

**ANALYSIS OF THE BARRIERS AND
DIFFICULTIES FACED BY INTERNALLY
DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS) WHEN
OBTAINING THE STATUS OF A RESIDENT
OF A MOUNTAINOUS SETTLEMENT IN THE
LVIV, IVANO-FRANKIVSK, ZAKARPATTIA,
AND CHERNIVTSI REGIONS**



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The Charitable Foundation “Rokada” serves as an executive partner of the **UN Refugee Agency**. The research was conducted within the framework of the Foundation’s activities and was aimed at supporting internally displaced persons, affected populations, and other vulnerable groups. The views presented in this study are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the **UN Refugee Agency**.

The research is aimed at **analyzing the barriers and difficulties faced by internally displaced persons (IDPs) when obtaining the status of a resident of a mountainous settlement** in the Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Zakarpattia, and Chernivtsi regions. The study is also intended to assess the interaction between stakeholders and develop recommendations to improve the procedure for providing this service.

The Charitable Foundation “Rokada” has been an executive partner of the **UN Refugee Agency** for over **20 years**. Until February 2022, the Foundation's team consisted of twenty people who helped refugees from more than forty countries, including Afghanistan, Sudan, and Syria, settle in Ukraine.

On February 24, 2022, everything changed for Ukrainians, refugees, and “Rokada.” Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, drawing on 20 years of experience and support from international organizations, our Foundation has expanded a network of regional offices in 14 regions of the country. Today, hundreds of specialists provide daily assistance to affected populations, internally displaced persons, and asylum seekers.

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The Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine has caused mass displacement of people to safer and more remote areas away from the combat zone, with a significant portion of internally displaced persons (IDPs) settling in the Western regions of Ukraine. According to the Information and Computing Center of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, as of September 1, 2024, 524, 674 IDPs were registered in Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, and Zakarpattia regions. Some of them settled in mountainous areas, and given the unstable security situation and the continuation of the evacuation efforts, the number of IDPs in remote communities may increase. As a result, this raises the issue of obtaining the status of a person residing and working (studying) in a settlement granted the status of a mountain locality by the internally displaced people.

Obtaining this status may be complicated by several factors, including insufficient awareness among IDPs about the possibility of acquiring it and the benefits provided to the status holders, misinterpretation of legal provisions by local authorities, lack of proper law enforcement practices, gaps in legislation, etc.

The absence of proper clarifications and recommendations for both IDPs and local authorities, as well as the reluctance or unwillingness of the latter to grant the corresponding status, lead to misunderstandings and violations of the legal rights of citizens who may be eligible for the status of a resident of a mountain settlement.

This highlights the need to identify the problems of internally displaced persons obtaining this status and develop effective solutions to address the existing obstacles. This study aims to analyze the barriers and challenges IDPs face in obtaining the status of a resident of a mountain settlement, assess the interaction between stakeholders, and develop recommendations to improve the procedure for providing the relevant service.

Research objectives:

1. To determine the level of awareness among internally displaced persons (IDPs) regarding the status of the settlement in which they reside, as well as the possibility of obtaining the special status of a person living and working (studying) in a mountain settlement.
2. To assess the scale of requests regarding the acquisition of the status of a resident of a mountain settlement.
3. To examine the reasons for rejection of applications and other obstacles related to obtaining the status of a resident of a mountain settlement.
4. To develop recommendations for improving the quality of service provision, including proposals for legislative amendments to align its provisions with current realities.

The findings of the research may serve as the basis for developing new initiatives and programs aimed at improving the living conditions of IDPs in mountain settlements, facilitating their better integration, and preventing violations of their rights.

Research Methodology

In addition to preparing information requests to local authorities, a quantitative data collection method was also used. Data was collected through an online survey. Standardized questionnaires were prepared for the respondents (closed-ended questions with answer options and two open-ended questions). The survey was conducted through the self-completion of the questionnaire by the respondents in an online form.

The survey was anonymous and participation was voluntary. During the survey, no personal data, such as mobile phone numbers, email addresses, or other information that could identify the individual, was disclosed.

