



COPING UNDER FIRE:

Insights from Ukrainian Society's Experience of War and Resilience

Why Read This Booklet

No one truly understands war until they live through it. The human mind, especially when accustomed to peace and believing it to be the natural state of things, instinctively shields itself from disturbing thoughts — convincing itself that war can only happen elsewhere, never here, never with you.

After 1945, the idea of a major war on the European continent seemed like a relic of the past. Even after Russia's initial invasion of Ukraine in 2014, the illegal annexation of Crimea, and the battles for Donbas, many treated these events as a contained, local conflict — a minor disruption, despite the fact that millions of lives were already being upended.

For many Ukrainians, too, war felt distant and unreal for years — until February 24, 2022. That day shattered illusions. Overnight, what seemed unthinkable became daily reality.

This very practical booklet is written for civilians — both as individuals and as civil society and business — for those who have not yet faced war and may still believe it cannot touch them. It is a concise collection of observations, case studies, and lessons learned from Ukrainian civilians who once thought the same way — some of whom were caught completely unprepared, others who prepared but discovered that preparation should have been very different when theory became reality. State and self-government officials, as well as private enterprise staff, may also find it useful to ensure their readiness for what may come — a new century warfare..

As Russia continues to expand its arsenal and refine its experience in modern warfare — and as European intelligence services warn of a potential wider attack on Europe between 2027 and 2030 — our hope is that this blueprint will help you learn from the mistakes and hard-won lessons of others. What may have seemed like paranoia just a few years ago could be the very thing that saves your life in the years to come.

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Chapter 1.

Hard-Lived Wisdom: Civilian Survival and Resilience



Pre-Invasion Preparations: Choosing Your Role

"In peace prepare for war, in war prepare for peace... Plan for what is difficult while it is easy, do what is great while it is small." — Sun Tzu, The Art of War

Overcoming mental firewall

- The hardest step is to break through denial and accept that war **can** happen to you personally. If you cannot make that mental shift, this booklet will be of little use. Do not panic or sink into paranoia — instead, realistically assess developments, imagine the unimaginable, think through your contingency plan and prepare with a clear mind.
- Understand that your government is likely to prioritize maintaining social order and economic stability until the very last moment, which means official warnings may come too late. Do not underestimate the cruelty of the Russian army, which has repeatedly ignored the Geneva Conventions. If war begins, you should assume that international norms and rules of warfare will not be respected by the invaders. But don't be scared, be prepared!

Choosing your role

- The first step is to choose your role: will you stay or will you leave? You cannot know for sure how you will react when the attack actually begins, but having a mental plan will help you act decisively on Day X.
- The plan for someone ready to take up arms or support the army and civilians on the ground will look very different from the plan for someone with children who may prioritize taking them out of the war zone. Families often face the painful reality of having both plans in place, which requires coordination and honest conversations in advance.





For Those Who Choose to Stay and Defend

If you decide to defend your country, your home and your future beyond the land of unfreedom that Russia seeks to impose, you may consider several options — enlist in the armed forces and have more time to be trained professionally, or train individually to later join your community’s territorial defence unit. Even where conscription exists or existed, if you have never had basic military training or it has been a while, now is the time to find a reputable course and obtain it; keeping “in shape” is essential. And do not forget about first aid training — a correctly applied tourniquet can not only save a life but also preserve a limb.

- Why joining the armed forces in advance may be a good idea? If your country lacks a system that allows new contract signees to choose the unit they join in case of invasion, be prepared for chaotic assignments in the first weeks of mobilisation. When systems are disrupted, personnel may be posted wherever the demand is highest — not necessarily where your skills are best used. If you intend to serve in a specific role, document your qualifications, carry proof of training, and notify relevant local officials in advance so they can prioritize appropriate placement when possible.
- If you already have basic military training, pursue courses in drone and robotics engineering, operation of unmanned air and ground systems, and contemporary field tactics will significantly increase your effectiveness. Look into OSINT. Military learning is continuous: refresh and update your skills regularly to reflect how warfare has evolved since 2023.

Only in 2025, on the twelfth year of the war, did Ukraine introduce mandatory basic military training for higher-education students—marking a significant shift in national mobilization and resilience. The program combines classroom instruction in defence fundamentals with practical field exercises, aiming to craft a baseline of survival skills among young adults and bridge the gap between civilian life and wartime readiness. By institutionalizing training in universities, Ukraine moves from ad-hoc volunteer drills to a structured model designed to embed defensive capacity in the next generation. The course does not lead to automatic enrollment into the armed forces.

- Ensure you have minimal protection in the first hours of chaos. Plan for delays: in a full-scale invasion, armour and ammunition may not reach you on time, especially if you're near the border. Make sure your community has the necessary supplies pre-positioned for defenders; know exactly whom to contact, and confirm the responsible person will remain in place and can open the warehouse. Understand that such facilities are prime targets and may be betrayed—Russia is actively recruiting local agents, and pro-Russian residents may already be present. Be vigilant. Ideally, acquire your own body armour, helmet, individual medical kit, and keep a packed go-bag.



Natalia cannot escape the thought that her brother might have survived if only he had been given body armor in time: “My brother died on the third day of the war, at the Irpin-Hostomel crossroads, the two most important cities for him. He was in the Irpen territorial defense unit. A bullet in the heart took him from us. Their unit had not received its body armor in time. Thus, his war has ended... On the 51st day of the war we were able to bury him in Motyzhyn. It's good that we got his body in one piece. In the morgues many of the dead remain unrecognized, with only a few body parts.”

From the collection [“100+ Stories of Women and Girls from Russia's War against Ukraine”](#)

- You could, of course, choose to rely on the standard-issue equipment you receive after basic training and skip this section entirely. However, life is uncertain, and war is profoundly unpredictable. No one can know whether you will face the enemy before or after your formal training is complete, which supply depots will be destroyed in the opening salvos, or if the gear you are ultimately issued will be suited for the reality of the modern battlefield. As warfare transitions to a new generation of remote conflict dominated by drones and robotic systems, it is almost certain that standard-issue gear will be inadequate. Therefore, if you have the means, preparing your own equipment is a critical investment in your survival and effectiveness.
- The process begins not with a weapon, but with a survivability kit. Once you have secured your ability to endure in a war of drones, only then can you effectively fight. The foundational priority is to neutralize the primary threat on the modern battlefield: small, agile drones. Without this capability, you are not a soldier; you are a target.
- The cornerstone of this anti-drone survival kit is surprisingly low-tech: entrenching tools. It may seem strange, but if you are not in the urban setting, a well-dug foxhole currently saves more lives from drone attacks than reinforced concrete bunkers. A convenient, portable shovel is your most important piece of equipment. This should be supplemented with supporting tools — a pickaxe, saws for wood and metal, and fastening materials like ropes, screws, and staples—to fortify any position. To complete this earth-moving capability, "big-bag" sacks are invaluable for rapidly creating soil-filled barriers.

- A dugout, however, is a death trap without overhead protection. This is where anti-drone nets become essential. These are not for camouflage but are strong, non-elastic nylon nets (fishing nets are a suitable alternative) with a mesh size of approximately 5–10 cm. Rigged over a position using cables, stakes, and wire, they create a physical barrier that can stop or detonate small FPV drones before they reach their target. Adding "diffusers" made of ropes or ribbons can further entangle propellers. While highly effective against small drones, it is crucial to understand these nets offer no protection from larger threats like guided bombs or loitering munitions.
- To survive, you must not only build defenses but also become invisible. Enemy forces such as Russian strike drone crews, as well as infantry assault groups, favor working at night using thermal imagers. Your defense against this is a multi-layered approach to thermal concealment. This includes a thermal-optical camouflage blanket or suit, along with insulating covers for your helmet and backpack to mask their distinct shapes. Even the ground you sit or lie on can betray your position, making a thermal mat essential for masking your heat signature. Mastering the use of this gear is critical, as careless wear will not deceive an experienced enemy pilot. Rounding out your survival kit is a passive RF detector, a compact device that provides early warning by detecting the radio command and telemetry signals of approaching drones.
- Once these foundational survival needs are met, you can add equipment that enhances your tactical effectiveness. In the technology-saturated environment, this starts with power and connectivity. Half, if not all, of your critical gear will require constant charging where the power grid may be down for extended periods. Every individual should carry a high-capacity power bank (20,000–30,000 mAh), while a group is better to get a portable autonomous charging station (such as an EcoFlow DELTA (Max/Pro) or similar) complete with extension cords and organizers. For communications, a portable, encrypted digital radio is a baseline, but the ultimate solution for jam-proof connectivity is a personal (or a small-group) satellite terminal like Starlink.
- This electronic gear supports your ability to observe and engage the enemy.

Observation Tools: a thermal imager is essential for spotting infiltrating infantry at night. A laser rangefinder provides accuracy, but its use requires strict discipline to avoid revealing your position.

Light Discipline: all light sources must be managed. Use a red or amber filter on your flashlight and ensure it has a shield to prevent side glow. Chemical light sticks offer a silent, passive alternative for illumination.

Counter-mine awareness: Russian forces make extensive use of mines, and drone technology allows them to deploy them anywhere, including deep in rear areas. Small plastic "petal" mines are a particular danger, as they are invisible to metal detectors. While you may consider getting a specialized multi-sensor mine detector, it is more practical for every soldier to have basic training in recognizing the signs of mines and booby traps, carrying simple probes and marking materials to indicate suspected threats.

- Finally, there are the tiers of personal protection and last-resort weaponry. While basic physical armor is non-negotiable — a helmet with active hearing protection, ballistic plates and glasses, and joint protection — the drone threat requires specific countermeasures. Depending on your country's regulations, this has proven to be the most effective last-resort weapon against FPV drones, though it requires significant practice to hit moving targets. Net guns, if you can find them, offer a non-firearm alternative but require just as much training.
- Considering all this, the single most important recommendation is this: if you feel that war may be imminent and know you will defend your country but lack a military specialty, do not wait for a formal declaration of war. Go now and train to become a drone operator or a specialist in a related support field. In the terrifying "squid game" that modern warfare has become, this ensures you are one of the hunters, not the hunted. Your options for participation will be far more effective, both in your contribution to the defense and for your own survival.
- And even if you are not to go for a UAV operator pro, anyway, if you can afford it, buy a commercial quadcopter drone, such as a DJI Mavic 4 or Matrice 4. "T" version (with a night vision) is ideal. Learn to fly it, master its controls, and become intimately familiar with its capabilities. In a war scenario, this single piece of equipment can transform your role. With a firmware modification — which, hopefully, specialists in your unit can provide, or you can get done with a quick trip to Ukraine and back — your commercial drone becomes a military asset. At best, you instantly become a UAV reconnaissance operator. At a minimum, you become the eyes in the sky for your own squad, capable of providing critical situational awareness that can mean the difference between life and death. Be aware, however, that this is not without risk. Russian EW capabilities for detecting a drone's homepoint are becoming perfected; the moment you take off, you can expect incoming fire. You must learn how to operate with extreme caution. Nevertheless, in modern warfare, the ability to see the battlefield from above is an advantage that cannot be overstated.
- Stay alert and verify information. The security environment includes hybrid threats, attempts at disinformation, and efforts to recruit or exploit collaborators. Confirm sources, report suspicious activity to trusted authorities, and prioritise collective, lawful action to protect your community.
- Prepare yourself and your family for the worst-case scenario. This may include making a will, legally formalizing your marriage (depending on the civil partnership legislation) so your loved one has the official right to make decisions about medical care or funeral arrangements, and ensuring they can speak on your behalf if you are captured. If your kids are too young to remember you, make a series of videos talking to them about important things in life. You may spend years in captivity but your children will have a chance to know you better.
- Ensure in advance your family also has a plan and means of its execution. Above all, ensuring your loved ones are safe provides peace of mind for those who stay to protect Homeland — whether they are serving on the frontlines or contributing in other ways (as medics, workers of essential enterprises like railroads, energy plants, weapons production plants, food producers and distributors, local authorities etc.).

- You can start saving lives and defending your country right now. Generals often prepare for the previous war — that’s why fresh, field-tested ideas matter. Promote new solutions to the challenges of twenty-first-century warfare at the level of your state or NATO. Be bold even when others doubt you, but make sure your proposals rest on deep knowledge and first-hand experience.

Mariia Berlinska, a Ukrainian volunteer and aerial reconnaissance specialist, became one of the earliest pioneers of drone warfare in Ukraine. Having served on the Donbas front in 2014–2015, she quickly grasped the tactical promise of unmanned systems for situational awareness and survivability. When official structures remained sceptical, she mobilised civil society to fill the gap, founding the Aerial Reconnaissance School in 2015 — a free training centre that taught hundreds of volunteers the principles of drone piloting, mapping, and real-time intelligence gathering. Her initiative laid the foundation for what would later become the standard model of civilian-driven defence innovation: combining open-source technologies, improvised design, and adaptive training to meet urgent battlefield needs.

As the full-scale invasion began in 2022, Berlinska transformed her early reconnaissance movement into a national campaign for technological militarisation. She and her network of engineers, trainers, and veterans championed the military adoption of FPV (First-Person View) drones — initially dismissed as “kitchen-made” devices — for both reconnaissance and precision strikes. Their workshops and field manuals established the first tactical doctrines for FPV operations long before formal integration by the Armed Forces. Berlinska’s “drone crusade” demonstrated how grassroots innovation could outpace institutional inertia: volunteers not only designed functional strike platforms but also trained operators, developed combat tactics, and mainstreamed drones as indispensable tools of asymmetric warfare. Her story epitomises how Ukraine’s civil society became an engine of tactical and technological resilience in modern war.



For Those Who Choose to Stay and Support

Preparations raising the odds of personal survival

- Supporting the army and ensuring the continued functioning of the country in the first days, weeks, and months of war is just as vital as fighting on the frontlines. If you choose to stay and contribute in this way, you must also be properly prepared. Of course, the exact tasks will depend on your role and your location, but there are some universal basics that everyone should take into account.
- First, understand that not being on the frontline does **not** make you any less of a target. Local officials and law-enforcement personnel who do not intend to collaborate, volunteers, civic activists, cultural figures, teachers of the local language or directors of educational and cultural institutions, and anyone visibly involved in nation-building or democratic life are at elevated risk. Many such people may be specifically identified in advance and listed for elimination. The enemy may already have your address and in case of an occupation you will almost certainly be detained, tortured, or killed.

While it may sound extreme for the modern age, Russian forces have repeatedly shown little regard for international humanitarian law and civilian protections. While warfare became highly technological, the attitude to civilians remains Medieval. If you live near a border, your risk is significantly higher.

- Like those who take up arms, you should complete basic military training, first-aid courses, and familiarise yourself with the realities of modern warfare. Training not only builds practical skills, it also reduces anxiety and increases confidence under stress.



I had taken a medical course. I took another course — emergency first aid — at “Hospitallers”. They provided us with truly deep knowledge, but you have to have the right aptitude to absorb it. [The Hospitallers are a Ukrainian volunteer medical battalion, with has been providing medical help to Ukrainian soldiers on battlefields and wounded civilians since the beginning of the Russian invasion in Ukraine (2014).] ”

From the collection [“100+ Stories of Women and Girls from Russia’s War against Ukraine”](#)

- ❑ Keep a ready bug-out bag. Don't underestimate this: when war begins you may literally have minutes to leave your home for work/activity, a shelter, or evacuation. Pack your bag so you can grab it and go at a moment's notice.
- ❑ Prepare for multiple outcomes — but prioritise portability. You cannot know if your area will be occupied or only shelled, so some precautions (like storing 72 hours of food at home) may turn out to be useless if you must flee or your home is destroyed. That said, do not skip those preparations. Many guidelines assume help arrives within 72 hours; in reality a town can be cut off for months, when you will have to do things you never thought about.
- ❑ Ensure you have some basic tools, like an axe, a pickaxe, a spade, and a hammer. They will come in handy from cooking outside to fixing up your flat after an attack.



There were forty of us, including twelve retirees, staying in a basement. The youngest woman was 63, the oldest 85...We gathered all the food we had to share with each other. We used an open fire to cook [ed. — outside], piled up fragments of damaged doors and wooden window frames to burn. From the beginning of the occupation everything — water, electricity, gas, heating — was cut. One option was to melt snow collected from roofs and car hoods. Another — to collect the rainwater. [ed.- Sometimes people even used technical water from the heating systems].

We considered ourselves truly lucky to wake up while staying in this basement. We slept in our clothes. It was a very cold spring — sometimes at night it reached 8 degrees below zero (17.6 Fahrenheit). Our basement was cold and humid; we just wore everything we had and covered ourselves with blankets. That's how we lived: faces covered in soot, clothes smelling of smoke, not a single chance to wash, uninterrupted shellfire and explosions.

