



PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL WAR CRIMES IN UKRAINE

RESEARCH REPORT



**Kharkiv Institute for Social
Research**



ULAG

UKRAINIAN
LEGAL
ADVISORY
GROUP

The study was commissioned and funded by the Ukrainian Legal Advisory Group.

Svitlana Shcherban, Andrii Chernousov, Denys Kobzin. Public attitudes towards international war crimes in Ukraine. Study report / Kharkiv Institute for Social Research. - Kyiv, 2024. — 47 p.



ADVANCING THE RULE OF LAW

This project was implemented with the support of CEELI Institute.

The report contains the results of a study on public attitudes towards international war crimes, assessment of the safety of war crimes witnesses, assistance to victims of war crimes, and overall access to and trust in national and international justice.

The results of the study will be of interest primarily to state authorities and representatives of civil society working on justice and international war crimes, as well as to all interested parties.

CONTENTS

Methodology	4
Socio-demographic characteristics of the survey participants	5
Attitudes towards grave international crimes	12
Status and assistance to victims of grave crimes	19
Assessment of the safety of war crimes witnesses	26
Access to and confidence in justice in Ukraine	30
Experience of reporting grave crimes to law enforcement agencies	39
Conclusions	46

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology included::

1. Public opinion surveys

Geography: Ukraine, government-controlled territory.

Methodology: Quantitative standardised survey of Ukrainian residents aged 18 and older through face-to-face (F2F) interviews using tablets and the Lemur computer platform (TAPI) at the respondents' place of residence.

Sample size: 1119 respondents.

Sampling design: combined route sample - probabilistic at the stage of selecting settlements and starting addresses for routes, quota at the stage of selecting a respondent by place of residence (gender and age quotas). The sample is proportionally stratified by region of Ukraine (Centre/North/West/East/South) and type of settlement (urban/rural). The statistical basis for stratification and quotas is the data of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine as of the beginning of 2022. The statistical error with a probability of 0.95 for these univariate distributions does not exceed 3% (theoretical error without taking into account the sample design effect).

Composition of macro-regions:

CENTRE: Vinnytsia region, Kirovohrad region, Poltava region, Cherkasy region, Kyiv region, Kyiv city.

NORTH: Zhytomyr region, Sumy region, Chernihiv region.

WEST: Volyn region, Zakarpattia region, Ivano-Frankivsk region, Lviv region, Rivne region, Ternopil region, Khmelnytsky region, Chernivtsi region.

EAST: Dnipropetrovsk region, Kramatorsk and Pokrovskiy districts of Donetsk region, Zaporizhzhia district of Zaporizhzhia region, Kharkiv region (except for Kupiansk district).

SOUTH: Mykolaiv region, Odesa region, Beryslav and Kherson districts of Kherson region.

2. Six focus groups and two in-depth interviews with people who have been affected by the war:

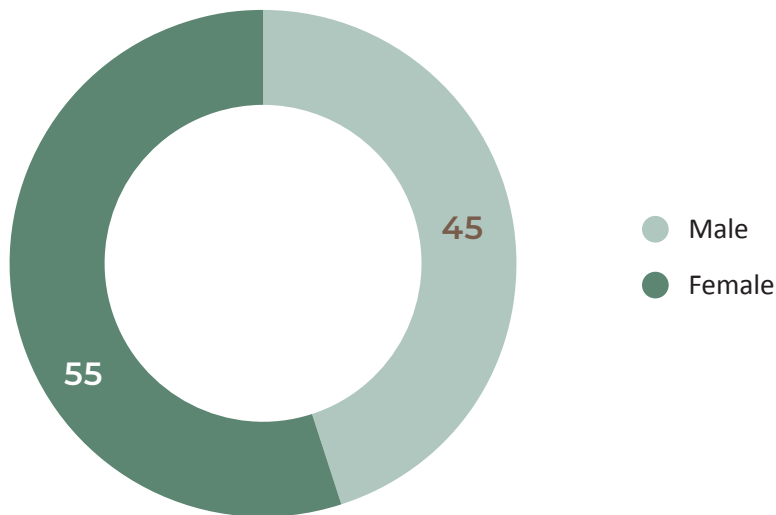
- Two focus groups with internally displaced persons;
- One focus group with people living in the area of active hostilities;
- One focus group with families with small children (under 5 years old)/families with multiple children/single parents living in the area of active hostilities;
- One focus group with people who lost their homes or other valuable property;
- One focus group with families of missing persons;
- Two in-depth interviews with people recognised as victims under Article 438 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine.

3. Seven in-depth expert interviews – employees of the National Police, social services and representatives of CSOs involved in helping people affected by the war.

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

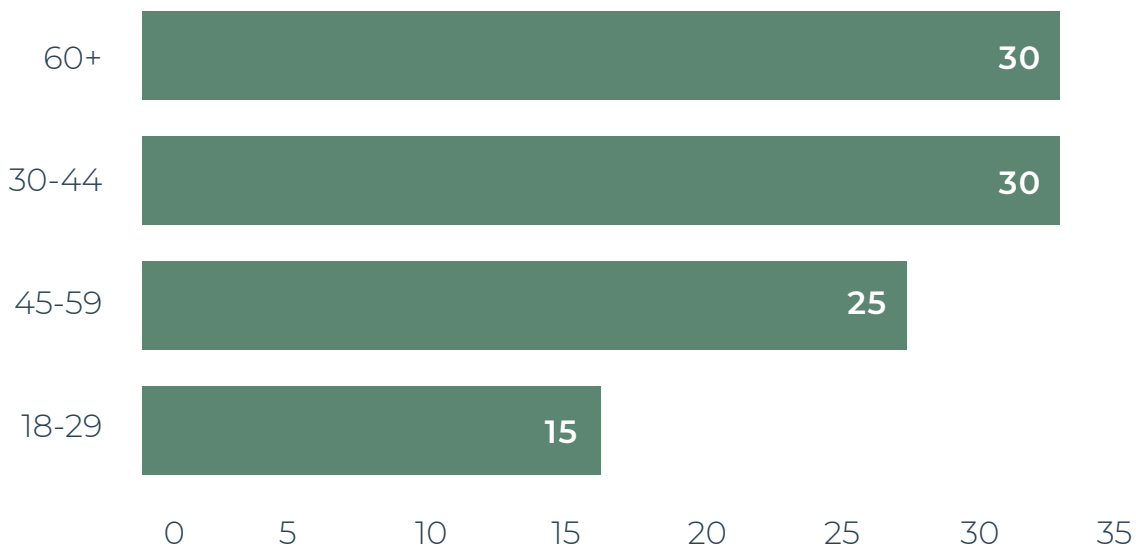
Fifty-five per cent of the respondents were women and 45% were men.

GENDER OF RESPONDENTS
(% of respondents)



One-third of respondents are aged 60 and over, and one in four are aged 45-59. Another third of respondents are middle-aged (30-44 years old). Fifteen per cent are young people aged 18-29.

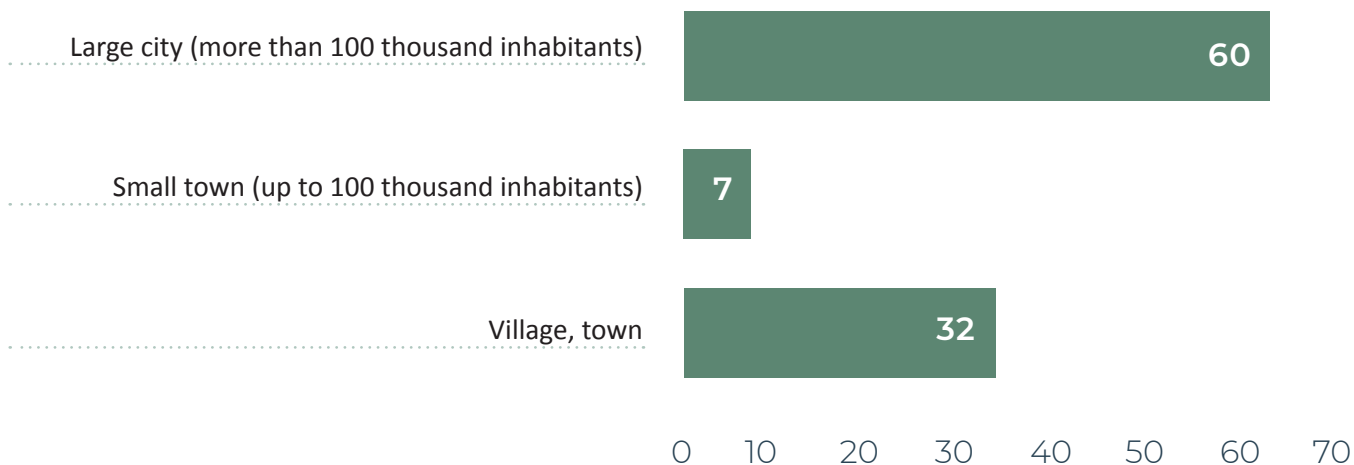
AGE OF RESPONDENTS
(% of respondents)



Sixty per cent of respondents live in large cities, one third live in rural areas, and 7% live in small towns.

PLACE OF RESIDENCE OF RESPONDENTS

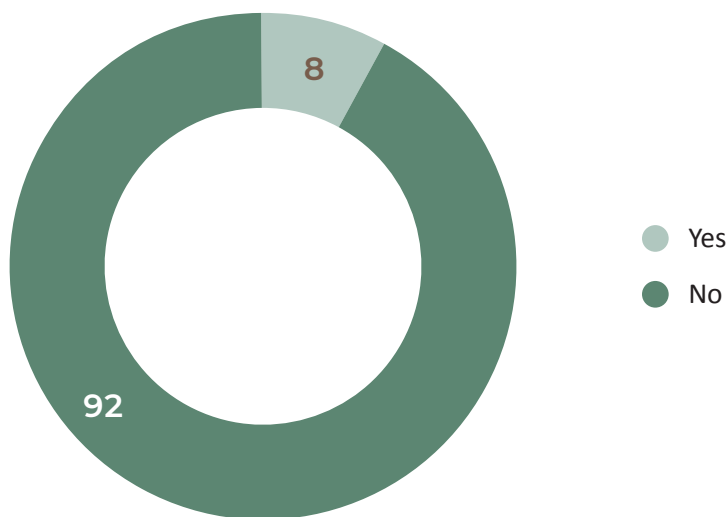
(% of respondents)



Eight per cent of those surveyed have IDP status.

DO YOU HAVE IDP STATUS

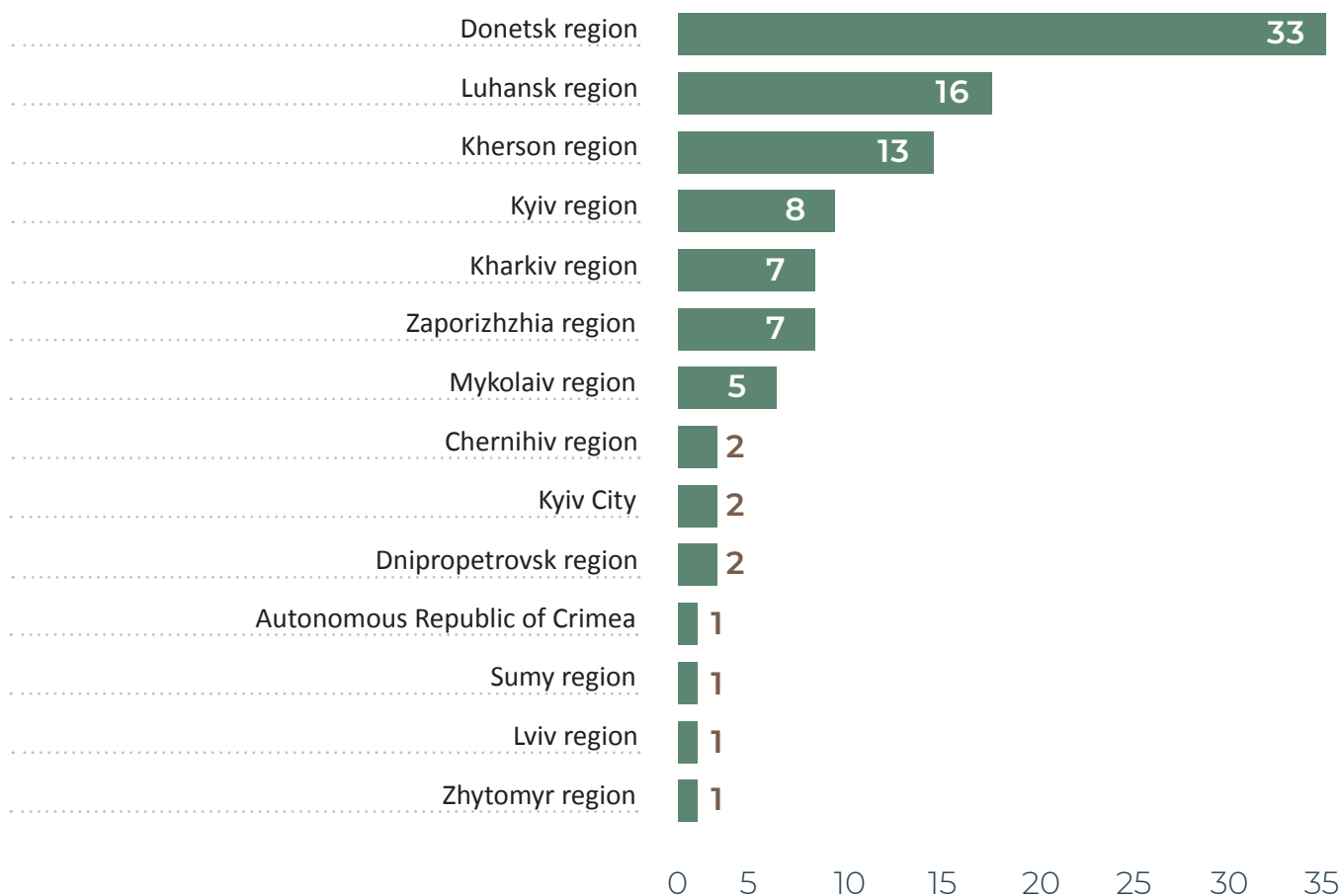
(% of respondents)



More than a third of IDPs left Donetsk region. Another 16% left Luhansk region and 13% left Kherson region.

AREAS FROM WHICH RESPONDENTS LEFT AS IDPS

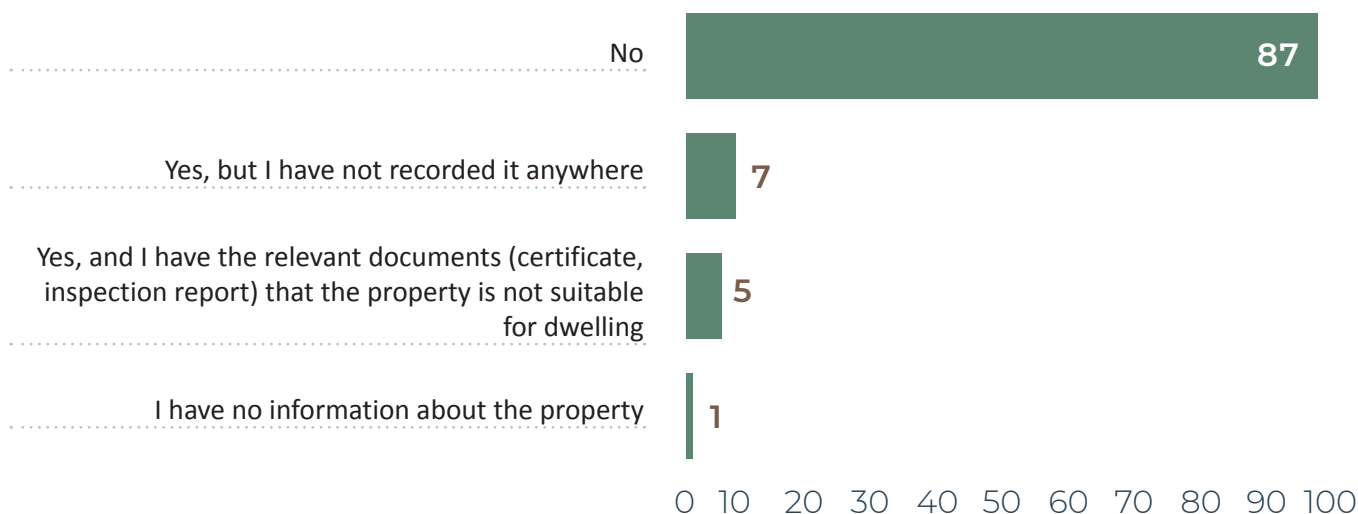
(% of those who indicated they had idp status)



The majority of respondents (87%) said that their homes were not damaged/destroyed as a result of the war. The opposite experience was reported by 12% of respondents.

WAS YOUR HOME DAMAGED/DESTROYED AS A RESULT OF THE WAR?

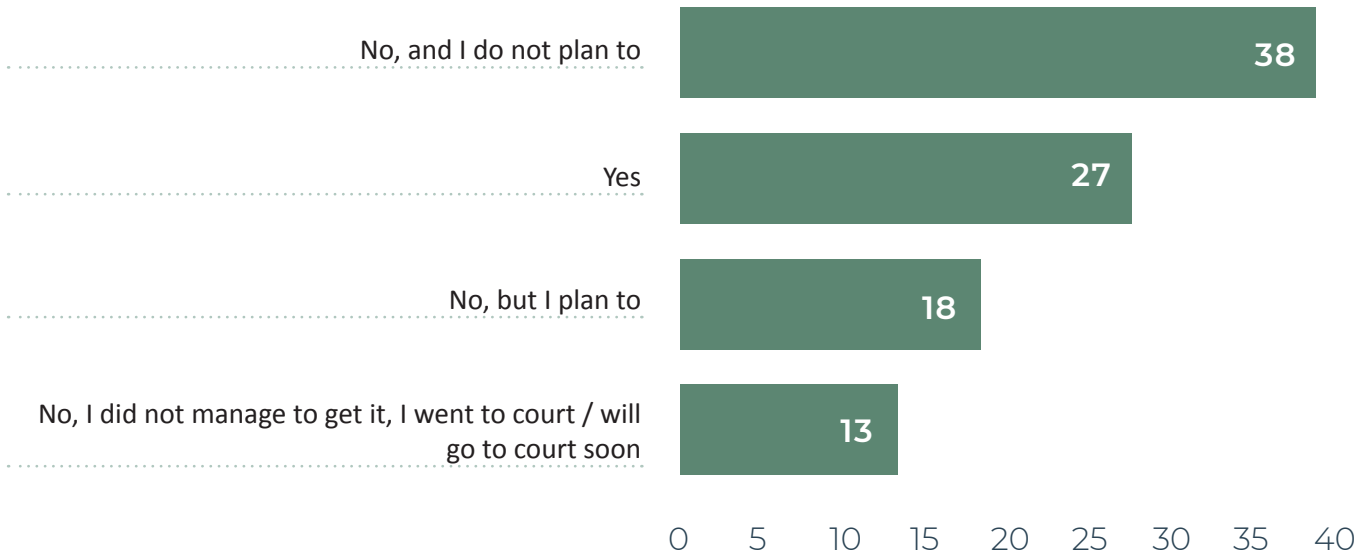
(% of respondents)



The largest share of respondents (38%) did not receive state financial assistance or compensation for damaged/destroyed housing, but about a third of respondents said they had such experience.

