



# IDPs: life before and during the coronavirus

External online study of the needs of internally displaced persons during the COVID-19 full quarantine and easing process

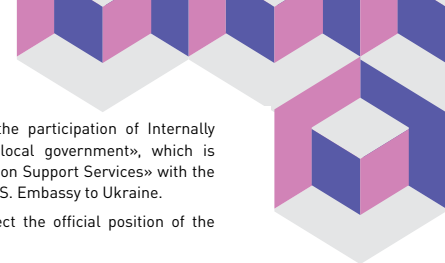
 **IDPCouncils**

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Implemented within the project «Strengthening the participation of Internally Displaced Persons in democratic processes of local government», which is implemented by the Charity Foundation «Stabilization Support Services» with the support of the Democracy Grants Program of the U.S. Embassy to Ukraine. The views of the authors do not necessarily reflect the official position of the U.S. Government.



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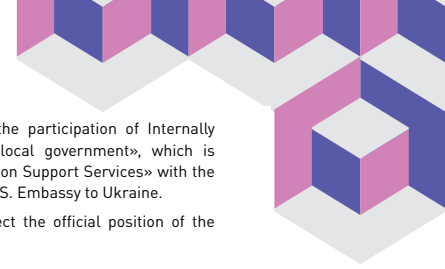
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## TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED

**OSA** — Oblast State Administration

**LGB** — local government body

**LA** — legal act

**IDPs** — Internally Displaced Persons

**EECP** — entry/exit checkpoints

**CC** — collective centre, i.e. modular town, sanatorium, dormitory

**ATO** — Anti-terrorist operation

**JFO** — Joint Forces Operation to ensure national security and defense, repel and deter armed aggression of the Russian Federation in the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts.

**CMU** — Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine

**MOH** — Ministry of Health of Ukraine.

**MES** — Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

**MSPU** — Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine



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## CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

Internal displacement remains the most problematic social consequence of the armed conflict in Donbas for both IDPs and the host community. Unfortunately, the problem of internal displacement remains underrepresented and underaddressed in all forms of narratives in Ukraine. Often we do not have a holistic view of what is happening to IDPs, largely because we lack qualitative and centralized analysis. The state is also often unable to effectively assist and support Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), as most national policies do not comply with international guidelines on internal displacement<sup>1</sup>.

Due to the quarantine announced on March 12, 2020, which meant the transfer of most workers to remote work or «vacation at their own expense», IDPs have become an even weaker group, as they are more vulnerable to situations of inequality. As of April 13, 2020, there are 1,446,881 IDPs in Ukraine, with the highest concentration in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts, and the city of Kyiv. IDPs often have limited access to basic services due to the socio-economic and psychological burden, which often excludes them from IDP support networks<sup>2</sup>.

One of the basic problems faced by most IDPs immediately after crossing the contact line is finding housing in a new place of residence<sup>3</sup>. When IDPs reach a new place of permanent or temporary residence, they usually do not have access to housing stock, which is exacerbated by the lack of relevant information on where to go<sup>4</sup>. After all, most IDPs find refuge in places where they can afford to rent, and often live with large families in confined spaces. Before the pandemic solving housing problems was already among the main tasks of every IDP, in a pandemic this group becomes more vulnerable to coronavirus infection and its rapid spread among household members.

IDPs, without a full understanding of the legal nature of their status, may face systemic barriers to receiving social or medical care<sup>5</sup>. Already in the case of day-to-day medical or social problems, IDPs have faced structural problems over the past six years, which are rooted in their legal status, alienating them from the new community<sup>6</sup>, marginalizing and discouraging them from seeking help from state institutions. In the situation of a pandemic, IDPs may not have access to relevant information, especially if central and local governments do not use the full range of media resources to communicate with IDPs and host communities. It is also worth taking into account the

1 Marta Jaroszewicz. Years After Crimea's Annexation, Integration of Ukraine's Internally Displaced Population Remains Uneven. The Online Journal of Migration Policy Institute.