From the collection [“100+ Stories of Women and Girls from Russia's War against Ukraine”](#)



- The first days are usually the peak of bombardment, so you need to know in advance the location of the nearest bomb shelter. Check it in person: how many people it holds, whether it is properly reinforced and renovated, whether it has two exits and functioning ventilation, and whether it is equipped with benches or beds, water, a generator, heating, and dry food. Well-equipped shelters are often organised by enterprises for their staff or small community initiatives rather than provided for the whole public; if possible, coordinate with your employer or neighbours so a shared shelter can be prepared and maintained.

Prepare your own personal shelter kit for hours or an overnight stay: a compact sleeping bag or emergency blanket, water and hot-drink supplies (tea), food/snacks, a powerbank, a flashlight with spare batteries, basic toiletries, and a first-aid kit.

Stress, shock, and shelling can provoke acute cardiac events; people have died from heart attacks during bombardments, and many heart conditions worsen under the strain of war. Make sure your go-bag and household emergency supplies include any prescribed cardiac medicines you need (e.g., nitrates, beta-blockers, anticoagulants, antihypertensives — write the generic names) and a supply for at least 48–72 hours (two days minimum; longer if you can). Also include over-the-counter calming/sedative medications available legally in your country for short-term use to help manage severe anxiety during acute incidents. Keep medicines in their original packaging, list generic names and dosages on a card, and carry copies of prescriptions and contact details for your doctor.

Bring something to calm or occupy yourself — a book, a notepad, or even a musical instrument (but only if you are a very good musician); music often helps people process shock and there are plenty of videos of concerts or singing in the shelter. Pack allergy medication (antihistamines), if you are allergic to fur, because people will bring pets.

If you have children and have no intention to evacuate, prepare a separate child kit with diapers/formula (if needed), snacks, comfort items, quiet activities, — children are especially sensitive and need distraction and reassurance. Also plan for pets (food, leash, carrier) if you expect to shelter with animals. Finally, rehearse routes to the shelter and identify at least one backup shelter so you can move quickly and safely when the alarm sounds. Overall, practice all the most essential routes both by car and on foot as navigation may not work during invasion. Most probably you will have no Internet or even network at all.

- Prepare in advance a written list of contact numbers of your dearest, important people, facilities for each family member and agree on meeting points. However, better use nicknames in case the contact list gets in the wrong hands.
- Prepare for the possibility that, in the event of occupation, formal financial systems may be inaccessible and possessions — including savings — may be confiscated. Diversify how and where you hold value (investments, alternative accounts, trusted custodians). Ensure immediate access to cash by keeping an emergency reserve (small denominations, local currency plus some foreign currency), and hidden “old good” stashes (cash wrapped in waterproof plastic, sealed in a glass jar, and buried in a reliable spot/s). Be aware of the risks — loss, theft, damage — and prioritise redundancy and discretion over any single “perfect” method when the banking system is disrupted or comes under hybrid attack.

- Your home may contain items of priceless emotional value — old family photographs, family history documents, religious items, or objects passed down through generations. Where possible, send these cherished items in advance to trusted relatives or friends in countries that are less likely to be targeted, or rent a safe-deposit box abroad. If sending items overseas, use registered, insured shipping with tracking; keep receipts and take high-quality photos of everything before you send it. When you can't move originals, digitize photographs and documents (high-resolution scans) and store encrypted copies in more than one secure cloud account and on at least one physical medium (USB or external drive) kept with a trusted person. Check export rules for cultural heritage items before moving them, and prioritise moving the most meaningful items first.

"My grandmother's apartment is in the centre of occupied Donetsk. What I miss most are two family photo albums and my grandfather's stamp collection, now inaccessible to us."

Anna

- Keep your vehicle's tank full at all times amid possible invasion — top up whenever you pass a petrol station. In addition, carry an approved spare fuel container (jerrycan) filled for emergency use (10–20 L, depending on your vehicle and legal limits).
- Prioritise connectivity. Reliable communications are vital, especially if you intend to ensure the state/community running during the war. Commercial satellite internet (e.g., Starlink) is one option to maintain access to news, maps, and messaging if terrestrial networks fail — investigate availability, local resellers, and charging/antenna requirements in advance. Old good walkie-talkies may also be very useful if not intercepted.
- Make an evacuation plan — and several fallbacks. Agree in advance with family members, neighbours, friends and colleagues on details. Test one primary route and then identify at least two alternate routes and rendezvous points in case the main route is blocked or your car is damaged.
- Know alternative transport options. Learn where the nearest train stations are, how they intend to operate during a crisis, and whether local authorities or volunteer groups have published evacuation corridors or schedules. Keep copies (paper + digital) of timetables, station addresses and contact points. Expect chaos anyway.
- Make your medical check up in advance, go to a dentist, as there might be neither time nor a possibility to concentrate on your health in the upcoming months.
- Tape your windows with strong duct tape or cover them with a protective window film. This will not protect the glass in case of explosion but it will reduce the number of flying glass shards if a window is hit.
- Rural precautions. If you live in a village, prepare small stashes of essentials (water, food, basic medicines, warm clothing) in robust, waterproof containers at locations that are safe and unlikely to be targeted, mined or overtaken by the enemy with high probability (like schools, administrations, best houses in the village).

- Personal bunkers may sound like Cold War advice, but they are coming back into fashion for a reason. If you have your own land—especially further from the border—and the financial means, building a private bunker can become a real lifesaver if your country faces heavy shelling or mass drone attacks. Civilians remain a legitimate target for Russia, which deliberately uses terror tactics to break civilian morale. That is why a properly designed shelter is not a luxury, but a necessity.

However, it is essential to understand that not every underground room qualifies as a bunker. A cellar or a simple basement can become a trap: people have died under rubble because there was no proper ventilation or emergency exit. A true monolithic shelter must be engineered to withstand serious loads and provide life support even if the entrance is blocked.

A reliable design places the shelter at a depth of about six meters. The ceiling should consist of a first reinforced concrete slab around 700 mm thick, a layer of soil above it, and then a second slab of about 600 mm. Walls must be at least 600 mm thick. There should be two independent exits leading in different directions, connected by corridors at the same depth. Six heavy steel doors—each weighing roughly two tons—ensure secure compartmentalization. This is what a proper shelter looks like; anything less is just a cellar and cannot guarantee survival in case of direct hits.



However, this entire concept of a static, impregnable fortress feels like a relic of a bygone era, a 20th-century solution for a 21st-century problem.

Consider the evolving nature of threats, especially for regions not on the immediate front lines. The primary risk isn't necessarily a full-scale barrage of ballistic missiles that would necessitate such extreme fortifications. The more insidious and probable danger comes from asymmetric warfare — specifically, the proliferation of both sophisticated, long-range and small FPV drone swarms deployed via sabotage means. These can be launched from great distances, potentially smuggled within commercial cargo, and operated remotely to execute precision strikes.

Against such a threat, a multi-ton steel door is rendered obsolete. A drone doesn't need to breach the main entrance; it can target a critical, less-protected element like a ventilation shaft, a power conduit, or a communications array, effectively neutralizing the shelter without a direct frontal assault. Therefore, a truly modern approach shouldn't be about retreating into a medieval castle mentality. Instead, the focus should shift to creating a "smart grid" of defense, investing in multi-modal sensor networks, early-warning systems that use AI to detect anomalies in the surrounding environment, and automated interception capabilities.

Even if full upgrades are realistically feasible only for the technically skilled and wealthy, everyone should check their shelter for vulnerabilities to new warfare threats.

Preparations raising the odds of your efficient operation under fire

If you stay, you already know how important your role is for the functioning of your community/state: preserving institutions, networks, and everyday social mechanisms is essential to keep resistance going. It is impossible to cover every role's specifics here, so the guidance that follows focuses on universal, high-impact measures that help you continue to perform your function during the initial shock and in the weeks that follow.

- ☐ Have clear, rehearsed protocols or make your employer develop them. Don't let protocols be formal and exist only on paper.
- ☐ Have Plan B and C ready for relocation/evacuation for your organisation. If you are responsible for an office, business, or critical service, assess whether you can evacuate operations in advance further from the border and rent housing for personnel ahead of time within the country if occupation of your current location becomes likely. Treat your team as family — protecting them and their loved ones is essential not only for operational continuity but also as a concrete demonstration of the values that set you apart from an enemy that devalues human life.
- ☐ Cross-train and delegate. At least one other person should be able to perform each key duty and know where to find essential tools, passwords, and documents.
- ☐ Backup communications. Ensure every team member has at least two reliable ways to receive and send information (e.g., mobile phone + powerbank, VHF/PMR radio, battery/solar-powered radio, or satellite option) and keep a paper list of critical contacts.

- Protect critical records. Store essential documents and operational data in waterproof/fireproof containers to stash or destroy sensitive data that may put human lives at risk or provide the enemy with valuable information. Maintain encrypted cloud backups accessible to trusted people.
- Stock essential operational materials. Ensure your team has the consumables and equipment required to perform core tasks for several weeks — whether that means production inputs, humanitarian supplies, medical kits, or repairs of infrastructure.
- Build supply and logistics networks now. Establish reliable contacts with suppliers, producers, fuel providers, and logistics partners. Early formation of volunteer networks and mutual-aid agreements greatly increases resilience. And again, use nicknames to mark the contacts to avoid exposing these people if your device or a note gets into enemy's possession.
- If you are planning to assist with humanitarian aid and army supply, purchase or create your own software to systematize processes. This will make your life much easier in the times of shock.

1. Взяти тривожну валіжку.
2. Вимкнути світло, газ,
3. Вивести продукти, замешити запаси ключі, сусідям.
4. Вимкнути світло.
5. Забрати батьків біля скверу.

номери телефонів
родичів і друзів

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For Those Who Choose to Leave

If you decide to prioritise the safety of your children or other dependents — especially those with medical conditions or special needs — your preparations must be meticulous. Vague plans will fail when seconds matter; the more complex the needs, the more exact your checklist must be.



“On March 8th we woke up early to dress up, feed the children and try to reach the gathering point in hope to find transportation. It is pretty difficult with two kids with special needs. Eventually we were late for about 5 minutes. All the vehicles had left. We came back home full of despair. That same day a huge occupants’ convoy passed by our village.”

From the collection [“100+ Stories of Women and Girls from Russia’s War against Ukraine”](#)

- ❑ The most rational choice is to leave early, when it is clear that the risks are extremely high. If, in the best case, the invasion doesn’t happen, you’ll simply have taken a short vacation. If it does, you’ll be grateful to yourself—and to the authors of this manual. And don’t plan actual vacations during high-risk periods—you might never get the chance to return home.
- ❑ Keep an eye on the embassies—especially the U.S. Embassy. If they start evacuating staff, it’s a clear signal that an invasion is imminent and you have just a couple of days.
- ❑ If you decide to stay until the invasion, prepare several evacuation routes. Mark them on a paper map, since the Internet may go down and your phone could die, get lost, or break—even if you’ve downloaded maps in advance. Think strategically, or better yet, consult military experts about possible invasion scenarios to understand how the situation might unfold on the ground. Identify friends or acquaintances who live along your evacuation routes. If communication remains possible—or if you have Starlink or another satellite connection—they can guide you during evacuation providing the information about the situation on the ground, which could save your life if occupation happens quickly. In other words, they may warn you about the moves of the enemy in real time.

The most probable scenario of an attack on Europe is a sustained hybrid campaign combining long-range missile and drone strikes, significant cyberattacks, targeted sabotage (including undersea cables and energy/logistics nodes), and episodic maritime and airspace incursions—designed to degrade infrastructure, disrupt logistics and communications, and politically intimidate Western publics and governments.

Key characteristics and intent: concentrated UAS/missile salvos to create shock and infrastructure outages; coordinated cyber operations against government and critical-service networks; covert sabotage and “shadow-fleet” activity targeting undersea cables, pipelines, and ports; and probing incursions by aircraft, naval units, or submarines to test responses and raise political costs—all aimed at eroding decision-making, supply chains, and public confidence rather than seeking immediate large-scale territorial conquest.

- Most importantly, avoid running into enemy forces on the road. They will shoot civilians with no second thoughts. Do not rely on signs marking your car as carrying civilians, children, humanitarian or medical aid—those will not stop the enemy from shooting.



“We fled on March 9 when we found out about the first corridor from Bucha. It had almost been blocked by the Russian invaders: they didn’t let buses pass or cease the shellfire. People organized everything by themselves and formed a massive flow with hundreds of cars. Now we understood how lucky we were as we saw many shot-up civilian vehicles on the roads, with ambulances and bodies lying along the curb.”

“I was in a car with mom, Arina stayed with dad...We were driving on a road, not sure what it’s called...then someone started shooting at us, mom screamed... Then we stopped, I called for mom, but she was just sitting and there was blood. I took her phone to call for an ambulance, but it was blocked with a password. I asked mom to unblock it, she was very pale but she could just slightly move her finger [she imitated some weak movements with her fingers – ed.]. I couldn’t call anyone and went along the road to look for help. There were tanks, so I hid...I spent three-four hours walking here and there and saw dad’s car. When I looked at him, his eyes looked like that [rolled her eyes up – ed.]. Arina was there – I told her “Let’s hide, ruscists are everywhere in their tanks.” She said: “My leg is hit, right there [pointed at her thigh above the knee – ed.]. I saw a scary wound.”

From the collection [“100+ Stories of Women and Girls from Russia’s War against Ukraine”](#)

- Check your car in advance and fix anything you’ve been postponing. Make sure you have a spare tire, all necessary tools, and a full tank—plus an extra canister of fuel.

- Be aware that during heavy air attacks, bridges may be destroyed by the enemy or blown up by your own forces to slow enemy advances. If a bridge crossing is on your route, have alternatives ready. Also, your car could be hit before you even reach it, so if possible, keep it in underground parking.
- Also remember that if you wait until the invasion begins, you won't be able to take many of the belongings you need, even wheelchairs or heavy medical equipment. There will likely be people asking you to evacuate them—or at least take their children—so be prepared for difficult choices. If you care for people with limited mobility or medical conditions requiring daily assistance, evacuate them in advance using appropriate transport. Otherwise, the evacuation could become unbearable suffering for them. Or even worse, lack of transportation after the invasion may become their death sentence.



“My story has nothing about the bloody massacres or torture that many of the women in my adopted homeland have faced in the occupied territories – I just want to convey what an ordinary person experiences during a war in a state of total helplessness, unable to move... I'd covered a distance of more than 2,500 km, lying in the trunk of a car, and when I saw an orthopedic bed being rolled up to our car by medical staff at the hospital, I realized: nothing is impossible.”

“On February 25 we realized it was impossible to move people in wheelchairs through the forest... We were hiding in the bathroom – well, someone in a wheelchair can't hide anywhere else. Even if we could get to the basement, it may be fatal for someone with a spinal injury to stay in the cold and damp; the kidneys react immediately and you can literally lie down and die without specialized medical treatment, which of course wasn't available under occupation.”

“In our minivan there were 8 adults, 4 children and a dog kept in a trunk. We had to leave wheelchairs and my younger son's pram, as those did not fit in.”

From the collection [“100+ Stories of Women and Girls from Russia's War against Ukraine”](#)



- It's also possible that, despite all preparations, you won't be able to evacuate by car. Make sure you know the railway evacuation plan, local authorities or volunteer groups' procedures, and designated meeting points. Coordinate with friends and set up safety nets for each other for different development of events.
- Keep in mind that trains will likely be shelled too. Because of the massive crowds, you'll have to leave almost all your belongings behind on a platform—bring only one backpack with essentials. Trains will be packed to the limit, and you might have to stand the entire way to safety. Obviously, this option is not suitable for people who need special transport arrangements.
- If you're pregnant, it's best to leave early. Giving birth in a basement of a hospital under the shelling or stairwell of your home, assisted only by neighbors with no medical training, is not an experience you want to risk, especially if you have complications or need a C-section.



"According to a protocol, with every alert all mothers had to go downstairs to the basement with their newborns. Even those with C-section had to walk – delivery nurses literally carried non ambulant patients from ICUs. Due to hostilities initiated by Russia, I had to leave my native city with a 7-day-old baby...No forgetting and no forgiving!"

"It so happened that a woman who was 9 months' pregnant had remained in our house. And so it happened that her child decided to be born on the 12th day of the war, when there was no more light, no water, no gas, no obstetricians in Bucha... the "obstetric express team" in our building (a therapist, a designer and a housewife) under the guidance of Iryna [a therapist] managed it perfectly and welcomed little Alice to this world. She was born in the darkness and cold of a house without power, but everything went well. A few days later, the mother and child were evacuated."