HAVE YOU RECEIVED STATE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE/COMPENSATION FOR DAMAGED/DESTROYED HOUSING?

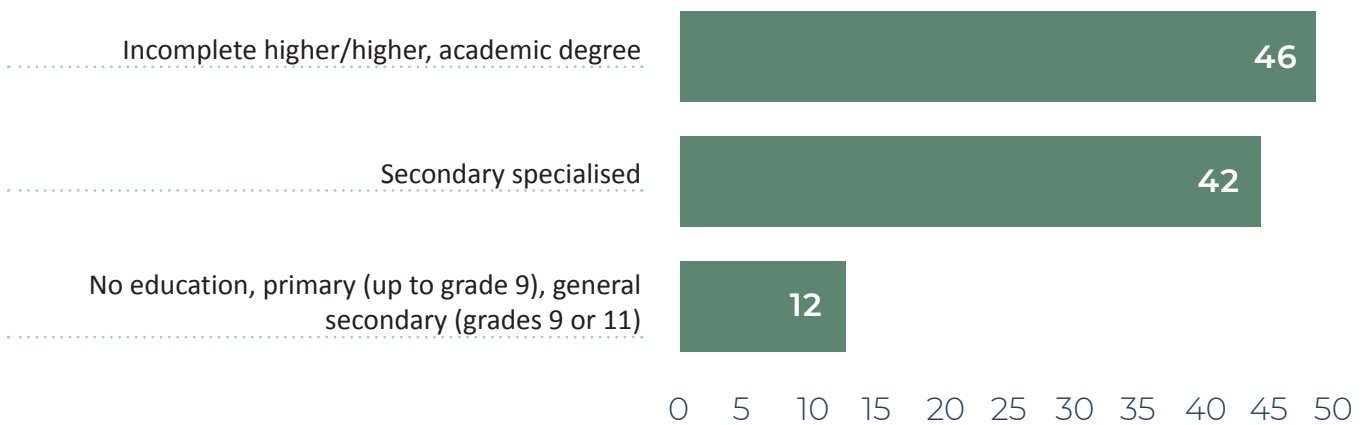
(% of those who reported this issue)



Almost half of the respondents have incomplete higher/higher education or a doctoral degree.

LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF RESPONDENTS

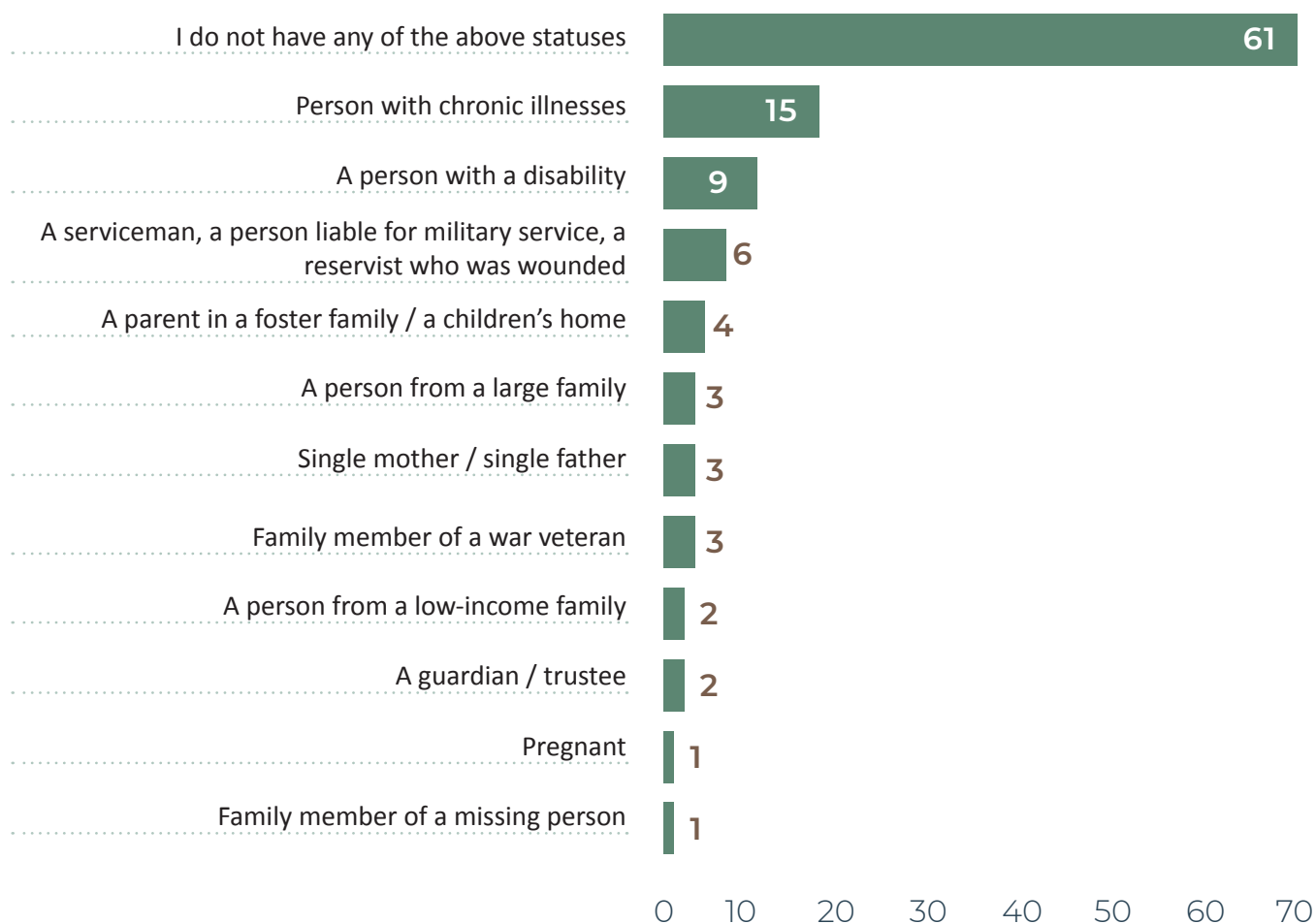
(% of respondents)



Among the respondents, 15% indicated that they have chronic diseases, 9% - disabilities. Six per cent are military personnel, persons liable for military service or reservists who were injured. Sixty-one per cent of respondents do not consider themselves socially vulnerable.

DO YOU BELONG TO THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES OF THE POPULATION?

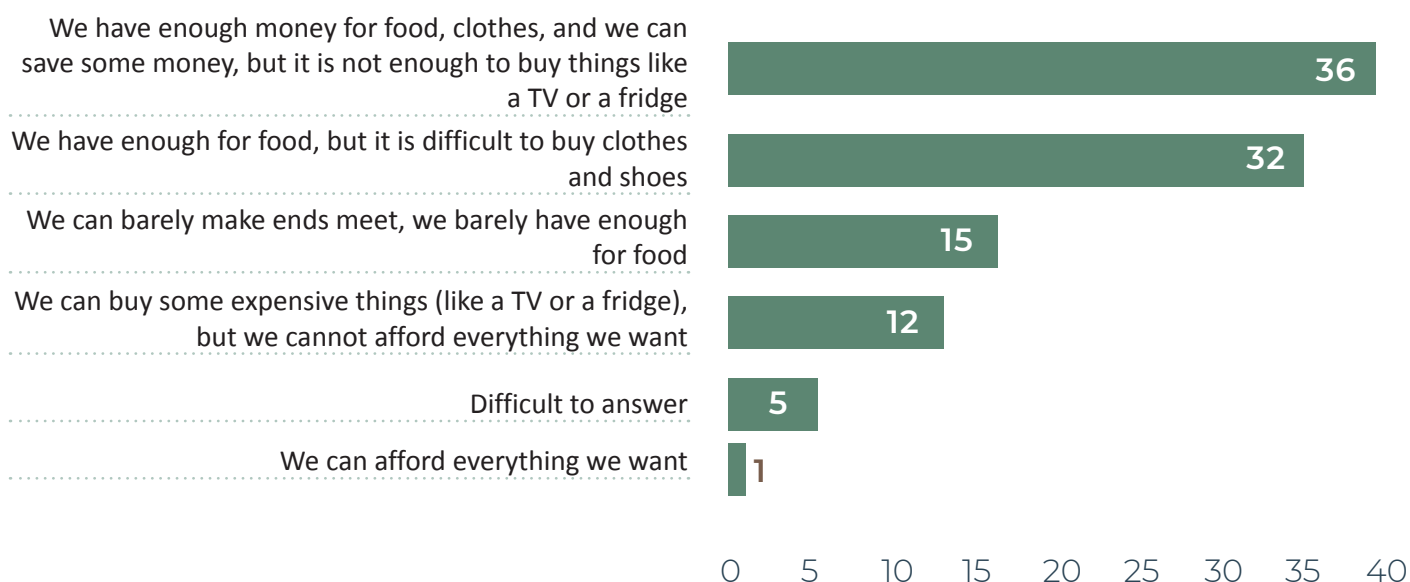
(% of respondents)



Respondents mostly have lower than average (32%) or average income (36%). 15% are at the poverty line (15%).

FINANCIAL SITUATION OF RESPONDENTS' FAMILIES

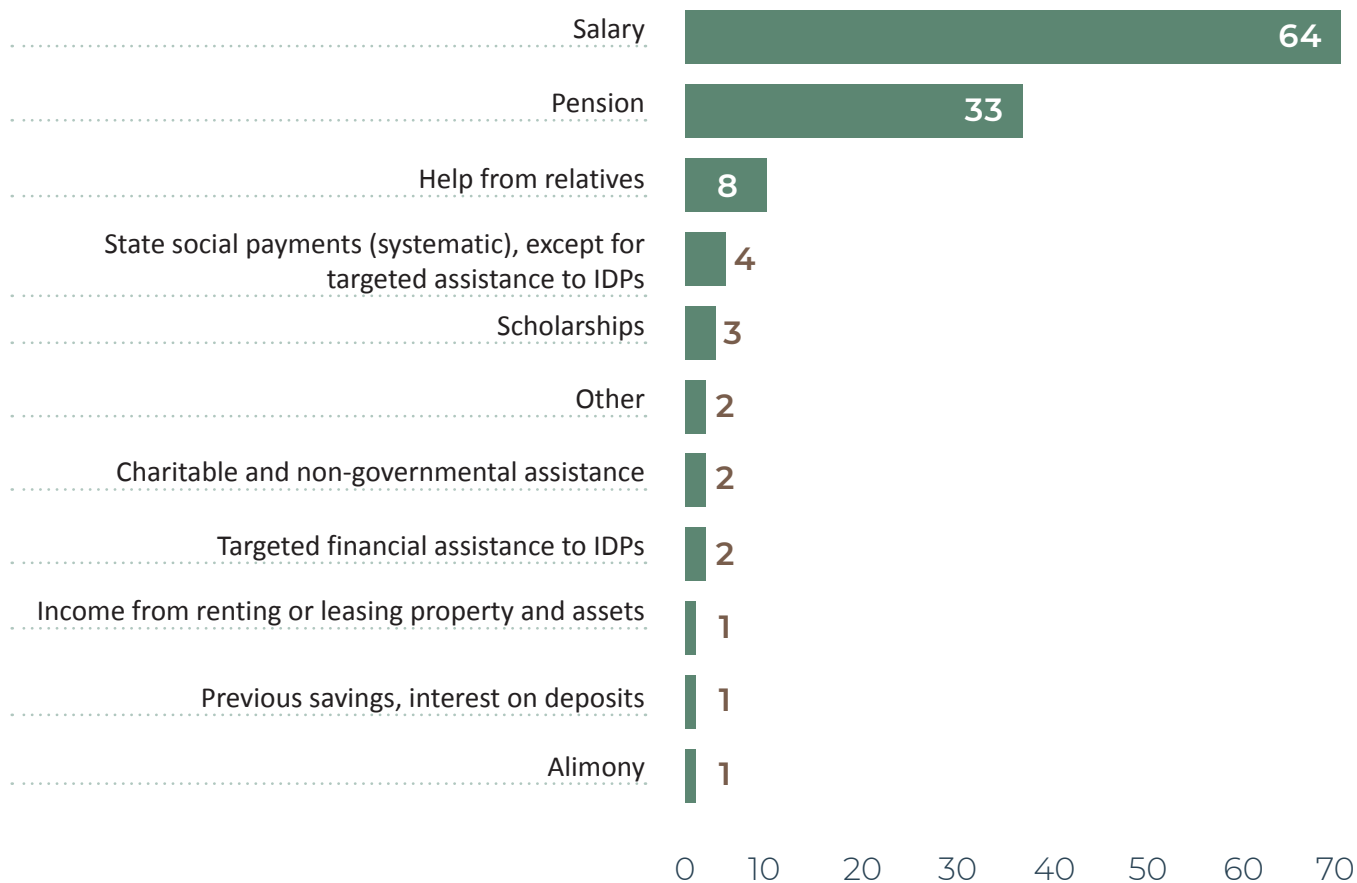
(% of respondents)



Sixty-four per cent of respondents have a salary as their main source of income, and more than a third receive a pension. Among other answers, respondents indicated that they have part-time jobs or no income.

MAIN SOURCES OF RESPONDENTS' LIVELIHOOD

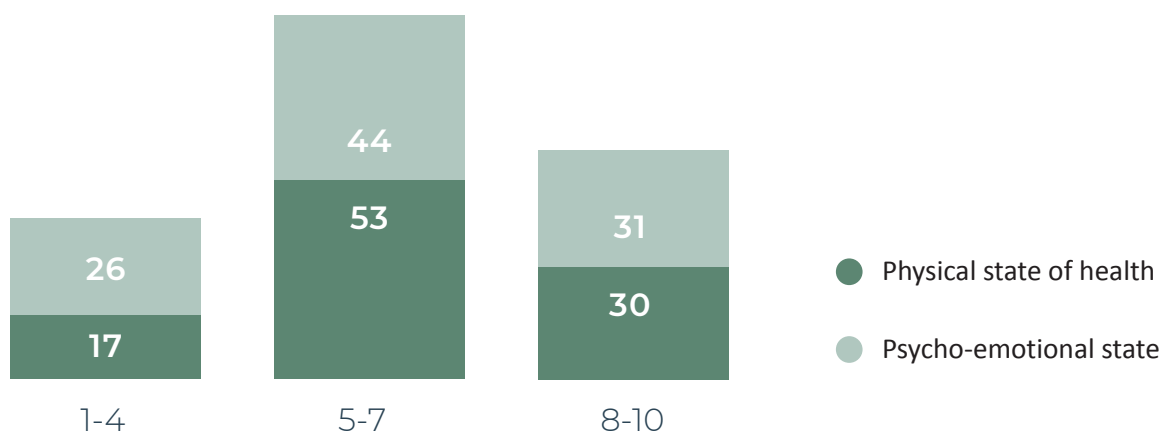
(% of respondents)



Respondents rate their physical and psycho-emotional states almost equally, most often at 5-7 points out of 10. However, on average, respondents rate their physical health slightly higher than their psycho-emotional state (6.19 and 5.99 points, respectively).

HOW DO YOU RATE YOUR OWN HEALTH

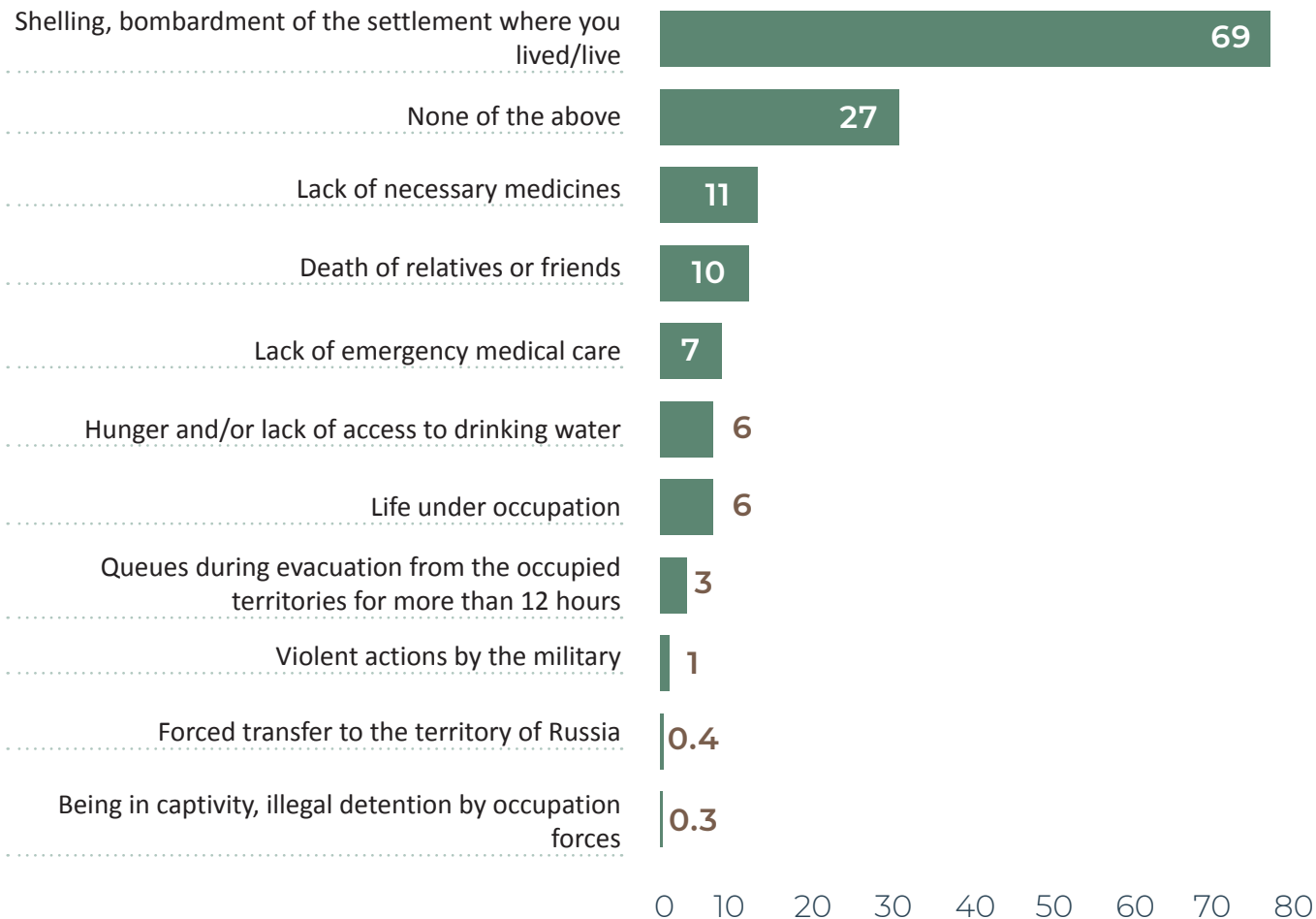
(% of respondents)



Since the beginning of the war, the majority of respondents (69%) have experienced such events as shelling or bombardment of their (former) place of residence. 11% faced the lack of necessary medications, and 10% experienced the death of relatives or friends. 7% faced the lack of emergency medical care.

HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED THE FOLLOWING EVENTS SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR?

(% of responses)



ATTITUDES TOWARDS GRAVE INTERNATIONAL CRIMES

Almost all respondents fully agree that Russia is committing war crimes (95%), crimes against humanity (95%), crimes of aggression (96%) and genocide (90%) against Ukraine. Regarding genocide, compared to other international crimes, there is a slightly higher number of those who disagree or say they find it difficult to answer this question (1% and 4% respectively).

CAN IT BE CONSIDERED THAT RUSSIA COMMITS THE FOLLOWING CRIMES AGAINST UKRAINE?

(% of respondents)



In focus groups and in-depth interviews, all affected respondents, regardless of the category to which they belong, strongly agreed that Russia is committing grave international crimes against Ukraine, primarily genocide.

“The main crime is the genocide of the Ukrainian people. This should be investigated by an international court. This war should be recognised as genocide, and that it is aimed at destroying the Ukrainian nation and Ukrainian identity.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

“It is simply the genocide of our nation that is happening, we have people being abused, both civilians and military in captivity, we can see it. They consider us not to be human, and human beings are supposed to be the highest value in society. And of course, children are not allowed to study, we are not allowed to work, there is no confidence in the future.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

In general, respondents mentioned the killing of civilians, destruction of residential buildings and civilian infrastructure, and psychological trauma to Ukrainians, especially children, as key war crimes committed by

Russia against Ukrainians.

"I think the gravest crime is genocide. And yet, it is hardest when this genocide is against small defenceless children. Also against the elderly... I understand that the military also suffer. However, an adult can still somehow defend himself. But it is scary when it comes to children and the elderly. This is a very big crime."

From a focus group with people affected by the war

"I think it's also about how our Ukrainian lands are being appropriated, our produce is being exported. There is a genocide of the population here, so that we have a shortage of food and water. Nuclear power plants, our Zaporizhzhia [power plant]. And genocide is being carried out to destroy the population. They want to destroy us not only physically but also morally. A lot of false information is provided on the Internet. They show videos with our killed young men. These are very serious crimes. Very serious."

From a focus group with people affected by the war

All experts also agreed that Russia is committing grave international crimes against Ukraine. The worst, in their opinion, has happened and is happening during the occupation, where people are being tortured, abused, ill-treated and generally living in a humanitarian crisis. In addition, the daily shelling of civilian infrastructure is also direct evidence of international crimes against Ukrainians.

"During the occupation, I am from the occupied territory, from Berdiansk, and what was created was that people did not have access to food, to other resources. People disappeared. People were tortured. They could not even leave the city, because... well, to get to the village to get some food, because they were shot at the exit from the city. Well, the torture that was used was also inhuman, mutilating people, raping them.

Now, when we live in Dnipro, we are again faced with the same stories of war crimes, some of them. The same torture in captivity, when a person is in captivity, they were subjected to, well, measures that, well, do not comply with the rules of warfare and the treatment of prisoners. So this is again sexual violence during the conflict, and genocide."

From an expert interview

Almost all respondents (92%) said that the crimes of killing and torture of people in the occupied territories should be investigated first. The majority of respondents also pointed to the priority of investigating crimes such as shelling of civilian infrastructure (78%), the use of prohibited weapons (73%), and the deportation of Ukrainians to Russia (72%).

WHICH WAR CRIMES SHOULD BE INVESTIGATED AS A MATTER OF PRIORITY?

(% of responses)



During the focus groups and in-depth interviews, victims and experts also noted that crimes of mass killings and injuries should be investigated first. It is equally important to deal with crimes related to captivity, violence, torture in the temporarily occupied territories, and the deportation of Ukrainians to Russia.

“Everything that is related to murder and physical violence against people, that is, even all these tortures, basements and everything else that cripples a person both morally and physically in general.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

“First of all, of course, it is murder. Because you can rebuild everything, but you cannot bring people back. You can’t bring back lives.”

From an interview with a war-affected person

“First of all, these are crimes that affect people’s lives. Because this is the highest value, and they should be in the focus of attention. Of course, material goods are also important. But when it comes to life, this is the most fundamental thing. This is torture, deprivation of personal liberty. Everything that, let’s say, touches the human personality.”

From an expert interview

“I think, after all, CRSV and rape are the most severe. Because the consequences are very profound, and it is difficult to put a person back in order afterwards. Also, the murder of relatives or friends, or torture,

when we know that human body parts were simply severed to make them give something away. And this is really the case. The deprivation of liberty, because some civilians were just kept there for months. And this also affected their health and subsequent recovery.”

From an expert interview

Some respondents also pointed to the priority of investigating the violation of Ukraine’s territorial integrity in general.

“Violation of the borders of a sovereign state. First and foremost, this is the responsibility of the top political leadership of the country that violated these borders, which led to further war crimes.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

“First, the violation of territorial integrity. This is the first thing. On what grounds did another state invade sovereign Ukraine? There is a legitimately elected president here. The Verkhovna Rada, whatever it may be, was nevertheless our choice. This is our sovereign state.”

From an interview with a war-affected person

As for the crimes that are most likely not to be investigated, victims mostly mentioned looting.

“Maybe some petty thefts, damage to inexpensive property. I think no one will deal with these issues.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

“Let’s say, the facts of looting by the russian federation. I don’t think it will be considered.”

From an interview with a person affected by the war

According to experts, crimes that involve monetary compensation for loss of income are unlikely to be investigated. It is also most difficult to investigate crimes committed during the temporary occupation of Ukrainian territories.

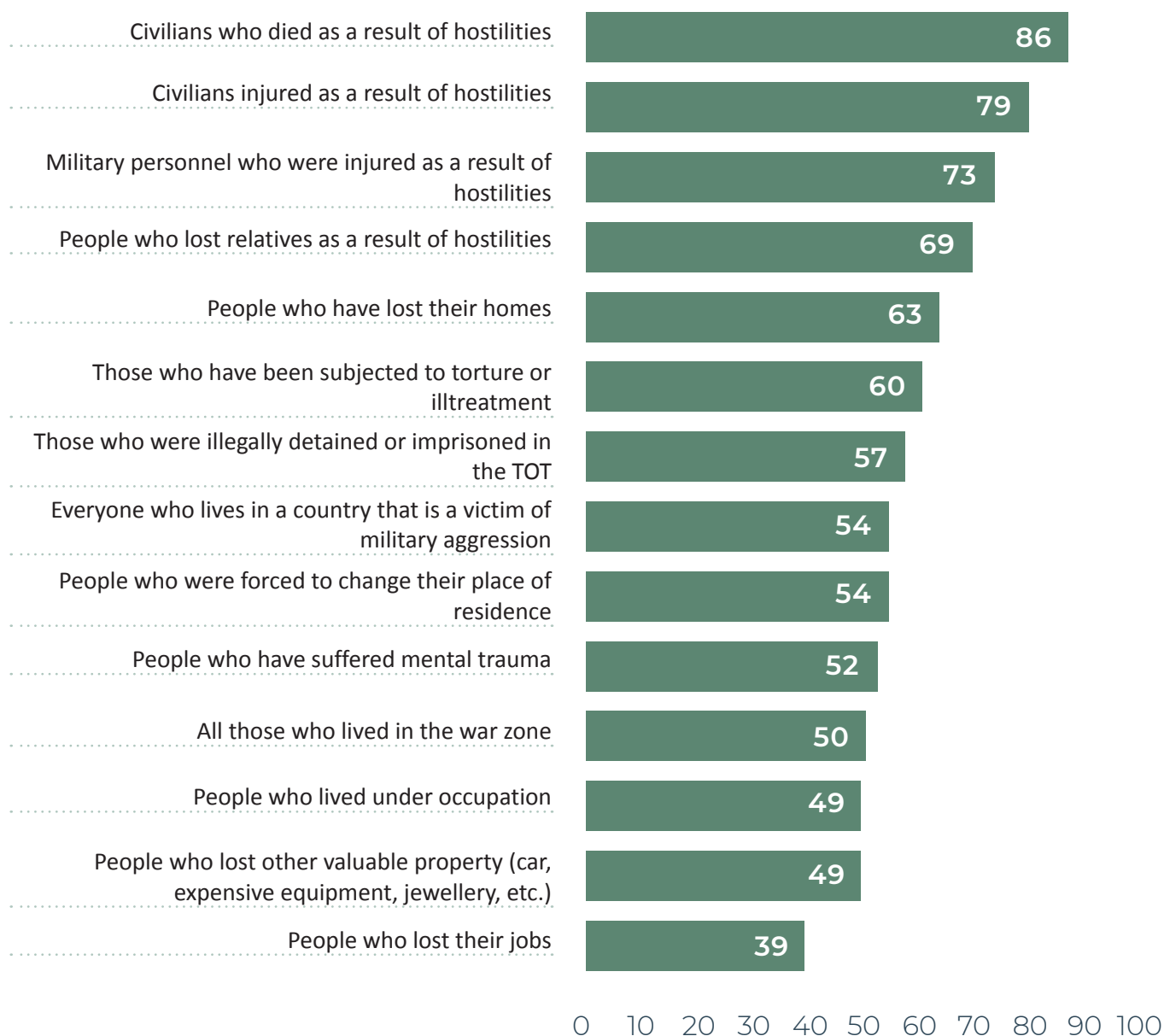
“You can file an application for compensation for your financial losses. That is, a person lost their job, lost their income or business because of the war. The war has been going on for 2.5 years. And, accordingly, I think that there will be little movement in this area, I think. Because, first, if it does, it will also involve big business. And these are huge reimbursements that will follow these decisions in the future. And there is a risk that in other categories, again, when it comes to life or compensation for destroyed housing, there will not be enough money. Because if we take business losses, we can only imagine what the numbers will be.”

From an expert interview

The majority of respondents (86%) believe that victims of war crimes are civilians who died because of hostilities. Similarly, the majority of respondents said that civilians and military personnel who were injured in the hostilities (79% and 73% respectively), as well as people who lost relatives in the hostilities (69%), can be considered victims. People consider those who lost their jobs to be the least affected (39%).

WHO CAN BE CONSIDERED A VICTIM OF WAR CRIMES?

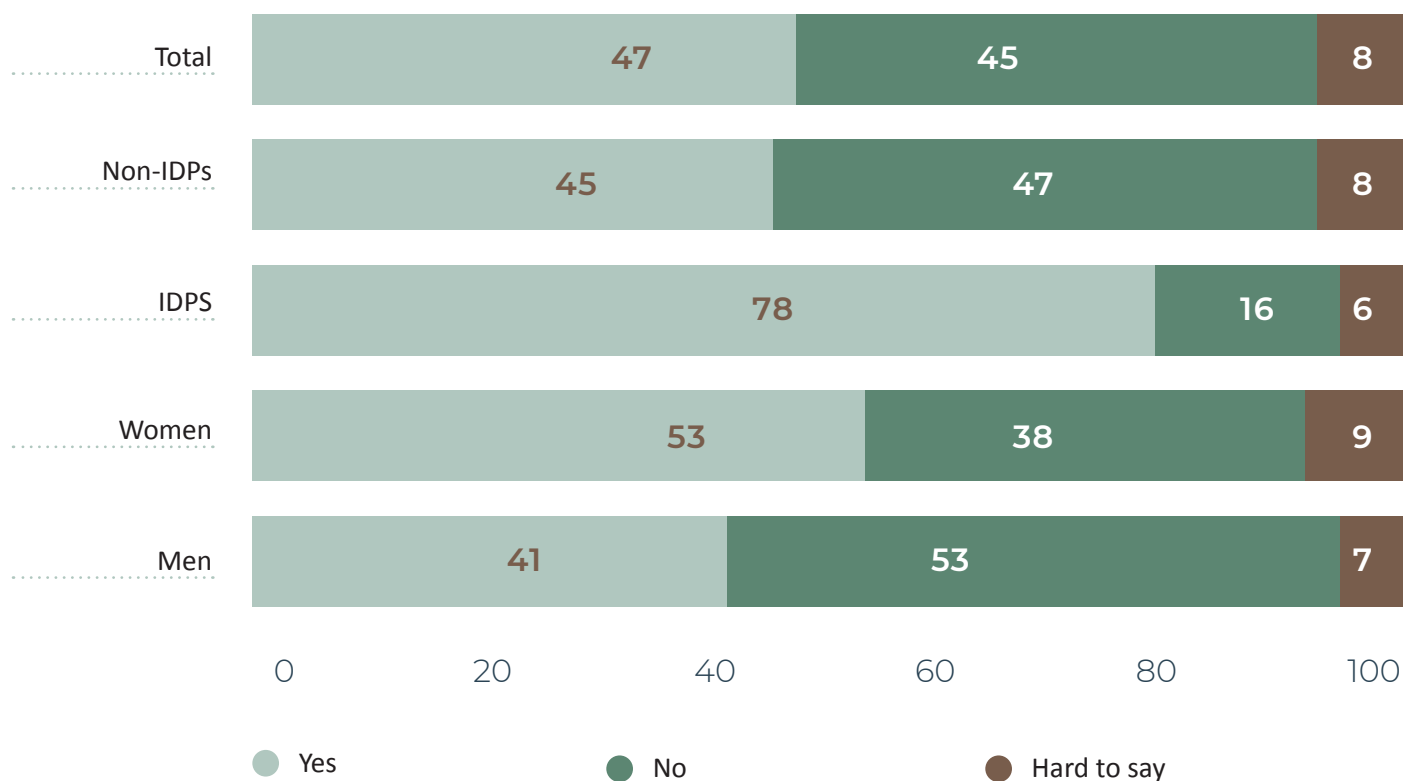
(% of responses)



Almost half of the respondents (47%) consider themselves victims of war crimes. Slightly smaller number of respondents (45%) do not consider themselves victims. It is worth noting that women, compared to men, are more likely to consider themselves victims of war crimes. The majority of those who consider themselves victims are residents of Dnipropetrovsk region (25%), while those who do not consider themselves victims are residents of Lviv region (42%). There is also a noticeable difference between the answers of those who have and do not have IDP status. Among those who have it, 78% consider themselves victims of war crimes, while among those who are not IDPs, 45% do.

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A VICTIM OF WAR CRIMES?

(% of respondents)



During the in-depth interviews and focus groups, survivors described different experiences of war-related harm. However, they all share the negative impact on their mental health and well-being. The respondents have experienced and continue to experience anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, poor sleep and nutrition, communication problems, unfounded fear, etc.

“I developed depression and anxiety. I am on antidepressants. I could not stand on my feet for three months. My legs did not move at all. My doctor told me it was because of nerves. I cried every day. I couldn’t sleep at all.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

For internally displaced persons and those who lost their homes due to Russia’s war crimes, problems with finding housing and employment are also extremely important.

“First of all, it is the moral and psychological state that is experienced and felt throughout the entire process and the conduct of hostilities by the aggressor country. Secondly, it is the loss of one’s own home, a heavy burden to provide for one’s family, the well-being and safety of one’s loved ones.”

From a focus group with people affected by war

The respondents consider all Ukrainians to be victims of Russia’s war crimes, but they primarily pointed to such categories of the population as those who were/are under occupation, were/are in the area of hostilities, lost loved ones/property because of the war, as well as those who were injured or received a disability, or experienced the deportation of children.

“I believe that everyone who lives on the territory of Ukraine. Everyone without exception. All residents of Ukraine are victims... Victims? These are those who have lost their loved ones, relatives, lost their property, whose property has been destroyed. Property that is located in the illegally occupied territories.”

From an interview with a person affected by the war

“I think the whole population. Everyone is suffering. Children, parents, and the military. They are left without parents, and... everyone suffers. There are many of our dead whose mothers are suffering a lot. Children suffer, who have not even been born yet, and already have no father. They have just been born and their father is gone.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

When asked who CANNOT be considered victims of war crimes, respondents mostly named collaborators, parliamentarians, and all those who earn or profit from the war in any way.

In their responses, the experts were in solidarity with the survivors: the entire population of Ukraine, including those who are currently forced to live abroad, can be considered victims of the war. Collaborators, traitors and Ukrainians who have long migrated abroad not due to the war are not victims.

“In this war that we are facing now, any citizen of Ukraine is a victim. It does not matter if it is a child, an elderly person, or a soldier. First of all, everyone suffers equally. I shall not say whether they suffer equally, but they do. One way or another, we all suffer from this war.”

From an expert interview

“I think the whole population. Because some people have lost their homes. They lost their relatives in this war. Some went abroad, how to say, not because of the good life here. Because the constant shelling, these air raids - they have a very strong impact on a person’s mental state.”

From an expert interview

STATUS AND ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF GRAVE CRIMES

The majority of respondents (63%) indicated that the status of a victim of grave crimes should be automatically granted to all those who found themselves in the area of hostilities. There are also quite widespread opinions that this status should be automatically granted to all those who find themselves under occupation (54%) and to those who have addressed the state authorities with this issue (45%). Among other options, respondents repeatedly said that this status should be automatically granted to all Ukrainians.

HOW THE STATUS OF A VICTIM OF THE MOST SERIOUS CRIMES SHOULD BE RECORDED

(% of responses)



When asked how the status of a victim of grave crimes should be recorded, people in focus groups and in-depth interviews mostly answered in a similar way: first of all, they noted that such a status should be granted to those who suffered the most and can confirm it (those who lost their homes, loved ones, were injured), and based on geographical principle, i.e. those who were under occupation or lived in the area of hostilities shall be considered victims.

“It seems to me that, first of all, it is those people who were under occupation, in which there are hostilities, who lost their relatives, friends... who lost their own, those who are defending. A lot of people died for nothing.”

From an interview with a person affected by war

“The first step is to identify the place of residence. Check whether the address was under occupation, whether there were hostilities there. Secondly, participation in hostilities, directly if family members are military, and so on. Thirdly, how it can be recorded, if we are talking about the categories of citizens who are the first priority and who can be proved, are people who have sought medical care as a result of UAVs and missiles shelling civilian objects. I think these are the priority categories that can be recorded and confirmed directly... Other categories of the population - here it will be harder to prove the specific damage, except in general terms by citizenship, that citizens have suffered to some extent.”

From a focus group with a person affected by the war

According to experts, the procedure for granting the status should be clearly defined and automated, with a list of specific criteria that will simplify the paperwork. Such criteria may include residence in the occupied territory or the territory where active hostilities are taking place, availability of medical documents certifying deterioration of health/disability due to the war, loss of housing, etc.