All the received responses were statistically processed and presented in a summarized form.

Target Audience: individuals from among internally displaced persons (IDPs) who reside, study, or work in settlements granted mountain status. The survey was conducted from **July 30 to September 27, 2024.**

Scope: 400 respondents.

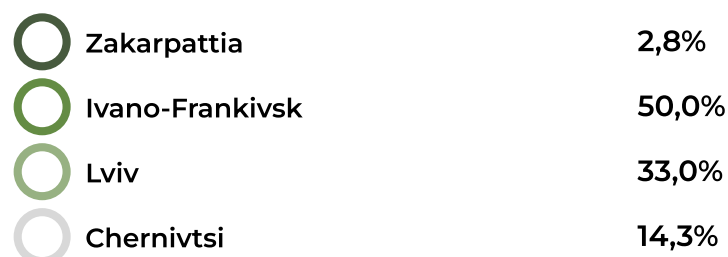
Sampling Method: convenience sampling, availability sampling method

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

A total of **400 internally displaced persons (IDPs)**, registered in settlements granted mountain status, participated in the survey:

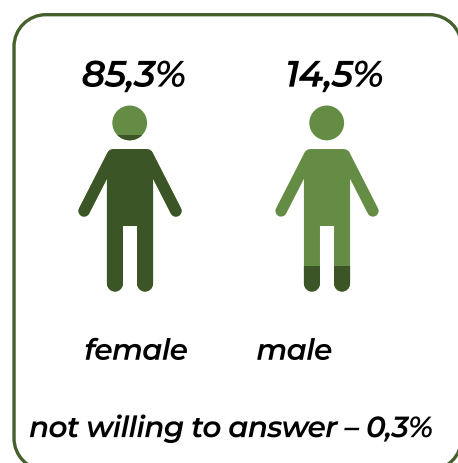
- **50%** of the respondents currently reside in Ivano-Frankivsk region;
- **33%** are from Lviv region;
- **14.3%** from Chernivtsi region;
- **2.8%** from Zakarpattia region.

Region in which you as an IDP are registered or currently residing, working, or studying

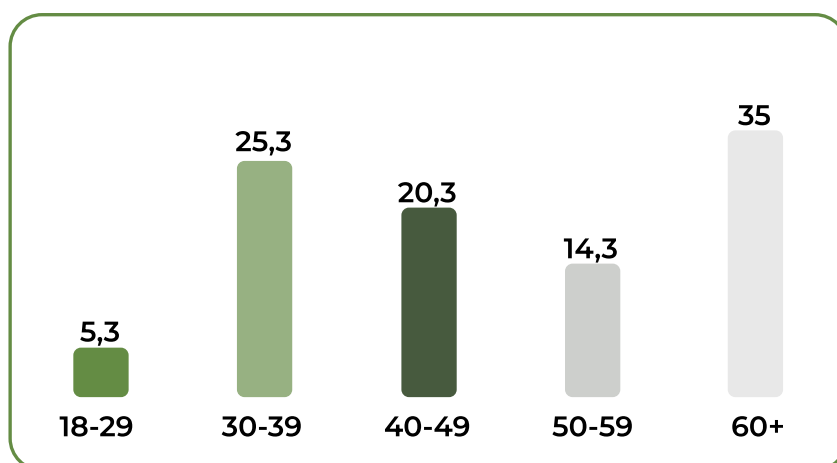


Among the respondents, **85,3%** are women, **14,5%** are men, and **0,3%** of the respondents refused to disclose their gender.

Concerning the age structure of the respondents, **35%** belong to the 60+ age group, **25,3%** are in the 30-39 age group, **20,3%** are in the 40-49 age group, and **14,3%** are in the 50-59 age group. Only **5,3%** of the respondents fall into the 18-29 age group.



sex



age

General Overview of the Situation Regarding IDPs Living in Mountain Settlements

Determining the Number of IDPs Registered in Mountain Settlements

According to data received from the Ministry of Social Policy, as of September 23, 2024, the number of registered IDPs who have been registered for more than six months in settlements granted mountain status totaled **70,665 people**.