From the collection ["100+ Stories of Women and Girls from Russia's War against Ukraine"](#)





- ❑ Leaving on time may also help you avoid ending up in a school gym or other crisis-response-type place and save you a lot of stress. However, it might also make you ineligible for certain assistance programs in other countries if they require proof that you left after the invasion began. Stay alert and follow discussions on relevant European policies. You might also consider relocating further from the eastern border—unless your country’s geography risks being cut off from the rest of Europe by land, as could happen through the Suwałki Corridor.
- ❑ Overall, don’t fall into either paranoia or denial—both can be deadly. Stay calm, think clearly, and keep several realistic plans ready while remaining alert and vigilant.

Important for all

Enemy planning begins before the fight—don’t let a carefree attitude give them the edge.

- ❑ Do routine visual checks of rooftops, stairwells, fences, entrances and transformer areas. Look for new, out-of-place objects, fresh marks, adhesive residue, recently added wiring, or small boxes. Photograph from a distance and record time/location. Do not touch anything.
- ❑ Keep multi-storied building access locked and controlled where possible. Make sure maintenance doors, attic hatches, cellars and roof access are secured and known to a small set of trusted people. Log who has keys.



- Improve passive deterrence: increase exterior lighting, trim vegetation that hides sightlines, and remove piles of debris or objects that could conceal devices. These are low-skill actions that make covert placement harder.

In the early stages of Russia's invasion, Ukrainian authorities and volunteers launched several official bots to collect reports about enemy activity, suspicious markings—symbols or reflective signs left on roads, rooftops, or near key facilities by Russian saboteurs to guide missile and air strikes, mainly on civilian infrastructure. Civilians were urged to immediately report such markings through official bots operated by the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), the Ministry of Internal Affairs, or verified regional channels. Ukrainians were also instructed to paint over, cover with dirt, or destroy these marks once documented. However, the spread of fake or hostile bots imitating official ones became a major security concern, as they were used to collect coordinates and personal data. Authorities warned citizens to rely only on bots verified through official ministry websites or social media accounts and to report suspicious ones for immediate blocking.

Surviving the Shock: Building Resilience and Self-Organization

"War is abstract until it is personal. For some, "only five civilians dead" is just a number, but for others it means the loss of an entire universe," — noted sharply by a Ukrainian researcher Asya Kudlenko.



For Those Who Choose to Stay and Defend

- If you choose to stay and defend, several scenarios can unfold in the first hours.
 - ▶ It is crucial to understand that once the invasion begins, every minute and hour will be dictated by the harsh logic of unfolding events. This does not imply a linear or predictable sequence of actions; on the contrary, the logic of war imposes waves of chaos on every individual, sweeping you up in a vortex. Whether you prepared or not, it is too late to reconsider. You must keep a cool head, focus on the immediate next step, and choose that step based on what is most critical.



- ▶ If you are already enrolled in a territorial self-defence unit or have a mobilization order as a reservist, you may be warned about the invasion and ordered to arrive at a gathering point fully equipped hours in advance. Make sure your family remembers all the details of your plan and has the means to implement it. If your decision to defend is spontaneous, you might consider going to the nearest territorial defence unit or military registration office to register.
 - ▶ However, no matter how sincere your motivations are to defend, temper them with cold, ruthless logic. Soberly assess whether you should rush to the nearest recruitment point or if you would take some time to be useful in a support role for those around you and for the defenders. Modern warfare is high-tech warfare. Anyone who does not know their precise role and how to perform it risks becoming mere cannon fodder for drones and precision munitions. This does not mean you should not go and defend — only that you must approach it thoughtfully and correctly, avoiding becoming a defenseless victim in a kill zone, which is a very high probability in the chaos of the war's beginning.
 - ▶ This calculation becomes even more critical if you are in a frontline or border zone. Your first thought must not be for yourself, but for your family. Do not rush headlong to a mobilization point or recruitment office. You can only go once you know your family is in complete safety. There is nothing more terrifying than a service member's family being left behind in territory occupied by Russian forces.
 - ▶ Once you have ensured your family's safety and have joined a unit, expect that local coordinators may distribute weapons and munitions quickly and assign roles on the spot. Even if you don't receive a weapon immediately, there will be tasks for you at strategically important places. If you have no military experience or preliminary training, find those who do and stay under their leadership. The most useful civilian actions in the early hours include helping to protect airports, energy infrastructure, other critical facilities, and official government buildings.
 - ▶ From the moment you arrive at that gathering point, do not think that you are not yet a combatant simply because you haven't been issued a weapon or haven't reached your camp. Once you are in, you are a legitimate military target and must behave accordingly — even if you are still in civilian clothes holding a freshly issued mobilization order. In this environment, calm and discipline are more important than "heroism". Survival is granted by concealment and dispersion, early warning systems, GSM and radio silence.
- While deeper areas may suffer heavy drone and missile strikes, regions near the border are likely to face both these attacks and direct assaults by enemy troops with higher numbers of losses. Expect chaos and a lack of coordination through official channels. In a chaotic combat zone, you may end up in a situation where decisions rest solely on you and your team. Move in small, steady steps. Listen to your experienced comrades. Simple rules and clear roles are better than grand plans that are never executed. Decisions should be made as close to the action as possible, favoring local initiative with concise reports sent up the chain of command. Own that responsibility — your lives will depend on your ability to do so.

- While Molotov cocktails were a vital tool against tank columns in 2022, modern fighting in the first hours rewards drone and counter-drone expertise most; unmanned systems operators, battle management systems developers, sigint, elint, electronic warfare and mining/demining specialists, snipers being turned into perfect drone sharpshooters, AI engineers and other former civilians with practical skills that quickly become crucial.
- Remember that in case of a full-scale invasion you can't rely only on official military forces—especially if your country has a small contingent and NATO's Article 5 may not be fully enforced. In the first hours, much depends on what individuals and local groups do. Not many are born for war, but many can rise to become heroes.
- Be prepared to witness things that will stay with you forever. This is not a movie: it will be far harsher and more brutal than you expect.

These recommendations can be crystallized into a more time-bound 72-hour memo, tuned specifically for self-organized territorial defence (in the regular army unit, you will have your order leading few-to-no space for the amateur activity) .

Phase 1: First 6 hours

• Stabilize

Your immediate goal is to establish control over your personal situation. The first priority is your family and home front; confirm their safety, ensure they have a 72-hour supply of water, food, and medicine. Make sure they are not to stay in the near-frontline area, or have a clear plan to leave it in safe mode. Assign responsibility for the elderly and children.

Next, practice immediate digital hygiene. Turn off geolocation on all devices, delete sensitive chats and photos with geotags, and install offline maps. Lock your phone with a passcode (disable biometrics).

Once your personal affairs are in order, focus on joining your military unit. If this is self-organized territorial defence, it may be you are a person to create a cohesive tactical group. 4–8 people is optimal. Make a list of everyone's skills and equipment and designate the key roles immediately: deputy leader, medic, radioman, and engineer.

The group's first actions must prioritize survival.

Disperse and conceal. Do not cluster together. Maintain 5–10 meters between individuals and 50–100 meters between vehicles. Use natural cover like trees and urban settings.

Establish overhead cover. The primary threat is from above. Immediately erect two-layer anti-drone nets over your assembly point, leaving some space between the layers.

Secure communications. Your primary should be an encrypted digital radio, but have backups ranging from a satellite messenger. Keep transmissions short and use minimal power.

Set up observation. Establish 2-3 observation posts with good fields of view and cover. Finally, prepare for the consequences of an attack by having fire extinguishers, sand, and wire cutters ready. After an impact, resist the urge to rush to the site, as the risk of a follow-up strike is extremely high.

In the first hours of the full-scale invasion, before any centralized command could be fully enacted, Ukrainian civil society became an organic line of defense. Across the country, civilians, often with hunting rifles or whatever arms they could find, joined nascent Territorial Defense units to establish impromptu checkpoints. Within hours, the approaches to cities and villages were fortified with whatever materials were at hand: sandbags, car tires, concrete blocks, and even hastily welded anti-tank “hedgehogs.” One witness evacuating from Kyiv on the third day counted 15–20 such checkpoints along a single route, each unique in its construction but unified by a singular, defiant purpose: to halt the enemy’s advance. This decentralized, nationwide effort demonstrated an extraordinary level of grassroots mobilization, turning the entire country into a contested landscape for the invading forces.

Phase 2: Hours 6–24

- **Organize**

As the initial shock subsides, your goal is to transition from a reactive group to an organized defensive unit. Begin by structuring your area of responsibility. Divide the terrain into simple, named quadrants ("School", "Bridge", "Garden") and mark them on offline maps on your phone (you will easily find suitable options for such open-source software in AppStore and Google Market, it is advisable to download them in advance). A formal watchbill is critical for sustainability; implement 2-3 hour shifts during the day and shorter 1-2 hour shifts at night to manage fatigue.

If you are not forced to engage in combat immediately and circumstances grant you a brief respite, drilling is paramount. Rehearse a clear operating procedure for an FPV drone alert, so everyone knows instantly whether their role is to deploy smoke, warn neighbors, secure passages, or evacuate casualties. Continue to harden your positions by adding a low-IR tarp or chaotic ribbons between your net layers to break up silhouettes and by practicing strict thermal discipline—cook, smoke, and warm yourselves only at designated, concealed points away from your main shelter. To enhance security, set up simple tripwire alarms on likely avenues of approach and establish contact with official military or police structures to learn the proper channels for reporting and requesting support.

Phase 3: Hours 24–72

- **Master**

In this phase, you must create a sustainable, resilient routine that can last for the long haul. This is achieved through constant reinforcement and planning. Conduct daily 30–60 minute micro-drills on essential skills: applying a tourniquet, casualty evacuation, radio procedures, and FPV escape drills.

Logistics and information become central to your survival. Institute a formal cycle for gathering intelligence and debriefing patrols, with a strict prohibition on taking photos on personal devices. Ration your water and calories, and create a schedule for charging

batteries to manage your power resources. It's also time to think about deception; use thermal decoys, create false positions, and lay misleading tracks to confuse the enemy. Finally, prepare for the inevitable by planning for contingencies. What are your actions if the area you hold sweepingly transitions from the rear echelon to the front-line combat zone? A pre-established resilient communication with the regular army and clear chain of command is not optional here.

Before the full-scale invasion in February 2022, Ukraine's Armed Forces counted about 215,000 active personnel. Within weeks, that number surged to nearly one million, as IT specialists, marketers, farmers, teachers, and factory workers took up arms to defend their country. Since 2014 Ukrainians knew well that occupation does not end suffering but makes such suffering invisible to the world.

Do not expect mild Russian occupation, as mass graves of civilians in Bucha and testimonies of occupation survivors demonstrate. Even if NATO forces intervene within days, every kilometer of delayed enemy advance still translates into countless human lives. Remember: Russia has lost wars before, and its victory is far from predetermined.

It may be difficult to cut ties with your old life abruptly, especially when transitioning into war, displacement, or another extreme reality. Many Ukrainian military personnel have tried to find internal balance by continuing to study, teach, consult, or manage businesses from the frontlines. These pursuits—small “islands of sanity” anchored in familiar routines—help preserve one's sense of identity and purpose amid chaos. Maintaining connection to what once defined you can ease the adaptation to a completely foreign environment, offering both psychological stability and motivation to endure. However, it very often was just a short-term strategy.



For Those Who Choose to Stay and Support

This could be the largest group in a society fighting for survival. Their roles are too numerous to list in full, but a few focus areas clearly deserve priority attention.

The Basics

- No matter how well prepared you are, you will likely experience shock or fear—don't let those feelings paralyze you. Act on what you can do, and take things as they come. Adjust your initial plans to the situation as it unfolds on the ground, and make sure every family member remembers their role and knows what to do.
- When children remain with you, ensure they have identification information—including their name, your contact details, blood type, and instructions in case of separation. In emergencies, some parents have resorted to marking this information on their children's skin with a permanent marker.





- Check on your friends and network members to see if they can still follow the plans you agreed on in case of a full-scale invasion. If they can't, have changed their plans, or you can't reach them, find alternative ways to continue your mission. Regroup and act. This may take enormous courage—by then you may have already seen neighbours or colleagues killed, learned that friends have died, or be unable to find out what happened to them. Helping others can become a sustaining pillar when the world around you is collapsing; it gives purpose and keeps you moving forward.

As Russian forces advanced on Kyiv, the defense of the northern Obolon district became a testament to rapid civilian-military synergy. On the first day of the invasion, local activists noticed Territorial Defense soldiers digging trenches by hand. By February 25, a Facebook post had mobilized an entire volunteer engineering team of entrepreneurs and construction workers. They recalled 170 discarded concrete water channels lying near the Pochaina River from a previous hydro-technical project. That same day, using cranes and heavy machinery provided for free by local businesses, they transported the massive blocks to Shevchenko Square, erecting one of Kyiv's first and most formidable barricades—far stronger than improvised barriers of tires and pallets. This “frantic brigade” of volunteers worked around the clock, even during curfew, turning their logistical and technical expertise into a critical defensive asset that fortified positions across the capital in a matter of days.

- You will likely have to take on many additional tasks along the way—helping the wounded, pulling people from under rubble, assisting local defense units. Very quickly, you’ll create or become part of multiple messenger networks filled with urgent requests—from evacuations and delivering diapers to transferring body armor, fundraising, rescuing animals, and responding to countless other needs. Within the first days you may get very few hours of sleep but the adrenaline will drive through the initial shock.

Launched in 2022, “Repair Together” is a grassroots volunteer initiative uniting young Ukrainians to rebuild homes and communities destroyed by Russian attacks. What began as small clean-up crews in Chernihiv region evolved into a nationwide movement that combines manual reconstruction with cultural resilience—mixing music, art, and solidarity at “clean-up raves.” The group repairs roofs, clears rubble, and restores rural infrastructure, relying on crowdfunding and local coordination rather than state aid.

Beyond reconstruction, the project serves as a psychological and social recovery mechanism, giving young people agency and purpose amid war. “Repair Together” has become emblematic of Ukraine’s civic energy—where rebuilding is not just physical, but an act of defiance and collective healing.

- If you see enemy movements, destruction, or abandoned equipment, report through official channels using precise time and location, but do not post anything online. Broadcasting military activity, even unintentionally, can cost lives. Bloggers, vloggers, Instagrammers and Youtubers will be tempted to turn shocking events into content. Even people who don’t usually post will want to share what they see being overwhelmed. But showing the surroundings in detail helps the enemy’s open-source intelligence. Even a small detail on the picture may help identify the location, not mentioning non-deleted meta-data. By revealing street names, building facades, junctions, vehicle types or the exact time and direction of movement you can—unintentionally—cause more destruction and be the cause of death of defenders and volunteers. Brace yourself and learn how to report safely before conflict breaks out.

In March 2022, a Ukrainian blogger posted a TikTok video showing Ukrainian military equipment near a shopping mall in the Podil district of Kyiv. Less than a day later, Russian forces launched a missile strike on the mall, killing eight people and destroying million-worth arms, business and private property. The Security Service of Ukraine detained the blogger for publishing footage with geolocation data, while investigators worked to determine whether he had acted deliberately as a fire spotter or out of negligence. He later publicly apologized to the victims and the Ukrainian people, admitting that he had not understood the potential consequences of his actions.

- ❑ Avoid predictable routes and crowds when moving, as they may become targets. Keep your ID and any official papers that confirm your role or affiliation. Have your essential medications, a charged phone if possible, a charger, a power bank, and a short paper note with contacts and your blood type.
- ❑ Stay informed through legitimate government or local channels and ignore unverified rumors. Russians are masters of information operations and fake manufacturing. Winning the minds of the population is just as important for the enemy as winning on the battlefield.

In the initial stage of the invasion, chaos was amplified by Russian information operations. Through numerous channels — including bots on social media and fake online pages — they spread rumors that the President of Ukraine had fled the country and that surrender was imminent. In response, the President and key members of the Ukrainian leadership recorded videos in front of a unique building — the House with Chimeras — in Kyiv every night to prove they were staying and leading the defense.

- ❑ Install a reliable air-alert app that lets you select your region. Localized alerts reduce false alarms and ensure you receive warnings that truly affect your area. Enable sound and critical notifications — a few seconds of warning can save your life.



