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CHALLENGES OF LEGAL STATUS OF WAR REFUGEES AND INTERNAL MIGRANTS: THE CASE OF UKRAINE

*Kateryna HORBACHOVA, Valentyna KSENDZUK, Kateryna VOITSITSKA,
Ivan KOVALCHUK, Olha TYKHONIUK*

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Challenges of Legal Status of War Refugees and Internal Migrants: the Case of Ukraine

Kateryna HORBACHOVA¹, Valentyna KSENDZUK²,
Kateryna VOITSITSKA³, Ivan KOVALCHUK⁴, Olha TYKHONIUK⁵

Abstract

The article examines the legal status of persons who have been forcibly displaced, in particular refugees and IDPs, through the prism of the full-scale war that has been ongoing in Ukraine since 2022. The relevance of the topic is due to the unprecedented scale of forced displacement of the Ukrainian population and the urgent need to transform the domestic legislative environment in line with the challenges posed by the protracted humanitarian situation in the country. The aim of the study is to analyse the legal framework for regulating the status of refugees and IDPs, identify gaps in legislation and law enforcement, and assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the rights of these categories of persons. Combining research on the legal status of IDPs and refugees in Ukraine allows for the formation of a systematic vision of national policy in the field of protection of persons who have been forced to leave their homes,

¹ Department of Private and Social Law, Faculty of Law, Sumy National Agrarian University, Sumy, UKRAINE. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5940-6350>; E-mail: horbachova1990@gmail.com

² Department of International Relations and Political Management, Faculty of National Security, Law and International Relations, Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University, Zhytomyr, UKRAINE. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7670-7350>; E-mail: walentyna_ksiedzuk@ukr.net

³ Department of National Security, Public Management and Administration, Faculty of National Security, Law and International Relations, Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University, Zhytomyr, UKRAINE. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2815-8814>; E-mail: katevoytsitska@gmail.com

⁴ Department of Social and Political Sciences, Faculty of Information Electronic Systems, Vinnytsia National Technical University, Vinnytsia, UKRAINE. <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-7467-5317>; E-mail: ivankovalchuk@vntu.edu.ua

⁵ Department of Information, Economic and Administrative Law, Faculty of Sociology and Law, National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute", Kyiv, UKRAINE. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3123-5841>; E-mail: Olga_Tykhonyuk@ukr.net

regardless of whether this occurred within the state or outside its borders. This approach opens up opportunities for comparative analysis, critical assessment of legislation, and identification of gaps in the implementation of legal guarantees. There are a number of legal and socio-political overlaps between the statuses of IDPs and refugees, which are evident in the protection of basic rights and access to social services: both categories are vulnerable social groups that need not only legislative guarantees but also real institutional tools for their implementation. Successful policies for such persons must be based on the principles of accessibility, comprehensiveness, and interagency cooperation, which is particularly important in the context of martial law and a humanitarian crisis. In the context of limited funding and extraordinary pressure on institutions, priority in providing protection is given to Ukrainian citizens, which logically follows from the constitutional obligation of the state. Statistics are indicative in this context: as of February 2025, there were approximately 3.7 million IDPs officially registered in Ukraine (People in Need, 2024), while the number of persons recognized as refugees was only 1,301 (State Migration Service of Ukraine, 2024). It has been concluded that there is a need to improve the unified interagency system for monitoring the rights of IDPs, introduce digital registration tools, and expand integration programs at the local level. It has therefore been established that the legal status of refugees and IDPs is not only a legal construct but also an indicator of a state's ability to respond effectively to humanitarian challenges while fulfilling its obligations to the international community and its own citizens.

Keywords: armed conflict; forced displacement; temporary protection; internally displaced person; refugee; protection of constitutional rights.

Introduction

The concept of legal status of a person occupies a key place in the system of modern public law, and in scientific literature it is often considered as a system of provisions enshrined in legal norms that determine the legal position of a person in society. In particular, Byelov and Hromovchuk (2021) define the legal status of a person as a set of norms and the relations regulated by them that arise between the state and a person in connection with their actual place in the socio-economic, political, and spiritual-moral life of society. Sorochkin (2024) rightly points out that these relations cover various spheres of life and are regulated by norms of practically all branches of law, but the norms of constitutional law, which determine the most essential foundations of these relations, are of particular importance.