The largest number of internally displaced persons registered in mountain settlements is in the Ivano-Frankivsk region, with **34,222 individuals**. In the Zakarpattia region, the number of registered IDPs in mountain settlements is **18,050**; in the Lviv region, there are **15,232** such **people**; and in the Chernivtsi region, this number is **3,161 individuals**.

Determining the Number of Vocational and Higher Education Institutions with Full-time Study Programs Located in Regions with Mountain Settlements, and the Number of IDP Students Enrolled with State Budget Funding

According to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Resolution № 345 dated March 19, 1996, the issuance of a certificate for residents of mountain settlements is provided, among other things, for individuals who are studying in mountain settlements.

In the **Ivano-Frankivsk region**, 48 educational institutions are located in areas where mountain settlements are situated. The number of IDP students studying in these institutions with state budget funding is 328 individuals.

Directly in mountain settlements, there are 5 educational institutions located in the towns of Kosiv and Nadvirna, with 14 IDP students enrolled in them on state budget funding.

In the **Lviv region**, 19 educational institutions are located in areas where mountain settlements are located. The number of IDP students studying in these institutions with state budget funding is 138 individuals.

Directly in mountain settlements, there are 2 educational institutions located in the towns of Borynia and Turka, with 6 IDP students enrolled in them on state budget funding.

In the **Zakarpattia region**, there are 13 institutions of vocational-technical and higher education, located in districts where mountainous settlements are situated. The number of students from internally displaced persons who study at these institutions with state budget funding is 187 individuals.

At the same time, unlike the Ivano-Frankivsk and Lviv regions, there are no mountainous settlements in the **Zakarpattia region** where vocational-technical and higher education institutions are located.

In the **Chernivtsi region**, there is the smallest number of educational institutions located in districts with mountainous settlements, and the number of IDP students studying at these institutions with state funding is 11 individuals.

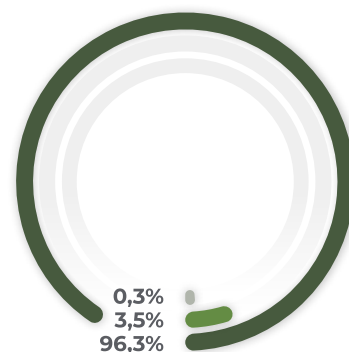
As in the Zakarpattia region, there are no mountainous settlements in the Chernivtsi region where vocational-technical and higher education institutions are located.

Overview of the awareness level of IDPs regarding the opportunities to obtain the status of a resident of a mountainous settlement

Awareness of IDPs about the status of the settlement they live in

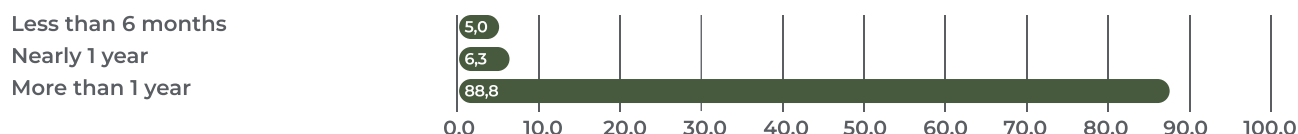
96.3% of respondents live in mountain settlements, 3.5% work, and only 0.3% study there.

On the territory of the mountainous settlement you are



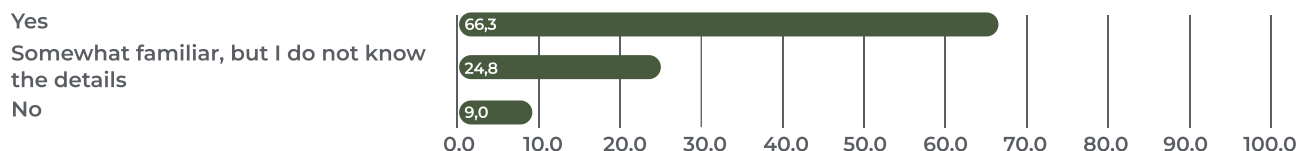
The vast majority of respondents (88.8%) have been living, working, or studying in their chosen settlements for more than a year, while 6.3% have been there for about a year, and 5% have been there for less than six months.

