



Nordregio

# Civil Preparedness in Practice Lessons and Insights from Ukraine

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# Moment of Silence

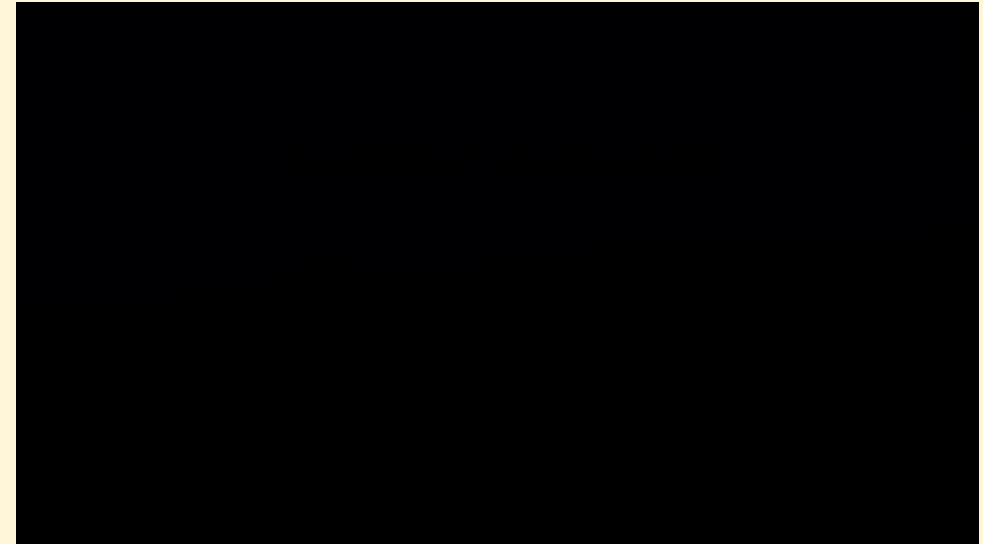
Across all of Ukraine, at 9:00 a.m. Kyiv time, everything stops in memory of those who have perished in the War for the Independence of Ukraine.

Let us honor the memory of those whose lives were taken by the war.

**Civilian losses in Ukraine from 2014 to November 2025 amounted to approximately 20,000 people.**

**We remember! We will not forgive! We will prevail!**

**Glory to Ukraine! Glory to the Heroes!**





# Wake-up call (February 24, 2022)

Illusion of stability → sudden reality check

russia's full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022 shattered Ukraine's everyday life, unleashing massive attacks on cities, civilians, and critical infrastructure, and leading to widespread war crimes.



**These are just a few examples of the hundreds, even thousands, of deliberate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure.**





# Wake-up call (February 24, 2022)

## Revealed gaps: shelters, resources, logistics

The crisis exposed a major gap in Ukraine's civil preparedness, as many communities, local authorities, and businesses lacked shelters, warning systems, resources, and advance planning needed to respond effectively.

### 25 February 2022 Ukrainian woman with infant in Metro

Madonna of the Kyiv Metro: Ukrainian Mother with an Infant Becomes an Icon in a Naples Church



# From Shock to Resilience: Why Lviv Became a Critical Hub

Nationwide destruction made clear the need for resilience centers - and Lviv became one of the strongest, rapidly transforming into a key humanitarian, logistical, and institutional hub.

**Lviv** emerged as one of them - a historic and **strategic** 'gateway between worlds'





# Lviv: Gateway Between Worlds

## Historical Significance

- **Founded in 1256**
- Strategic location at **key crossroads of trade routes.**
- Part of several state formations over the centuries:
  - Principality of Galicia-Volhynia
  - Kingdom of Poland
  - Austro-Hungarian Empire
  - Interwar Poland
- Each era left lasting marks on:
  - architecture
  - culture
  - governance traditions
- Results: **unique blend of Western European and East Slavic influences.**
- This centuries-long experience fostered:
  - strong local self-organization
  - identity preservation
  - resilience at imperial borderlands



Since 1998, Lviv has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

# Lviv: Gateway Between Worlds

Located just 70 km from the Polish border, Lviv serves as a major gateway between Ukraine and the EU.