The study of the legal status of the individual allows forming an idea of the general principles of legal personality, rights, and freedoms of the individual in the legal system of the state. However, in the current context of a growing number of global conflicts, forced displacement, and mass migration, there is a need for a

detailed study of the specific legal regimes applicable to certain categories of the population, in particular refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

It should be noted that the legal status of such persons has a dual meaning: on the one hand, they remain bearers of basic human rights guaranteed by international law; on the other hand, their status is determined by specific norms that take into account their “vulnerability” the lack of a permanent place of residence, problems with documentation, access to social guarantees, medical care, education, etc. That is why the study of the legal status of refugees and IDPs is of particular importance at both the national and international levels.

Ukraine, as a state that has experienced armed conflict and mass internal displacement of the population, faces the need to respond promptly to the legal needs of persons with refugee and IDP status. Both statuses are regulated by Ukrainian law and an important legal nuance that should be clearly established in a scientific context, because the concepts of “refugee” and “internally displaced person” not only have different legal implications, but also differ in terms of citizenship. Thus, the main difference is that refugee status is an international legal regime applicable to foreigners, while IDP status is a domestic protection mechanism that may also apply to Ukrainian citizens. This explains why the legal framework for these two categories of persons provides for different procedures, guarantees, and scope of rights.

Thus, when analysing the legal status of Ukrainian citizens temporarily residing in European or other countries, one should refer to the legislation of the host countries, taking into account the status granted to them (refugee, person under temporary protection, humanitarian status, etc.), which allows for a more complete assessment of the scope of their rights, guarantees, and obligations within the relevant jurisdiction. At the same time, when analysing the legal status of refugees in Ukraine, the basis for the study is Ukrainian legislation and international law.

In view of the above, the aim of this work is to conduct a comprehensive study of the legal status of refugees and internally displaced persons in the context of the armed conflict in Ukraine in general, and, in particular, to study the current national legislation and assess the effectiveness of existing mechanisms of state support.

Literature Review

The legal status of internally displaced persons and refugees in Ukraine in the context of armed conflict has been the subject of research by many Ukrainian and foreign scholars, who, in their publications, emphasize the urgent need to adapt Ukraine’s national legislation to international humanitarian standards. For example, Leheza *et al.* (2024) point to the fragmented nature of administrative and legal regulation of IDPs, which creates difficulties in law enforcement and discriminatory practices in access to social services. This conclusion is reinforced

by the scientific position of the authors Izarova *et al.* (2023), who draw attention to the lack of unified procedures for ensuring the rights of IDPs to housing, education, and medical care, especially in the context of limited local budgets.

The problem of practical implementation of rights is also raised by Tarkhanova and Pyrogova (2024), who note that regional executive authorities do not always have clear algorithms for ensuring the needs of IDPs, which leads to unequal access to basic resources depending on geographical location. In the same context, Mikheieva and Kuznetsova (2023) draw attention to the lack of an effective model for registering persons who have been forced to leave their homes but have been unable to leave the danger zone, thereby creating a new legal phenomenon – the “forcibly immobile”.

As Tesliuk *et al.* (2024) emphasize, it is the inability of legislation to respond to the emergence of new forms of displacement that is a key challenge for the current stage of law-making in Ukraine. The authors rightly point out that certain categories of persons are, in fact, displaced persons but do not formally fall under the definition in the current law, which deprives them of access to social protection.

The findings of the study by Buchko *et al.* (2024) show that the adaptability of state support mechanisms during different stages of the war largely depends on the local level of governance, while central authorities remain in the role of coordinators without any real instruments of influence. Their observations are confirmed by the analytical position of Mooney (2023), who criticizes the current legal model for its excessive formalization and poor adaptability to changing circumstances on the ground, pointing out that although Ukrainian legislation, in particular the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons” of October 20, 2014, No. 1706-VII, formally complies with the UN Guiding Principles on IDPs, its implementation in practice is insufficiently effective.

