks:** The consultation revealed heightened exposure to **gender-based violence** and other protection risks linked to overcrowded living conditions and the lack of safe spaces for women and girls.

Sumy officials update project staff about emerging and urgent humanitarian needs in the region.

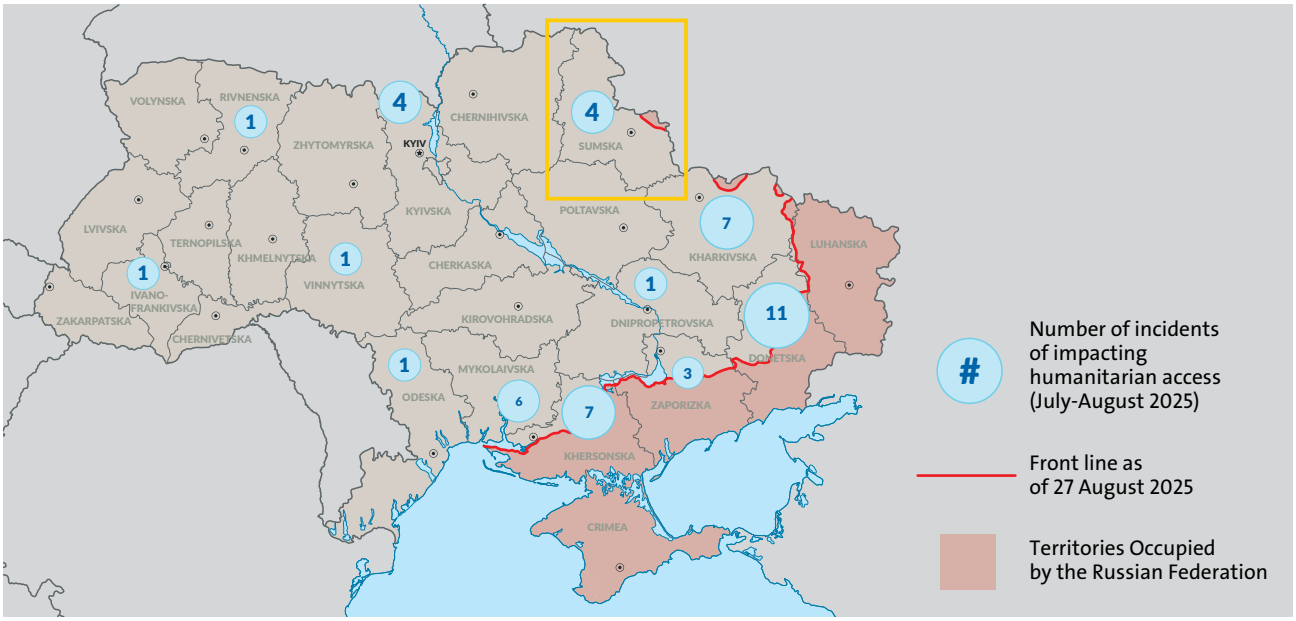
III. UN Women's Humanitarian Response Activities in Sumy

In the aftermath of the 13 April missile attack in the heart of Sumy city, UN Women began implementation of multi-sectoral emergency response activities in Sumy city and the surrounding area.

Sector / Area	Needs	Response	Results	Partners
Protection/GBV	Protection-related psychological support, medical services, legal support and referrals Psycho-social support for vulnerable women and girls Access to personal hygiene items for women, girls, and vulnerable people in temporary shelters	• Individual protection assistance and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) support for vulnerable women and girls in Sumy region. **Planned reach:** 500 girls, women and older people from Sumy region[20] • Distribution of customized dignity kits to displaced women and girls with intersecting vulnerabilities residing in temporary shelters in Sumy region • Planned reach: 1000 girls, women and elderly people	• 510 affected people (276 girls, 207 young women, and 27 older women) accessed MHPSS services. • 1,585 women, girls, and vulnerable individuals accessed dignity kits meeting hygiene needs. • Protection assistance reached 660 internally displaced persons, 92 persons with disabilities, and individuals belonging to other vulnerable groups, including: 684 women from families affected by hostilities, 14 women veterans or family members of veterans, 127 single mothers, 21 pregnant or young mothers, and 608 women facing other difficult circumstances.[21]	NGO Girls
CASH	Cash assistance to meet urgent needs	• Provision of multipurpose cash assistance **Planned reach:** 100 women and girls	• 100 women (56 young women and 44 women) received individual cash assistance; among them, 96 women whose families had suffered as a result of hostilities, 4 women of bereaved military families and 14 people with disabilities.	NGO Girls
Capacity strengthening	Growing MHPSS needs among the staff of WROs engaged in humanitarian response and experiencing trauma and fatigue, affecting long-term organizational sustainability	• Provision of MHPSS to staff of WROs engaged in humanitarian response **Planned reach:** 5 WROs/21 staff	• 7 WROs participated in a four-day well-being and stress management workshop, in addition to individual psychosocial support services for 24 staff members (4 young women and 20 women.	NGO Girls

20. Girls (17 y/o and under); young women (18-35 y/o); women (36-60 y/o); and older women (61 y/o and older)
21. Vulnerabilities are often intersecting. Therefore, the sum of the number of vulnerable people by type of vulnerability (2,206) exceeds the total number of people served (1,585).

Geographical coverage: Sumy Region



Source: UN OCHA. 2025. Ukraine: Situation Report, 2025.

Operational Constraints

- **Active hostilities**, impacting safe humanitarian access.[22]
- **Long security procedures at checkpoints**, causing delay or suspension of activities.[23]
- **Insecurity-induced displacement** from Sumy to safer regions, impeding the recruitment and retention of qualified case managers and affecting access to humanitarian services and goods.
- **Reduced humanitarian funding**, constraining national NGOs' response capacity and threatening their existence beyond 2025.