Developed on the second day of Russia's full-scale invasion by Ukrainian tech companies Ajax Systems and Stfalcon, in cooperation with the Ministry of Digital Transformation, the "Air Alarm" (Повітряна тривога) app became a vital civilian protection tool. It provides instant, region-specific alerts about air raids, missile strikes, artillery attacks, and chemical or radiation threats. Regional civil-defense operators trigger alerts through an integrated system connected to the app's network, which delivers critical notifications even when a user's phone is in silent mode. The app collects no personal data and covers every oblast of Ukraine. By digitizing the air-raid siren system, it allows millions of Ukrainians—including those in high-rise buildings, remote villages, or with hearing impairments—to receive warnings in real time. Despite alert fatigue and the challenge of constant disruptions, the Air Alarm app remains a key innovation in Ukraine's adaptive civilian defense infrastructure, demonstrating how rapid tech mobilization can save lives under sustained attack.

- Do not forget about your animals. If you do not return, they may die of hunger in your apartment or be killed if your home is hit by a drone or a rocket. In rural areas, the best strategy is often to release them outdoors so they have a chance to survive when you are not home. In urban settings, try to ensure they are evacuated by volunteers, friends, or passersby. If that is not possible, leave them in a secure cage inside a bomb shelter with food, water, and a note for others who may use the shelter.

The Specifics

- If, unlike in Ukraine, your army does not need civil-society help to lobby for weapons or raise funds to satisfy other needs of the army, civilian experts and volunteers can still be indispensable from day one of an invasion. In the first hours and days they can drive innovation for the armed forces, counter disinformation, keep the public informed, assist IDPs, evacuate people and animals from the near-frontline area, provide hot meals, and deliver critical aid to those cut off from services. Mobilised this way, civil society becomes a rapid, flexible force-multiplier—closing gaps that formal institutions cannot instantly fill and turning community resilience into operational advantage.





On February 24th, the feeling of confusion was quickly replaced by a desire to act, to do something to protect the city, my family, and to help our army. In my younger years I used to work as a cook and even run our own cafe together with my husband. So when a friend of mine asked me to help a volunteer organization with cooking for our soldiers, I immediately agreed.

From the first days of the war, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., my daughter and I worked for the Odessa volunteer organization “Unbreakable”. This one is a part of the Ukrainian South Chef Association. We are just the cog of a huge machine that started working to help our army, the territorial defense, children and retirees in Odessa... A lot of cafes and restaurants completely switched to providing lunches for our soldiers and retirees.

From the collection [“100+ Stories of Women and Girls from Russia’s War against Ukraine”](#)

- If you work on sanctions, trade, law, or economic policy, your contribution can directly weaken the enemy’s ability to wage war. Use your affiliation with a think tank or NGO to research targeted measures, map sanctions evasion channels, draft legal mechanisms, and push them into policy discussions at national and supra-national levels. Well-designed sanctions that are enforceable and politically sellable inflict real strategic costs—sometimes faster and more sustainably than battlefield supplies.
- Mobilize your country’s diaspora abroad as it can become a decisive force for advocacy and awareness. Advise them on messages for organized rallies, media, and all sorts of communities and networks to deliver clear, unified messages that push governments to act faster and more decisively. Help pair public demonstrations with quiet, targeted diplomacy — meetings, letters, and briefings to officials. Use creativity and performance art to make your cause visible and memorable: visual actions, symbolic installations, or coordinated social media moments that capture attention. The goal is simple — transform empathy into policy. Visibility, persistence, and imagination are your strongest tools abroad.



When Russia launched its full-scale invasion, Iryna Petrovska, a long-time Ukrainian resident of Hungary and founder of the civic group “Unity” in Budapest, acted immediately. By 9 a.m. on February 24 she had secured permits for rallies near the Russian Embassy. Within days, Unity organized thirteen demonstrations in the first fifty-four days of the war, drawing 300–400 people each and several thousand on the first day.

When Russia launched its full-scale invasion, Olena Halushka turned outrage into strategy, as a co-founder of the International Centre for Ukrainian Victory and a leader of the #BlockPutinWallets campaign. The campaign called on Western governments to freeze the assets of Russian oligarchs, cut off their families from safe havens abroad, and close the financial networks sustaining the Kremlin’s war machine.

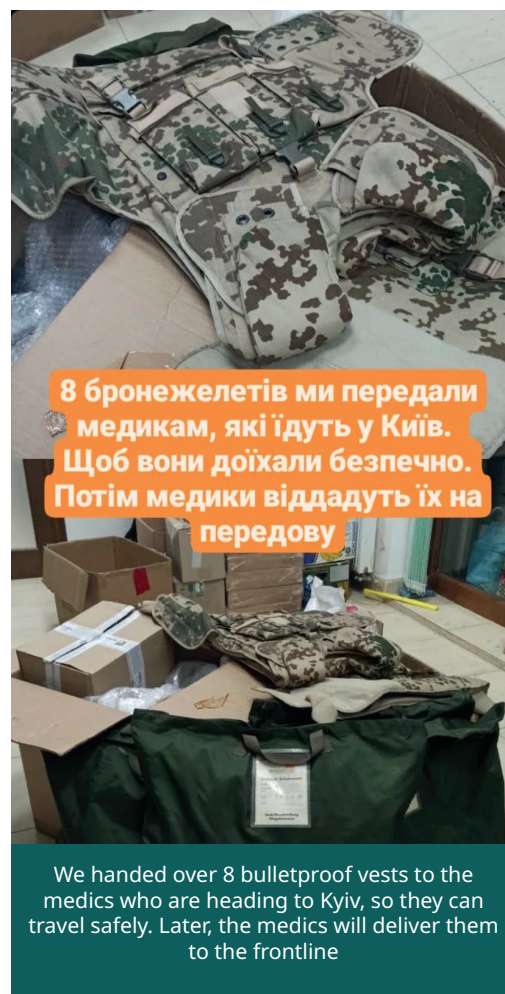
What began as a civil-society initiative in Kyiv quickly reached parliaments and media across Europe and North America. Halushka and her team produced evidence, briefed officials, and built coalitions linking Ukrainian NGOs with investigative journalists and sympathetic lawmakers. Their message was simple and sharp: every unfrozen yacht and unblocked account funds missiles and death. Over time, #BlockPutinWallets evolved into a wider movement pushing for the confiscation of frozen Russian assets for Ukraine’s defense and recovery.

When Russian bombs fell on Ukrainian cities, Iryna Zemiana and her colleagues decided that outrage was not enough — action had to stop the flow of comfort to the aggressor. They discovered that trucks carrying goods, including luxury items like Martini, were still crossing the Polish-Belarusian border into Russia. Some drivers said they were delivering them “to comfort Russians because they also suffer.” That was the final straw.

Zemiana and fellow activist Nataliia went to the border with Ukrainian flags in hand. At first, just thirty people stood on the road, blocking traffic for seventy-two hours and creating a 30-kilometre queue of trucks. After police pressure, they called for reinforcements online — within four days, 400 volunteers arrived, expanding the blockade to 55 kilometres. The Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki voiced support and brought the issue to the European Council.

When EU leaders stalled — with the Baltics backing closure but Germany and France opposing — Zemiana and her team took their protest to Berlin. They brought an appeal signed by dozens of civil-society groups and a pair of baby shoes from a girl killed in Mariupol, offering them “for sale to Russia” to expose Europe’s moral contradiction. The gesture stunned German media and reignited debate across Europe. Zemiana’s campaign to close the Polish-Belarusian border became a symbol of how civic determination and moral courage can move even the heaviest trucks.

- If you find yourself engaged in advocacy, remember that the first few months may be the hardest. There will be a painful gap between your reality and the perceptions of those whose decisions you are trying to influence. Policy responses will often be slow, partial, and frustratingly detached from urgency on the ground. This dissonance, combined with the constant shock of news and the strain of a new reality, can quickly lead to exhaustion or burnout. Take care of yourself, and reach out for support when needed. Sustainable advocacy begins with sustaining the advocate.
- Effectively use the online communities you're already part of. During the war, Ukrainian members of international mom groups, hobby forums, and fan communities reached out to celebrities and influencers, asking them to share Ukrainian stories and speak out on their behalf — and many did. You can do the same: think about who could become a recognizable voice or advocate for your cause.



- Help gather evidence of war crimes. While justice may be slow, ensure there is a chance to punish perpetrators.

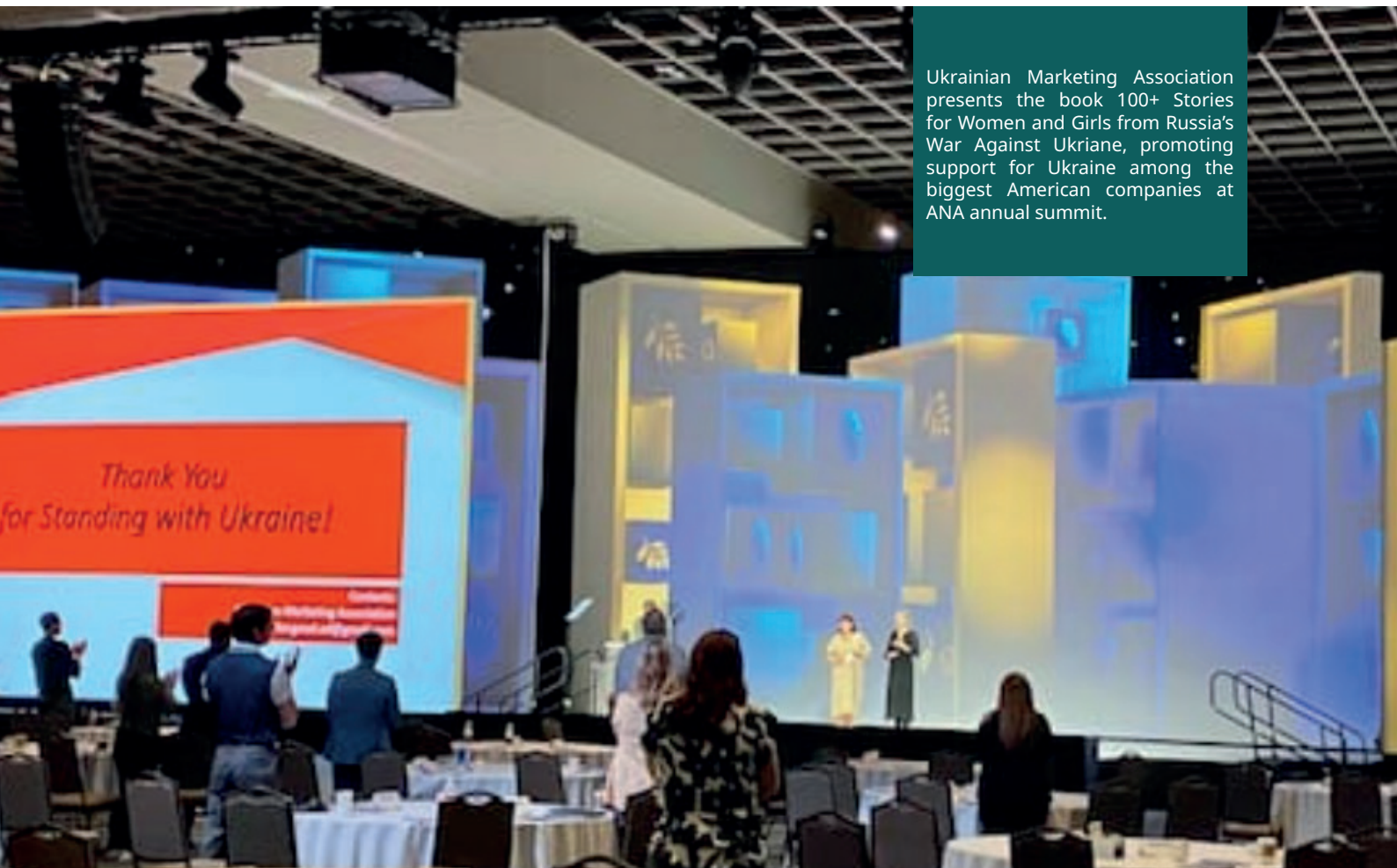
Launched in March 2022 by the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, WarCrimes.gov.ua serves as the official state platform for citizens and witnesses to report evidence of Russian war crimes. Accessible both as a web portal and mobile interface, it allows users to securely upload photos, videos, text testimonies, and precise geolocation data of attacks on civilians, infrastructure, and cultural heritage sites. Submissions are encrypted and routed directly to the Prosecutor General's central evidence repository, where they are verified, cross-referenced, and catalogued for potential use in Ukrainian and international courts, including the International Criminal Court (ICC). By mid-2025, the platform had received tens of thousands of verified submissions, many of which contributed to domestic prosecutions and international case files.

- If you want to make the greatest difference, steer your professional skills toward the needs of the people, the army and the state. Medical skills will be most needed to save lives. If you have any training, go to a nearest hospital or a scene of an

attack to offer aid. IT specialists can drive military innovation and strengthen cyber defenses (and, where required, offensive capabilities). Journalists and media professionals are vital for truthful information campaigns at home and abroad. Logistics experts keep the country's lifelines open when routes are disrupted, ensuring supplies reach people and units that need them most. Your expertise matters — redirect it where it matters most.

When Ukraine's ports and airports closed at the start of the full-scale invasion, Lyuba Shipovich, President of Dignitas and an IT entrepreneur, faced an impossible question: how to move humanitarian aid across a country under attack when all the logistic routes are disrupted. International experts told her that 20% losses in wartime logistics are normal, but she refused to accept that donor-funded supplies could simply disappear. With no logistics background, her team built a full supply chain from scratch — shipping from U.S. warehouses through New Jersey to Warsaw, then to Lviv and across Ukraine. When Excel tracking failed, the group used their IT experience to develop a custom ERP system for humanitarian logistics: warehouse and transport management, customs documentation, and financial accounting under Ukrainian law. Within months, 15 Ukrainian organizations were using the system.

- Emergency responders are increasingly vital in saving lives after strikes—and that makes them a target. Russian forces often use a “double-tap” tactic, launching a second attack to hit rescuers, medics, and civilians who arrive at the scene.



Ukrainian Marketing Association presents the book 100+ Stories for Women and Girls from Russia's War Against Ukraine, promoting support for Ukraine among the biggest American companies at ANA annual summit.

In 2014, as Russia's war against Ukraine began, a group of civilian IT experts in Kyiv chose to fight with technology instead of weapons. They called themselves Aerorozvidka — "Aerial Reconnaissance." What began as a handful of volunteers tinkering with drones and software soon became a cornerstone of Ukraine's defense innovation.

Working early with NATO partners, Aerorozvidka built open-source mapping tools and battlefield networks. After 2022, they scaled up fast — designing software, customizing commercial drones, and even creating their own: the R-18 octocopter, capable of carrying an 11-pound bomb, flying 40 minutes, and striking targets 2.5 miles away.

Now more than a hundred strong, Aerorozvidka's engineers, coders, and veterans fuse civilian creativity with military purpose. Their story shows how ingenuity and courage turned ordinary people — and ordinary drones — into one of Ukraine's most effective weapons.

["Civil-Society Role in Ukrainian Defense" — Sahaidachnyi Security Center Policy Brief \(2025\)](#)

In February 2022, as Russia launched its full-scale invasion, Ukrainian IT professionals and volunteers created the IT Army of Ukraine (ITAU) — a state-endorsed cyber-force coordinated with the Ministry of Digital Transformation. Within days, tens of thousands joined encrypted Telegram channels to carry out DDoS attacks, website defacements, and data leaks against Russian government, banking, and media targets.

A notable operation came in June 2023, when hackers briefly took over Russian state TV to air Ukrainian footage and the message "The hour of reckoning has come." NATO's CCDCOE described ITAU as the world's first large-scale, crowdsourced cyber-offensive coordinated by a sovereign state, involving an estimated 100,000–400,000 participants. The IT Army exemplifies how Ukraine turned civilian digital expertise into a coordinated instrument of national defense — blurring the line between volunteer activism and state-level cyber warfare.

- At the same time, doing your everyday work can already be an act of resistance and strength. Pharmacists who kept their pharmacies open, teachers who continued to teach, and museum workers who saved art — all defended the country in their own way. You don't need to change your profession to contribute; simply doing your job with purpose, while protecting what matters to you, sustains the fabric of life even in wartime.



We couldn't leave, like many others [being pharmacy worker]... We have obligations to those who require medicine, to those who go to work every day and help civilians to buy the medicines they need. Opening the pharmacy to the sound of machine-gun fire during street fighting; Russian soldiers coming to the pharmacy for drugs. The taxi driver who revealed our positions to the enemy. The shell from an airstrike... We no longer know what day of the week it is, what is the date. We lived in the basement, went to work helping to collect medicines...