How long have you been living/working/studying in this settlement?



Regarding the level of awareness of IDPs about the status of the settlement they live in, 66.3% of respondents are aware that it has the status of a mountainous settlement. 24.8% are somewhat familiar with the status of their settlement but do not know the details. 9% of respondents are unaware that the settlement they live in has the status of a mountainous settlement.

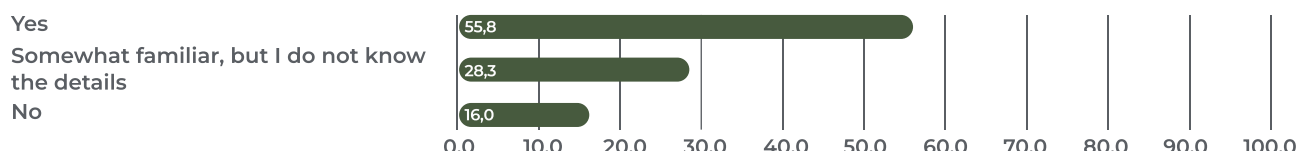
Are you familiar with the fact that the settlement you are living/working/studying in is included in the list of settlements provided with the status of a mountainous settlement?



Awareness of IDPs about the possibility of obtaining the status of a resident of a mountainous settlement and the benefits associated with it

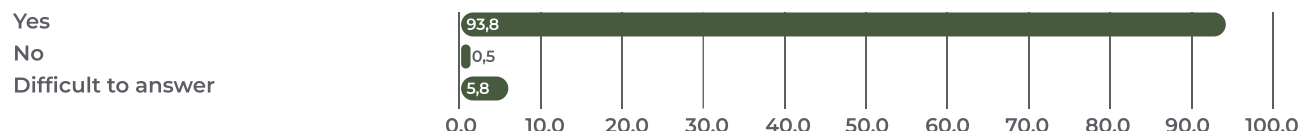
55.8% of respondents are aware of the possibility of obtaining the special status of a person living, working (or studying) in a mountainous settlement. 28.3% are poorly informed about the opportunities to obtain such status and, therefore, do not know the details. 16% of respondents are unaware of the possibility of obtaining the corresponding status.

Do you know about the possibility of obtaining a special status of a person residing, working, or studying in the territory of a mountainous settlement?



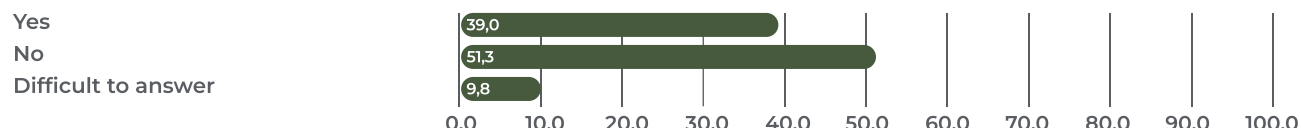
Despite the relatively small proportion of respondents who are aware of the possibility of obtaining the status of a resident of a mountainous settlement, the overwhelming majority, 93.8% of respondents, wish to obtain this status. 5.8% chose the answer "difficult to answer," and only 0.5% provided a negative response.

Are you willing to obtain the status of a person residing, working, or studying in the territory of a mountainous settlement?



Only 39% of respondents are aware of the benefits provided to those who have the status of a person living, working (or studying) in a mountainous settlement. 51.3% responded that they do not know, and 9.8% chose the answer "hard to say".