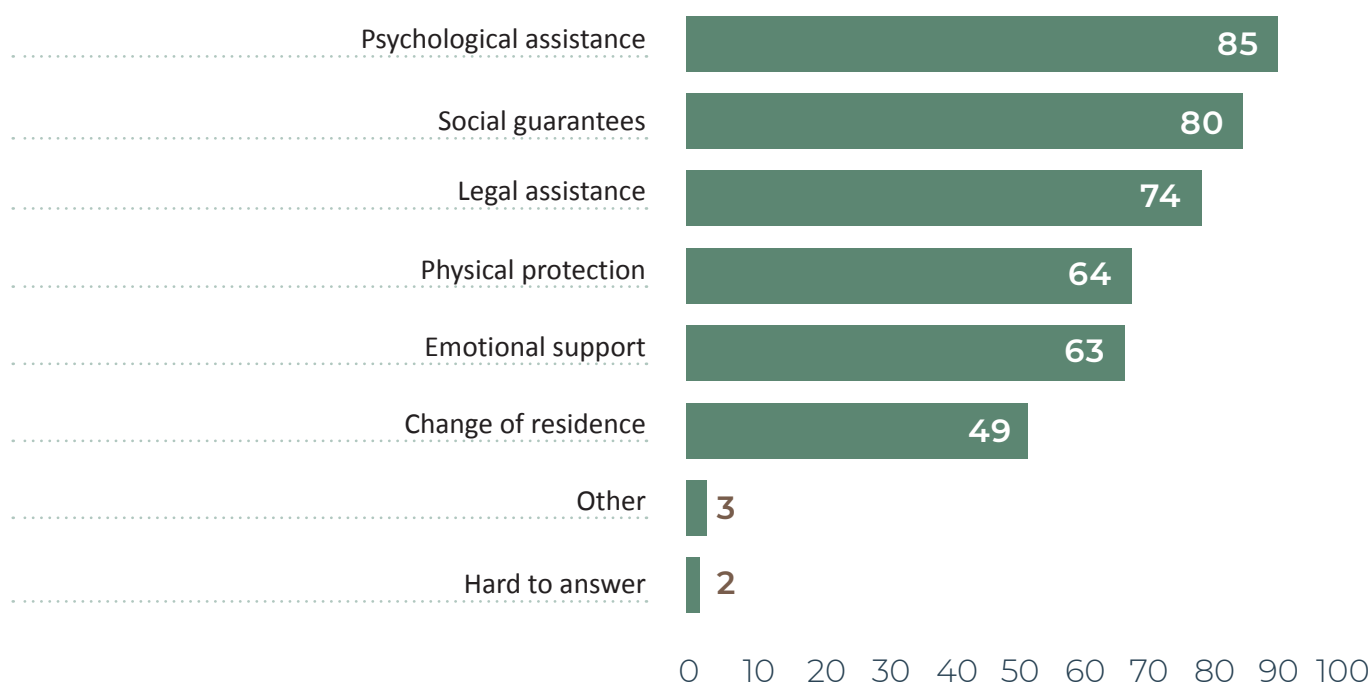
“It is clear that this will be a mass phenomenon. And this is what we need to assume in the first place. If we want to provide for such a status, we must understand that there may be hundreds of thousands, or even millions, of such applications. And we must consider this. That is why, by analogy, we could do the same as with the International Register of the Security Service of Ukraine, for example, to make a list, to establish a commission that will make the decision. Because if we provide for an investigation, if we compare it to a trial, it will never end, given the number of applications that will be filed. Therefore, there should be a certain universal mechanism that will not burden, so to speak.”

From an expert interview

In answering the questionnaire about what kind of assistance victims of grave international crimes need, respondents most often mentioned psychological assistance (85%) and social benefits (80%). A significant proportion of respondents also chose the option “legal assistance” (74%). In the “Other” option, the need for financial assistance to victims was most often mentioned.

WHAT KIND OF ASSISTANCE DO VICTIMS OF GRAVE CRIMES NEED?

(% of responses)



During focus groups and interviews, research participants also noted the need for various types of assistance to victims of war crimes: psychological, medical, social, financial, legal, etc.

“There should be an exclusively individual approach here... For me personally, the first thing is, of course, help with paperwork... There are families with small children, grandparents who are homeless. First of all, we need to help these people... Restore the damaged property. So that people can live. However, if this property cannot be restored, then give people the opportunity to live somewhere. And not on “bird’s rights”, but with some kind of legal documents. For all categories that have suffered, it is medicine. They need access to medicine. And then with documents. People’s apartments burnt down... This should be a separate centre that deals directly with the victims. So that there are no obstacles in such cases.”

From an interview with a person affected by the war

Respondents with IDP status also mentioned the need for assistance in finding housing, a new job, and socialization in new places of residence.

“In terms of adaptation, I believe that it was necessary to introduce the possibility of retraining for adults. For example, a person has a certain qualification in the coal industry, but was forced to move and cannot, of course, work in his or her specialty. That is, a mechanism for adapting a person so that he or she can at least partially support himself or herself, because we know that wages in different areas have different rates and, accordingly, different demand for labour. Not every adult, regardless of their education, is able to adapt to new conditions quickly. Therefore, I think this is partly a social factor, and partly a matter for local authorities. They have more information about what businesses have what opportunities.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

Participants in the study evaluated the level of access to necessary assistance mostly negatively, complaining about excessive bureaucracy.

“In our country, everything that is state-owned is difficult to access, because there is so much bureaucracy to overcome, so much to do that we don’t have accessible assistance, in my opinion, I may be wrong, but I see it that way.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

“Our government cannot even meet the deadlines for providing certificates. There are endless documents and authorities. People are thrown from one office to another, shuffled around. Even the money that is supposed to be paid arrives with long delays. To get a pension for a child, you have to go through 20 circles of hell. In the end, you get peanuts. Unfortunately, our state does not help in any way. Absolutely nothing.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

Although there were some positive responses, respondents noted that everything depends on the particular community or civil servant performing certain duties.

“I believe that it is available, but apparently it all depends on the local authorities, how well the authorities organise all this...”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

The accessibility of humanitarian aid from the state authorities was positively assessed by respondents who have large families or small children.

“In this regard, we have the city council... I do not know, maybe something goes missing somewhere. But they seem to be transparent. Because when a foundation comes, they break down everything they receive into categories and write, “Today, from 9 to 5, go there and there with a document proving your category.”

You can receive it.” There are separate categories for people with disabilities, and the elderly are divided into different categories. People with many children, low-income families. And they allocate several days for these people to come.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

During the focus groups, people noted that it is mostly possible to get help from charitable organisations, foundations, and volunteers, unlike state aid, which is less accessible.

“Unfortunately, there is zero help from our government. All the help we can get comes from volunteers. Volunteers are the people who have learnt to help the victims since 2014. And all the help comes from them. On a volunteer basis, they help psychologically, they help with physical rehabilitation, and they help in the legal aspects. Everything is only through volunteers.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

Respondents from the IDP category complained a lot about problems with receiving payments. Those respondents who faced the problem of housing destruction/damage shared obstacles to receiving assistance due to complicated paperwork, difficulties in confirming the fact of residence, etc.

According to experts, in addition to the above services, it is important to provide victims with a sense of security. And this can only happen through comprehensive work with people and, above all, meeting the basic needs of evacuation, transportation, accommodation, and treatment of the affected population. The second stage of this process is rehabilitation measures, which should include resocialization, adaptation, and integration of people after their experiences. At the same time, almost all experts pointed out problems with the government’s assistance to the victims. These include inadequate amounts of cash payments, delays in these payments, bureaucratization of assistance, and the provision of social or other services only to certain categories of people who suffered damage from the war, etc.

“This is a very broad question, you know. It is just that a person needs a lot to get out of this situation. First, they need security, they need care. In order to recover, they need a lot of medication, let us say, treatment. Secondly, they need a place to live, a roof over their heads, normal housing or dormitories, so that when they arrive they realise that they are not going just anywhere. In addition, transparency of information, so that even when they received any service, they could leave a review without fear for their lives that it would affect something later. Then, after we have provided and fed them, they need money, food, basic needs. Medical care - medical assistance. Then comes legal aid and psychological assistance. The approach is comprehensive: recovery is psychological, then job search, help in finding a job, specializing in the new city.”

From an expert interview

“The kind of help they need varies. First of all, if it is my personal opinion... first of all, it is security. I would like to give people safety and take them somewhere. People are still living there as they were. Some of them are not able to leave the territory under fire. There is simply nowhere to go. This is the first thing. If a person does not have a house, it is gone, then, again, it is... Again, there are various rumours about who pays whom how, or does not pay. Some people were not paid. And after the war ends, God willing that it end, no one will pay reparations either, because there is no state of war. And the state and local authorities, well, they give out aid. Who receives it? How much? In what way? Is it enough for a person to rebuild a house?”

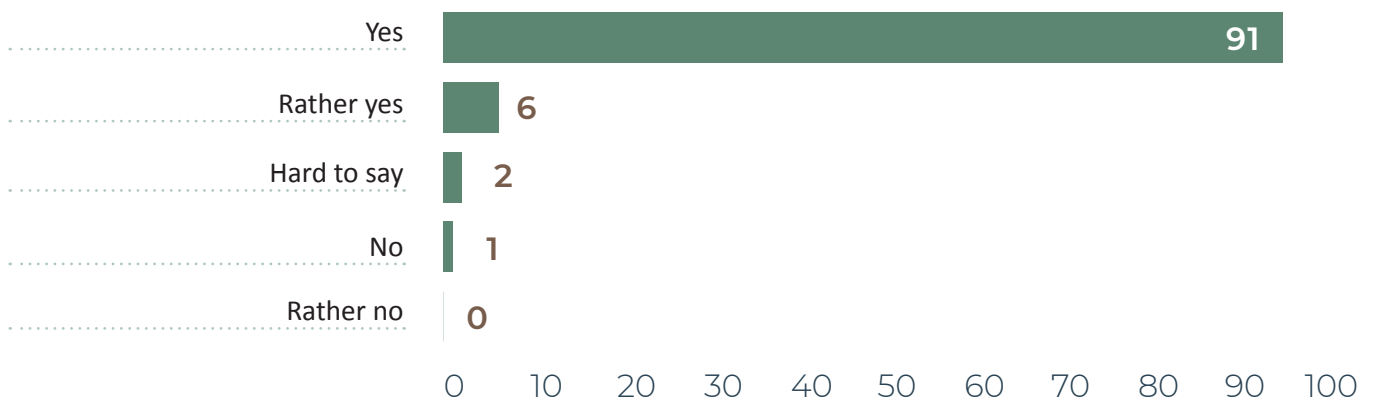
From an expert interview

“Assistance is not accessible today. And it will remain so in the future, at least there is a tendency that it will become even more inaccessible in the future. The payments are small. This situation is because half or even more than half of the state budget is spent on security and defence - this is first. Secondly, it is the economic situation in the country. A large number of people are leaving the country and moving to other countries. Accordingly, there is now a very strong imbalance in the number of vacancies that exist and the number of possible labour force that can be employed for this vacancy. Accordingly, the economy is not very active.”

From an expert interview

The majority of respondents (91%) believe that the protection of witnesses and victims should be the responsibility of the state. Only 1% of respondents expressed the opposite opinion.

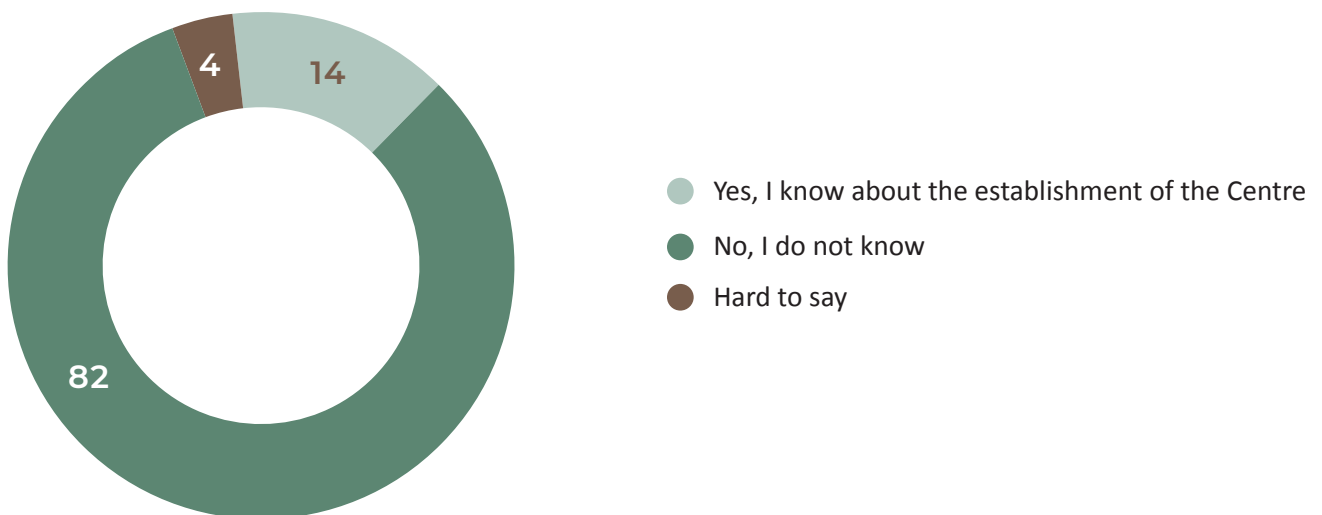
DO YOU THINK THAT WITNESS AND VICTIM PROTECTION SHOULD BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE? (% of respondents)



The majority of respondents (82%) indicated that they did not know about the establishment of the Coordination Centre for Victims and Witnesses at the Office of the Prosecutor General. 14% said they were aware of the Centre.

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COORDINATION CENTRE FOR VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT AT THE OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL?

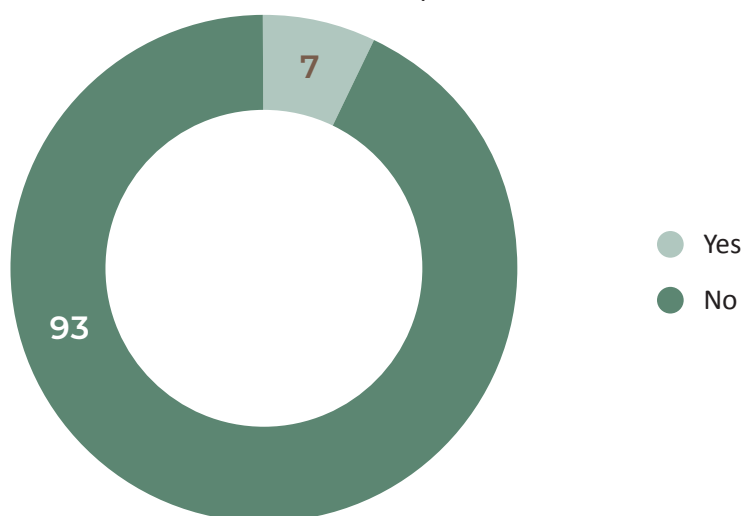
(% of respondents)



Seven per cent of those respondents who indicated that they knew about the creation of the Coordination Centre had contacted it.

HAVE YOU REACHED OUT TO THE COORDINATION CENTRE FOR ASSISTANCE?

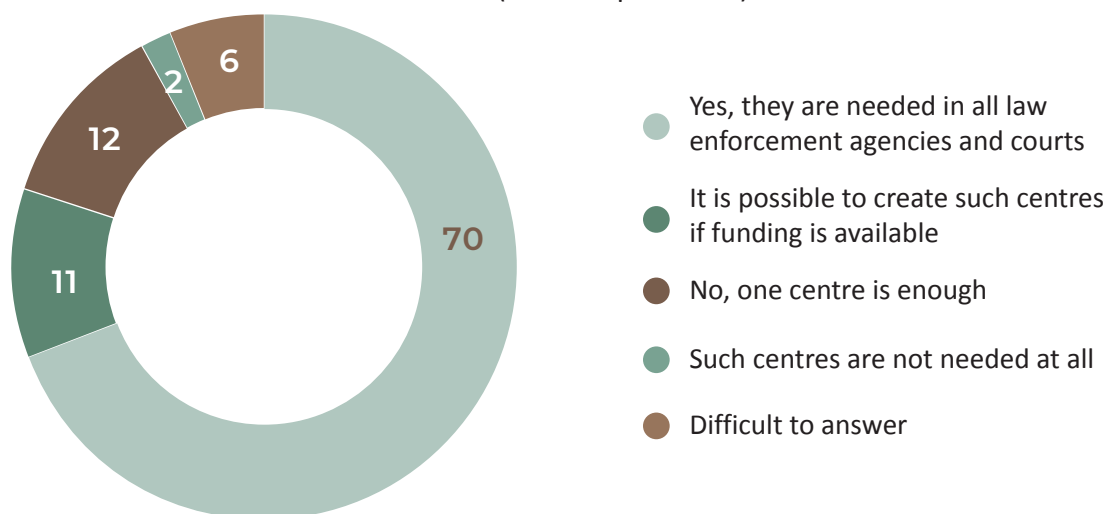
(% of those who know about it)



The majority of respondents (70%) also said that such centres should exist within other law enforcement agencies and courts. Only 2% said that such centres are not needed at all.

SHOULD SIMILAR CENTRES EXIST WITHIN OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES (POLICE, SECURITY SERVICE, SBI) AND COURTS?

(% of respondents)



Only a few participants of the focus groups and interviews knew about the Coordination Centre for Victims and Witnesses Support under the OGP. Only one respondent commented on the activities of this centre.

“They help as much as they can. They are good in this sense. They provide assistance to all those who apply, after checking certain actions that were taken against the victim, if possible. It will be either some kind of financial assistance for surgery or some kind of help with documents. I was assisted, but nothing was resolved. Nevertheless, there should be such centres in every city.”

From an interview with a person affected by war

Most participants said that such centres should exist. At the same time, it is important not to create too many similar institutions that will duplicate each other's activities and therefore not be effective.

"It seems to me that it is most likely inappropriate to create many small ones. Because they will not be able to perform a large amount of work. Perhaps 2 or 3 are needed, but they should be effective and the majority of IDPs or the population should know about them through advertising or social aspects. Otherwise, a large number of small ones does not guarantee us a result, in my opinion."

From a focus group with people affected by the war

"I think the main thing is what content to put into these newly created organisations, what they will do. Therefore, perhaps, it is a good idea that somehow it should be centralised, so that someone is responsible for the result. Otherwise, we often have the situation where people are kicking the ball around and saying it is not their area of expertise. But if something is really centralised, and if they are responsible for a certain amount of work and area of responsibility, then you know who to ask."

From a focus group with people affected by the war

"By and large, they should exist, but the main thing is that they should work as they should, that they should not just sit there, that they are created, they receive funds and that's it, that they should be active, then yes, I agree, but it does not depend on us."

From a focus group with people affected by the war

Six out of 7 experts are aware of the activities of the Coordination Centre, but only one person has experience of interaction. According to the respondents, such a centre is necessary, but it is not worth creating similar centres at other law enforcement agencies. Like victims, experts also noted the risk of duplication of powers and misuse of public funds.