2 Kuznetsova I., Mikheeva O., Kathling J., Round D., Babenko S. Mental Health of Internally Displaced Persons and the population of Ukraine: the results of a national survey and interviews with experts. Brief description and results. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2585511

3 Gentile, Michael. Geopolitical Fault-Line Cities / Migration and the Ukraine Crisis A Two-Country Perspective ed. Agnieszka Pikulicka-Wilczewska & Greta Uehling. 2017. – p. 13.

4 REPORT OF THE NATIONAL MONITORING SYSTEM ON THE SITUATION WITH INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS. International Organization for Migration. December 2018

5 Ensuring the right to medical care for Internally Displaced Persons on the example of Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv regions / Chernousov A.M., Shcherban S.V. - Kharkiv: Kharkiv Institute of Social Research, 2015.

6 Report on the results of the all-Ukrainian survey of Internally Displaced Persons and residents of host communities. Kyiv International Sociology Institute, 2016.



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economic possibilities of IDPs, who do not have the opportunity to go to private clinics and depend on free medicine. Even if they can go to a public clinic, they are more likely to compete with other citizens and vulnerable groups, as most hospitals have limited capacity and resources. Given the fact that COVID-19 is putting extreme pressure on health systems around the world, it only complicates the situation for IDPs. This situation also shows the propensity of IDPs living in areas close to the contact line to cross-border practices - i.e. crossing the contact line to receive medical or other services<sup>7</sup>. This movement between controlled and uncontrolled territories is a reflection of the basic needs of both IDPs who have left their homes and moved to controlled territories, and citizens of Ukraine who continue to live in uncontrolled territories of certain districts of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts. The basic reasons for such practices are the need to care for the third generation of the family and property and to receive social and medical services. From the beginning of the pandemic, the crossing of the contact line was restricted, which led to severe consequences, including the inability to obtain the necessary medical care.

Continuing the previous argument, it should be noted that IDPs also often face certain problems due to their registration and legal status of “IDP”<sup>8</sup>. And if for a certain part of IDPs it is connected with daily discrimination on the basis of «registration» (refusal to rent housing, problems in medical institutions, constant «redirection» of IDP problems to other institutions, etc.), then for people with IDP status, who need to move across the contact line, this is due to the need to obtain «citizenship» of the self-proclaimed republics in order to legalize their stay there. In this situation, «passports» become a means of survival, not a sign of citizenship or loyalty<sup>9</sup>. Therefore, crossing contact line is a necessary survival practice for a certain number of IDPs. Three times a year, a study by the International Organization for Migration records the reverse movement of IDPs, i.e. return to the temporarily occupied territories - their number is from 8 to 21% of respondents (since 2017), and the main reason for return is the availability of private property (housing), and, therefore, no need to spend the lion’s share of income for rent<sup>10</sup>.

Given all of the above, it can be confirmed that IDPs and their families are extremely vulnerable to loss of livelihood and financial insecurity. This is especially noticeable during quarantine and particularly affects those IDPs who frequently cross the contact line. According to IOM, 55% of IDP workers after relocation were employed in areas that may be vulnerable to the spread of infection - i.e. worked in areas of vital importance

7 Mikheeva, Oksana. Step out of the shadows: The impact of politics of (non) recognition the facts from the lives of people from the areas of Luhansk and Donetsk regions not controlled by Ukraine on men’s and women’s roles in everyday life. PAX, March 2018; Analysis of Humanitarian Trends Government Controlled Areas of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts within 20 km of the Line of Contact, REACH, July 2019 - [https://www.impact-repository.org/document/reach/1904056d/REACH\\_UKR\\_Report\\_MSNA\\_July-2019.pdf](https://www.impact-repository.org/document/reach/1904056d/REACH_UKR_Report_MSNA_July-2019.pdf)

8 RESIDENCE REGISTRATION SYSTEM IN UKRAINE: its impact on the realization of human rights and vital interests. The results of a sociological study. - Kyiv: CEDOS Analytical Center, 2018; LOST IN PAPERS: observance of social rights of Internally Displaced Persons. Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union, 2017; ASSEMBLING THE PUZZLE: THE IMPACT OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND ACCESS TO ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES IN UKRAINE. Report on the results of the study. - KYIV, 2018.