Every day Yullia went to city pharmacies seeking medicines, while we [two pharmacy students] were trying to work and created a useful online service that helped locals to search for necessary medicines. We wanted to ease the process of finding and delivering medicines, baby food and toiletries.

Day by day, shelling became more and more frequent... For this reason, Yullia

devised the entire special operation to arrange our evacuation. We had to transfer a priceless collection of old Kharkiv postcards, which dated back to 1917, to Lviv. The collection is unique, so we realized our responsibility. Besides the postcards, the collection includes the archives of a famous doctor-physiologist Vasyl Iakovych Ianevskii (1868–1939); unique photos by famous photographers Oleksii Ivanytskii and Alfred-Liutsian Phedetskii, dating back to 1920; and sets of pharmaceutical journals. Most of them are one of a kind. Particularly important is the original report by Antonina Lesnevska, after which women were allowed to work as pharmacists. In 1901 she managed to convince male authorities to open the first female pharmacy and accepted 11 girls to teach them to be future pharmacists. We managed to evacuate the archives.

From the collection [“100+ Stories of Women and Girls from Russia’s War against Ukraine”](#)

- During the invasion, the state might not be able to care for all internally displaced people. Act immediately — reach out to your friends, neighbours, and colleagues to create a small network of trust. Coordinate who can host families, who can provide transport, and which local facilities — schools, gyms, or community halls — can be equipped to shelter people. Even a few organized efforts can make a huge difference in the first chaotic days, ensuring that no one is left without a roof or support.
- Be prepared to experience life before the invention of electricity. The enemy will target power plants and energy grids, causing blackouts that can last for days. This may also mean days without running water, without the ability to cook or make a hot drink, and no working elevators in high-rise buildings. You will be grateful later for having a portable power station such as an EcoFlow, a small gas stove with interchangeable mini-canisters, and—if you are lucky—your building association will have installed a standby generator or a mini power station to keep essential systems running.

- In the first period of resistance, you will likely be unable to fully process what is happening around you. The trauma of war often settles slowly — sometimes years later. Take care of those around you, as their life and yours could end at any moment. If you have elderly neighbours, check in on them when you can. If you have other responsibilities and they are too frail or unwilling to leave their home to access shelter or humanitarian aid, pass on their details to trusted volunteers. These simple human connections — the ability to ask for support and to give it — are the hidden core of resilience that keeps communities alive amid destruction.
- Remember to look after yourself, too. A simple act like reading a few pages of a book or making yourself a cup of tea could help you reset and recharge. Focus on things you can do for yourself and others.



I've been tasked with working as a train attendant on the Kramatorsk–Lviv evacuation train. Hundreds of people with different forms of pain, stories and questions nobody is able to answer... at every raid alert the trains have to stop and turn the lights off – exactly the moment when you feel paralyzed. But at the worst moments we demonstrate our unity and kindness to each other. That is what makes us so different from the invaders!

On March 12... our train came under shellfire. I remember exiting the compartment with the thought that I would still have time for a coffee and a short rest after this exhausting run... the last thing I remember was a flash of eye-piercing light... then darkness and a sharp pain in my ears. I touched my head and felt blood on my hands... I found out that nobody else had been hit except me and my counterpart Nataliia, who was killed instantly by a missile fragment severing her carotid artery.

From the collection [“100+ Stories of Women and Girls from Russia's War against Ukraine”](#)





For Those Who Choose to Leave

- If you do not leave immediately, you may lose the chance to evacuate and get killed or captured if occupation arrives quickly. Make sure you and your dependents carry a note with their name, emergency contact details, blood type, and at least several days' worth of medicine. Some even write this information on a wrist or inner arm in marker.

Launched in March 2022 by the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, WarCrimes.gov.ua serves as the official state platform for citizens and witnesses to report evidence of Russian war crimes. Accessible both as a web portal and mobile interface, it allows users to securely upload photos, videos, text testimonies, and precise geolocation data of attacks on civilians, infrastructure, and cultural heritage sites. Submissions are encrypted and routed directly to the Prosecutor General's central evidence repository, where they are verified, cross-referenced, and catalogued for potential use in Ukrainian and international courts, including the International Criminal Court (ICC). By mid-2025, the platform had received tens of thousands of verified submissions, many of which contributed to domestic prosecutions and international case files.

- The longer you wait, the worse traffic will be. Vehicles stuck in jams become easy targets for loitering and kamikaze drones; a blocked convoy can draw strikes that cause mass casualties. Do not assume that the attacker will respect conventions or avoid striking civilians. There is a rule that a kamikadze drone has to strike even if a goal is random.
- If you decide to use trains, official evacuation corridors, or volunteer evacuations, depart immediately. You will only be able to carry a backpack of your family's most essential items — do not overburden yourself. Moreover, word of mouth may become your only source of vital information with jamming of the signal.



One day I noticed an announcement regarding the formation of a volunteers' group for the organization of a targeted evacuation of Hostomel citizens. We basically had to go from one address to another and check each basement trying to find people and inform them about evacuation as there was no telecom coverage. The group consisted of three women and a man...who wanted to find his fiancée.

From the collection [“100+ Stories of Women and Girls from Russia’s War against Ukraine”](#)

- If you end up needing to escape from occupation, prepare for the probability that you will need to flee on foot or hide for a while: you may have to spend a night in the woods, wade across rivers, walk many kilometres with children, and rely on the goodwill of strangers.
- Delete all political or personal information from your phone, all apps leading to your data, pictures, be vigilant about your social platform pages, and especially messaging that the enemy will be able to read. One text or one picture may define your fate.



Growing despair made my daughter and me stick to a very risky decision to try and leave Hostomel. We wanted to reach a nearby town by crossing the field, which might have been mined already. But what choice did we have? Unfortunately, we ran into Russian troops, who did not allow us to pass.

It took us three weeks to finally get another chance to flee with our neighbors – 20 people with only essentials in two vehicles. Russian soldiers didn’t restrain us that time but at each of four checkpoints inspected us thoroughly. They even checked chats in messengers.

We were lucky to reach a detached house in a village with no electricity or gas, but with water and a stove. At least it was warm. We had spent a couple of days there, when we got a piece of information that it was possible to get to Ukraine-controlled territory. But we had to cross the river Irpin by ford in March. Imagine walking in extremely cold water reaching your chest! Nobody complained about wet clothes, when afterwards we were walking a couple of kilometers towards our destination, as we managed to get out of hell alive.

From the collection [“100+ Stories of Women and Girls from Russia’s War against Ukraine”](#)

- In the early hours and days, state and international capacities will be overwhelmed and unable to meet everyone’s needs. While Europe has strategic depth to absorb large refugee flows, neighbouring states closest to an invasion often lack sufficient immediate lodging, especially enough adapted facilities for people with special needs.

- Before leaving your home, remove or give away any food that can spoil. Better to pack it and share with those who stay — within days, the smell of decomposing food will make your home unbearable. Just leave it outdoors.

The Prykhystok (Shelter) volunteer initiative was born in the first chaotic days of the full-scale invasion, when thousands of Ukrainians fled their homes. An idea of an IT specialist, supported by MP Halyna Yanchenko, united people willing to create a simple, citizen-driven tool linking those in need with those able to help.

Calls for support spread rapidly through social media and personal networks, drawing an immediate response. Within hours, about fifty volunteers — IT experts, designers, and coordinators — joined forces to develop and launch the decentralized platform prykhystok.gov.ua, where any citizen could offer free housing or assistance. A volunteer call center ensured requests were processed in real time. Soon after, fliers about the platform were distributed in Ukrzaliznytsia trains, allowing evacuees to access it on the move. What began as a spontaneous civic effort became Ukraine's most visited platform for free shelter, operating in forty languages and used at home and abroad. Thanks to it, over 40,000 IDPs and refugees found housing independently of state structures — a striking example of Ukrainian self-organization and solidarity in crisis.

- Leave your keys with trusted neighbours who intend to stay. If your town is shelled but not occupied, they may use your home to help internally displaced people or friends of friends who need shelter. As a refugee yourself you will not mind.
- If you live in a country house, dig a small hole and leave a spare set of keys there, marked or wrapped securely, in case someone needs to access the house later.
- Have no illusions: if Russian troops enter the city, they will break into homes, loot, and destroy what they find.



More and more russians were flooding the town like a plague. They settled in vacant apartments, which belonged to my neighbours.

From the collection [“100+ Stories of Women and Girls from Russia's War against Ukraine”](#)



I know I'm lucky my apartment had not been ruined, but it had been robbed. I live on the ground floor, so it was easy to break the window, get inside and open the door. Before the war the door was enough to make you feel that your home is your fortress. In the new reality my family's "nest" had been plundered. There was broken glass on the floor, cigarette butts and bottles of alcohol lying everywhere (not only had they drunk the good alcohol from my bar, but they'd brought in bottles from other robbed apartments)... Many of my belongings were missing, such as clothes, cosmetics, jewelry... Instead, there were many things I could not recognize. Boxes with someone else's stuff were piled in the corridor. Apparently, they were collecting gifts for their wives, but did not have time to take the presents when they ran away. Before the war, I loved to buy perfume, especially duty-free on my way home from vacation. All my favorites were kept in a cosmetics bag. Of course, it had disappeared. My home had become dirty and shabby. By the way, the uninvited "guests" left a message on a kitchen board: "Forgive us. We don't like it ourselves!" (ed. — written in Russian with a grammatical mistake).

From the collection ["100+ Stories of Women and Girls from Russia's War against Ukraine"](#)

- Don't forget about your pets. "We are responsible for those we have tamed."

Life in a Protracted War: Adapting and Enduring

*Ukrainian dark humor: it's very easy here in Ukraine.
If you survive the night shelling, you go to work.
If you don't [survive], you don't [go to work].*



For Those Who Choose to Stay and Defend

- By this stage, those who joined the Armed Forces at the start of the invasion will have become fully integrated.
- If you have had time to adjust and train after the invasion, you may be better positioned to make an informed decision — not simply to join the army, but to choose a specific branch or even a particular brigade, if the system allows.

Ukraine has reshaped its military recruitment by allowing volunteers to choose their brigade and role, marking a shift from mass conscription to a skills-based, motivation-driven system. Since 2024, units have been able to recruit directly, bypassing enlistment offices and matching applicants to specific functions — from drone operators to medics or logisticians. The reform intended to boost morale, speed up mobilization, and align individual expertise with frontline needs, as well as to also motivate the commandment to improve, as their reputation is a major factor for volunteers. This innovation reflects Ukraine's broader effort to modernize its wartime army through flexibility, transparency, and human-centred resilience. While the results and efficiency level of this reform is yet to be known, there was no other way to adapt to the new warfare realities — and, in fact, there is no other way for any other nation forced to face war, as new personnel lacking motivation and training do not merely add zero value to a combat unit fighting on the extremely lethal high-tech battlefield — but impose a net negative impact.

- It is likely that if you are fortunate enough to still be alive and capable of fighting, you exist in a state where any external advice feels distant and irrelevant. Veterans of the war in Ukraine often describe it as the feeling of constantly running from a roaring, accelerating train on a track you cannot leave. You cannot step aside, and you cannot simply collapse from exhaustion, because the train will crush you without even noticing and thunder onward. The only option left — the one you are

already using — is to continuously lighten your load, throwing things out of the rucksack of your existence to save strength for the next step. You discard everything you can: secondary tasks, relationships, emotions, thoughts, and communication, leaving only what is absolutely essential. Eventually, you become a clenched knot of hardened, purposeful will, a fist you are afraid to relax, even during brief leaves of absence, for fear you will lack the inner strength to form it a second time. And this often happens — some soldiers do not return from leave, choosing to desert. For them, the war became a trial that exceeded their strength.

- The experience will inevitably force you to reassess everything. Life will test you in every way imaginable, initiating you into other states of consciousness and being. These can be periods of colossal psychological pressure, physical exertion, emotional exhaustion — or all of them at once. There may be prolonged periods of deprivation from food, water, and sleep. Sleep, in particular, becomes an especially rare resource; even when a few moments for it are possible, it is nearly impossible to relax.



- Perhaps most difficult of all, the war will relentlessly throw challenges at you that you have never encountered, problems for which there are no known answers — again, and again, and again. They evoke nothing but bewilderment. But you will have no choice but to solve them. On this path, you will be flanked on one side by the dark guardian of panic attacks, born from confusion and the weight of responsibility, and on the other by a strange sense of calm and strength that grows each time you find an answer where it seemed impossible.

For over two months, nearly 2,000 Ukrainian soldiers made their last stand at the Azovstal steel plant in Mariupol, completely encircled by enemy forces. In the subterranean tunnels of the complex, they established a field hospital where conditions were medically medieval. With a critical lack of medicine, bandages, and, most importantly, blood, medics performed miracles with minimal resources. The case of Azov fighter Artem Dubyna, who survived a gunshot wound to the neck after his comrades evacuated him under sniper fire, became emblematic of their plight; with no blood for a transfusion, his survival was a testament to sheer human will. Despite starvation and exhaustion, the defenders held their positions, conducted counter-raids, and even waged an information war, with the Azov press service reporting from beneath the bombs. They laid down their arms only when ordered to preserve their lives, leaving behind a legacy of one of the most heroic examples of fortitude and survival in modern military history.

- There will be other states, too — states of complete surrender and acceptance of life. When you have done everything you possibly could, and it still wasn't enough, a total release will come. With it come strange glimpses of the Freedom spoken of by mystics in various spiritual traditions. In many ways, war is a profoundly mystical experience.
- This reassessment is shaped by exposure to cruelty orchestrated by the enemy, as well as systemic flaws and human nature. Kindling for your pain, stress, and disillusionment will be provided by both the enemy and your own side. The enemy will wage a grueling terror campaign aimed at your physical and psychological collapse. With missiles, bombs, artillery shells, mines, and drones, it is possible you may never even see your enemy face-to-face by the war's end. You may find yourself besieged, encircled, temporarily cut off from your unit, or repelling ferocious assaults. But if you think this is the only source of tension, you are mistaken.
- First and foremost, pain will be inadvertently delivered by those from whom you least expect it: your closest comrades, when they are killed or maimed. This will be an experience of absolute bitterness that can never be erased. Almost certainly, there will also be fellow soldiers, commanders, or adjacent units whose actions you see as wrong, leading to unjustified risks, losses, or a squandering of resources. You will have to either accept it — because you are a soldier or an officer, and insubordination is the beginning of the army's end — or challenge it, if your conscience so decides. Or perhaps it will be you making the mistake, and someone else will challenge you. War is not a chain of simple choices between good and evil;

alongside the physical hardship, there will be constant dilemmas for your soul. It is rare luck to avoid this.

- Furthermore, the nature of this “drone” warfare introduces a new dark dimension never seen before. The massive proliferation of drones has turned every single soldier on the battlefield into a constant, 24/7 target, raising the level of physical and psychological pressure on a soldier to the highest in the history of warfare. This positional, drone-based combat creates a new psychological reality, a depersonalized confrontation within a “manhunt” paradigm that minimizes space for traditional expressions of military valor or human spirit. A stark dichotomy of roles emerges: the “hunters” (drone operators) and the “hunted” (primarily infantry in positions or on the march).
- The “hunters” operate from a distance that feels safe, tracking and coolly eliminating targets creating a qualitatively new and desensitizing psychological effect where destruction can become a gamified process. Meanwhile, the “hunted” are trapped in mostly static, vulnerable positions, living with a constant sense of helplessness against the threat from above. You become the object of a hunt, where death, injury, or an irreversible mental breakdown are the near-inevitable outcomes of prolonged exposure to this pressure. This erosion of morale and the psychological deformation of both “hunters” and “hunted” is an invisible but profound consequence of this new way of war.
- Your phone will fill with contacts who will never answer again, yet there will be little time to grieve. Prolonged service in a high-intensity war can widen the gap between you and civilians, including your loved ones. Ultimately, you will realize that the only people who are truly “your own” in war are the comrades who have gone through what you have, who protect you as you protect them. This is not because other citizens — soldiers in rear units, civilians, volunteers — are indifferent or wish you ill. On the contrary. It is because they cannot fully understand you without having walked your path. And they probably never will. You live in fundamentally different worlds, and these worlds may never meet again.
- Still, meaningful bonds with your comrades, your family, and timely psychological support remain crucial for resilience and recovery. It was once believed that modern wars would be short, precise, and technologically contained. Yet in the new era of global polarization — where opposing blocs possess roughly equal military and economic strength — prolonged wars may have returned, despite their devastating economic cost. The uncertainty of timelines, limited to no rotation// demobilization adds another layer of physical and psychological strain to already difficult conditions. Remember that hard times create strong men, strong men create good times. Unfortunately, not all the heroes invested in good times creation will be able to benefit from them.