## Vital transport hubs for:

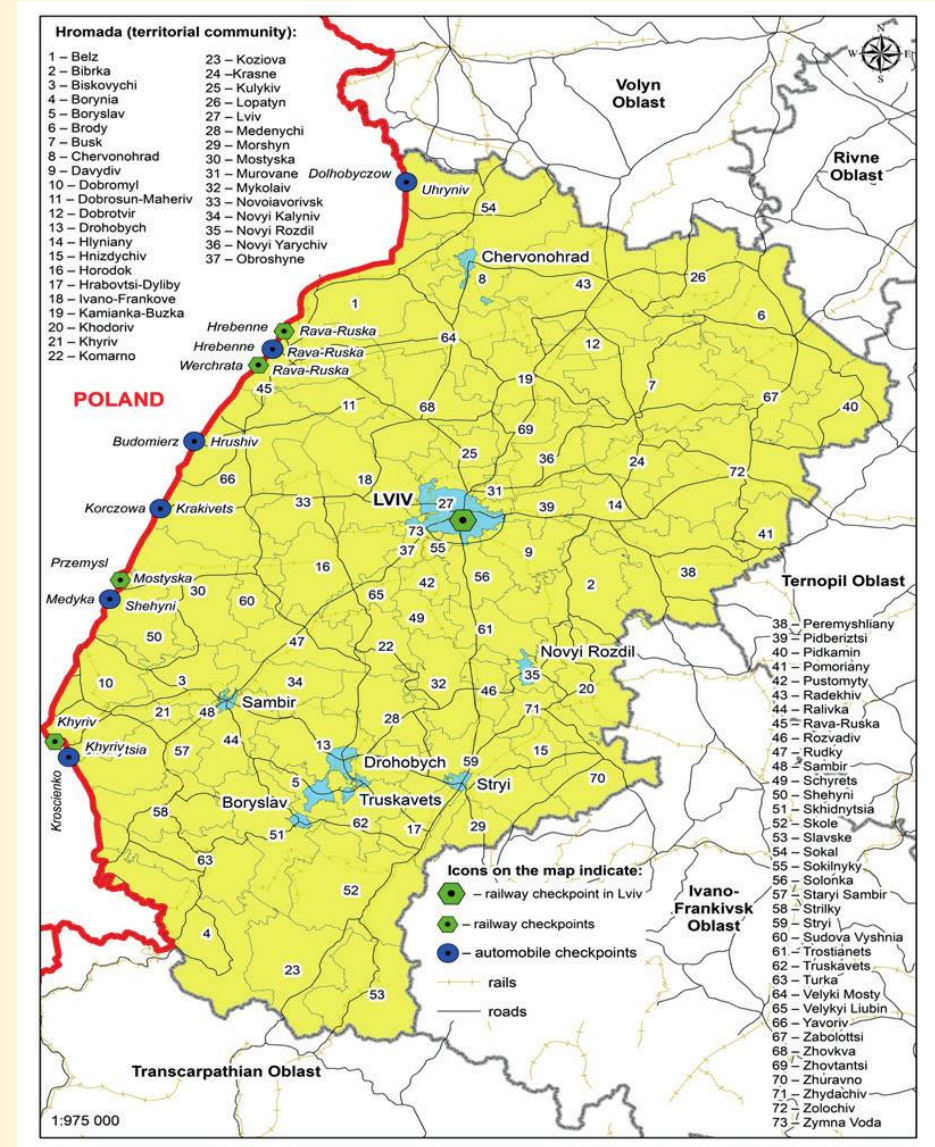
- Humanitarian aid
- Refugees
- Essential supplies

## Diverse landscape (mountains & plains)

= diverse preparedness needs:

- Evacuation logistics
- Urban sheltering
- Healthcare capacity

## Strategic Position Today





# Lviv's Demographic and Economic Transformation

## Industrial Heritage

Before the war, Lviv region featured diverse industries: mechanical engineering, food processing, and energy equipment production.