"I think it's enough with the Office of the Prosecutor General. Because to duplicate all this on other bodies is an overlap of powers, it is bureaucracy again, and that is it. If we were talking about efficiency, then in my opinion, it would be more appropriate to simply increase the staff if it requires recruiting competent employees who would continue to do their job. But I don't think it's necessary to duplicate every centre under law enforcement agencies."

From an expert interview

"We need to analyse the number of people who will apply. Then draw some conclusions. Maybe no one will come to this centre. In addition, we will inflate the staff, and people will be involved in the wrong places. It will be easier to allocate them to some other issues. Moreover, there will be duplication of functions. Look, if we put this together in each structure, we will have, first, at least two managers, a head and a deputy. Then, we will have a staff. And, in fact, we will be duplicating and throwing papers at each other, as we always do."

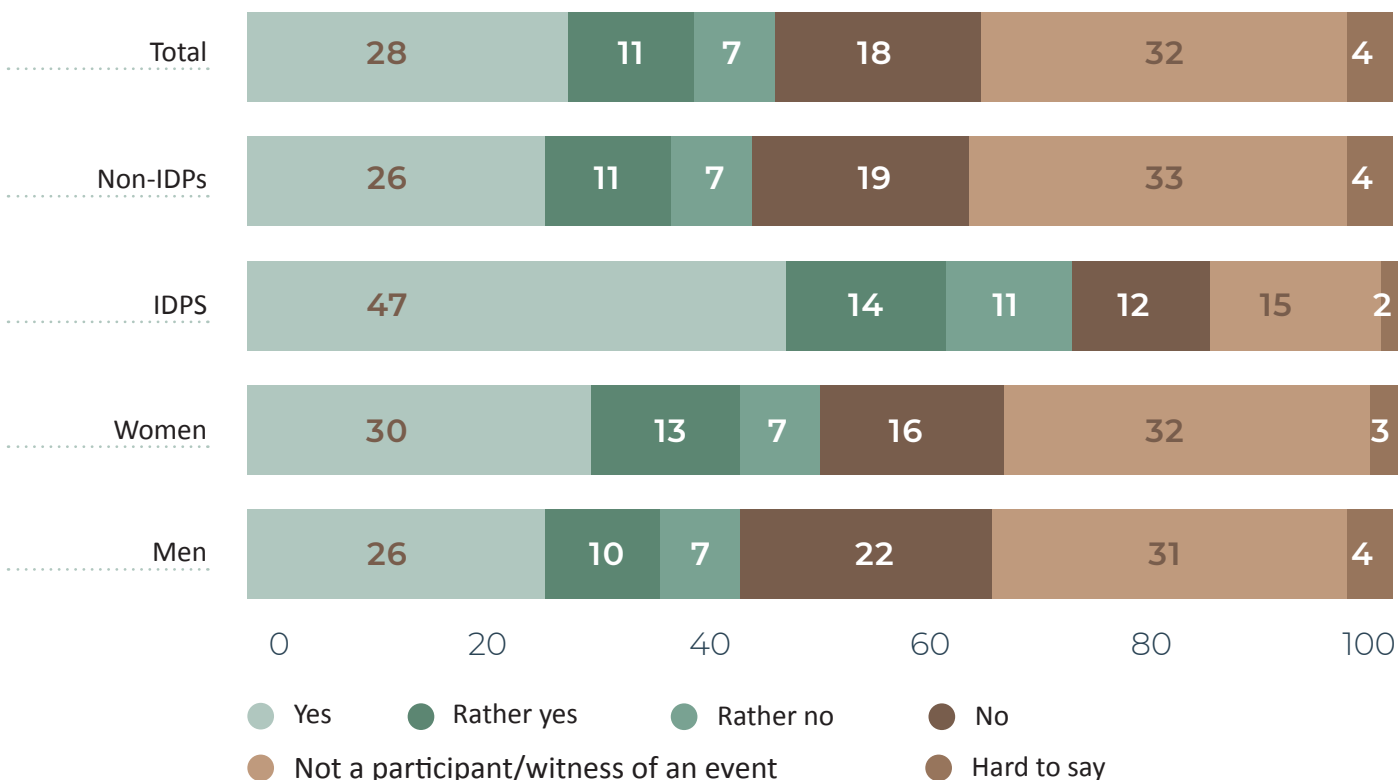
From an expert interview

ASSESSMENT OF THE SAFETY OF WAR CRIMES WITNESSES

When asked whether respondents feel unsafe because they are participants or witnesses of certain events during the war, a significant number of respondents (39%) answered in the affirmative. One third of respondents said they were not participants or witnesses of such events (32%). Gender does not appear to be a factor in the answers, but it does matter whether the respondents are internally displaced. Among those who are, more than half of the respondents (61%) feel threatened, while among those who are not IDPs, just over a third of respondents (37%) do.

DO YOU FEEL UNSAFE BECAUSE YOU PARTICIPATED IN OR WITNESSED CERTAIN EVENTS DURING THE WAR?

(% of respondents)



The most frequently mentioned threats to participants or witnesses of certain events during the war were:

- bombing;
- shelling;
- missile attacks;
- air raids;
- occupation;
- being taken prisoner.

The respondents also mentioned the following danger factors:

- risk of losing their own lives and the lives of their loved ones;

- risk of losing housing (property);
- tense moral and psychological state;
- persons with mental illness who have weapons;
- looting;
- unclear situation in the country;
- uncertainty about the future;
- lack of protection from the authorities.

During the focus groups and interviews, survivors explained that their fears are often related to their active volunteer position or public activities, which may put their lives in danger in the event of occupation or travel abroad.

“To be honest, I will be shot. Therefore, I am, let us say, afraid for my life. Do you realise that I give many comments? Both on television and to journalists. So if I ever go abroad... Well, I am afraid. Because I say those things where I was a participant in these events... If I ever get into the occupation, I will be shot very quickly.”

From an interview with a person affected by the war

“If these ‘katsaps’ [russians – ed.] break through, they will hang me first for helping the military.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

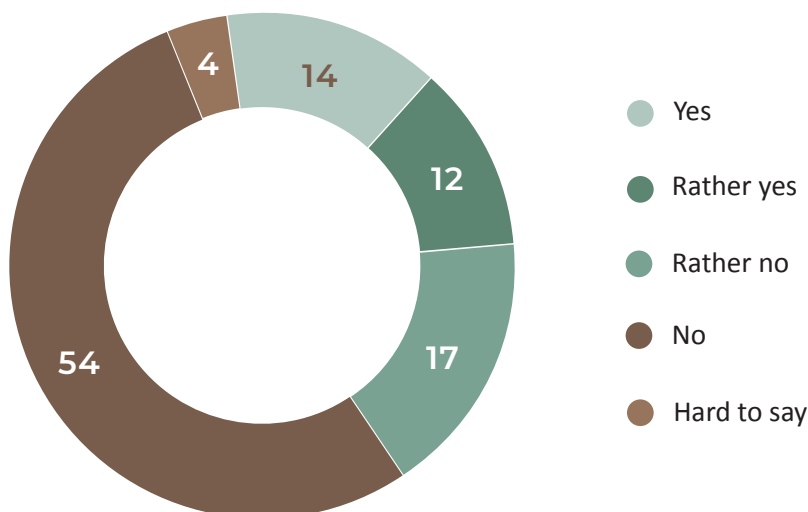
“If, God forbid, the Russian Federation comes here, I will be the first to be hanged on the first pole. Because I still volunteer and help the whole village. We have also created a public organisation, so it is really bad.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

Seventy one per cent of respondents do not know or are not sure they know how to get the necessary protection from the state. Only one in four respondents is aware or somewhat aware of this issue (26%).

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO GET THE NECESSARY PROTECTION FROM THE STATE?

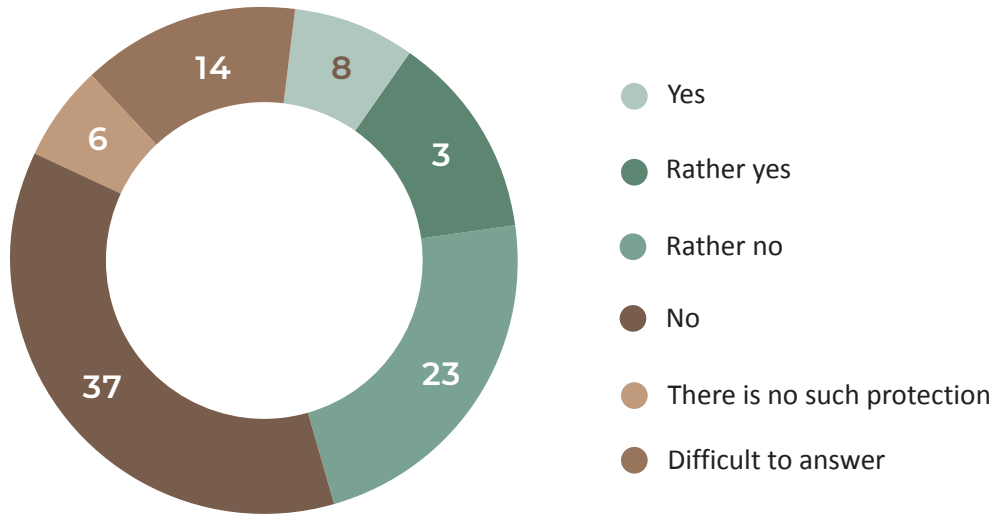
(% of respondents)



The majority of respondents (60%) do not consider the existing state protection to be effective, while another 6% believe that there is no such protection at all. While only 21% of respondents can call it effective.

DO YOU CONSIDER STATE PROTECTION TO BE EFFECTIVE?

(% of respondents)

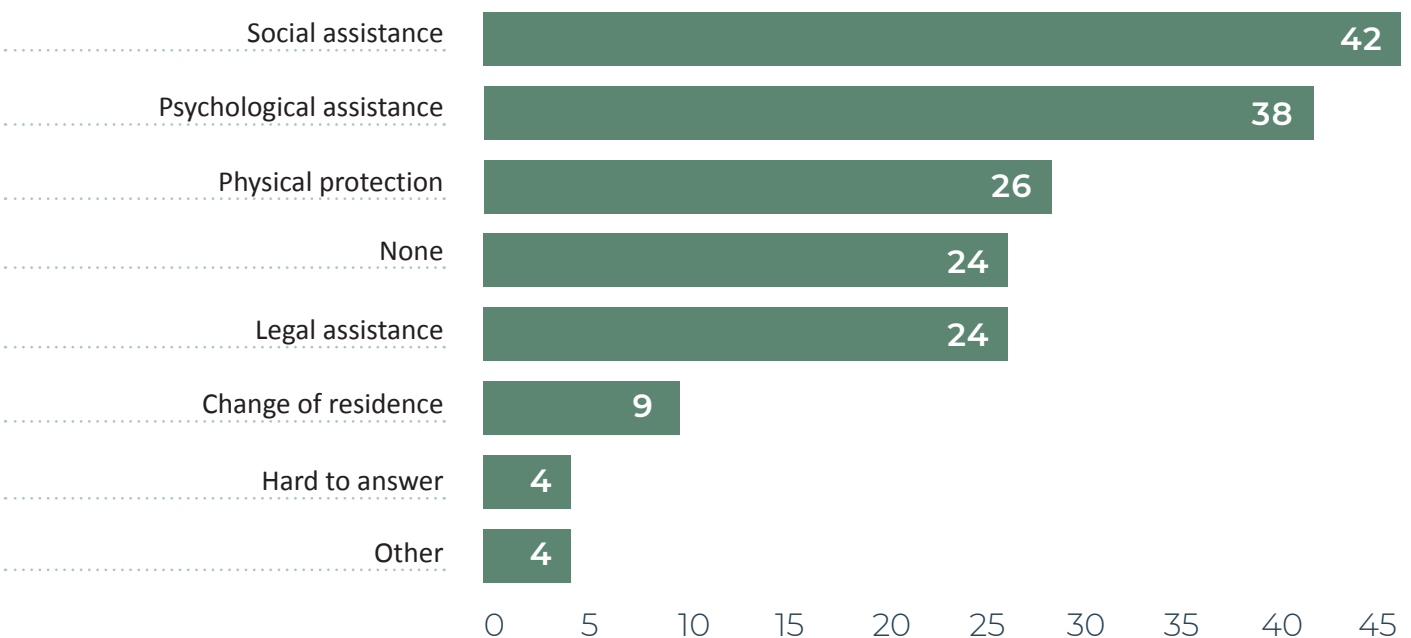


Most respondents are currently in need of social and psychological assistance from the state. In the “Other” option, respondents indicated that they also need financial assistance.

Women are somewhat more likely to say that they need the following assistance from the state than men: physical protection (28% of women and 23% of men), change of place of residence (10% and 8%), social (44% and 39%) and psychological assistance (44% and 30%). Men, for their part, were more likely to mention the need for legal assistance than women (27% and 21%) were. The need to change the place of residence was somewhat more often mentioned by respondents aged 30 to 44 (15% vs. 6-8% in other age groups). Psychological assistance is slightly more needed by respondents aged 45-59 (43% vs. 35-38%), and social assistance is most often needed by the oldest respondents (60+ years) (44% vs. 39-41%).

WHAT KIND OF PROTECTION FROM THE STATE DO YOU NEED NOW?

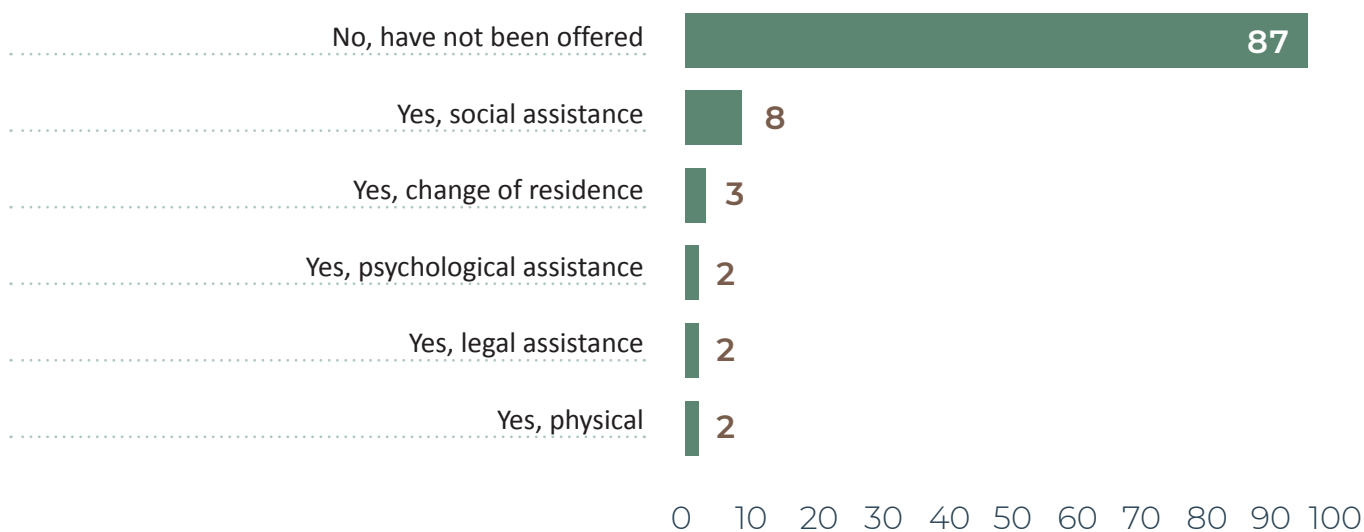
(% of responses)



Few of the respondents were offered any protection by the state; 87% did not receive any such offers. Among those who were offered, most common was social assistance.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN OFFERED PROTECTION BY STATE REPRESENTATIVES?

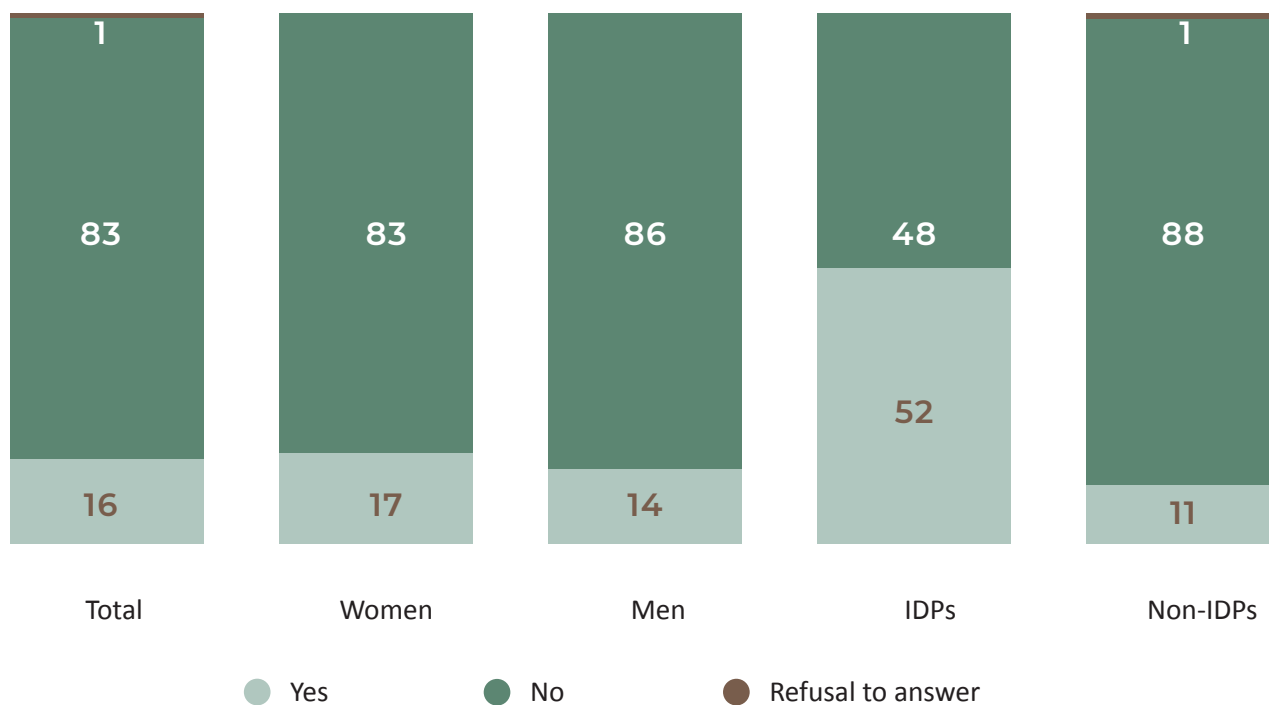
(% of responses)



Only 16% of respondents have received protection from the state. Among IDPs, slightly more than half have such experience (52%). Only 11 per cent of the resident population have received protection from the state.

HAVE YOU EVER RECEIVED PROTECTION FROM THE STATE?