As you can see, the realities of prolonged war are stark, and to be honest, severe. Yet, this is not a reason for despair, but a call to take the challenge of endurance seriously, for it requires a conscious, disciplined practice of survival and resilience.”

The following recommendations are not about abstract motivation but about the concrete craft of staying alive, sane, and effective in a grueling, positional, drone-centric war.

Recommendations for building psychological fortitude.

First, you must know the symptoms of long-term stress. Irritability, hypervigilance, memory lapses, tunnel vision, and emotional numbness are not signs of weakness; they are the nervous system's adaptation to an overwhelming load. Recognize them as signals to manage your state, not as personal failings. Master short breathing techniques (like the 4x4x4x4 box breath) and tactile grounding exercises. Develop a simple, internal command like: "Stop. Breathe. One task."

Keep your record of difficult decisions and doubts. Speak with a chaplain or unit psychologist. Identify one or two trusted peers you can talk to without judgment. The goal is not to eliminate pain but to prevent it from controlling your actions.

Seize any genuinely safe opportunity for a 10-20 minute "Non-sleep deep rest" (NSDR) or a quiet nap. Use caffeine strategically for specific missions, and avoid it without real necessity, especially within a 6-hour period before the planned night sleep.

Create a simple three-step process to transition out of the combat mindset: wash your hands and face, take five minutes of silence, and briefly note what went well and what didn't. This helps break the mental "replay loop". Some Ukrainian soldiers found helpful indeed to have animal pets (cats, dogs, and even wild animals like hedgehogs)

Recommendations for keeping the body an actionable asset.

In a long war, your body is a critical piece of equipment that requires meticulous maintenance. Treat your sleep plan as a combat objective. Even a few separate blocks are infinitely better than none. Protect these micro-windows for sleep fiercely. Pay attention to your physical structure; 5-8 minutes of stretching for your back, calves, and hips can be the difference between staying combat-effective and becoming a liability. Protect your knees and lower back that are particularly stressed and vulnerable at the forward positions — in the adrenaline rush, you may not notice your vertebrae popping out

Recommendations for the anti-drone hygiene

The sky is now a permanent threat zone. Your behavior must adapt accordingly. Train yourself to automatically scan for cover every 10-20 meters. Every movement should be planned along routes with "pockets" of concealment under trees or overhangs. The standards for protecting your position are non-negotiable: two layers of netting with a standoff, chaotic ribbons between the layers to break up shapes, and a low-IR emission tarp on top. Entrances must be zigzagged, and all metal hidden. Strict thermal discipline is life. Warm yourselves and cook food at designated, remote points. "Warm spots" inside a dugout make it glow on a thermal imager at night, turning your shelter into a target. Embrace deception by using thermal decoys and false positions, and constantly break your routines. Use a different path, change your timing—be unpredictable.

Leadership, family, and meaning

You have to manage your life outside the war. Have a family support plan with a designated contact person and a financial cushion. Prepare legal documents like a will and power of attorney; this is not fatalism, it is responsibility. When you get leave, decompress. The first 48 hours should be quiet, with minimal alcohol and maximum

sleep. If you feel that the internal "fist" won't clench again upon return, it's not a weakness to talk to your commander—it's preventing a catastrophe.

Finally, you must find a reason to continue. Set small, achievable goals. Find a quiet way to honor the fallen within your unit to separate grief from duty. And in a quiet moment, write down, in a single paragraph, why you are still fighting. Return to that text on your hardest days. Some Ukrainian soldiers write poems which hence become inspiration for not themselves only, and even not just for comrades — for the entire nation.

For the brutal landscape of the full-scale war, Ukrainian soldiers have turned to poetry not as a hobby, but as a vital mechanism for survival and sense-making. This literary front, emerging from trenches and between battles, provides a way to process trauma, articulate the visceral experience of combat, and preserve humanity amidst the dehumanizing chaos of war.

This phenomenon is powerfully embodied by figures like Yaryna Chornohuz, a combat medic and marine reconnaissance specialist who has been on the front lines since before the full-scale invasion. For her, poetry is a "genre of exhale," a meditative practice for capturing the raw emotion of the moment. Her 2023 collection, [dasein: оборона нрццмнoсmі] ("[dasein: defense of presence]"), delves into the truth of death, love, and the razor's edge where knowledge is found. Similarly, Dmytro Shandra, a Kyiv bookstore owner who became a combat medic on the war's second day, documents the war's sensory horror. His 2024 collection, Shchilnyichornyj ("Denseblack"), is a compilation of prose and verse jotted down in the mud-soaked trenches, often in a state of fever and exhaustion. He describes his short, non-linear fragments as an "attempt to cheat silence," a scream against the overwhelming urge to say nothing at all. His work inverts the typical hierarchy of the senses, prioritizing the metallic taste of fear and the smell of danger over sight and sound, reflecting the disorienting reality of the trenches where what you hear, not what you see, keeps you alive.



For Those Who Choose to Stay and Support

- When war drags on, you learn to live without the feeling of safety. The abnormal becomes routine — sirens, explosions, and uncertainty get integrated into daily life. You begin to tell the difference between artillery, missiles, and drones by sound alone, and you turn into an accidental ‘expert’ on geopolitics and defense. Yet amid the collapse of familiar order, preserving small self-care routines becomes a way to hold on to your humanity when everything else feels unstable and you understand that imagining your distant future is an underestimated privilege.
- When the most intense phase of the crisis passes, your organization will likely return to its original mission—but it will not be the same. Wartime response reshapes networks, skills, and trust. Activities born out of necessity—supporting the army, displaced people, or advocacy—often become part of your long-term identity. As this transition begins, review what proved effective, sustainable, and aligned with your core mission. Keep the partnerships and practices that strengthened your impact, and gradually phase out those driven only by urgency. Integrate new experiences into your institutional memory—turn ad-hoc solidarity into structured resilience. This evolution will ensure your organization remains relevant in both war and peace.

Since its establishment in 1997, the Ukrainian Marketing Association (UAM) has focused on advancing marketing education and professional ethics, as well as countering sexism in advertising. After 2022, it focused on social resilience, creating a Network of NGOs Supporting Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) based on its regional branches.

Through this network, very early UAM organized integration meetings that united IDPs, local authorities, and businesses, helping over 600 displaced people find employment and enabling relocated companies to resume work in host communities. The Association also supported teachers from frontline regions with computers, provided tablets with animal videos donated by the Zoo San Diego to children treated in Vinnytsia’s hospital basement during shellings, and held community-building activities—children’s holidays, cooking workshops, and family trips to the zoo.

Beyond humanitarian aid, UAM engages in advocacy: it compiled “100+ Stories of Ukrainian Women at War” within the first three months of war and presented it internationally, developed strategies for veteran reintegration and dual education during wartime. In 2025, UAM has started helping Ukrainian Armed Forces brigades to build their brands and ensure their recognizability, fundraising and manpower enrollment.



A child in Vinnitsia hospital watching educational videos from Zoo San Diego obtained thanks to UAM

- Living with a family divided between a country at war and relatively safe abroad brings unique emotional and practical challenges. War exposes more of existing tensions in partnerships than it creates. Communication and experience gaps, differing perceptions of danger, unmet needs, gaps in the character of problems faced in two different realities, and survivor's guilt often strain relationships. To cope, establish regular but flexible communication—short updates are better than long silences. Be honest about your needs and limits; avoid comparing hardships. Share small routines to preserve a sense of normal family life, like online meals or reading together. Recognize that distance does not mean disconnection: empathy, patience, and consistent contact can bridge even the widest frontlines.
- Honoring the fallen must go hand in hand with learning to live alongside those who return, while the war continues. Veterans carry discipline and trauma that civilians may not understand fully despite being exposed to shellings, occupation, etc. This gap can lead to alienation on both sides. Meaningful commemoration—through memorials, storytelling, and community rituals—helps build shared memory. Lasting reintegration, however, depends on dialogue, veteran-led initiatives, and civilian empathy. When remembrance is paired with cooperation, loss turns into collective strength and renewal.



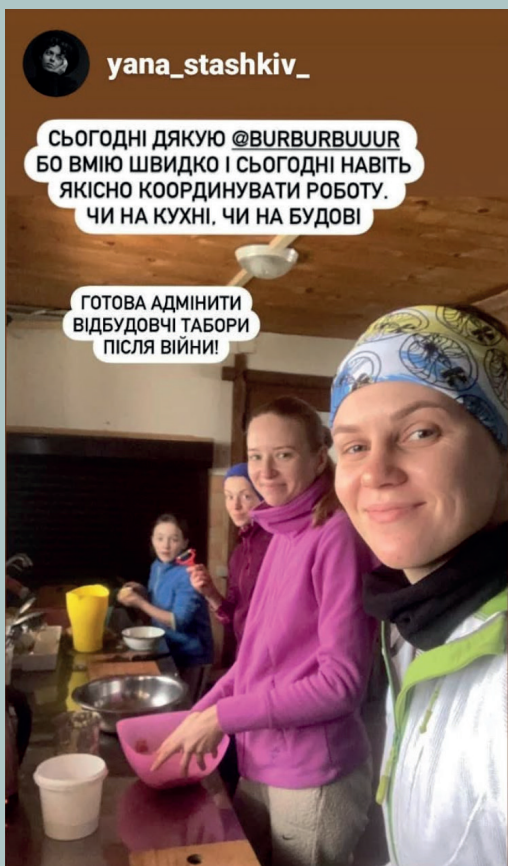
Війна триває. Як і кому ми допомагаємо?

відправили машини з паливом у Харків та Київ

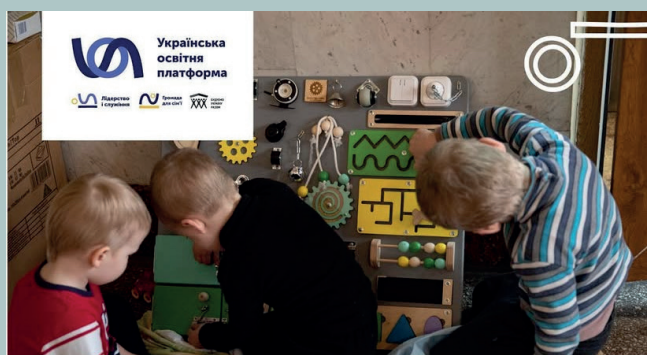
The war continues.
Whom and how do we help?
We sent vehicles with fuel to Kharkiv and Kyiv.



Repairs are our element.
We restore damaged roofs



Today I want to thank @burburbuuur — turns out I can coordinate things fast and efficiently, whether it's in the kitchen or on a construction site. Looks like I'm ready to run reconstruction camps after the war!



Війна триває. Як і кому ми допомагаємо?

облаштували дитячі куточки у залах очікуваннях
Львівських вокзалів

The war continues.
Who do we help, and how?
We have set up children's play areas in the waiting rooms at Lviv train stations.

- Try not to ignore air-raid alerts. While it may feel impossible to leave your bed for a shelter every night during months/years, especially if it's far away, move at least to a safer spot inside your home — a corridor, bathroom, or any room without windows and closer to the building's core. It's not a perfect solution, but it significantly increases your chances of survival. Small, consistent precautions often make the difference between danger and safety in long wars.
- Learn to plan your life around electricity cuts rather than resist them. If you are still not well-prepared for electricity cuts, adapt. Treat outages as a predictable rhythm, not a crisis. Use your provider's outage app or Telegram bot to anticipate schedules, syncing them with your calendar to cluster critical tasks within power windows—even if that means waking up at 2 am to simultaneously do washing, cooking and vacuuming. Structure your day into “power-on” and “power-off” modes: digital productivity when electricity flows, and analog focus—reading, journaling, stretching, or shared meals—when it doesn't. Many Ukrainians have found that rediscovering paper books and quiet offline routines during blackouts helps preserve calm and a sense of agency. What begins as an adaptation often becomes an anchor—proof that continuity and meaning can persist even in disrupted conditions.

Every Ukrainian city and town now has an alley dedicated to fallen defenders.
Every morning at 9 a.m., the entire country pauses for a national minute of silence.



In the face of unstable logistics and the harsh realities of trench warfare, Ukrainian volunteers were critical to let soldiers quickly master the art of autonomous survival. Across the country, a grassroots manufacturing effort emerged to supply the front with simple but essential items. Schoolchildren and community groups produced “trench candles”—tin cans filled with wax and cardboard that provide long-burning light and heat. Volunteers collected and sent solar panels, power banks, and portable gas burners to make units less dependent on fuel and electricity. A massive effort to prepare long-lasting food—dehydrated vegetables and meat, energy bars, and canned goods—ensured that soldiers had lightweight, nutritious rations independent of centralized supply chains. These practical, small-scale solutions, from self-made trench heaters to community-sewn gear, became a cornerstone of battlefield resilience, saving countless lives by ensuring that basic survival needs were met even in complete isolation.

- Connectivity may degrade, and propaganda will intensify—often precisely when people are most vulnerable. Build an information survival kit before that happens: identify three to five verified, low-noise channels (official, community-level, and analytical), cache maps, contacts, and key documents offline, and set your phone for low-bandwidth resilience. Practice a “minimum-viable news routine”—brief, pre-selected updates once or twice a day—to stay situationally aware without spiraling into anxiety or exposure fatigue. Ukraine’s wartime experience shows that information discipline is a survival skill.



Network of NGOs supporting IDPs organized psychological support for children

- Find your way to contribute to the war effort, no matter how small, and make it a daily ritual. Despair thrives in feelings of helplessness, and the most potent antidote is purposeful action. It doesn't require grand gestures; consistency is what builds resilience, both for you and for the soldiers on the front line. Donate a small, affordable amount to a trusted volunteer fund every morning with your coffee. Spend ten minutes weaving a camouflage net. Write a letter to a soldier in a hospital. Share a verified post from a military brigade to help their fundraising campaign. These actions, woven into the fabric of your daily life, transform passive anxiety into active support. They create a tangible link between your safety in the rear and the immense effort being made to secure it. This daily rhythm of contribution serves as a powerful psychological anchor, reminding you that you are not a bystander to history but an active participant in the collective resistance.



Network of NGOs supporting IDPs organized a series of events to reintegrate IDPs and promote their re-qualification and self-employment

- Don't forget about your animals — the war is taking a heavy toll on them too. Constant explosions, sirens, and stress can cause fear, disorientation, or even illness. Give your pets extra attention and reassurance, and keep them close during attacks.



For Those Who Choose to Leave

- **Relocation is a hard toll**, especially when not by choice. When your home is destroyed, occupied, or simply unreachable, you are forced to start from scratch. That loss is not only material—it dismantles identity, belonging, and your sense of continuity. Everyday habits—food, humour, communication styles—may clash. Don't over-adapt or over-isolate; instead, experiment with selective integration. Keep what feels authentic, adopt what works. Identity after exile is hybrid by necessity, not betrayal.

Accept that grief will come in waves. Instead of waiting to “get over it,” focus on rebuilding the agency: take small, achievable steps—learning the local system, finding safe housing, and creating daily structure. These micro-achievements restore control in a situation defined by uncertainty. Hybrid identity—rooted yet adaptive—is the hallmark of survival in exile.

- **Loss of professional identity can feel like erasure.** Many displaced professionals—teachers, managers, doctors—end up in survival jobs. The gap between who you were and what you can do abroad may feel humiliating. Counter this by documenting your prior experience in a simple bilingual portfolio, joining diaspora professional networks, and enrolling in requalification programs. Even if recognition takes time, preserving your expertise sustains dignity and signals to others that you are more than your current status. It is difficult to overcome a “refugee stigma” often rooted in economically successful societies that expect you to be ‘happy’ just with the fact of not being at your homeplace.
 - ▶ **Economic and bureaucratic frustration will test patience.** Systems differ—documents get lost, benefits delayed. Expect inefficiency, not malice. Keep digital copies of every paper, note reference numbers, and use online appointment tools. Learning how to navigate bureaucracy is slow empowerment: each form you master returns a piece of autonomy.
 - ▶ **Language barriers isolate and exhaust.** Not knowing the local language makes every interaction—from paperwork to school meetings—a stress test. Approach language learning as emotional survival, not an academic task. Start early, learn phrases you actually use, and celebrate progress. Use public libraries, volunteer language exchanges, and children's homework as shared learning moments. Fluency builds not just communication, but belonging.
 - ▶ **Your children's adaptation will not mirror yours.** Children absorb uncertainty differently—they may idealize home, resist the new culture, or feel inferior among local peers. Keep routines that preserve stability: shared

meals, bedtime reading, family traditions. Encourage them to maintain the native language while gently exposing them to local culture. A child who feels emotionally anchored will adapt socially and academically faster than one pressured to “fit in.”