**The Drohobych Salt Plant (1250)** is Ukraine's oldest continuously operating industrial enterprise.



**Lviv Brewery (1715)**, now part of Carlsberg Ukraine, is the country's oldest beer producer, with historic facilities listed by UNESCO.





# Lviv's Demographic and Economic Transformation

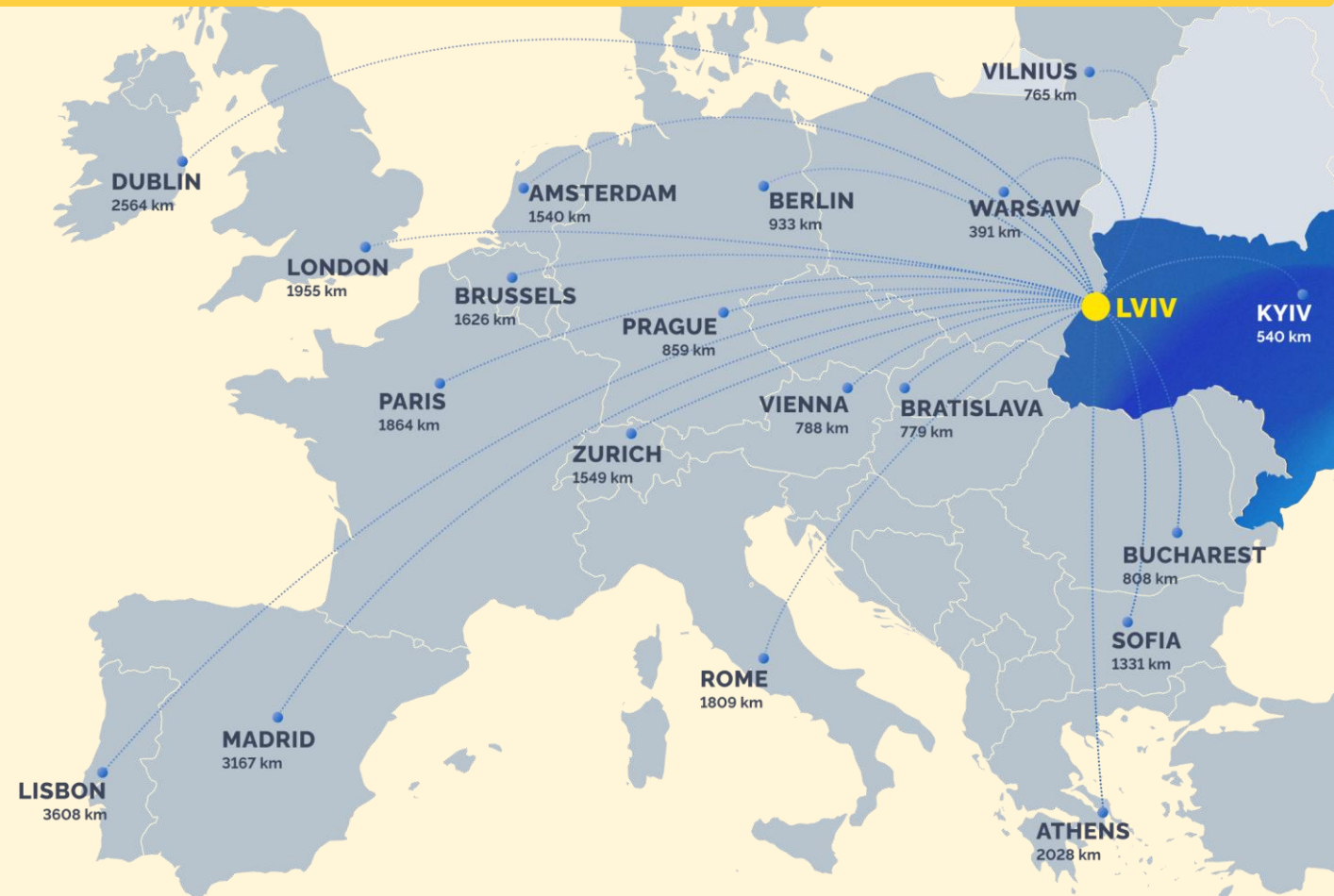


## Tech Hub Growth

In recent decades, Lviv has become a thriving IT and innovation hub, with an IT Cluster of over 300 companies generating more than \$1 billion in revenue and attracting highly skilled professionals and startups.