(% of respondents)

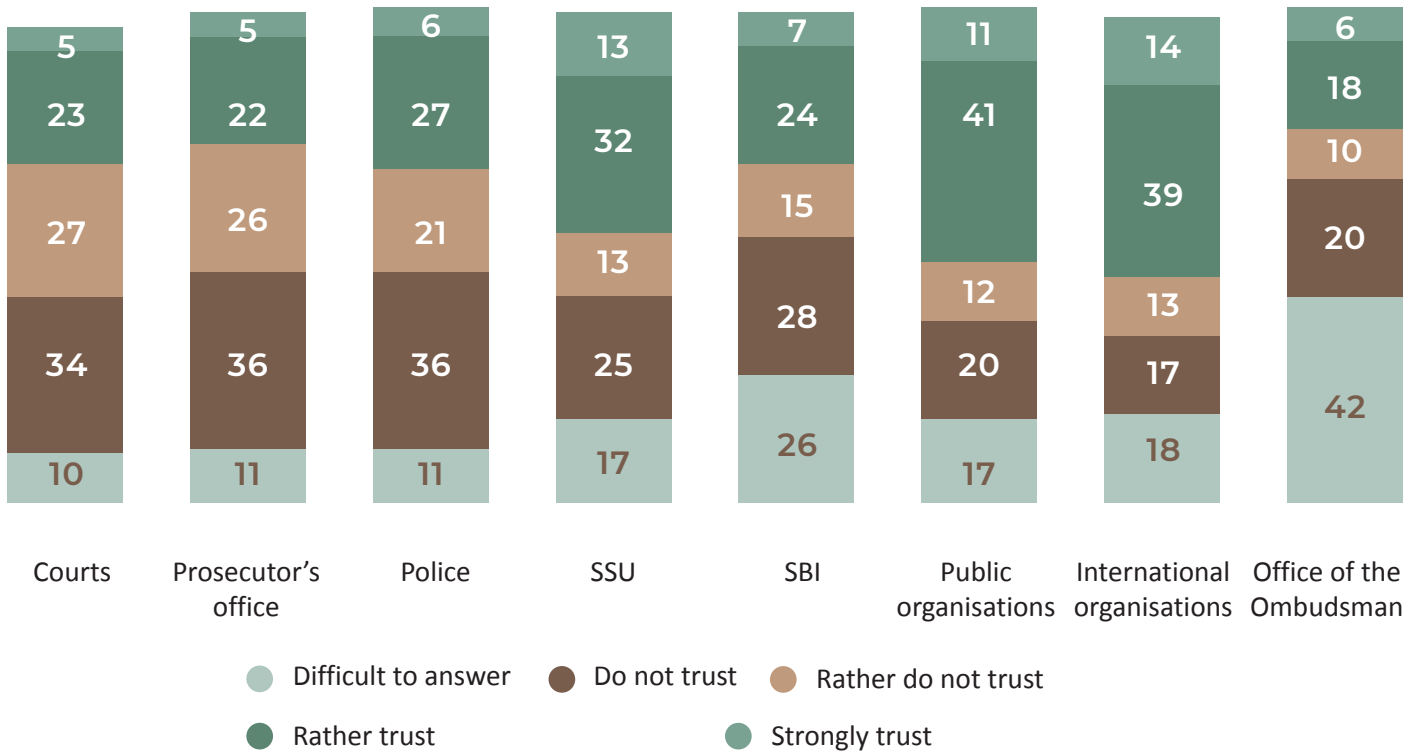


ACCESS TO AND CONFIDENCE IN JUSTICE IN UKRAINE

Respondents trust international organisations (53%) and civil society organisations (52%) and the SSU (45%) the most, and courts (28%), prosecutors (27%) and the Ombudsman's Office (25%) the least.

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU TRUST THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM IN UKRAINE

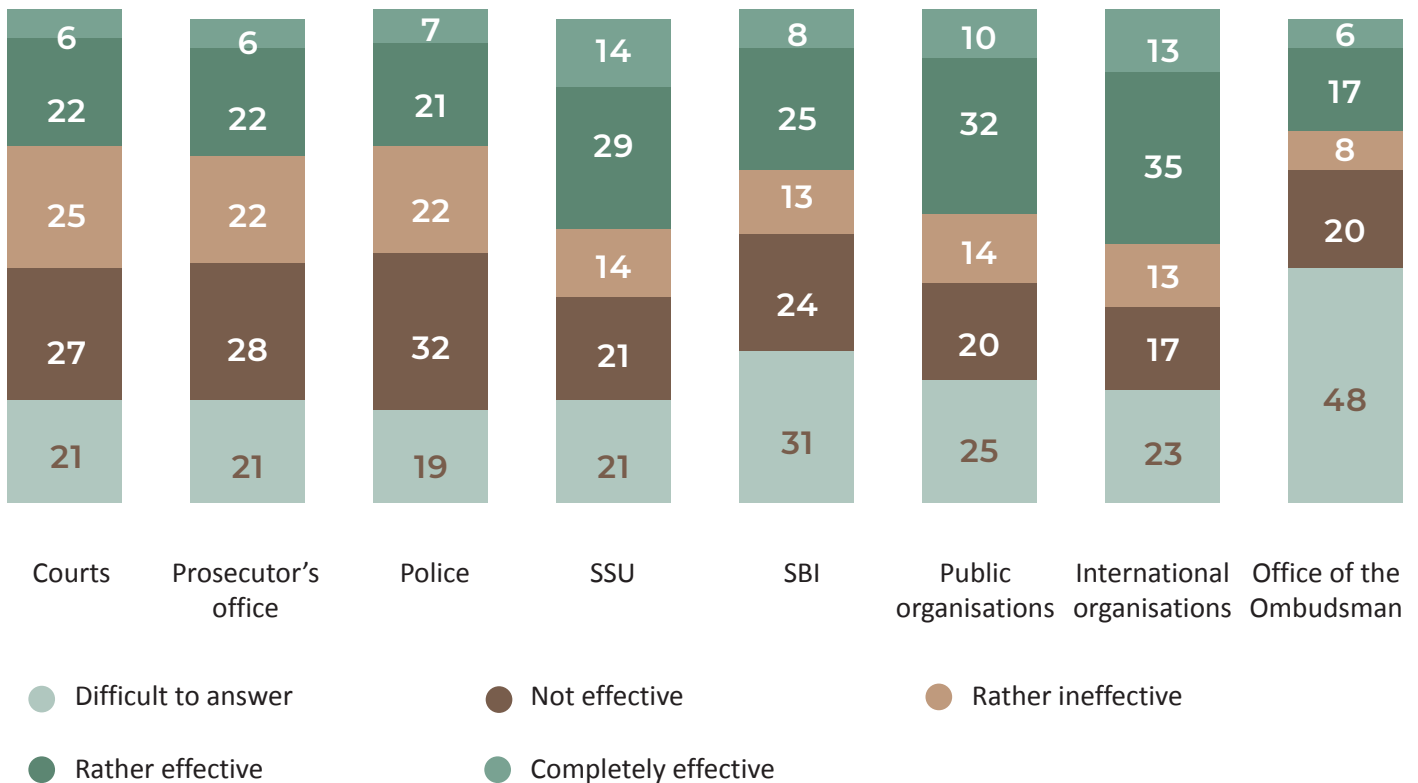
(% of respondents)



Assessments of the effectiveness of these bodies result from the level of trust in them. International organisations (48%) and civil society organisations (42%) and the SSU (43%) are the most effective in investigating war crimes. The least effective are the courts (28%), the prosecutor's office (28%), the police (28%) and the Ombudsman's Office (23%).

HOW EFFECTIVE ARE THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS IN INVESTIGATING WAR CRIMES?

(% of respondents)



With regard to trust in the national justice institutions, participants of focus groups and interviews mostly noted that in general, there is no trust in any institutions due to their corruption and improper performance of their duties. Accordingly, the assessment of their performance is low.

"I'm very sceptical about them, because when you have money, then somehow, God forbid, something happens, as it always does, some fuss and somewhere this story disappears completely, when some person who has no money, out of desperation, did something somewhere, stole something - the next day he gets 10 years, goodbye! Where is the justice, please? And there the trials have been going on for years, and everything is very cool, I doubt it, now even in the media we see that even people who have money at the top are covering up for them, we see this, and people's distrust is growing."

From a focus group with people affected by the war

"We have a very corrupt country. You know it yourself. Maybe they are good, 10%. They took an oath. There are some good ones. We are not saying that all of them are. However, the majority... Everything is bought for money. They will not be given a license later if they go against the authorities. They do everything as they are told."

From a focus group with people affected by the war

"This is a provocative question, but I will answer it like this. Since I am a victim, I can say from my personal experience... This branch of power does not finalise."

From an interview with a person affected by the war

Respondents also mentioned that the outcome of applying to these bodies often depends on the management of a particular institution or even on a particular specialist, which also does not contribute to trust in them in general.

“There are cases, but in general, there is no trust. There are people who are responsible, who treat it as it should be, who are really right, but they are very few, they are a drop in the bucket.”

From an interview with a person affected by the war

“I don’t know. Sometimes it is like, you know, somehow you come across certain people, as if everything is as it should be. And the second time, it is just... It all depends on the person, probably, from the first day.”

From an interview with a person affected by the war

“It doesn’t depend on the institutions; it depends on the people who lead them, who work there.”

From a focus group with people affected by war

However, unlike other law enforcement agencies, there were positive comments about the police.

“Our police, so to speak... It is all right if you apply or do something, everything is fine. I guess it depends on one’s situation.”

From a focus group with people affected by war

“Unfortunately, I have no confidence in the prosecutor’s office and judges. I have confidence in the police, yes. When we asked them, they helped us. But I do not trust judges.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

Experts, in turn, are more positive about the activities of the national justice system in investigating war crimes committed by Russia. This primarily concerns the collection of evidence and communication with certain categories of victims. The work of the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine received positive feedback from several experts.

“I think they are quite effective within the limits of the capabilities they have today. The investigation records the currently available information. In addition, those bodies that provide procedural guidance, in particular the Office of the Prosecutor General record all this information and then pass it on to international institutions. And I think that when the time comes, all this information will be used for accountability.”

From an expert interview

“Any crime is recorded in our country. We do not have a case where something happened and no one reacted. This is all being done. And then it will be necessary to hold them accountable when it’s over.”

From an expert interview

“You know, I can only speak for the Office of the Prosecutor General. Because there is feedback, and our clients are there, we see their work, we see cooperation. So we can say that they are quite effective.”

From an expert interview

Experts also noted the key problems faced by state bodies in the process of working on war crimes in Ukraine. First, it is the lack of personnel, the need for staff training (skills in first aid, communication with the affected population), and the high risk of being attacked again when visiting crime scenes.

“For example, I worked with prisoners. During the 8 months of my work, I did not receive any training on how to communicate properly with people or with the family of a prisoner who came to write a statement, how to communicate on sensitive topics, how to communicate with them in general, or how to support

them properly. This was sorely lacking. You know, like a person in a case, you just fulfil your function, take the application, basically, and that is all, you prepare the documents. And this human understanding of learning was lacking, and the competence for certain jobs that you do was also lacking.”

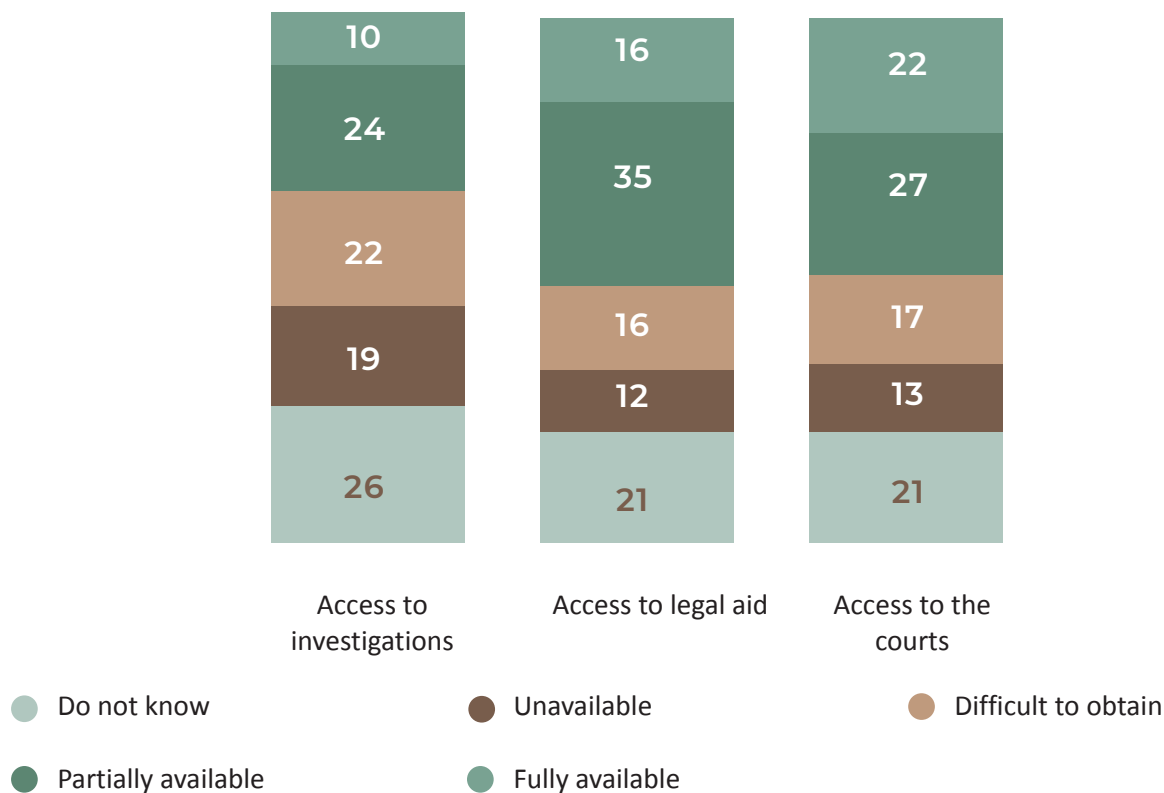
From an expert interview

“The problem is that the investigator or the investigative team needs to go to the place of the attack. In addition, double taps happen very often. That is, you can arrive and stay there, to put it mildly. Another problem: if it were a deceased person or a very badly injured person, it would be very good if there were either a psychologist or a person who can provide psychological assistance alongside the investigator or the operative. Because we, as police officers, are a little bit callous and we are doing our job. But to help a person, to talk to them, you need a specialist.”

From an expert interview

Every second citizen believes that legal aid (51%) and going to court (49%) are partially or fully accessible in Ukraine. Much fewer - a third of respondents (34%) - think the same about access to investigations.

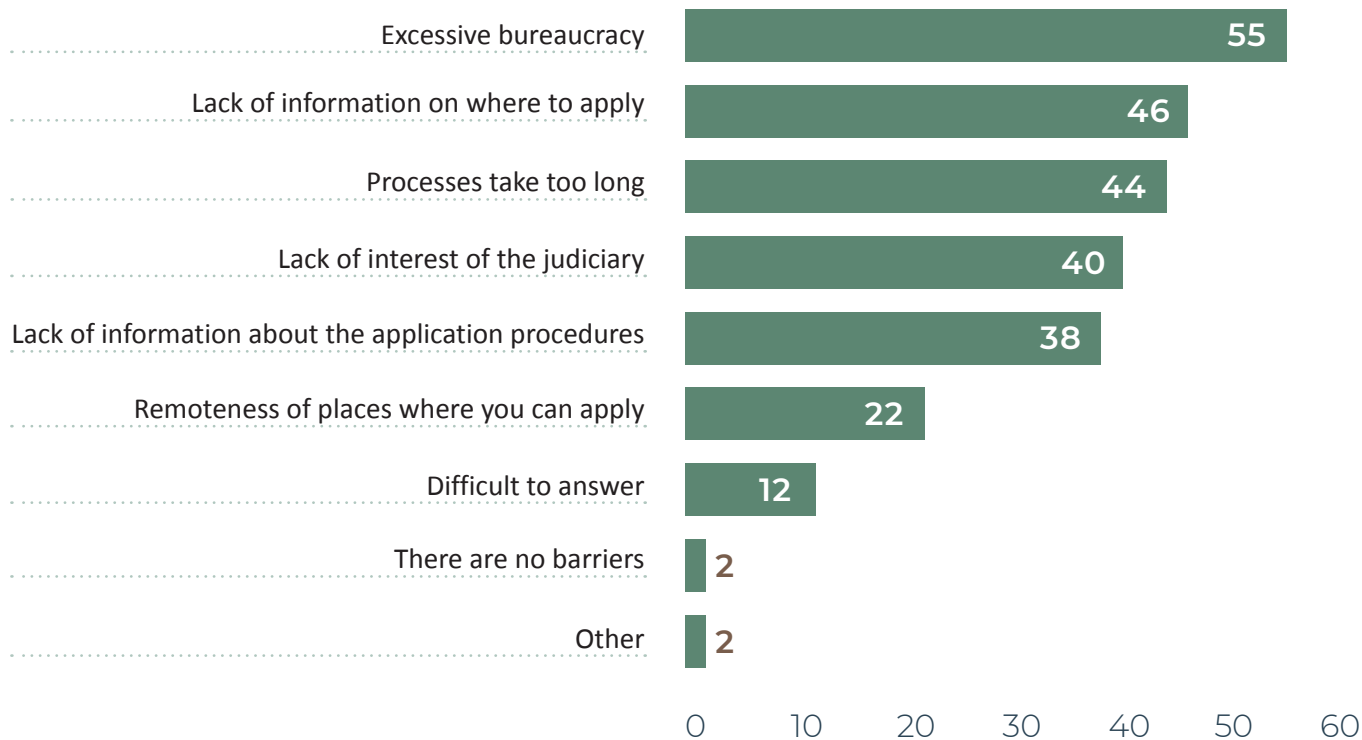
TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU THINK THE FOLLOWING LEGAL REMEDIES ARE AVAILABLE IN UKRAINE
(% of respondents)



More than half of the respondents said that excessive bureaucracy is a barrier to justice for victims of grave crimes (55%). Lack of information on where to turn (46%) and long duration of proceedings (44%) were also frequently mentioned. Only 2% believe that there are no barriers.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT BARRIERS TO JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF GRAVE CRIMES?