IV. Coordination and Partnership

GIHA Working Group: UN Women is the co-chair of the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group in Ukraine. The working group plays a central role in advancing GiHA in the country and provides a valuable platform to convene Ukrainian WROs/WLOs, NNGOs, INGOs and representatives of national and local governments, as well as academic institutions. The GiHA WG has more than 400 members, including more than 100 Ukrainian WROs operating throughout Ukraine. In 2025, the working group facilitated rapid consultations following the April missile strike on Sumy City, convening humanitarian actors, local officials and women's rights organizations to identify urgent needs, including mental health and psychosocial support, cash assistance, and safe shelter.

Government, UN, NGOs and INGOs: As GiHA WG co-chair and secretariat, UN Women participates in the Inter Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) and coordinates the working group's support to the humanitarian coordination mechanism. UN Women is also member of the Ukraine Humanitarian Country Team and chairs the UN Ukraine Gender Theme Group. The Ukraine CO maintains a wide network of partners from the private sector, academia, and local and national government across Ukraine, including in Sumy where government partners include the Sumy Regional Military Administration and its relevant divisions – the Department of Social Protection and Humanitarian Affairs Division and the Department of Social Protection of the Sumy City Council, all of which collaborated with UN Women in planning the Sumy response, including the implementation of needs assessment and identification of collective centers in Sumy Oblast.

22. UN OCHA. September 2025. Ukraine: humanitarian access snapshot (July - August 2025).
23. Ibid.

Women's Organizations

In Sumy, as throughout the rest of Ukraine, women's organizations are critical leaders in the humanitarian response, providing specialized services and serving the most vulnerable in their communities. In Sumy region, at least **45 WROs** are operational, providing a range of humanitarian and protection assistance, including MHPSS, legal assistance, livelihood support and other support to women, girls and marginalized groups in the region.[24] UN emergency response in Sumy is implemented in partnership with **NGO Girls**. The organization is also the national co-chair of the GiHA WG along with CARE Ukraine and UN Women.

In addition to the WROs operating in Sumy, **11 Women's Self-Help Groups** are active in the region. Supported by UN Women in partnership with the Ukrainian Women's Fund from summer 2022 until April 2025, the SHG's promote the accountability of local authorities in the allocation of public resources in line with the needs of women and girls. They collect gender-disaggregated data to inform community gender profiles and provide evidence-based recommendations for local recovery plans. The SHGs also implement community-based initiatives that respond to the identified urgent needs of women most in need of protection and other support.

Sumy Response Donors and Financial Support:

The project is financially supported by the Governments of Sweden, Denmark, and Latvia, and the UN Women National Committees. The project also receives support from UN Women through the Emergency Funding Mechanism (EFM) – a flexible, replenishable, revolving fund that allows resources to be rapidly allocated in the immediate aftermath of sudden-onset crises or peaks in protracted crises.

Funding Overview (January-June 2026)[25]

Funding Needs	Funds Received	Funding Gap
USD 1 Million	**USD 150,000**	**USD 850,000**

24. This data is extracted from UN Women's WE Respond dashboard. The dashboard provides a comprehensive overview of the operational presence, programming and other features women's organizations throughout Ukraine and Moldova. This fills a critical gap in humanitarian coordination by helping local, regional and international actors to identify partners for program development. It supports response localization and aids local organizations to build networks to maximize resources and expertise in service of those in need.
25. Funding overview for UN Women humanitarian response in Sumy.

UN Women's humanitarian impact in Ukraine

In addition to its recent initiatives in the Sumy region, UN Women works across Ukraine to respond to the urgent needs of crisis affected women and girls. This includes:

- Since February 2022, UN Women in Ukraine has reached over **339.000 crisis-affected women and girls** with humanitarian support and services, including through programs managed by UN Women and the Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF).
- Only in 2024, over 6.5 million USD were disbursed to **54 WROs and WLOs** for humanitarian response and recovery in 2024.
- In 2024, UN Women supported **33 new local women's sub-partnership initiatives** in war-affected communities that continued to focus on the security concerns of women and families, through income-generating activities and various other forms of locally tailored support.
- UN Women works to inform local authorities on gaps on service and social protection provisions, as well as ensure that diverse needs of the most vulnerable groups are addressed in local recovery plans and development strategies, including through the production of **16 gender profiles in war impacted communities**.

Key Initiatives led by UN Women

- The Alliance for Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Recovery for Ukraine, including bringing gender in the center of the Ukraine Recovery Conference discussions;
- Women Economic Empowerment Initiatives: She Drives, Of Course, You Can, She Made: discovery & recovery of Ukraine.
- Women Political Participation Program to increase women political participation at all levels;
- UN Women serves as a secretariat of the Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund in Ukraine and co-leads the GiHA Working Group.
- **Conflict related sexual violence (CRSV):** UN Women provides expert and technical support to the Inter-Agency Working Group on the implementation of the Framework of Cooperation between the Government of Ukraine and the UN on the prevention and response to CRSV and co-chairs Sub-Group 5: Reparations to survivors of the CRSV.

Contact Information

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UN Women exists to advance women's rights, gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

As the lead UN entity on gender equality and secretariat of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, we shift laws, institutions, social behaviours and services to close the gender gap and build an equal world for all women and girls. Our partnerships with governments, women's movements and the private sector coupled with our coordination of the broader United Nations translate progress into lasting changes. We make strides forward for women and girls in four areas: leadership, economic empowerment, freedom from violence, and women, peace and security as well as humanitarian action.

UN Women keeps the rights of women and girls at the centre of global progress – always, everywhere. Because gender equality is not just what we do. It is who we are.