## Lviv as an IT & Innovation Hub

- **A leading tech center:** Lviv's IT cluster generates **\$1+ billion** annually and attracts skilled professionals and start-ups
- **Since 2022:** IT companies and the Lviv IT Cluster prioritize projects that **support Ukraine's resilience, security, and victory**
- **Global competitiveness:**
  - Ukraine ranks **15th worldwide** in business, technology, and data science skills (Coursera Global Skills Report 2023)
  - **+6 positions** compared to 2022



# Lviv's Demographic and Economic Transformation

- **Pre-war population:** ~720,000 (2022)
- **2025 estimate:** ~723,403 residents
- **Lviv Oblast (2022):** ~2.48 million
- **IDPs received:** over 200,000
- **Current population:** 900,000–1,000,000+



## Key Challenges in Lviv

- Overload from IDPs – housing & services
- Insufficient shelters, esp. in rural areas
- Energy vulnerability during massive attacks
- Healthcare under strain, lack of psychologists
- Education system: shelters + IDP integration
- Coordination gaps between authorities & NGOs



# Good Practices – Joint Efforts

- **Collaboration:** authorities, business, communities
- **Support for IDPs** – local & international initiatives
- **Volunteer and university-based projects**
- **Toloka**
- **Spiritual Preparedness**
- **Inclusive Stress-Free Communication:** Delivering Information Without Panic
- **Access to Services & Resilience:**
  - ✓ **Points of Invincibility** – electricity, heat, internet
  - ✓ **Medical hubs:** Unbroken, Superhumans
  - ✓ **Cultural and psychological resilience projects**

# Legislative Framework and Multi-Level Governance

## Ukraine's Civil Preparedness Framework

- Built on a **comprehensive legal system** coordinating central and local authorities.
- The **Constitution** defines the state's duty to ensure human security and outlines local self-government responsibilities.
- Key legislation includes:
  - **Law on the Legal Regime of Martial Law**
  - **Civil Protection Code**
  - **Law on Local Self-Government**
  - **Law on National Security**

### National Level

Sets strategic frameworks for civil protection and resilience through Cabinet resolutions, Presidential decrees, and NSDC decisions.

### Regional Level

Lviv Region implements civil protection and national resistance programs coordinated by the Regional Council and Regional Military Administration.

### Local Level

Lviv develops shelters, evacuation plans, digital alert tools, and community support mechanisms including IDP councils.



# Private Sector and Civil Society: Co-Creators of Resilience

Ukrainian companies support the state and communities through financial, humanitarian, media, and information efforts.



**CSR Ukraine:** Business Contribution to Victory Catalog (partnered with Diia.Business, featuring 300+ companies).



**"Saving Lives":** aid for 85,000+ IDPs



**Humanitarian Post of Ukraine:** free delivery of aid; support for relocation



**RISE + Octopus Energy:** 100 solar plants to stabilize power systems



**OKKO: Warm the Defenders** (free hot drinks/food) & UAH 207M+ for drones and military support

# Good Practices – Joint Efforts

The **IDP Centre at Lviv Polytechnic National University**, is an important focal point for civil preparedness. Several international partners, including the International Organization for Migration, support the Centre's activities.

The Centre houses hundreds of displaced people, and provides them with a range of services, assisted by student volunteers. It is a positive example of educational institutions functioning as an integral part of the **civil preparedness system**.