Basova (2017) emphasizes the need for cross-sectoral cooperation between academia, legislative and executive authorities, and international bodies as a key factor in the development of an effective legal system for the protection of IDPs. At the same time, the author highlights the lack of systematic coordination between these actors, which hinders the practical implementation of the constitutionally guaranteed rights of IDPs.

There are also significant gaps in the implementation of refugees’ rights in Ukraine. As Koval and Strelchenko (2024) rightly point out, one of the key problems at present is the lack of adequate infrastructure to support and integrate refugees. In particular, there is a shortage of qualified interpreters at temporary accommodation centres for refugees, insufficient information for individuals about their rights, and a lack of mechanisms for temporary identification during the application process. The authors also emphasize the advisability of creating a centralized body that would deal not only with the legal procedures for granting status, but also with issues of social, cultural, and economic integration of refugees into society

(Ihnatenko, 2024). Among the practical initiatives proposed are the introduction of state language courses, the creation of a single register of translators, and the simplification of appeal procedures. This opinion correlates with the conclusions of Neofita (2022), who also draws attention to the need for a single body responsible for the comprehensive integration of refugees, including language training, access to housing, and social services. In addition, the researcher emphasizes the need to harmonize national legislation with European standards and adopt a single codified act that would comprehensively regulate the legal status of foreigners, including refugees and persons in need of additional or temporary protection.

Mishenina and Derkachenko (2020) also draw attention to a number of systemic problems that complicate the realization of refugees' rights in Ukraine. One of the key shortcomings, in their opinion, is the lack of adequate access to information on procedures for registration, re-registration, obtaining housing, or social services. In addition, attention is drawn to the high staff turnover in the State Migration Service of Ukraine, which negatively affects the quality of decision-making, counselling, and case management.

A general review of the scientific literature reveals systematic criticism of both the regulatory and procedural aspects of the legal status of refugees and IDPs in Ukraine. Among the key problems are the lack of a unified database, weak interagency control over the implementation of support programs, and a formal approach to determining the categories of displaced persons. There are increasing calls in academic discourse for a review of the current legislation to take into account the challenges of today, in particular hybrid forms of conflict, digital identification of displaced persons, and the need to provide mobile support in temporarily occupied or de-occupied territories.

Thus, most authors agree on the fragmented nature of national legal regulation, the lack of a clear mechanism for the reintegration of IDPs, and the need to reform the regulatory framework. It can be argued that contemporary academic thought lays the foundation for a profound transformation of Ukrainian legislation in line with international standards and practices. However, effective implementation requires not only legislative initiatives but also coordination between public policy actors and adequate resource allocation.

Methodology

In the process of researching the legal status of refugees and internally displaced persons, a set of methods was used to ensure the depth, consistency, and validity of the analysis. In particular, a formal legal method was used to analyse national legislation regulating the legal status of these categories of persons. The comparative legal method allowed us to identify common features and peculiarities of the legal regulation of both categories. The method of systematic analysis was used to study normative legal acts in their interrelation with other elements of the legal field. The

empirical base was formed through content analysis of reports from international organizations such as the UN, the International Organization for Migration, and Ukrainian institutions. Statistical methods were used to interpret quantitative indicators relating to the number of displaced persons, their demographic structure, and access to social services. In addition, the results of sociological studies and surveys highlighting the attitudes, intentions, and problems of refugees and IDPs were taken into account, which allowed for a deeper understanding of the real challenges of the legal status of these persons in the current context.

Results and Discussion

The legal status of internally displaced persons in Ukraine is not only a legal construct but also a social reality that requires comprehensive analysis. IDPs are a specific category of persons who, unlike refugees, do not cross state borders but are forcibly displaced as a result of armed conflict, human rights violations, or disasters (Protsenko, 2018).

The legal status of internally displaced persons in Ukraine is primarily determined by Law No. 1706-VII (Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons”, 2014), which was adopted in response to the armed conflict and mass displacement of the population in the country. The law formalises the concept of IDPs, establishes guarantees for the observance of their rights and freedoms, and defines procedures for registration, access to social services, employment, education and medical care.