- ▶ **Children’s opportunities may shrink—but resilience grows differently.** If relocation moves you from a vibrant city to a small town, your child may lose access to specialized sports or arts programs. Compensate with what the new environment offers: language immersion, local community projects, nature, or digital learning. Excellence may pause, but growth will continue through adaptability and empathy.
- ▶ **Displacement reshapes family dynamics.** Living apart from a spouse or parents splits emotional labour—one side bears constant danger, the other, survivor’s guilt. Avoid mutual resentment by keeping communication brief but consistent; don’t measure love by frequency but by honesty. Shared rituals—a Sunday video call, an online meal, or even silence together—rebuild connection across borders.



Experience of Female Forced Migrants from Ukraine in European Countries

“It’s hard to find accommodation with children. Many refusals, as soon as they hear that the family has a child or a disabled person. It is difficult to find housing for a large family.”

“It’s too expensive, the money is running out, we have not received financial aid yet... I have to find a place to rent, but in Austria it is rented out without furniture and so on, just an apartment, so in addition to the actual rent, there will be costs for furniture.”

“There are no kindergarten places for children. In most countries, children are admitted from the age of three, while private kindergartens are very expensive. The time a child remains in kindergarten is very short, and mothers cannot get a job because the child needs to be picked up at 12:30.”

“We live in a small town, and the child has nowhere to go for after-class activities. There is a school with sections, but it is designed for children from 6–12 years old. I can’t drive to sports clubs in another city.”

“It is difficult to find a job because of the language barrier and the need to take care of children. Employers prefer those who can work full time and speak the local language.”

“We are offered low-paid jobs, often below our qualifications. It is humiliating when you had a profession back home and now clean houses or pick fruit just to survive.”

“Some people say Ukrainians are taking their jobs or social benefits. It hurts when you hear that after losing everything.”

“At first, everyone was supportive, but now we feel the attitude changing — people are tired of us.”

Source: [FEMALE FORCED MIGRANTS FROM UKRAINE IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES: A NEW REALITY](#)



“Women are afraid to trust people who offer help, because there are rumors about traffickers pretending to be volunteers.”

“We were warned not to go with strangers offering accommodation or transport; some girls disappeared like that.”

“My husband stayed in Ukraine; I can’t sleep at night thinking about him.”

“Even when you’re safe, you feel constant guilt — you eat, sleep, live while others are dying.”

“It’s very hard emotionally — you smile in front of your children, but every evening you cry silently. You feel like you live in between worlds, unable to return but not belonging here either.”

“I feel useless. At home I had a job, friends, a purpose. Here I just exist.”

Source: [FEMALE FORCED MIGRANTS FROM UKRAINE IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES: A NEW REALITY](#)

- ❑ Think of the dependents. If you have dependents—young children, people with disabilities, or elderly relatives—relocation becomes even more demanding.
- ❑ Balancing their care with work or study abroad can be overwhelming, especially when kindergartens, care facilities, or hospices are limited or costly. Availability and affordability of such services vary widely between countries and even regions within one state. Before choosing where to settle, research childcare, eldercare, and disability support systems in advance: waiting lists, language requirements, subsidies, and accessibility standards. Consider not only safety and employment prospects but also the realistic capacity of local institutions to support your family’s specific needs. A well-informed choice of host state can prevent burnout and ensure that those depending on you receive consistent, dignified care.

Ukrainian refugees are standing in line for legal advice and humanitarian aid



- Exploitation and trafficking risks rise. Financial vulnerability, language gaps, and isolation make displaced people easy targets for abuse. Keep copies of your documents, learn emergency numbers, and never surrender your passport or work papers. Attend safety briefings or online training offered by NGOs. Trust instinct over politeness—if a situation feels wrong, leave. Safety is more important than gratitude.
- Information overload and propaganda fatigue are real. War follows you digitally; endless news feeds amplify your anxiety and exhaust empathy of the hosts. Moreover, the enemy will continue the cognitive warfare against your nation. Be that person that is able to convey the real state of affairs in your country in a calm but persuasive way. Wherever you are, you are an advocate of your country.
- Prejudice may come from unexpected directions. You may encounter resentment from rival or enemy's diasporas, or those influenced by hostile propaganda. Respond by showing contribution—through volunteering, paying taxes, or mentoring others—erodes stereotypes faster than arguments. Stay connected to local civic groups that defend equal rights; collective visibility protects individuals.
- You may feel misunderstood or unseen. People in safety often expect quick adjustment or equate physical security with emotional recovery. They might minimize your trauma or grow tired of hearing about the war. Don't take this personally—it reflects their limits, not your failure to adapt. Instead of seeking total understanding, build selective empathy: find two or three people you can speak openly with, and lower expectations of casual acquaintances. Recognition from a few who “get it” is more healing than broad acceptance.
- Psychological wear will accumulate silently. Long-term uncertainty leads to fatigue and numbness more than overt breakdown. Trauma shortens attention and patience. If professional help is available in your language, use it; if not, find peer support circles. In Ukraine's case, group-based, culturally familiar therapy has proven more sustainable than formal Western models alone.
- Guard your sense of time. When everything feels temporary, days blur into waiting. But you should not wait for your life to come to what it used to be. It most probably never will. Start a new chapter as soon as you are ready to, whether back at home or at a new place.



To be honest, I could write a book about how we are living now [2022]. How broken are our dreams from before, how beautiful are our dreams that grew up on the ruins of the old ones. How I hate and adore my volunteer work: the context is awful, the people and the process are great. How I love the phenomenon of spontaneous volunteer barter, which sometimes resembles a new kind of platonic love between people with common values. How I hate the invaders and why I am ready to join the Armed Forces, the territorial defense and the guerrillas, if I have the opportunity... Each Ukrainian has so many stories to tell.

From the collection [“100+ Stories of Women and Girls from Russia's War against Ukraine”](#)

Chapter 2.

Lessons from Ukraine: What Succeeded and What Fell Short



Civil Society Networks

Ukraine's survival through the first year of full-scale war would have been impossible without its robust civil society network. When Russian forces invaded from multiple directions on February 24, 2022, no state apparatus—however well-prepared—could simultaneously coordinate military defense, manage mass internal displacement, sustain rapidly expanding armed forces, and maintain basic social services.

Understanding Ukraine's rapid 2022 civil society mobilization requires recognizing the foundation laid after 2014. The Revolution of Dignity and Russia's initial aggression in Donbas catalyzed a surge in civic organizing—new NGOs registered, volunteer networks formed, and grassroots activism became normalized. By February 2022, this mature ecosystem stood ready to respond.



The Ukrainian Volunteer Service and Building Ukraine Together (BRU) exemplify this pattern. The Ukrainian Volunteer Service, founded in 2017, had built a community of more than 200,000 volunteers by 2022. After the invasion, the organization immediately established itself as a center to quickly mobilize volunteers and direct them to the most needed causes. Within days of the invasion, the community already had 200,000 people ready to help, processing over 3,435 requests for humanitarian aid daily with a team of 90 case managers working around the clock to match volunteers with these requests.

Building Ukraine Together, created in 2014, had spent eight years helping communities create youth centers and restore homes through volunteer camps. Since February 24, 2022, BUR immediately responded to support thousands of internally displaced families who fled to western Ukraine, helping to renovate infrastructure, building shelter camps, and offering humanitarian aid across Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Chernihiv. Both organizations had established networks, tested systems, and experienced staff. When war began, they didn't need to build credibility or recruit volunteers—they activated existing assets, enabling them to rapidly respond to critical humanitarian and social needs in small villages, towns, and cities across the country where larger international organizations often struggled to reach in the first chaotic weeks of the invasion.

Source: [Annual Report of the BUR 2022](#), article [“Ukrainian Volunteer Service Connects Activists Across Ukraine”](#)

Ukraine's wartime civil society mobilization extended far beyond pre-existing organizations. Teachers, local activists, socially responsible entrepreneurs, progressive local deputies, and ordinary citizens with no prior volunteer experience spontaneously created initiatives across all regions. The whole of society mobilisation has highlighted the importance of informal networks in Ukraine, and demonstrated that civic activism in the country is primarily anchored in action rather than organisational membership.¹

¹ Zarembo, K. and Martin, E. (2024) Civil society and sense of community in Ukraine: from dormancy to action <https://direct.mit.edu/euso/article/26/2/203/127346>

Citizens mobilized through diverse formats: over half of all initiatives operated as volunteer or humanitarian hubs covering issues like housing for IDPs and local residents, workshops, social enterprises, information platforms and campaigns, education, kitchens, cleaning and construction, consultations, employment support for IDPs, resistance efforts during occupation, book collection and sales, partnerships, patrols, and financial support.

These initiatives did not operate in isolation. Different citizen groups united to share resources and mutually reinforce each other's efforts, with particularly vital collaboration emerging between the civic sector, local business, and municipal authorities.



Volunteers from the Ukrainian Voluntary Service in a small town are collecting aid for internally displaced persons



Volunteers from the NGO "Building Ukraine Together" in Lviv are collecting aid for residents of frontline regions



On the first day of the invasion, some metro stations in Kyiv were closed. That is why public transport and taxis became even more important for transporting residents. With mobilisation underway, many military personnel faced the challenge of quickly getting to their units. On the first day of the invasion, there were many cases when taxi drivers, travelling empty or with passengers, offered to take military personnel to their destination free of charge. Taxi companies, understanding the need for transport at that moment, put additional cars on the routes. Since there were many traffic jams on the streets, soldiers often leaned out of the windows and raised their weapons high to show other drivers that there were soldiers in this civilian car who were travelling to their destination. This repetition of the historical experience of the 'Marne taxi' once again highlights how relevant the issue of mobility is in the context of an invasion. Even more importantly, the initiative was demonstrated not only by company management, but also by ordinary taxi drivers who made a conscious decision to help the military.

Source: personal experience of the authors



In the early days of the war, the issue of food supplies became particularly acute. Many shops were closed, and cafés, bakeries and markets were shut down. In these circumstances, a number of businesses decided to distribute their stocks to people in need.

There were many bakeries and confectioneries located on the northwestern outskirts of Kyiv. The employees and management of these businesses lived in other parts of the city and were unable to get to work after the metro and public transport were shut down. That is why they decided to contact local residents and civil defence services. Thanks to this initiative, people in civil defence shelters and local residents gained access not only to finished products, but also to ingredients that could be used in cooking. This initiative was also important because it prevented looting, which could have happened if people had started looking for food on their own. The irony is that without electricity, the food would have spoiled anyway, and this useful initiative by businessmen allowed it to be used for the benefit of society.

Source: personal experience of the authors



Before the war, Nizhyn City Youth Center operated as a communal youth space, created in 2018 after sociological surveys revealed young people's need for a free meeting place. Located in a historic Greek building in the city center, it was run by the civic organization "Laboratory of Initiative Youth" headed by Anzhela Tymchenko. The center already had infrastructure, relationships with local authorities, and most critically – an established community of young activists.

When Russia's full-scale invasion began on February 24, 2022, this existing structure proved invaluable. "When we learned we would operate as 'SpiDiyaHub,' we put out a call on social media to gather and unite a volunteer community to work on the humanitarian front," recalled Tymchenko. "250 participants of various ages filled out the application: from 12 to 60+. We united everyone in a Telegram chat. And the first thing people wrote was: 'Why are we sitting around and not going anywhere?'"

The hub's first major test came when Chernihiv was liberated. Volunteer Lina Martynenko described their ambitious goal: "Our first large-scale 'operation' took place after Chernihiv was liberated. We set ourselves the goal of helping the community. It seemed easier for us, while they had lived through harsh occupation. A week had passed since the occupiers left, and we decided to organize a collection. The goal was to collect a minibus worth of supplies, about 2.5 tons of products. We were very worried whether we could collect it. As a result, we collected 10 tons."

Source: [From the report "Wartime communities. Effective and timely" by Center of United Actions](#)

A large portion of initiatives worked on solving housing problems for IDPs, who were accommodated in communal facilities, private houses, volunteers' apartments, and modular homes. Considerable attention was also paid to the integration of displaced persons through public events – excursions, conversation clubs, Ukrainian language lessons, and cultural activities aimed at integration, psychological relief and restoring social connections.

However, involvement of target audiences—particularly internally displaced persons—into the organizational side of activities, when they turned from passive recipients of aid to providers of support for others, created stronger community bonds and transformed beneficiaries into contributors who staffed humanitarian hubs, conducted workshops, and launched their own initiatives. This approach built sustainable support networks rooted in mutual aid rather than one-directional charity.



East-SOS—an evacuation organization founded by IDPs from Luhansk in 2014—grew from their own displacement experience. When Russia’s full-scale invasion began in 2022, the organization returned to its roots, tripling its staff primarily with volunteers from liberated cities and war-torn regions.

“We are people who have gone through displacement. Their situation now is much worse and more complicated than ours, so we want to do everything possible to provide relief,” explains one founder.

Their drivers, themselves IDPs, navigate checkpoints and minefields to evacuate people from hard-to-reach occupied areas—understanding firsthand what evacuees need because they’ve experienced it themselves.

Source: [“CF East SOS”](#)

Numerous universities in safer locations became hubs that coordinated humanitarian aid and volunteer activities. Some universities have allocated significant funds to support the defence of the cities in which they are located.



For example, the Ukrainian Catholic University, together with donors, allocated 4.58 million dollars for humanitarian aid over eight months of war, established a Volunteer Center that distributed approximately 467,000 units of medical supplies, food, tactical medicine, and ammunition. The university also held online meetings with students from around the world, sharing information about the war in Ukraine and thus engaging over 1,000 people from different corners of the globe.

Source: [Report on UCU’s activities during the sixth month of war](#)

Another way in which higher education institutions supported their fellow citizens was by providing them with temporary accommodation. As is well known, most universities have dormitories where not all rooms are occupied. That is why such premises can be a lifeline for people who have been forced to leave their homes due to the approaching front line. As is well known, a large number of universities with dormitories were located in the Ukrainian capital, but at the initial stage of the invasion, fighting took place on the outskirts of Kyiv. Therefore, this initiative was actively implemented by regional universities.



At the request of local authorities, Kremenchuk National University named after Mikhail Ostrogradsky transferred dormitory No. 4 for the needs of refugees. The Kremenchuk Temporary Stay Centre was set up in the dormitory. For the most part, this place was used as a temporary stopover before refugees were sent further west to Ukraine. But refugees were provided with more than just a place to sleep and water. At the initiative of local residents and employees, food, hygiene products, medicines and clothing were collected for the refugees.

Source: [Kremenchuk National University named after Mikhail Ostrogradsky](#)



Since the beginning of the war, approximately 1,500 places for internally displaced persons have been set up in the Drohobych community using budgetary and donor funds, including in the dormitories of the Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University of Drohobych. Two university dormitories have been equipped with 780 places for refugees. In addition, the university community made every effort to help people who had nowhere to return to adapt to their new reality. For displaced persons, scientific and pedagogical workers organized lectures and master classes, free courses in Ukrainian and Polish, excursions, fitness, dance, and vocal classes.

Source: [DSPU](#)

Business and State Enterprises

From the first days of war, businesses transformed from economic actors into critical components of community defense and resilience.

Preparation That Made the Difference. 69% of Ukrainian companies had crisis management plans before February 24, 2022, including emergency scenarios, employee contacts, backup communication channels, and evacuation procedures.² The most prepared companies developed plans for four possible scenarios: operations under active hostilities, in occupied territories, in safer regions after relocation, or in restored territories.³ Some industries were particularly proactive, organizing team relocation in January-February 2022 and arranging backup infrastructure before the invasion. Companies that made quick decisions and adapted rapidly had the best chance of survival.

² <https://ucu.edu.ua/en/news/tryvozhnist-prysutnya-ale-oznak-paniky-nemaye-69-ukrayinskyh-kompanij-mayut-antykryzovyj-plan-opytuvannya-biznes-shkoly-uku/>

³ https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-10/undp-ua-report_responsible_business_conduct_during_war_in_ukraine_eng.pdf

Business responses varied across sectors. Some businesses transformed their production: metallurgical enterprises shifted to manufacturing defense structures, fashion companies began sewing tactical clothing, and restaurants switched to feeding volunteers and military personnel. Agricultural businesses faced unique challenges with disrupted logistics and blocked ports. In the first weeks of the invasion, farmers prioritized employee safety through evacuations and early salary payments while mobilizing resources for territorial defense. A lot of manufacturing companies lost their facilities to occupation but rebuilt in safer regions within months, while logistics companies quickly evacuated staff and resumed critical supply chain operations despite losing their central office and warehouse to Russian attacks.