# Wartime Support

Sweden and Finland supports sustainable reconstruction and demolition waste management, green recovery, education, and civic solidarity in Ukraine

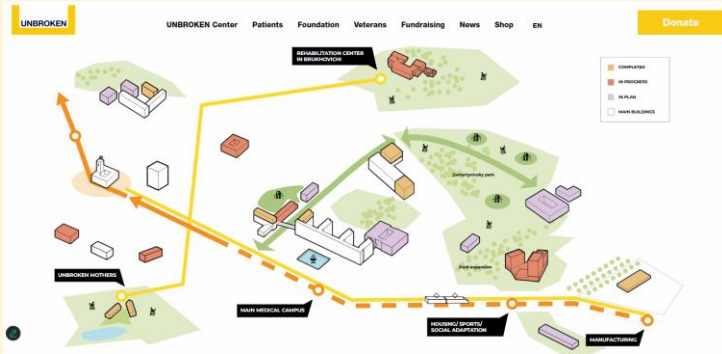


In Irpin, where over 900 buildings were destroyed, **Sweden** is launching a €5.9 million reconstruction project in autumn 2025, focused both on rebuilding and strengthening community resilience through capacity-building, including training female heavy-machinery operators.



**Finland** plays a strategic role in supporting Ukraine's recovery, education reform, and civil society resilience. Between 2022 and 2025, it supported nearly 50 Finnish business projects through the Finnpartnership programme, awarding a record €11.9 million in 2024.

# Resilience Through Decentralization: Energy, Food, and Healthcare



## Hospital Cluster Model

- Hospital clusters optimize **emergency routes** and concentrate **specialized care**
- The “**money follows the patient**” model (NHSU) gives hospitals financial autonomy and regions - greater responsibility



## Lviv Region

- Created a network of **37 hospitals** within the cluster model
- Operates “**supercluster**” institutions for highly specialized treatment

## Flagship Centers

- **Superhumans Center** - prosthetics, reconstructive surgery, rehabilitation
  - **UNBROKEN** - full ecosystem of medical, prosthetic, physical and psychological rehabilitation
- 19,000+ wounded Ukrainians** treated since 2022

## Healthcare System Transformation National Framework

- The **Law on Critical Infrastructure** and government resilience programs emphasize **backup power, energy efficiency, and autonomous healthcare facilities**

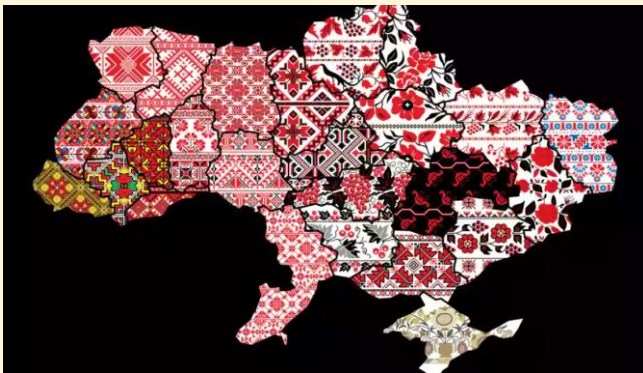


# Beyond Infrastructure: Psychological Resilience

From the Ukrainian perspective, civil preparedness extends beyond material functions to include psychological resilience, spiritual preparation, and cultural practices strengthening social cohesion during war.

Music, theatre, art, sports, and traditional mutual aid support morale and create trust environments.

The Ukrainian cultural tradition of «**toloka**» - voluntary community unification for solving urgent problems - manifests as both historical practice and modern social mechanism maintaining unity and psychological **resilience** against russian military aggression.



## Extraordinary societal mobilization



On 8 July 2024 in Kyiv, fire and rescue service workers, hospital staff and volunteers clear rubble and search for people trapped under debris after an attack.

## OKHMATDYT HOSPITAL, UKRAINE'S LARGEST CHILDREN'S MEDICAL CENTRE

**Ukrainians showed resilience:** volunteers mobilized, businesses adapted, and local authorities organized relief. The war proved preparedness is a shared duty.