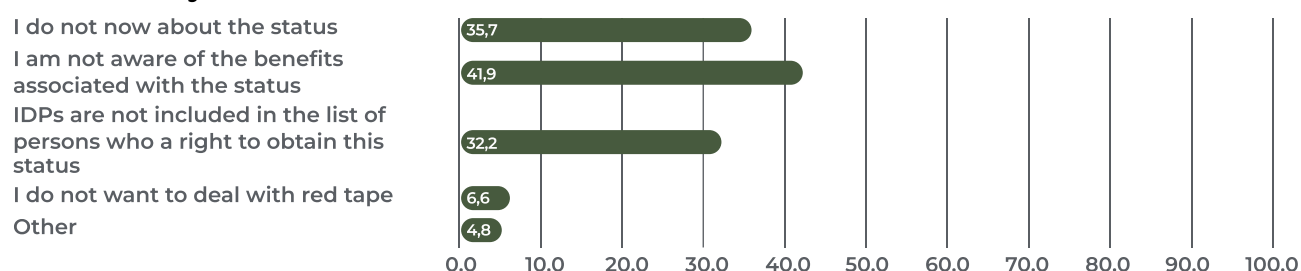
Do you know about the benefits provided for persons with the status of person residing, working, or studying in the territory of a mountainous settlement?



According to the obtained data, a significant number of people are unaware of the possibility of obtaining the status of a resident of a mountainous settlement and, therefore, do not exercise their rights.

Specifically, 35.7% responded that they did not know about such a status, 41.9% of respondents are not aware of the benefits provided by this status, 32.2% answered that IDPs are not included in the list of individuals eligible to obtain this status, 6.6% indicated that they do not want to engage in bureaucratic procedures, and 4.8% of respondents chose the "other" option.

What is the reason why you have not applied for the status of person residing, working, or studying in the territory of a mountainous settlement or do not want to do so?

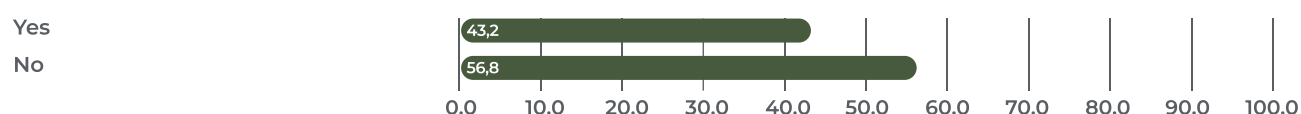


Issues Faced by IDPs in the Context of Obtaining the Status of a Resident of a Mountainous Settlement

Processing Cases of Denials in Obtaining the Status of a Resident of a Mountainous Settlement

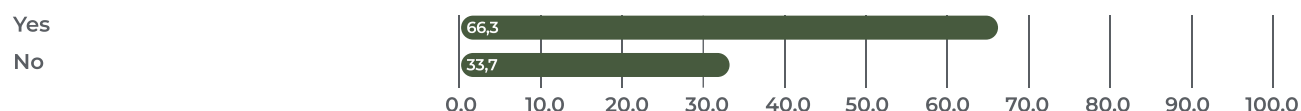
43.2% of those surveyed approached the relevant local administration or the executive body of the city, town, or village council to acquire the status of a person who lives, works (studies) in the territory of a mountainous settlement.

Have you contacted local authorities regarding the possibility of obtaining the status of person residing, working, or studying in the territory of a mountainous settlement?



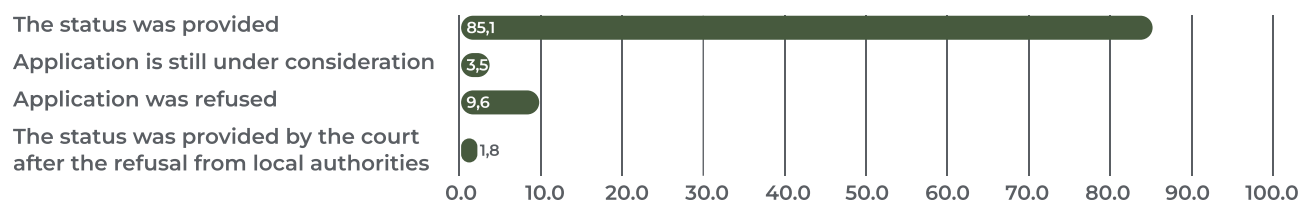
Of those who approached the local authorities, **66.3%** reported that their application was accepted by the relevant competent authority for consideration, while **33.7%** received a negative response.

Has your application been accepted by a competent authority?