Its provisions are supplemented by a number of government regulations, including: Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 509 “On the Registration of Internally Displaced Persons” (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2014), and Resolution No. 332 “Some Issues of Living Allowances for Internally Displaced Persons” (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2022b), etc.

The legislation formally guarantees IDPs a number of rights, namely: the right to housing, participation in state support programs, education, medical care, work, social protection, and the preservation of electoral rights. However, in practice, these guarantees are difficult to implement. One of the main problems is the complexity of the procedures for obtaining assistance and the lack of coordination between state and local authorities, which leads to fragmentation of the protection system (Selikhov, 2024).

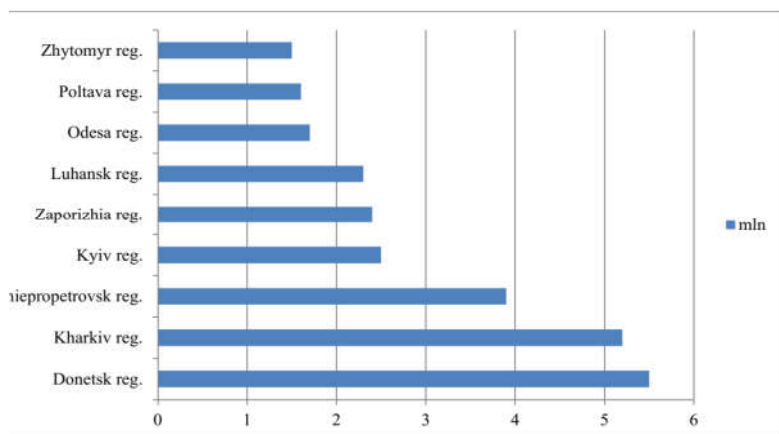
This imbalance between legislative norms and the actual state of affairs is further exacerbated by institutional weaknesses (Bonyak, 2023). The social protection system for IDPs in Ukraine remains flawed due to chronic underfunding, excessive bureaucracy, and limited access to public services, especially in rural or frontline regions. Specific measures to improve this situation could include the development of electronic services for the registration and accounting of IDPs, the delegation

of powers to the local level, and the active integration of displaced persons into host communities.

The scientific community has analysed in detail the structural and institutional shortcomings of Ukraine's IDP policy that emerged after 2014 (Mykhnenko *et al.*, 2022). In particular, several key problems of both an administrative and socio-political nature have been identified. It is noted that the policy towards IDPs in Ukraine has been reactive rather than proactive, and as a result, the decisions taken have often been temporary and situational in nature and have not formed a coherent long-term strategy for the integration and support of displaced persons. For example, this has contributed to the lack of a comprehensive housing policy that would allow IDPs to settle in new communities on a permanent basis. There have only been short-term compensatory measures, such as temporary housing or small cash payments, which have not solved the problem of long-term housing. Bureaucratic barriers are also highlighted, which led to complicated IDP registration procedures, numerous requirements for obtaining certificates, verification of actual place of residence, and the need to regularly update status, which created additional pressure on displaced persons.

Another subject of scientific research is the impact of internal displacement on subjective well-being in Ukraine (Perelli-Harris, 2024), and the need for a comprehensive approach to supporting IDPs that takes into account not only material needs but also psychological assistance and social integration is emphasized.

Statistical data (see Figure 1) show a significant concentration of IDPs in the eastern and central regions of Ukraine, due to the intensity of hostilities and proximity to conflict zones. In particular, Donetsk and Kharkiv regions have the highest rates, reflecting the scale of population displacement as a result of military operations.



Source: created by the authors based on information from the Information and Computing Centre of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine (2025)

Figure 1. Internal displacement in wartime: Regions with the highest burden (2025)

It should be noted that the number of IDPs is constantly growing. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), as of February 2025, there were approximately 3.7 million IDPs in Ukraine (People in Need, 2024). Undoubtedly, this dynamic reflects the scale of the humanitarian crisis caused by the war.