9 Mikheeva, Oksana. Get out of the shadows: The impact of politics of (non) recognition the facts from the lives of people from the areas of Luhansk and Donetsk regions not controlled by Ukraine on men’s and women’s roles in everyday life.

10 REPORT OF THE NATIONAL MONITORING SYSTEM ON THE SITUATION WITH INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS. IOM, September 2019. - [http://iom.org.ua/sites/default/files/nms\\_round\\_15\\_ukr\\_screen.pdf](http://iom.org.ua/sites/default/files/nms_round_15_ukr_screen.pdf)

11 Ibid.



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(health, services, trade, etc.)<sup>11</sup>. At the same time, according to the International Labor Organization, more than a third of IDPs work off the books<sup>12</sup>. Thus, IDPs are also very vulnerable to coronavirus infection due to the fact that they often work on the «first line» and have a high risk of losing their jobs due to quarantine restrictions. Quarantine can significantly limit sources of income, which will obviously lead to financial problems, pushing them deeper into poverty. This financial insecurity, combined with weak social support systems and infrastructure, can also lead to food insecurity, mental health vulnerabilities, and life-threatening health problems.

All IDP problems described over the last six years, challenges and life quality deterioration can lead to relocation or forced migration to uncontrolled areas after the opening of access through the contact line. Risks of extreme poverty, food insecurity, loss of employment or income, death of relatives due to the virus and other socio-economic factors may force IDPs to relocate. Once IDPs are displaced to uncontrolled territories, any progress and development towards their integration into new communities that they have received during their stay as displaced persons will be in vain.

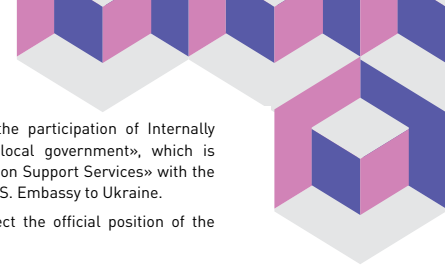
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12 ЗВІТ НАЦІОНАЛЬНОЇ СИСТЕМИ МОНІТОРИНГУ СИТУАЦІЇ З ВНУТРІШНЬО ПЕРЕМІЩЕНИМИ ОСОБАМИ. МОМ, Вересень 2019 р. - [http://iom.org.ua/sites/employment\\_needs\\_assessment\\_and\\_employability\\_of\\_internally\\_displaced\\_persons\\_in\\_ukraine\\_summary\\_of\\_survey\\_findings\\_and\\_recommendations/](http://iom.org.ua/sites/employment_needs_assessment_and_employability_of_internally_displaced_persons_in_ukraine_summary_of_survey_findings_and_recommendations/) / ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe. - Budapest: ILO, 2016 - [http://www.un.org.ua/images/documents/4525/wcms\\_457535.pdf](http://www.un.org.ua/images/documents/4525/wcms_457535.pdf)



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# THEORETICAL BASES AND SUBSTANTIATION OF THE NECESSITY OF THE RESEARCH

## Theoretical bases of research

The problem of social adaptation and integration of Internally Displaced Persons in Ukraine does not lose its relevance, and is especially exacerbated by the spread of coronavirus infection COVID-19, quarantine aimed at curbing its spread and economic crisis. Despite the significant number of measures to support and ensure faster adaptation of IDPs by public authorities and local governments, the number of measures aimed at integration and further inclusion before the start of quarantine is almost non-existent, most of them implemented by national and international NGOs. Positive measures introduced by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine to overcome the consequences of the spread of coronavirus infection have partially reduced the burden on IDPs, but many questions remain unanswered.