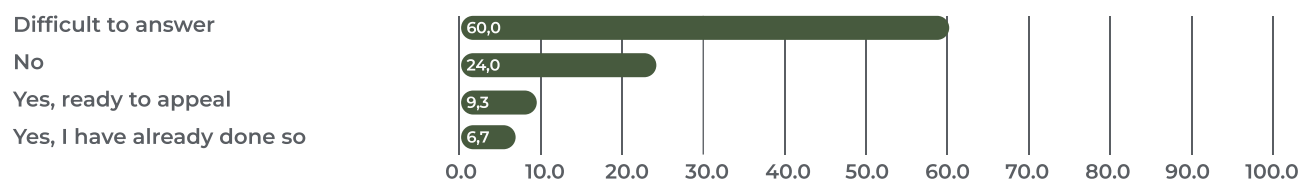
Regarding those whose applications were accepted for consideration, **85.1%** reported that they were granted the status of a resident of a mountainous settlement, **9.6%** stated that they were denied this status, **3.5%** indicated that their application is still under consideration, and **1.8%** mentioned that the status was granted following a court decision after appealing the denial.

What was the decision based on your application?



In the case of a denial, **9.3%** of respondents expressed their willingness to appeal the decision in court, while **6.7%** stated that they had already done so. **24%** indicated that they were not willing to appeal the decision in court, and **66%** chose the answer "difficult to answer".

Are you ready to appeal to the court in the case of refusal?



Internally displaced persons (IDPs) who did not apply for the status of a resident of a mountainous settlement made this decision because they were aware of rejections faced by other IDPs and were uncertain whether they would receive assistance. Some of the respondents did not apply for the status because they did not experience the need to do so.

Analysis of the Main Reasons for Denial of the Status of a Resident of a Mountainous Settlement

The most common reason for the denial of this status was the place of registration of the respondents. Representatives of the relevant authorities reject the status application for individuals living in mountainous settlements, arguing that internally displaced persons (IDPs) reside in these settlements temporarily.

Respondents were also informed that if they were granted the status of a resident of a mountainous settlement, they would lose their IDP status. Additionally, the authorities mentioned the lack of funding for payments to individuals with the status of a resident of a mountainous settlement, the prohibition of granting such status to IDPs, and the lack of legislative regulation on this issue. In some cases, internally displaced persons were advised to appeal to the court.

The denial of the status of a resident of a mountainous settlement to internally displaced persons (IDPs) is primarily caused by gaps in Ukrainian legislation. The Law of Ukraine “On the Status of Mountainous Settlements in Ukraine”, enacted on February 15, 1995, does not include provisions regarding the permanent residence of internally displaced persons at their place of registration. As a result, IDPs are not included in the list of individuals entitled to receive the certificate.

Additionally, the Regulation on the Procedure for Issuing the Certificate of a Citizen Who Lives, Works (Studies) in the Territory of a Mountainous Settlement, dated March 19, 1996, has not been amended to regulate the possibility of granting the corresponding status based on the certificate of registration of an internally displaced person (IDP). This certificate confirms the displacement of the person and contains information about their actual place of residence. However, the permanent place of residence is considered to be the settlement that the IDP has left.

Furthermore, the provisions of the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons”, dated October 20, 2014, confirm that IDPs reside in the territory of mountainous settlements temporarily. This law does not include provisions about the permanent residence of IDPs at their place of registration.

Conclusions

Based on the research results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- There is a relatively low level of awareness among IDPs regarding the status of the settlement in which they reside

Although the majority of respondents (**66.3%**) are aware that the settlement in which they live has the status of a mountainous settlement, a significant portion of the respondents (**33.7%**) are either only superficially familiar with the status of their settlement or are completely unaware of it.

- There is a low level of awareness among IDPs about the possibility of obtaining the status of a person who lives, works, or studies in the territory of a mountainous settlement

A slightly larger portion of respondents (**55.8%**) are aware of the possibility of obtaining this status, while the rest either do not know the details about how to acquire such a status (**28.3%**) or have no information on the matter at all (**16%**).