Thus, a consistent analysis of scientific approaches allows forming an understanding of the legal status of IDPs as a dynamic phenomenon that requires constant regulatory updates and interagency cooperation. This status is not limited to formal recognition, but is embodied in the state's ability to provide real mechanisms for protection, adaptation, and return home for millions of its citizens.

As mentioned above, the main rights of IDPs include the right to free temporary housing, state registration, targeted financial assistance, access to medical and educational services, and participation in elections at their place of actual residence. However, in reality, the implementation of these rights is often hampered by overburdened local infrastructure, lack of resources, and legal uncertainty in some areas (in particular regarding documentary proof of IDP status in the event of loss of personal documents). At the same time, IDPs have certain responsibilities, such as notifying the authorities of a change of residence, registering in accordance with the established procedure, and, in some cases, cooperating with social protection authorities. Despite the legal status enshrined in legislation, there is a gap between formal guarantees and actual access to protection, which increases the vulnerability of this group. In particular, academic circles note that the situation with pensions and housing remains quite difficult (Fedorova & Hamul'ák, 2023) and with the implementation of IDPs' economic rights (in particular regarding the protection of property rights) (Hlibko *et al.*, 2022). At the same time, Resolution No. 1555 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated December 31, 2024 (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2024) introduces a pilot project for the temporary accommodation and support of certain categories of internally displaced persons in difficult life circumstances, representing an example of a selective and pilot approach to the implementation of state guarantees of IDPs' rights. On the one hand, this illustrates the general trend in law enforcement in the field of internal displacement, which tends towards experimental, situational regulation instead of full implementation of legal guarantees in the form of stable state policy. On the other hand, it is an attempt to improve the housing situation for IDPs.

Another solution to this problem could be Resolution No. 495 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of April 29, 2022, "Some measures for the formation of housing funds for the temporary accommodation of internally displaced persons" (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2022a), which establishes mechanisms for the formation of a housing fund for the temporary accommodation of IDPs. According to the resolution, local authorities form and manage this fund through the purchase, construction, reconstruction, or conversion of premises, as well as the transfer of housing to municipal or state ownership. Housing is provided free of charge for a period of up to one year with the possibility of extension, provided that there are

no changes in the status of the IDP and no other place of residence. Priority in the provision of housing is given to large families, families with children, pregnant women, persons who have lost their ability to work, and persons of retirement age whose housing has been destroyed or rendered uninhabitable as a result of armed aggression. This resolution is an important step in ensuring the right to housing for IDPs, but its implementation depends on the effectiveness of local authorities and the availability of funding.

Combining research on the legal status of internally displaced persons and refugees in Ukraine provides a comprehensive picture of the functioning of the overall protection system for persons who have been forcibly displaced as a result of conflict, persecution, or other humanitarian crises. The Law of Ukraine "On Refugees and Persons in Need of Additional or Temporary Protection" provides refugees with a wide range of rights, including the right to work, education, medical care, social protection, etc. In particular, the Basic Law enshrines the general principle that foreigners and stateless persons enjoy the same rights and freedoms as citizens, with some exceptions (political rights). This wording is in line with international standards, in particular the provisions of the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

At the same time, despite the existence of a legislative framework, certain problems exist in practice, such as the length of application procedures, limited access to free legal aid, and insufficient places in temporary shelters for refugees (Almashi, 2023). These factors can hinder the realization of refugees' rights and require further policy improvements in this area.

In addition, theorists emphasize that persons who have been granted subsidiary or temporary protection often face discriminatory practices and have limited access to the labour market, which hinders their social integration (Davydovych, 2013). Therefore, there is a need to improve mechanisms for the realization of these persons' rights, in particular by simplifying procedures for obtaining work permits and ensuring access to free legal aid.