Supporting the State and People. Ukrainian businesses became critical contributors to national defense and humanitarian relief. Ukrainian businesses implemented diverse initiatives in the first weeks of war to support people and the country across various sectors.



Kormotech, Ukraine's largest pet food manufacturer, transformed its social responsibility mission after the full-scale invasion by creating the Save Pets of Ukraine initiative, which established a 24/7 humanitarian aid headquarters in Lviv to process applications and coordinate logistics for animal shelters and volunteers across the country.

In the first month of war alone, the company allocated 200 tons of its own pet food production for animals throughout Ukraine, distributing it at Lviv railway station and to border services for evacuees with their pets. The company founded international fund U-Hearts in 2022, which raised \$5.4 million from donors worldwide over two years through transparent reporting and powerful storytelling that gave voice to Ukrainian animals' experiences.

Source: [Kormotech: feed, assist, export](#)



When the full-scale invasion began, the directors of Rubizhne Hosiery Manufactory were already in Lviv searching for backup premises, having traveled there on February 23, 2022, just hours before the war started. The factory in Rubizhne, which had operated for 30 years with 160 employees, was destroyed by Russian shelling and looting, but 17 workers relocated with their families to Lviv to rebuild from scratch. Their long-time partner Dodo Socks supported the recovery by providing a partnership loan to purchase 20 sewing machines in May 2022, and the reborn factory resumed production in October 2022.

Dodo Socks transformed their business model by creating charitable collections, donating all profits from certain sock sales to the "Come Back Alive" fund and raising over 603,000 hryvnias during a Valentine's Day campaign. The brand also partnered with volunteer medical organization "Hospitallers", United24, and animal rescue organization UAnimals, using their products as a fundraising tool to support Ukraine's defense.

Source: [Dodo Socks and Rubizhne Hosiery Factory: starting over](#)



From the first days of the full-scale invasion, Evrotrade company began transporting humanitarian cargo free of charge from Europe to relatively safe regions of Ukraine. The enterprise delivered medicines, food products, clothing for the military, hygiene supplies, as well as humanitarian aid for civilians and equipment for hospitals. Despite the fact that the company itself found itself in the epicenter of fighting near Hostomel and suffered significant losses, volunteer activities did not stop for a single day.

As executive director Mykola Bykovets notes: “One such trip costs us about 3,000 euros. The cost of fuel was later covered by international organizations, and there were also privileges for traveling on highways for humanitarian cargo. But we bear the drivers’ salaries and other expenses ourselves.”

Source: [Buying new vehicles, transporting cargo free of charge, and paying for prosthetics for military personnel: the story of a freight forwarder from Gostomel](#)

In the first days of Russia's full-scale invasion, Ukraine's state-owned enterprises swiftly transformed from routine service providers into critical wartime infrastructure. The enterprises proved invaluable by leveraging their existing nationwide networks, logistical expertise, and dedicated workforce to provide immediate humanitarian response while maintaining essential services—demonstrating how state infrastructure can serve as a resilient backbone for civilian survival and economic continuity during the chaos of invasion's first hours.



Ukrzaliznytsia evacuated over 1 million people in the first eight days of the invasion, ultimately transporting 4 million people to western Ukraine and 600,000 abroad throughout 2022. Railway stations in Kyiv, Kharkiv and other major cities filled with crowds seeking evacuation, prompting the company to abandon schedules entirely and introduce free evacuation trains. The railway also played a critical role in business relocation, with the state providing transport through Ukrzaliznytsia to help relocate companies’ equipment and operations to safer western regions—over 400 enterprises completed relocation by late April 2022.

Source: [Ukrzaliznytsia evacuates more than 1 million people from Ukraine's hot spots since the start of Russia's invasion.](#)



Ukrposhta became one of the largest channels for humanitarian aid to Ukraine, establishing cooperation with national postal operators and charitable organizations worldwide to deliver essential goods—redirecting more than 1,000 20-ton trucks of humanitarian cargo, with some postal services providing free delivery. The company continued delivering pensions and social payments even in occupied territories until August 2022, often at great personal risk to postal workers.

Source: [Ukrposhta press release](#)



Naftogaz maintained gas supplies to 98% of households after competing suppliers lost access to resources, effectively becoming the sole energy provider for millions of Ukrainians. Despite Russian attacks damaging over 5,000 kilometers of pipelines and 3,800 distribution facilities, the company kept production running even in active combat zones and maintained artificially low prices to prevent an energy affordability crisis. Naftogaz's repair brigades worked continuously to restore damaged infrastructure while simultaneously securing international financing to import additional gas and maintain strategic reserves, ensuring Ukraine's survival through winter heating seasons under constant bombardment.

Source: [Ukraine's Gas Market after the War](#)

Local Self-Government

Local governments became the frontline responders to the humanitarian crisis, proving critical to Ukraine's survival in the first days of invasion. When Russia's full-scale attack began on February 24, 2022, communities immediately faced massive social and humanitarian challenges with no guidance from central authorities. Pre-war decentralization reform, which granted local governments financial autonomy and decision-making authority, enabled them to act rapidly without bureaucratic delays.

Communities faced massive infrastructure collapse—within the first days, hundreds of thousands of people lost access to electricity and water as significant infrastructural damage left bridges and roads damaged by shelling, cutting communities off from markets for food and basic supplies. Administrative service centers operated around the clock to register internally displaced persons—processing documents on paper during the day and entering data at night—while over 160,000 people were internally displaced in just the first three days.

Communities commandeered trucks to travel to supermarket distribution centers for food supplies, ensured bakeries had flour by finding grain and mills throughout the city, organized emergency medical services and distributed critical medicines as health facilities came under attack, and redirected local budgets to support defense forces.

Village administrative centers became critical communication hubs, with village heads serving as the key information link between local government and residents in geographically dispersed communities, ensuring aid reached those huddled in bomb shelters without heat, electricity, or medical care.

Communities established coordination mechanisms to unite volunteers, NGOs, and businesses into effective networks. As volunteer initiatives proliferated in the first weeks, many cities created volunteer councils—consultative bodies that brought together civic organizations, local authorities, and business to prevent resource duplication and ensure strategic allocation. These councils allowed authorities to provide administrative support and communication channels while volunteers maintained operational independence, ensuring aid reached those who needed it most.



In Khmilnyk, Vinnytsia Oblast, local authorities established a Volunteer Council as a consultative body to coordinate all volunteer efforts. Natalia Mazur, head of the Information and Public Communication Department of Khmilnyk City Council, explained:

“We created a volunteer council – a consultative body that coordinates the efforts of all volunteer communities, initiated by the authorities. But the authorities are not the institution that directly influences one direction or another. The authorities are there to communicate in the right direction, so that all the good things we do are directed to the right goals. So that aid is targeted, so that all issues are resolved in a planned, concentrated manner. So that everything goes where it is needed first. Everyone benefits from this: the authorities, the community, volunteers, business, and the entire community, and especially those who need this help.”

Source: From the report [“Wartime communities. Effective and timely”](#) by Center of United Actions

Sister city partnerships with foreign municipalities proved essential for rapid resource mobilization. Communities that had established formal partnership agreements with cities in other countries before the war could immediately activate support networks—receiving humanitarian aid, financial assistance, and technical resources within days rather than weeks. These pre-existing relationships with documented cooperation protocols enabled foreign partner cities to bypass bureaucratic procedures and deliver targeted assistance directly to Ukrainian municipalities that needed it most, providing everything from ambulances and generators to housing for evacuated residents.



Munich provided its sister city Kyiv with 15 railway wagons of humanitarian aid, medicines, and medical equipment in March 2022, along with 12 ambulances donated by the mayor's office. Marseille sent three ambulances, a fire engine, medical equipment, and medicines to its sister city Odesa. The Bulgarian city of Pleven was among the first to respond, sending medicines, sleeping bags, and chargers to sister city Mykolaiv. German cities including Cologne, Schweinfurt, and Düsseldorf provided humanitarian aid to frontline cities Dnipro and Mykolaiv, while German municipalities collectively donated eight fire-rescue vehicles with equipment to Kyiv.

Source: [How can sister cities help in Ukraine's recovery? Examples and instructions](#)

Information resilience — Civil coordination and messaging: bloggers, social media, and communication channels

Ukraine's information infrastructure faced an unprecedented test in the first days of full-scale invasion. As Russian forces advanced and disinformation campaigns intensified, Ukrainian citizens, bloggers, and civil society rapidly self-organized to create robust communication networks that would prove critical to national survival.

Rapid Communication Network Mobilization. Within hours of the February 24, 2022 invasion, Ukrainian civil society leveraged existing digital platforms to establish coordinated messaging systems. Telegram channels became primary coordination hubs, while countless local community channels emerged to share real-time information about air raids, humanitarian needs, and evacuation routes.

Social media activists and vloggers immediately pivoted from peacetime content to wartime coordination. Influencers with established followings became trusted information sources, countering Russian disinformation while providing practical survival guidance.



The 20-year-old photographer from Chernihiv had been posting captivating shots of her travels around the world before February 24. After the invasion began, she abruptly changed her content and started creating videos showing her new reality of life in a bomb shelter with her family. Her most famous video featuring the Sicilian song "[C'è la luna mezzo mare](#)" went viral worldwide and garnered over 50 million views.

Source: [Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights "Killing of civilians"](#)

Village heads and local officials maintained constant communication with residents through established social media channels, providing verified updates during periods when national communication infrastructure faced disruptions. This decentralized approach meant that even when central systems were targeted, local networks continued functioning.

Countering Disinformation Through Citizen Networks. Ukrainian citizens became active participants in information defense. Local residents documented Russian war crimes on their phones, creating primary source evidence that contradicted Kremlin narratives.



Local residents of Bucha created a unique set of evidence using drones and video recordings, while the organization Jus Talionis coordinated a team of four civilian drone pilots who created a digital model of the city. This grassroots documentation prevented Russian denials from gaining traction.

Local media and residents documented Russian forces firing on humanitarian corridors in Irpin, providing real-time evidence that saved lives by warning others and mobilizing international pressure.

Sources: [Crime Scene: Bucha](#)

Teachers, entrepreneurs, and ordinary citizens without prior media experience learned to verify information before sharing, creating informal fact-checking networks within their communities.

Local media outlets in Kharkiv, Chernihiv, and Mariupol continued reporting even under bombardment. Local media outlets that evacuated their operations continued reporting remotely, ensuring coverage of occupied territories where international journalists couldn't access. Thus local journalists became frontline information defenders, documenting war crimes in real-time and countering Russian disinformation with verified facts and eyewitness accounts.

Digital Counteroffensive: Ukraine's IT Army. Since Russia had been actively using cyberattacks as a weapon of hybrid warfare since 2014, it became critical for Ukraine not only to protect its digital infrastructure but also to disrupt the adversary's forces in cyberspace. The IT Army became an example of how citizens' technological expertise can transform into an effective instrument of national defense.



On February 26, 2022, Minister of Digital Transformation Mykhailo Fedorov announced the creation of Ukraine's IT Army. The initiative was organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Defence—initially to defend critical infrastructure. Coordination occurred primarily through Telegram and Twitter, and by May 2022, the effort had mobilized approximately 65,000 international volunteers—so-called “sofa hackers” who contributed their computing power to organized attacks—alongside the Telegram channel’s peak membership of 300,000. In the first six months of war, the IT Army blocked over 6,000 Russian online resources, including the websites of the Moscow Stock Exchange, Sberbank, and Gazprombank.

Source: [Center for Strategic and International Studies “The IT Army of Ukraine”](#)

International Information Bridge: Making Ukraine Visible. Marketing professionals, designers, and media specialists pivoted their skills from commercial work to wartime communication. They provided information support for charitable fundraising efforts abroad, created powerful visual campaigns exposing Russian atrocities, while maintaining high production standards that ensured international media pickup to make Ukraine's struggle visible to the world.



Banda Agency launched the “Arm Ukraine” campaign, creating compelling visual content that helped crowdfund military equipment. Their professional storytelling made technical military needs understandable and urgent for international donors.

Source: [X page of Volodymyr Zelenskyi](#)

“Be Brave Like Ukraine” emerged from Ukraine’s creative community as a direct response to Russian aggression. The campaign positioned Ukrainian resistance as an inspiration—courage that the world could learn from and support. “Courage cannot be bought. It cannot be taken away. Courage is being Ukraine. Courage is our national resource”, - wrote Volodymyr Zelenskyi on his Instagram page.

Source: [Instagram page of Volodymyr Zelenskyi](#)

Annexes

List of Abbreviations

BUR	— Building Ukraine Together
CAT	— Combat Application Tourniquet
CCDCOE	— Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence
CEPA	— Center for European Policy Analysis
CSIS	— Center for Strategic and International Studies
DC	— District of Columbia
EW	— Electronic Warfare
FPV	— First-Person View
IDP	— Internally Displaced Person
IT	— Information Technology
ITAU	— IT Army of Ukraine
NAPA	— National Academy of Public Administration
NATO	— North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	— Non-Governmental Organization
OSINT	— Open-Source Intelligence
RF	— Radio Frequency
UAF	— Ukrainian Armed Forces
UAM	— Ukrainian Marketing Association
UAV	— Unmanned Aerial Vehicle

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Medical Kit Essentials

- ☐ Massive blood loss, pneumothorax, and airway obstruction account for 80% of casualties in combat. The kit should have essentials to raise the chances for survival.
- ☐ Sterile field dressing with compression component and protective coating
- ☐ Sterile gauze bandage (7 m x 14 cm)
- ☐ Hemostatic bandage or chemical bleeding stopper
- ☐ Gel-based occlusive thoracic bandage (with or without valve)
- ☐ Non-woven adhesive plaster (3–5 m x 2–3 cm)
- ☐ Non-sterile nitrile examination gloves (pair)
- ☐ Thermal (emergency) blanket (160 x 210 cm)
- ☐ CAT-type bleeding control tourniquet (2 pcs.)
- ☐ Nasopharyngeal airway with lubricant
- ☐ Waterproof blue marking pen for casualty info
- ☐ Trauma shears for clothing and boot removal
- ☐ First aid kit case (tactical pouch)
- ☐ Casualty card (for tracking treatment and evacuation)
- ☐ Emergency medications (Paracetamol, Meloxicam, Ciprofloxacin/Levofloxacin)
- ☐ Antiseptics (e.g., chlorhexidine solution or alcohol-based wipes)
- ☐ Antimicrobial or wound-healing gel
- ☐ Medical triangular bandage for limb immobilization
- ☐ Flexible immobilization splint (optional, 90 cm min.)
- ☐ CPR face shield (optional for artificial ventilation)
- ☐ A packed go-bag essentials

In reality, you might not be able to take any of these items with you — only what you are wearing and whatever fits in your pockets. Some people wear an oversized warm jacket with extra inner pockets or even sew hidden compartments into the lining, so they can carry all their most valuable belongings on themselves.

Emergency Evacuation Bag Checklist (72-Hour Bug-Out Bag)

- Water & Food
 - ☐ Drinking water (bottles or bladder)
 - ☐ High-calorie food for 3 days (energy bars, dried fruit, canned goods, instant meals)
- First Aid & Medicine
 - ☐ First-aid kit (tourniquet, gauze, bandages, antiseptics, gloves)
 - ☐ Personal prescription medicines (min. 3 days)
 - ☐ Painkillers, anti-diarrhoea meds, antihistamines, rehydration salts
- Documents & Money
 - ☐ Passports / IDs (in waterproof pouch)
 - ☐ Copies of birth certificates, property deeds, insurance papers
 - ☐ Emergency contacts on paper
 - ☐ Cash in small denominations
 - ☐ USB stick or phone backup with scanned documents
- Tools
 - ☐ Headlamp + spare batteries
 - ☐ Small flashlight
 - ☐ Multi-tool and/or sturdy knife
 - ☐ Power bank for phone
 - ☐ Compact stove or way to heat food (optional)
- Hygiene & Comfort
 - ☐ Toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, hand sanitizer
 - ☐ Wet wipes
 - ☐ Menstrual supplies (if needed)
 - ☐ Trash bags (to keep things/feet dry)
- Special Items (If Needed)
 - ☐ Baby formula, diapers, bottles
 - ☐ Pet food & leash
 - ☐ Spare keys (house, car)

Authors



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Contributors



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