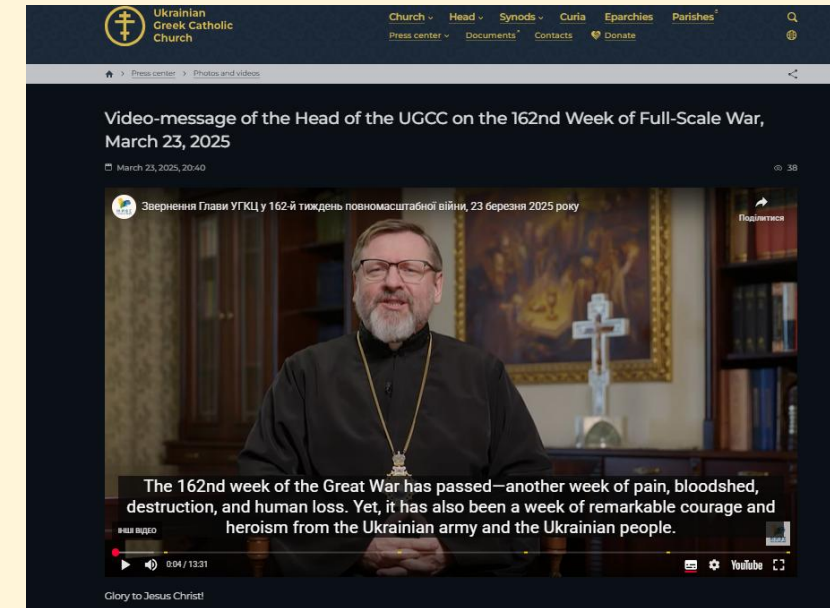
# Beyond Infrastructure: Psychological Resilience

The Center of Military Chaplaincy of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Lviv conducts services, moral lectures, and organizes pilgrimages for military personnel and families, strengthening **spiritual resilience**.

**Retreats like Hero's Compass** (8-day Carpathian adventure combining adventure therapy, art therapy, and group psychological support) and **Ukrainian Action Heroes** (two-week rehabilitation programs with group therapy and mindfulness activities) **promote psycho-emotional recovery**.

**The mhGAP programme**, implemented at the primary health care level, trains family doctors to diagnose and treat common mental disorders, significantly expanding access to **psychiatric care**.

## Spiritual Preparedness





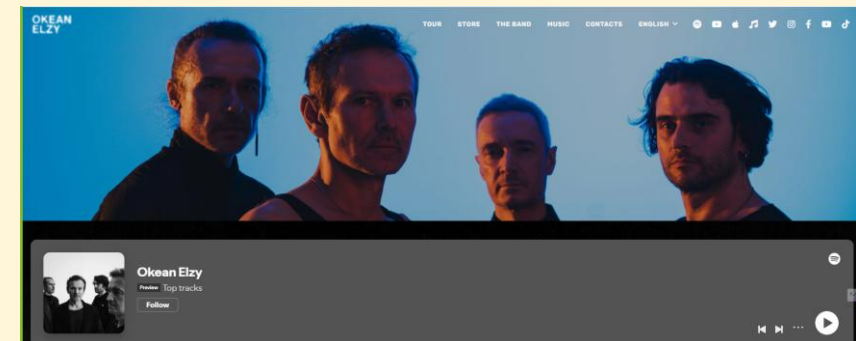
# Beyond Infrastructure: Cultural Preparedness

## Creative & Therapeutic Support for Resilience

- **Blue Sky Ukraine:** humanitarian aid + art therapy for tens of thousands of children (drawing, music, storytelling).
- **Art Therapy Force:** therapy for children, IDPs, and veterans in hospitals and universities.
- **International Medical Corps:** non-verbal art sessions for displaced children (e.g., “map of Ukraine from flowers”).
- **Music Therapy Project:** 12-week music courses reducing stress and depression among displaced people.
- **Victory Beats:** musicians and DJs providing long-term (up to 36 weeks) music therapy for veterans.
- **Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra:** refugee and diaspora musicians performing worldwide - **culture as resilience**.

The day will come - the war will end

## Cultural Expression and Healing



**Opportunities and  
lessons to be learned**



# LESSONS FROM A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

## Delivering of Information Without Panic

Air Alert app: clear, non-emotional alerts + short action steps; integrates mental-health advice (How Are You?)