It can be concluded that the existence of regulatory frameworks does not make the realization of refugees' rights in Ukraine less problematic in many respects. According to research (Koval & Strelchenko, 2024), the lack of adequate infrastructure for the integration of persons in need of international protection is one of the most acute problems. In particular, there is a shortage of qualified interpreters in temporary accommodation centers for refugees, which makes it impossible to fully inform foreigners about their rights and registration procedures. This situation is partially regulated by Order No. 228 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine dated March 11, 2013 (Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, 2013), which approved the Procedure for Maintaining the Reference and Information Register of Interpreters. However, the effectiveness of this mechanism in practice is limited by the lack of data updates and public access to relevant information.

Another important problem is the insufficient level of social and cultural integration of refugees (Neofita, 2022), while integration policy should be comprehensive, covering language training, access to housing, and social services. A unique response to this problem should be the approved Regulations on the Centre for Social Integration of Refugees (Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, 2015), which is supposed to provide support to persons in need of additional or temporary protection. However, limited resources and staffing significantly hamper the potential of these centres.

Particular attention should be paid to the material support of refugees in temporary accommodation centres. The requirements approved by Order No. 217 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on March 28, 2016, establish basic living standards (Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, 2016), but do not cover other critically important components of integration, such as access to education and language programs. In this context, there remains an important need for the introduction of state-funded language courses, as frequently mentioned in academic publications (Mishenina & Derkachenko, 2020).

The systemic nature of the problems is largely due to the fragmented nature of national migration policy. The concept of state migration policy, approved by Presidential Decree No. 622/2011 (President of Ukraine, 2011), is rather declarative in nature and does not ensure effective coordination between executive bodies. In this context, it seems logical to propose the creation of a single state body that would combine the functions of legal, social, cultural, and economic support for persons in need of protection and ensure the proper implementation of their rights at all stages of their stay in Ukraine.

It should be borne in mind that the full-scale war waged by the Russian Federation against Ukraine has significantly transformed the internal and external migration context of the state. The resources of state institutions are primarily directed towards responding to the internal displacement of citizens, humanitarian challenges, and ensuring defence capabilities. Under such conditions, the provision of international protection to foreigners, although provided for by current legislation, is de facto relegated to the background.

One of the key barriers to the realization of refugees' rights is the lack of effective access to asylum procedures. Due to the war, the work of the State Migration Service was suspended in many regions and later only partially resumed, leading to numerous cases of unjustified rejection of applications. Persons without the appropriate status are subject to fines, deportation, or detention for "illegal stay" (HIAS & Right to Protection, 2023).

The results of the study show that there are significant discrepancies between the legal status of refugees and internally displaced persons as enshrined in law and the actual implementation of their rights in practice. The analysis shows that, despite the formal compliance of Ukrainian legislation with international standards, such as the UN Guiding Principles on IDPs, there is a significant

discrepancy between legislative regulations and implementation mechanisms on the ground.

One of the key problems is the fragmentation of legal regulation, as evidenced by the legislative acts analysed above. Weak coordination between executive bodies at both national and regional levels reduces the effectiveness of assistance, especially in a context of limited resources. The lack of effective algorithms for supporting IDPs creates conditions for unequal access to services and potential discrimination. One of the important prerequisites for effectively addressing systemic problems related to ensuring the rights of internally displaced persons in Ukraine is the introduction and functioning of a Unified Information Database (UIDB IDPs) (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2016). The system allows for the accumulation, processing, and systematization of large amounts of data necessary to ensure targeted social assistance, control over the actual location of persons, and monitoring of the needs of the relevant population group. It is important that only authorized bodies, in particular the Ministry of Social Policy, the Pension Fund, and local authorities, have access to the database, which guarantees the confidentiality of personal data and at the same time ensures the operational coordination of actions between different institutions. Thus, the creation of a unified information database is an example of the introduction of a digital tool that can help solve a number of administrative and social problems.

However, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights notes in his report that despite the finalization of the software for the Unified Information Database on IDPs by the Ministry of Social Policy and ensuring access to it by entities responsible for the formulation and implementation of state policy on IDPs, the work to bring subordinate legislation into line with the law has not yet been completed, in particular, an electronic IDP office has not been created (Analysis of the implementation of the state policy strategy on IDPs until 2024, 2025). In addition, research by the Kharkiv Institute for Social Research indicates that data on the needs of IDPs is updated infrequently and only when a displaced person reapplies for assistance to a social protection agency or changes their place of registration (Kharkiv Institute for Social Research, 2025).