- There is a low level of awareness among IDPs about the benefits provided by the status of a person who lives, works, or studies in the territory of a mountainous settlement

Just over half of the respondents (**51.3%**) are unaware of the benefits associated with the relevant status, and **9.8%** were unable to provide an answer. Only **39%** of the respondents are aware of the benefits provided by the status of a resident of a mountainous settlement. This finding is further supported by the responses of IDPs regarding the reason they did not apply for this status: the largest proportion (**41.9%**) of respondents were unaware of the advantages offered by this status.

- There is a high demand for obtaining the status of a resident of a mountainous settlement, despite low awareness of its details

Despite the responses indicating a low level of awareness about the specifics of this status, the overwhelming majority of respondents (**93.8%**) expressed a desire to obtain the status of a resident of a mountainous settlement. These responses serve as an indicator of broader trends, particularly the significant demand among IDPs for any form of assistance or benefits.

- There is relatively high rate of rejections for applications regarding the status of a resident of a mountainous settlement

Although one-third of respondents (**33.7%**) were denied consideration of their applications, the majority (**66.3%**) still received a positive decision following their submission. Furthermore, **85.1%** of those whose applications were accepted for consideration were granted the status of a resident of a mountainous settlement.

- The presence of legislative contradictions and the lack of clarifications for local government representatives lead to rejections of the status for internally displaced persons (IDPs)

According to the respondents' answers, the most common reason for denial was the place of registration of the IDPs, as local government representatives considered the place of registration (the settlements the IDPs had left) as their permanent residence. Additionally, representatives of the relevant authorities justified their rejections by citing the lack of funding for payments to this category of individuals, the lack of legislative regulation on the issue, and so on. Moreover, there were cases of outright reluctance to grant the status, with local government representatives stating that granting the status of a resident of a mountainous settlement to IDPs was prohibited or immediately directing such individuals to court.

Recommendations

Given the difficulties faced by internally displaced persons (IDPs) in obtaining the status of a person who lives and works (studies) in a settlement granted the status of a mountainous settlement, a number of recommendations have been developed aimed at improving awareness and removing obstacles in the context of granting this status to IDPs.

1. Improving awareness

- Disseminate information about the status of a resident of a mountainous settlement and the benefits provided by it through social media, websites, and other informational channels of local government bodies and state authorities.
- Charitable foundations and international organizations, in cooperation with local government bodies, should organize informational meetings with IDPs who have been living in or have recently arrived in mountainous settlements, to provide consultations regarding the process of obtaining the status of a resident of a mountainous settlement and the benefits associated with it.

2. Increasing the Competence of Relevant Authorities' Employees

- Develop guidelines at the level of regional military administrations regarding the granting of the status of a resident of a mountainous settlement to IDPs. The guidelines should include information on the most common judicial approaches to resolving legal conflicts, as well as explanations regarding the possibility for IDPs to obtain the status of a resident of a mountainous settlement under national legislation.
- Charitable foundations and international organizations should conduct training for employees of the relevant authorities on granting the status of a resident of a mountainous settlement to internally displaced persons.

3. Regulation of Legislative Conflicts

- The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine should amend the Regulation on the procedure for issuing a certificate to a citizen residing, working (studying) in a mountainous settlement, dated March 19, 1996, to regulate the possibility of granting the relevant status based on a certificate of registration of an internally displaced person.
- The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine should amend the Law of Ukraine "On Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons" dated October 20, 2014, to ensure that the provisions of the Law provide for the permanent nature of IDPs' residence at their place of registration.
- The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine needs to amend Article 6 of the Law of Ukraine "On the Status of Mountainous Settlements in Ukraine" by increasing the amount of state payments for internally displaced persons.

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1. [Analytics of Internally Displaced Persons in Ukraine \[Electronic Resource\] / State Enterprise "Information and Computing Center of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine".](#)
2. [Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine On the Certificate of a Citizen Residing, Working \(Studying\) in the Territory of a Mountainous Settlement from March 19, 1996 \[Electronic Resource\] / Official Portal of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.](#)
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