### 1. Use simple messages and clear language

“what to do now / where to get help,” RCCE reduces anxiety & prevents infodemic

### 2. Multi-channel delivery of alerts and instructions

sirens, telethon, official channels, secure messengers, radios for blackout resilience

### 3. Accessibility for people with disabilities

sign language, subtitles, easy-to-read texts, audio descriptions, interpreter hotlines



# LESSONS FROM A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

## 4. Ensure a psychologically safe environment

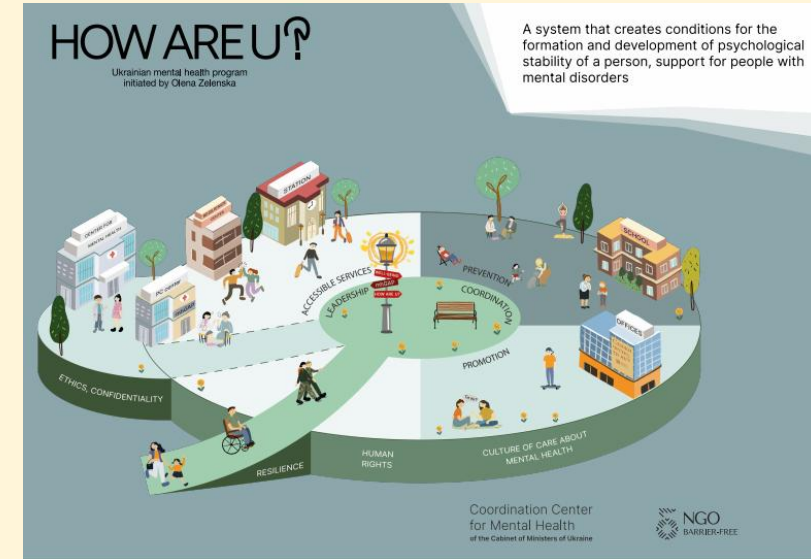
- Provide facts, simple risk assessments, and “anxiety buffers” (self-help tools, MHPSS contacts, offline support) to reduce stress
- Platforms such as *How Are You?*, *Mentalochka*, and UNFPA initiatives strengthen adolescents’ emotional resilience

## 5. Cybersecurity as part of civil preparedness

- SSSCIP and CERT-UA publish short checklists on passwords, MFA, phishing, backups, and incident-reporting
- Emphasis on “protect yourself and your community’s data” through action cards and short videos.

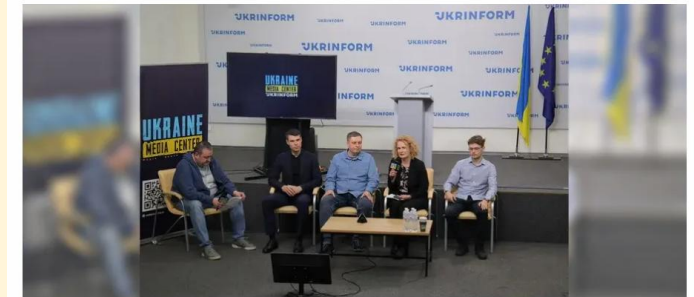
## 6. Counter disinformation

- Explain propaganda techniques and typical russian narratives
- Citizens must know how to recognize, what to do, and where to report disinformation (official fact-check channels)



Corruption is in the focus of Kremlin's information operations against Ukraine: results of a research of disinformation narratives

18.04.2024



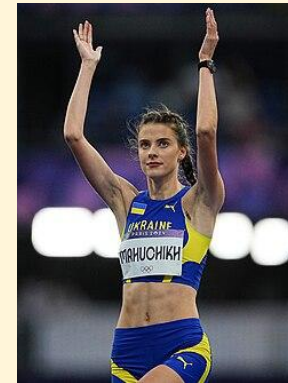


# LESSONS FROM A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

## 7. Leverage inspirational leaders in communication

This approach involves media messaging by popular inspirational figures, such as doctors, psychologists, clergy, educators, athletes and celebrities, who uphold ethical, patriotic beliefs and are experts in their field.