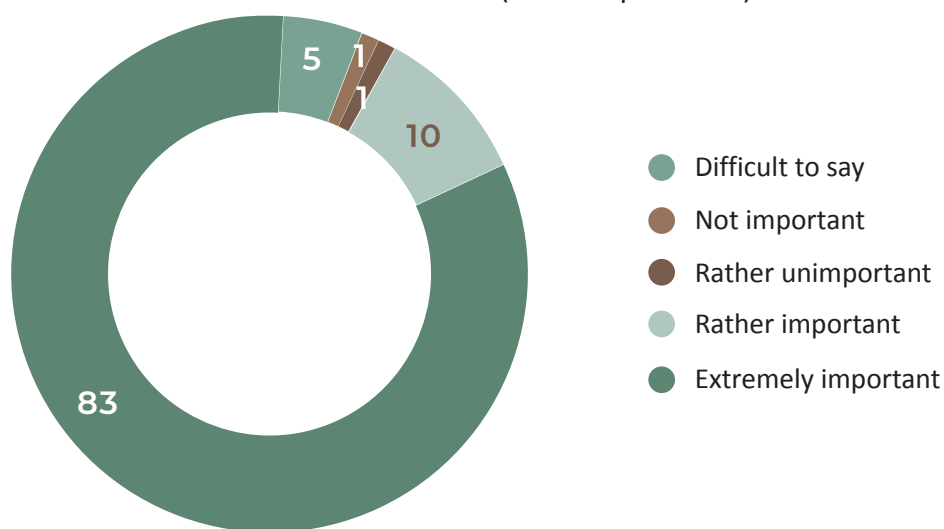
(% of responses)



Almost all respondents (93%) indicated that access to justice is extremely or rather important for victims of grave crimes. Only 1% of respondents said it was not important.

TO WHAT EXTENT IS ACCESS TO JUSTICE IMPORTANT FOR VICTIMS OF GRAVE CRIMES?

(% of respondents)



Regarding access to legal aid, participants in focus groups and interviews noted that there is access to legal aid, but it is often only primary and not always of high quality. Victims sought help from government initiatives, as well as from CSOs and charitable foundations that can provide legal advice on their own or offer their services to people through local authorities. At the same time, some of the responses were positive.

“You get help only on the first steps, and then you have to continue, but it’s for a fee.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

“Thanks to these victim support centres at the Office of the Prosecutor General, it all works. If you apply, you are taken care of... I know from my own experience and the experience of my friend, a friend who sheltered 50 people in Bucha, and his basement was pelted with grenades... He has witnessed several criminal cases. The centre, of course, helps as much as it can. And this is a great support.”

From an interview with a person affected by the war

People also complained about corruption, which hinders the accessibility of legal aid for all categories of citizens.

“I think, for example, if you apply to foundations, it may be easy. I do not know. I have no such practice. However, if you go directly to someone, it is only because of the money. If you have the money, it is easy. If not, it is very difficult.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

Regarding access to the investigation, respondents shared certain problems and noted that it is quite easy to file a crime report, but further communication with investigators, investigation of the crime, and collection of evidence can be very slow or not happen at all.

“For example, the case of my house. I called the police; they opened a criminal case, Article 365. The SSU is dealing with it. In addition, that is it. And silence. Just silence. I understand that there are many of these criminal cases and no one will deal with them. According to the documents, my plot was damaged. And that’s all, and silence.”

From an interview with a person affected by the war

“It is not difficult to contact the police or write a statement. It is not difficult to write a statement at all. However, whether it will be considered is a question. We faced the issue of a woman openly expressing support for separatism, in simple terms: “Yes, Russia will come and restore order.” We wrote a statement to the relevant authorities. However, I was surprised, as they say that the woman was free to go abroad after a while, even though she was officially suspected of separatism. I was a bit surprised... How is this possible? We are suffering from all this. And people are somehow irresponsible in their official duties.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

Respondents rated access to the court better than access to the investigation, mentioning the usefulness of the Diia app in this context.

“As a person who has had experience in litigation, all this is also easy to solve. Diia receives a notification of a court hearing when it is scheduled. It’s all automatic now.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

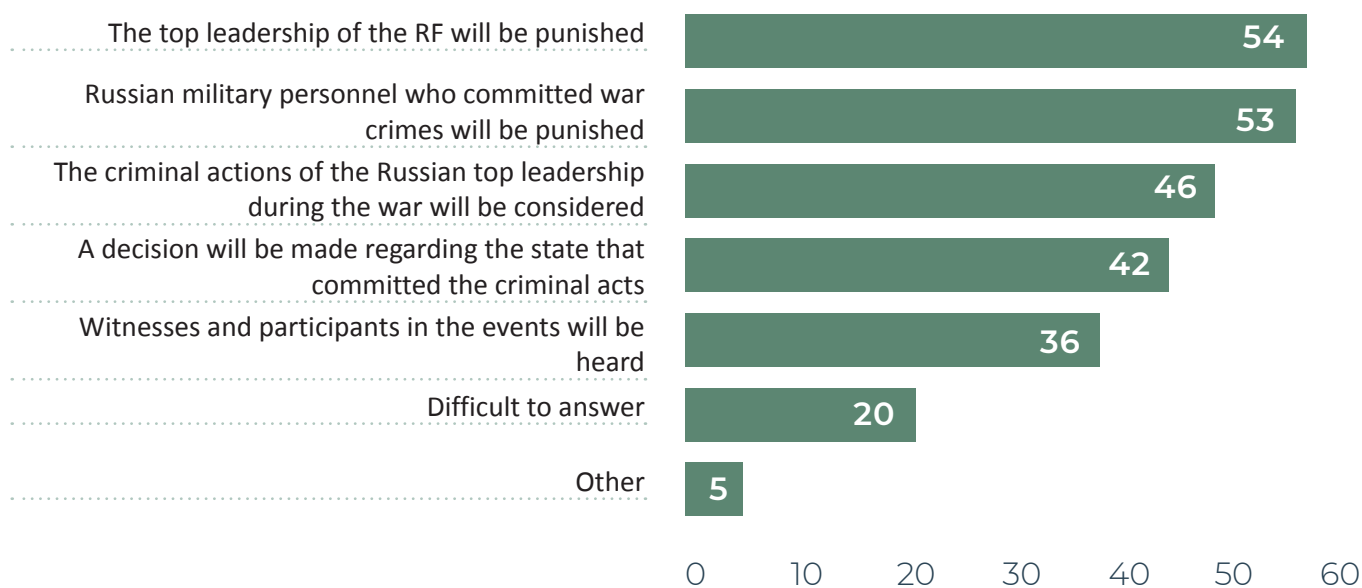
“In our case, yes. In general, it is easier than applying, for example, if someone is missing, and if it is the police or investigators. In terms of the court, it is easier. People are more supportive.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

More than half of the citizens expect international justice to punish the top leadership of the Russian Federation (54%) and the Russian military who committed war crimes (53%). In addition, almost half of the respondents expect the criminal actions of the Russian top leadership during the war to be investigated (46%). One-fifth of respondents do not know what to expect from international justice (20%).

EXPECTATIONS FROM INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE FOR GRAVE CRIMES

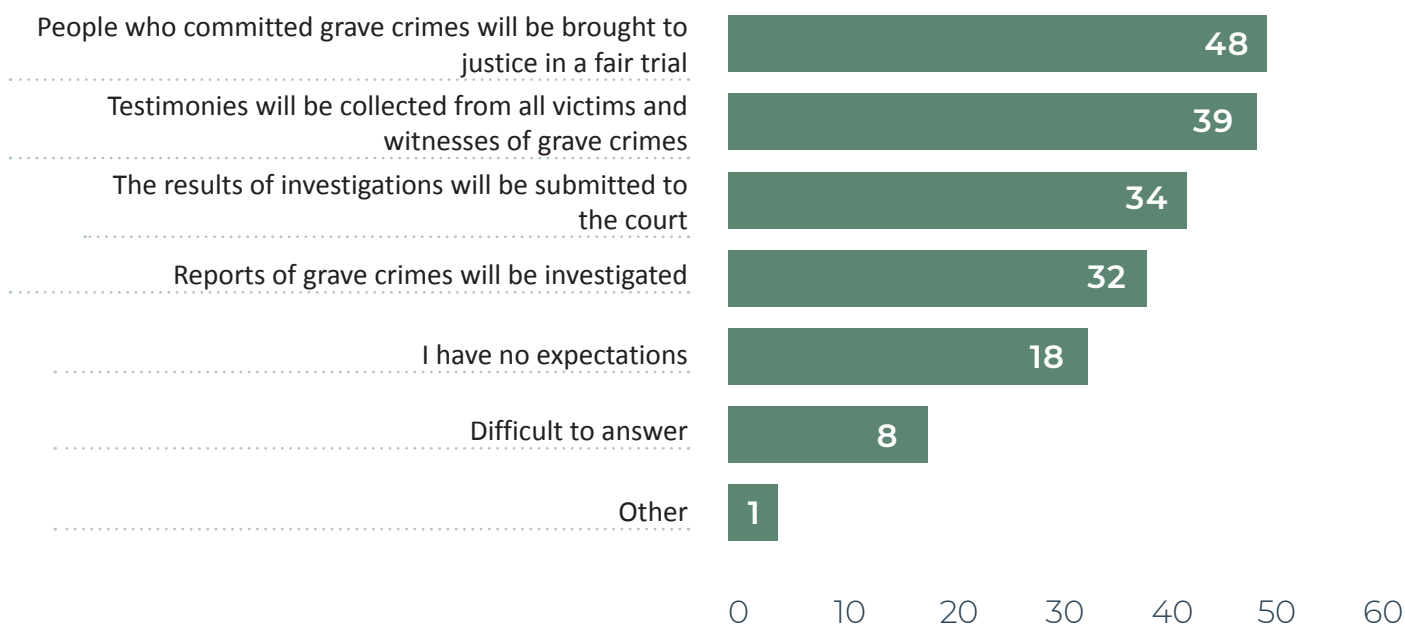
(% of responses)



Almost half of the respondents expect the national justice system to bring to justice the perpetrators of grave crimes in a fair trial (48%). In addition, a significant share of respondents (39%) expects the collection of testimonies from all victims and witnesses of grave crimes. 18% do not have any expectations, and 8% were undecided.

EXPECTATIONS FROM THE NATIONAL JUSTICE SYSTEM REGARDING GRAVE CRIMES

(% of responses)



Regarding the actions to be taken by the national justice system in relation to grave crimes, victims in the focus groups mostly noted that it is important to collect testimonies, systematise and structure data on war crimes for further submission of cases to an international court.

“As far as I see the situation, it is collection and systematization. Because I do not see any levers that these court decisions can use, even if they are fair and on the topic, I do not see any levers to implement them. Therefore, it is only through some international courts. In addition, the task of our system is to prepare these materials, collect and systematise them. I see nothing else in this sense.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

“That is, they should structure their work now so that there are no questions regarding their work in the future, that is, later, when they need to solve people’s issues, they will say, we are just setting up, we do not have a database, we lost your appeal or something else.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

“I think there must be a single register of such war crimes. And, perhaps, transferring them to an international court is also a must.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

“To go to the international court and seek financial compensation for the people who suffered. We need to fully voice all of this, bring it all to the international arena, and people need to rebuild their homes, restore their property, so that it is compensation. And to grant them status.”

From an interview with a person affected by the war

Experts in in-depth interviews also noted that it is important to collect and record evidence of war crimes at the level of national justice, and that it is more appropriate to consider cases and pass sentences in an international court.

“I think that the International Court has experience in handling such cases, and not only in our country.”

We are probably not the first country in the world to suffer from such injustice, and people are suffering and dying. I think they have more experience in such cases.”

From an expert interview

“That’s what international justice is all about, to get the community to become more active around preventing this from happening again. Because if it can be done with one country, then it gives permission to do it with another country. And when such crimes are investigated in the International Court, it is, you know, a signal to other countries that the same thing can happen to you if they do not respond to everything. I hope that this will increase security.”

From an expert interview

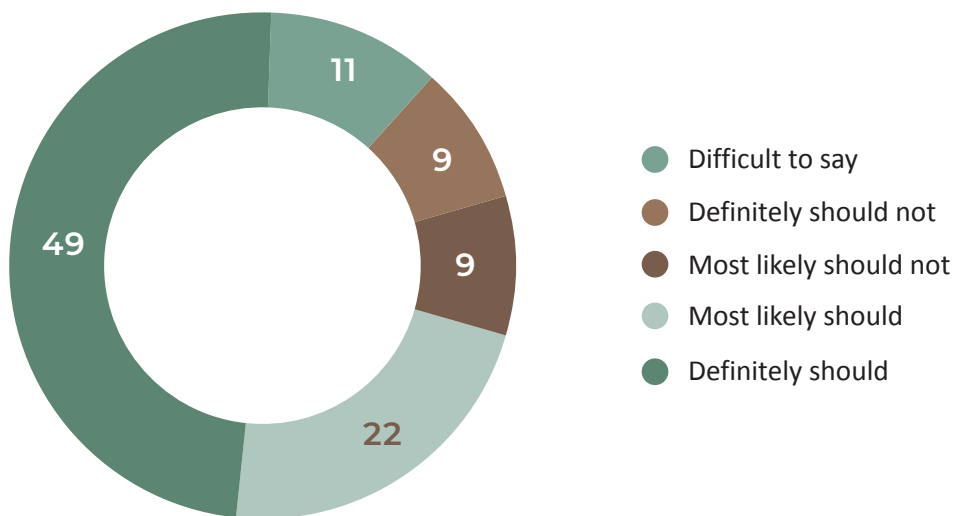
“Our system should record everything in accordance with all the rules; transfer it to the International Court, nothing else.”

From an expert interview

The majority of respondents believe that the international procedure should consider the story of each victim (71%). On the other hand, 18% believe that it definitely or probably should not.

SHOULD THE INTERNATIONAL PROCEDURE CONSIDER THE STORY OF EACH VICTIM?

(% of respondents)



During the focus groups and in-depth interviews, participants expressed much more trust in international courts than in national ones, noting that the former are much more effective.

“If this is our judicial system in Ukraine, I probably would not want to participate. Because I already have experience of years of litigation. I would not want to deal with our courts again. Because I already know, what our courts are like. If it’s an international court, it’s a different matter.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

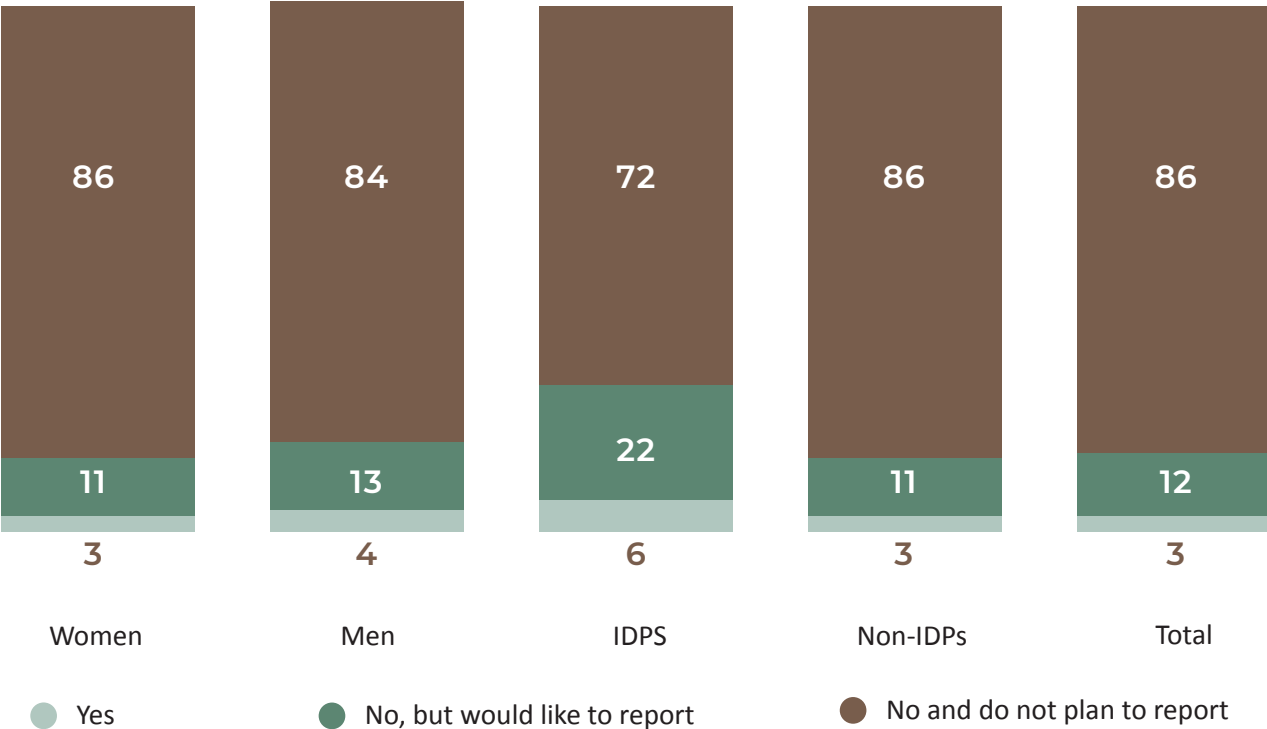
“Somehow, there is probably more trust in international courts. Russia will have to reckon with an international court.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

EXPERIENCE OF REPORTING GRAVE CRIMES TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Eighty-five per cent of respondents have no experience of reporting grave crimes to law enforcement agencies and do not plan to do so. Only 3% of respondents reported having such experience. Twelve per cent would like to apply in the future, with IDPs (22%) being 2 times more likely to do so than the general population (11%).

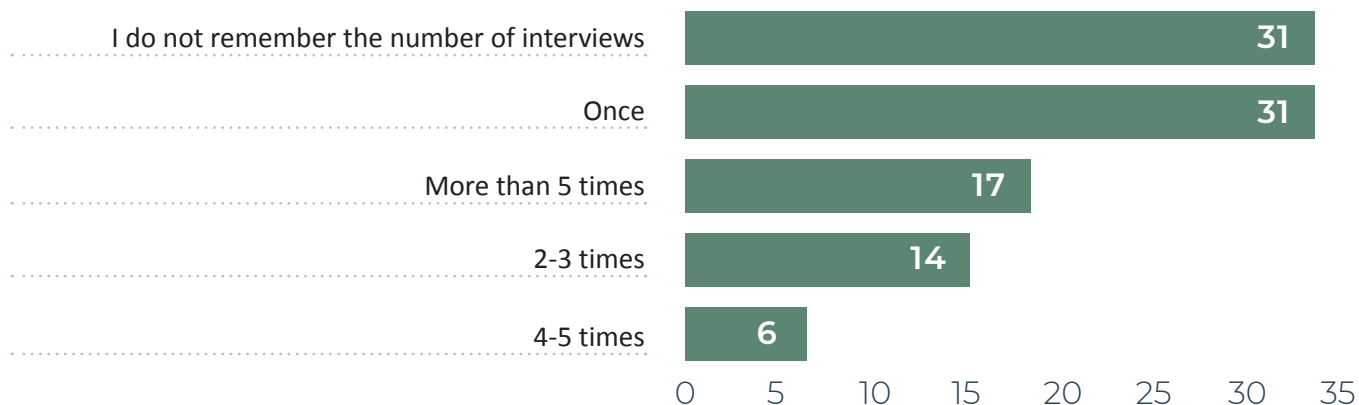
HAVE YOU HAD EXPERIENCE OF REPORTING A GRAVE CRIME TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES?
(% of respondents)



Approximately one third of the respondents stated that they had been interviewed once, and the same proportion of respondents said they did not remember the number of interviews. The smallest number of respondents were interviewed 4-5 times (two people).

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU BEEN INTERVIEWED BY DIFFERENT LAW ENFORCEMENT OR JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES IN YOUR CASE?