Therefore, there is a continuing consensus in academic discourse on the need to update the mechanisms for registration, documentary confirmation of status, and access to social guarantees. This is particularly relevant in the context of “forced immobility” proposed by Mikheieva and Kuznetsova (2023), which requires new approaches to the registration and protection of persons who are unable to leave dangerous regions.

It should also be noted that there is no mechanism for holding accountable officials involved in resolving issues related to IDPs, although there was a draft law on Amendments to the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offenses (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2015) that would have introduced administrative liability for such violations. Attention should also be paid to housing problems: in practice, there is

a lack of housing programmes and mechanisms for their implementation, despite the fact that the law provides for the possibility of providing housing for IDPs.

Despite the existence of a certain regulatory framework, the effectiveness of state policy on refugees also needs to be substantially reviewed, regulatory acts improved, and a transition made from fragmented decisions to a comprehensive and systematic approach to integration policy. The lack of systematic updating of regulatory and legal acts, the low priority given to refugee issues in state policy, and limited funding for relevant programs complicate the practical implementation of their rights. This is confirmed by official statistics: according to the report of the State Migration Service of Ukraine for 2024, as of December 31, only 1,301 persons with refugee status were registered, of whom 960 were men and 341 were women (State Migration Service of Ukraine, 2024). This figure is extremely low, given the overall scale of migration processes in the region, which once again demonstrates the limited capacity of the state to accept foreigners in need of protection in a state of martial law.

Thus, the study confirmed that the legal status of IDPs and refugees is a dynamic phenomenon that requires constant monitoring, adaptation, and interagency coordination. Effective implementation of the rights of this population group requires not only legislative reform but also a practical reorientation of institutions toward the needs of displaced persons.

Conclusion

The study confirmed the complexity and multidimensionality of the legal status of refugees and internally displaced persons in the context of the war in Ukraine. Based on an analysis of the legislative framework, statistical data, and scientific literature, it was established that the formal guarantees enshrined in regulatory acts are largely not implemented in practice due to the lack of effective enforcement mechanisms, insufficient resources, and weak interagency coordination. The results obtained indicate the need for further scientific research in the direction of comparative analysis of approaches to the protection of displaced persons in different jurisdictions, the study of the legal situation of persons who were unable to leave dangerous territories, and the development of effective mechanisms for coordination between public policy actors. All these aspects form the basis for updating the institutional and legal framework for the effective realization of the rights of these categories of persons, taking into account the requirements of the times, international obligations, and the needs of millions of citizens in vulnerable situations.

In summary, it should be emphasized that both categories are covered by norms guaranteeing basic social rights: the right to housing, work, education, medical care, and social protection. Both refugees and IDPs have a formal registration procedure, receive special status and relevant documentation, which is the basis for

access to public services. The law provides both groups with targeted assistance, participation in support programs, and access to free legal aid.

Both statuses are highly dependent on the effectiveness of state institutions: the realization of formally enshrined rights is significantly hampered by bureaucratic barriers, lack of resources, and poor coordination between authorities. As in the case of IDPs, the legislation provides only a framework for refugees, while the mechanisms for the practical implementation of rights are often fragmented and situational. In both cases, there is a need to develop a stable integration policy that would not only ensure survival but also promote the full social adaptation of these persons.

Another common feature is the formal compliance of national legislation with international standards, but the actual implementation of rights remains limited.

A critically important aspect is the recognition of the fundamental difference that has a direct impact on state policy in the field of protection of each category. Internally displaced persons are citizens of Ukraine who retain all rights guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of Ukraine, including the right to participate in political life, social insurance, voting rights, etc. Accordingly, the state's obligations towards IDPs are internal in nature and based on civil law. This difference is particularly important in a state of war. Ukraine is currently focused on meeting the basic needs of millions of its own citizens who have been forced to leave their homes as a result of armed aggression.

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