**Jamala** – EUROVISION WINNER 2016



**Yaroslava Mahuchikh** -  
High-jump world-  
record-holder

**Yuliia Paievska** - Taira's Angels,  
documented the medical efforts in Mariupol



**Borys Todurov** - renowned  
professor and surgeon



**Ukraine hospital chaplain: Under the bombs  
with faith and resilience**

**Father Yaroslav Rokhman** is a chaplain at the Perinatal Centre of Ivano-Frankivsk. His messages – “Love instead of aggression”, “After the dark night, a new day” – offer hope and inner peace to many families and strengthen civil resilience

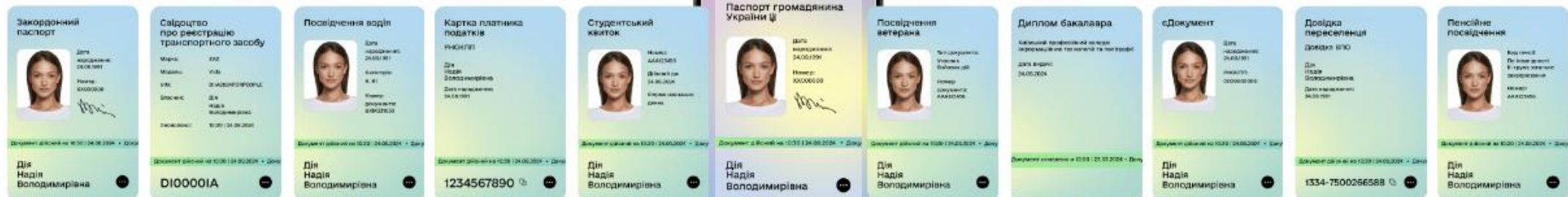
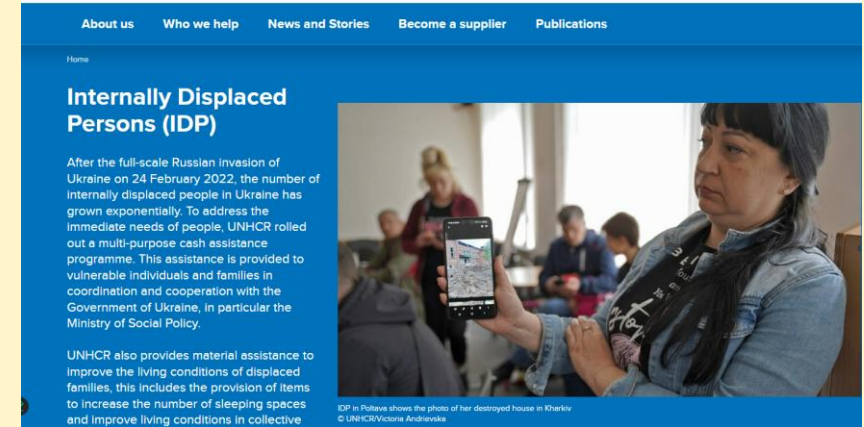
# LESSONS FROM A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

## 8. Bilaterality and community engagement

- **Develop IDP councils** and youth initiatives as permanent communication nodes
- **Involving IDPs** as co-authors of housing, employment, and social service solutions increases engagement
- **Practical formats:** Lviv IDP Council Forums, the national IDP councils portal, and regional/city IDP integration programs

## 9. Local barrier-free services

- **Diia** exemplifies barrier-free digital access to public services
- Provides **legally valid digital documents** (ID, driver's license, student ID, tax number), shelter maps, threat alerts, and civil defense services (eEnemy, eRecovery, eAssistance)
- e-Document enables **identity verification** without physical documents



# Closing Message

- Civil preparedness = shared responsibility
- Multi-level cooperation ensures resilience
- «Toloka»

## Key characteristics of resilience from Ukraine:

- Stability under shocks and stress
- Adaptability – the ability to adjust to new conditions
- Recoverability – returning to stability after a crisis
- Development – using a crisis as an opportunity for improvement



# Civil preparedness in practice

Lessons and insights from Ukraine

Zoriana Dvulit & Elin Slätmo



NORDREGIO WORKING PAPER 2025:5

# Civil preparedness in practice

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