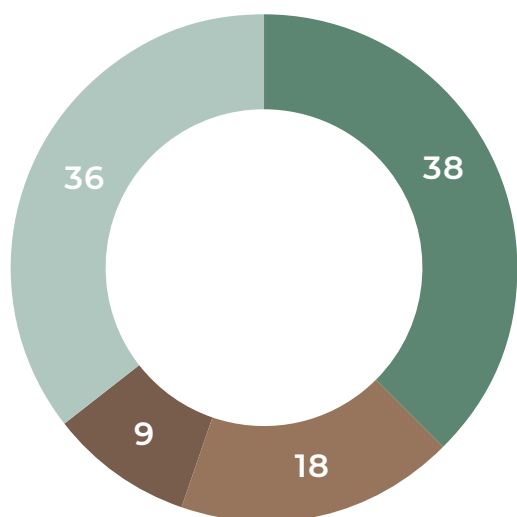
(% of those who reported such experience)



A significant proportion of respondents (38%) are calm about repeated interviewing by law enforcement agencies and are ready to talk as much as necessary if need be. For 18 per cent, it is / may be difficult to relive this experience each time. Nine per cent said it could be emotionally unbearable.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT REPEATED QUESTIONING BY LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES?

(% of respondents)



- Calmly: I am ready to talk as much as necessary if needed
- Difficult: it is emotionally difficult to relive the experience each time
- Emotionally unbearable: I refused to be questioned again because I don't want to recall my experience
- Difficult to answer

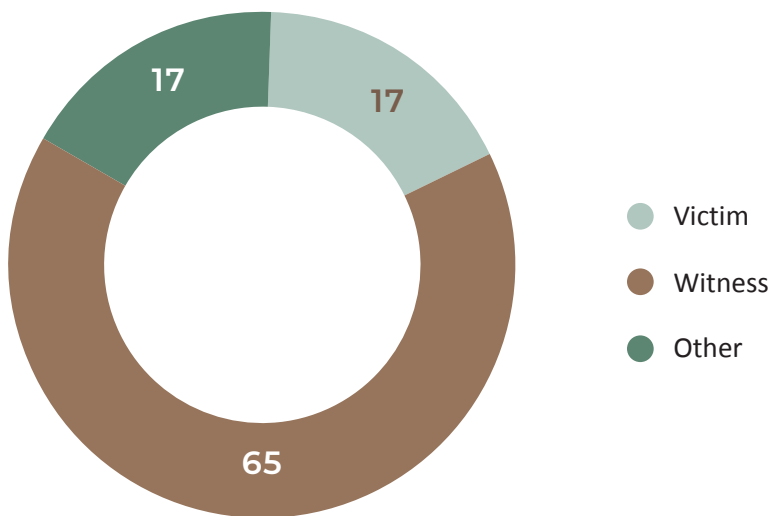
PARTICIPATION IN TRIALS FOR GRAVE CRIMES

Ninety-eight per cent of respondents said they had no experience of participating in trials regarding grave crimes. Among those who did participate, men and those with IDP status predominate.

Among those who had experience of participating in trials regarding grave crimes, the majority (65%) were witnesses. 17% were victims. Other options included the role of a defendant or a witness.

THE ROLE OF RESPONDENTS IN TRIALS REGARDING GRAVE CRIMES

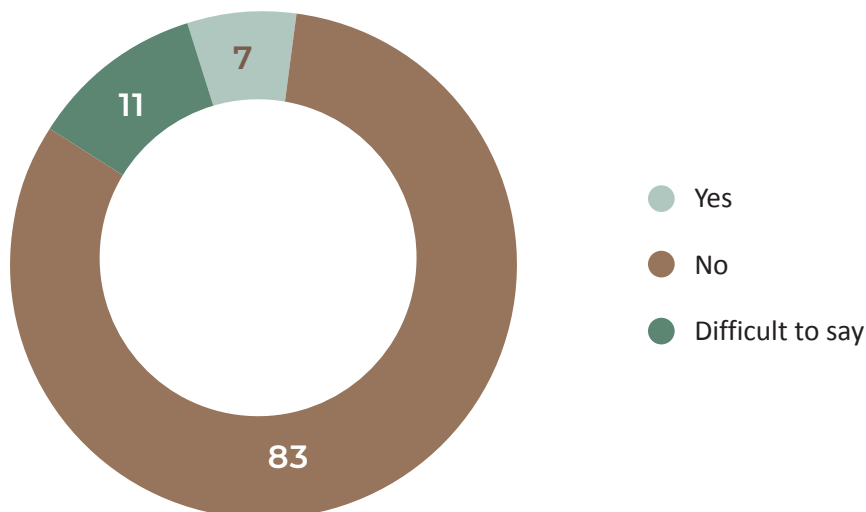
(% of those who reported such experience)



Eighty-three per cent of respondents said they would not be willing to participate in trials for grave crimes. However, almost 7% said they would. Most of them were men and persons with IDP status.

WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN TRIALS REGARDING GRAVE CRIMES?

(% of respondents)

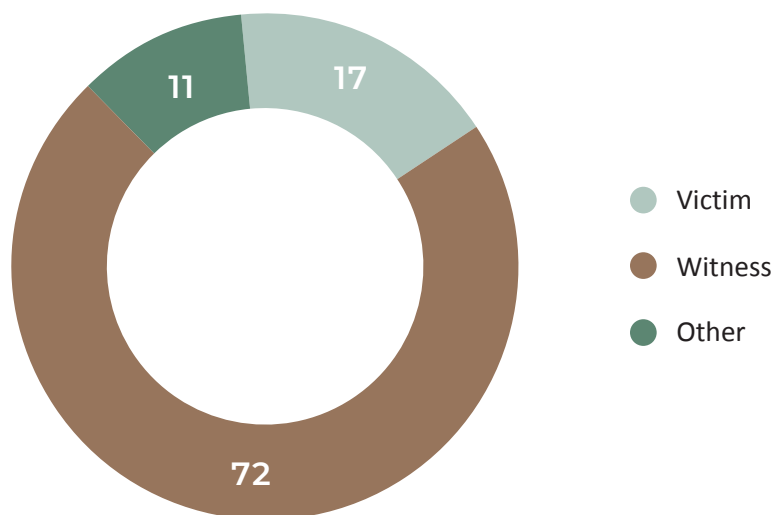


Among those who expressed their willingness to participate in a trial regarding grave crimes, the majority (72%) see themselves as witnesses.

Seventeen per cent of respondents said they would take part as victims. As for other options, they mentioned the roles of plaintiffs and support members of the prosecuting party.

RESPONDENTS' PREFERRED ROLE IN TRIALS REGARDING GRAVE CRIMES

(% of those who expressed such willingness)



Participants of in-depth interviews and focus groups explained that their refusal to participate in court hearings is associated with additional stress and anxiety. Moreover, victims do not have the strength and resources to do so.

"I would like to take part, but I can't stand it morally and physically, not today, no, maybe later, yes."

From a focus group with people affected by the war

"It would probably be very difficult both morally and physically, and for my health. I think these are very difficult processes."

From a focus group with people affected by the war

Some of the affected persons who clearly indicated their desire to participate in the trials reasoned this mainly by the need to punish the perpetrators. For the most part, those willing to participate in the trials indicated that they would be witnesses.

"There is a desire. It must be condemned. They must be punished for it. Because the aggressors cause significant consequences by their actions. For example, in my situation. My mother was practically a healthy person. Now I have taken my mother away completely incapacitated. And this is only because she did not want to take a Russian passport. She did not receive any medical support. And she was just ruined."

From a focus group with people affected by the war

"First of all, for me, it is a feeling that those people should be punished fairly. Or non-humans. I do not know what else to call them. And for them to face it. How many families have suffered? I am talking about myself now. However, I realise that people have even more grief. I want them to be punished, and I want

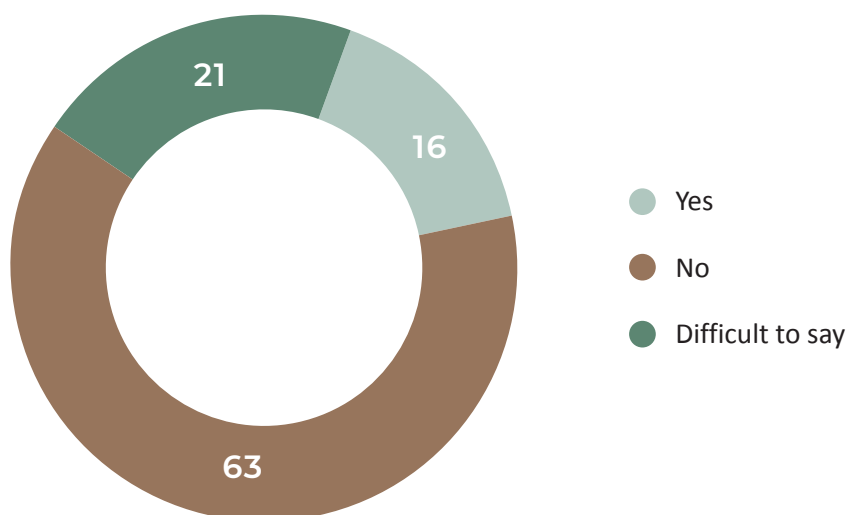
the authorities of the aggressor country, and even its residents, to pay for it. Because we lost our health; we lost our relatives; we lost our homes. There is a lot of this going on here. And we want them to be punished for it.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

Sixty-three per cent of respondents do not consider trials in absentia to be an effective form of justice. Only 16% of respondents share the opposite opinion.

DO YOU CONSIDER PROCEEDINGS AND TRIALS IN ABSENTIA AN EFFECTIVE FORM OF JUSTICE?

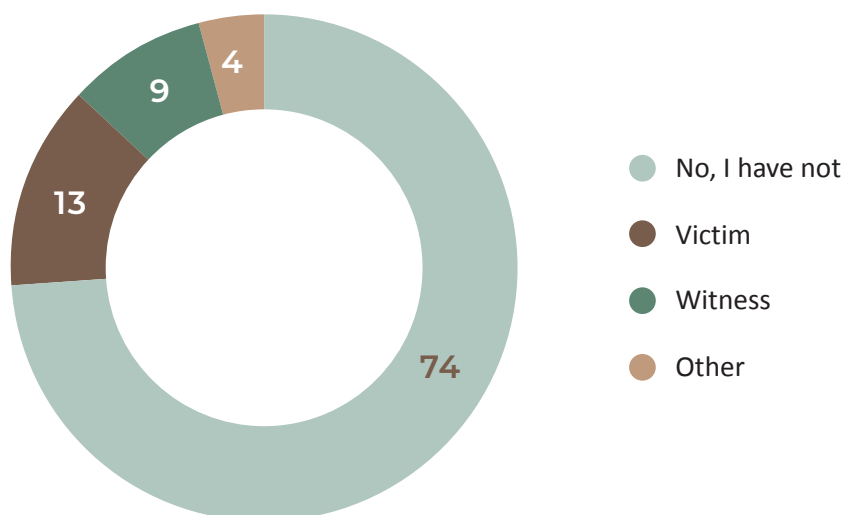
(% of respondents)



The majority of respondents (74%) have not participated in trials in absentia regarding grave crimes. 13% participated and were victims, and 9% were witnesses. Other options included the role of the defendant.

HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED IN TRIALS IN ABSENTIA FOR GRAVE CRIMES AND IF SO, IN WHAT CAPACITY?

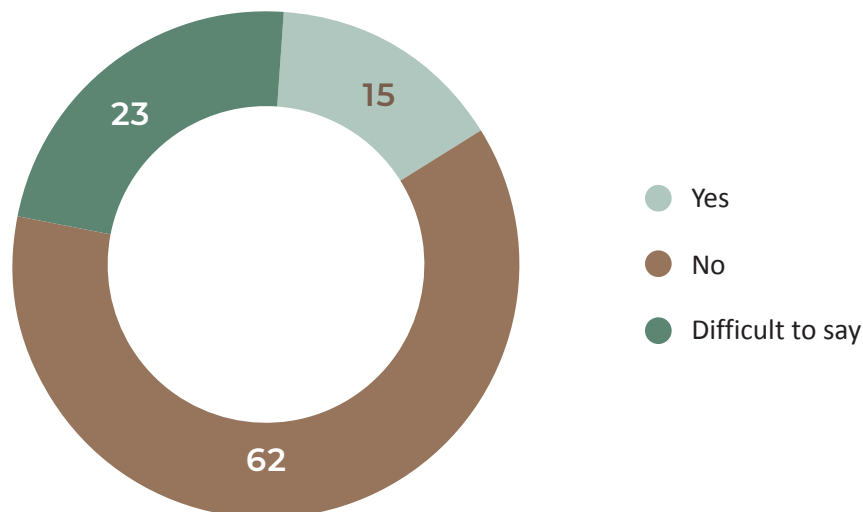
(% of respondents)



The majority of respondents (62%) believe that justice is not restored in absentia in the same way as with face-to-face trials.

DO YOU THINK THAT JUSTICE IS RESTORED IN ABSENTIA IN THE SAME WAY AS DURING IN-PERSON TRIALS?

(% of respondents)



During the focus groups and interviews, most victims explained that they were sceptical about trials in absentia because they did not believe in their effectiveness and that the convicted person would be punished. At the same time, according to some respondents, if there is no other way to convict a criminal, it should still be done in absentia.

“It seems to me that this is not a sentence. What is a sentence in absentia? The way Putin was sentenced. Well, he cannot go anywhere. Well, maybe it will come true someday, just as those who were executed are tried in absentia. Perhaps it is necessary after all. I am just thinking aloud. Probably, sometime in the future, it will not work right away, but someday, I think, it will work. Someday those people will be punished.”

From an interview with a person affected by the war

“Such sentences are simply not effective. They are passed and that is it. You know, as if they just checked the box and that is it. And then nothing... No one will capture him; no one will catch him. No. It will not be effective. It will not come into force.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

“Well, how can you treat something when nothing happens, if a person does not understand it, it is impossible to reach him or her to present this sentence or apply it to him or her, I think it will only be on paper, and there will be no sense in it, this is my own opinion.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

Only a few participants from among mothers with many children and mothers with small children expressed a positive attitude towards sentences in absentia.

“Very positive, because these are indefinite sentences, they have no time limit, they will always be executed, no matter how long it takes, I will say that.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

“Yes. I also believe that we need this. Because even if they come back here, they will already know, there is a case against them. That they have committed a crime, they will realise what they have done. But still, at least something will happen.”

From a focus group with people affected by the war

As for the expert opinion, it is similar to that of the survivors. Most experts also believe that sentences in absentia do not cause any harm to the perpetrators, and therefore are not effective. Representatives of the National Police also stated this.

“Honestly, it’s a little bit negative in the sense that it’s almost impossible to execute, it’s very difficult to execute. That’s why it feels like there is no punishment. But in reality, every person who has suffered, part of their recovery lies in the punishment of the aggressor.”

From an expert interview

“This can only give some hope to a person who is right. However, you realise that nothing from this verdict will be practical. Well, they will indict the person and sentence him in absentia. He lives there in the Russian Federation. That is it. What does that verdict do for him? And the person is here without a home, without anything.”

From an expert interview

CONCLUSIONS

- Almost all respondents (90 to 96%) agree that Russia is committing war crimes, crimes against humanity, crimes of aggression and genocide against Ukraine.
- Ninety-two per cent of respondents said that the murders and torture of people in the occupied territories should be investigated first. The majority of respondents also pointed to the priority of investigating crimes such as shelling of civilian infrastructure (78%), the use of prohibited weapons (73%), and the deportation of Ukrainians to Russia (72%).
- The overwhelming majority of respondents (86%) believe that the victims of war crimes are civilians killed in the fighting. Similarly, the majority of respondents said that civilians and soldiers who were injured in the hostilities (79% and 73% respectively), as well as people who lost relatives in the hostilities (69%), can be considered victims.
- Almost half of the respondents (47%) consider themselves victims of war crimes.
- The majority of respondents (63%) said that the status of a victim of grave crimes should be automatically granted to all those who found themselves in the area of hostilities. There are also quite widespread opinions that this status should be automatically granted to all those who find themselves under occupation (54%) and to those who have applied to the state authorities with this issue (45%).
- Respondents most frequently indicated that victims of grave international crimes need psychological assistance (85%), social guarantees (80%), and legal aid (74%).
- Ninety-one per cent of respondents believe that the protection of witnesses and victims should be the responsibility of the state. However, 82% said they were unaware of the establishment of the Coordination Centre for Victims and Witnesses at the Office of the Prosecutor General. Seventy per cent of respondents said that such centres should exist at all law enforcement agencies and courts.
- More than a third of respondents indicated that they feel threatened because they participated in or witnessed certain events during the war. Seventy-one per cent of respondents indicated that they do not know (or are not sure) how to get the necessary protection from the state. Among the potential threats to them, respondents most often mentioned everything related to hostilities (shelling, bombing, occupation, etc.), as well as risks caused by the war: loss of loved ones, property, uncertainty, etc.
- Sixty per cent of respondents believe that the current protection provided by the state is ineffective. Most respondents need social (42%) and psychological (38%) assistance, as well as physical protection (26%). Only 13% of respondents were offered some kind of protection by the state, most often, social assistance. Only 16% of respondents availed themselves of protection from the state.
- Respondents consider international organisations (48% consider them effective and 53% trust them) and civil society organisations (42% and 52% respectively) and the Security Service of Ukraine (43% and 45%) to be the most effective and trusted, while courts (28%), prosecutors (27%) and the Ombudsman's Office (25%) have the least confidence score.
- Every second citizen believes that legal aid (51%) and recourse to the courts (49%) are partially or fully accessible in Ukraine. Much less - a third of respondents (34%) think the same about access to investigations.
- More than half of the respondents said that excessive bureaucracy is a barrier for victims of grave crimes on the way to justice (55%). Lack of information on where to apply (46%) and lengthy proceedings (44%) were also frequently mentioned. Only 2% believe that there are no barriers.
- Regarding expectations from international justice for grave crimes, more than half of the respondents want to see the top leadership of the Russian Federation (54%) and the military who

committed war crimes (53%) punished. In addition, almost half of the respondents expect the criminal actions of the Russian top leadership during the war to be investigated (46%).

- Almost half of the respondents expect the national justice system to bring the people who committed grave crimes to justice in a fair trial (48%). In addition, a significant share of respondents (39%) expects the collection of testimonies from all victims and witnesses of the grave crimes.

- Eighty-five per cent of respondents had no experience of reporting a grave crime to law enforcement agencies. Twelve per cent indicated a desire to apply in the future.

- Ninety-eight per cent of respondents had no experience of participating in court proceedings regarding grave crimes. Among those who had experience of participating in trials for grave crimes, the majority (65%) were witnesses.

- Eighty-three per cent of respondents said they would not want to participate in trials for grave crimes.

- The majority of respondents do not consider trials in absentia to be an effective form of justice (63%) and do not believe that they result in justice being restored in the same way as in-person trials (62%).