External online research of the needs of Internally Displaced Persons was conducted by the CF Stabilization Support Services in cooperation with InMind Analytics within the project «Strengthening the participation of Internally Displaced Persons in democratic processes of local government» (hereinafter - IDP Councils) with the support of the Democracy Grants Program of the U.S. Embassy to Ukraine. This project aims to involve IDPs in democratic and governance processes, especially on issues directly related to their fate and the search for long-term solutions, through the establishment of advisory bodies - IDP Councils - at local authorities and local governments. IDP Councils are called upon to represent the interests of IDPs, establish a dialogue and improve the quality of decision-making on important issues of state and public life. The data obtained from this research allow to expand the capacity of local authorities in the integration of IDPs, taking into account the needs and interests of IDPs in the process of policy development and management decisions at the local level, especially during quarantine and its easing.

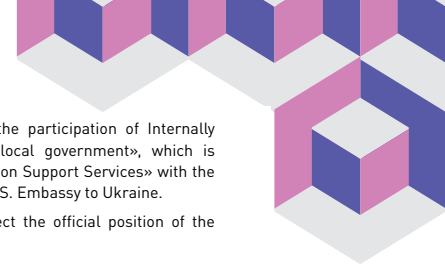
## Objective of the research

To determine the impact and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the socio-economic situation, as well as on the processes of adaptation and integration of IDPs in the target communities in order to identify available resources, identify problem areas and conflict situations that may become barriers in the identification of long-term solutions and further development of recommendations.



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## Tasks of the research

1. Outline the basic needs of IDPs before the start of national quarantine due to the spread of coronavirus infection COVID-19.
2. Determine how quarantine due to coronavirus infection has affected the socio-economic situation, as well as the processes of adaptation and integration of IDPs in the Oblast.
3. Find out which IDP groups have become the most vulnerable during quarantine in the Oblast.
4. Formulate the problems of IDPs, which have become even more relevant and exacerbated in connection with the pandemic. Outline how the needs of IDPs in the region have changed during quarantine due to coronavirus infection.
5. Establish how these needs are currently being met: assistance programs or new services for IDPs have been introduced in the Oblast; actions of regional and local authorities to support IDPs.
6. Identify which problems will be most acute for IDPs after easing / ending quarantine.
7. Highlight expectations from regional and local authorities regarding support for IDPs after quarantine

## Methodology of the research

Adequate methods and tools relevant to the objectives and tasks of the study were used to obtain reliable data, namely, a representative sample research, which covers selected samples, i.e. only part of the objects of the general population, selected by special parameters.

## Subject of the research

The main needs of IDPs before quarantine, the impact of the pandemic on needs, as well as the problems that will worsen after the easing of quarantine. Awareness of IDPs about assistance programs or new services introduced in the Oblast, expectations from regional and local authorities to support IDPs after quarantine.

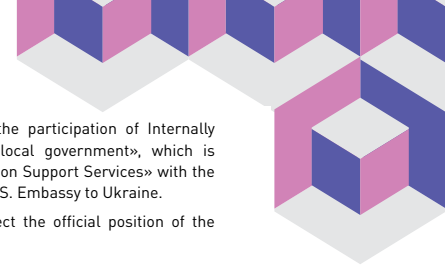
## Participants of the research

Representatives of relevant civil society organizations, representatives of local authorities and local government bodies, IDP activists in Luhansk, Donetsk, Kharkiv and Zaporizhia Oblasts.



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## Sources of information

- Interview materials and focus group discussions in the respective target regions;
- Websites of civil society organizations that interact with the relevant structural units of social protection bodies;
- Websites of regional online publications and media projects, regional media;
- Official reports within the requirements of the Law of Ukraine «On Access to Public Information», relevant resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine;
- Official reports of international donor organizations that provide humanitarian and charitable assistance to IDPs in Ukraine;
- Official reports and statistics on IDPs of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine.

## Tools and methods of the Research

Target groups	Assessment method
Internally Displaced Persons in the respective communities	Focus group discussions
Representatives of local authorities and local government	Expert online interviews
Representatives of IDP CSO	

## Calendar plan

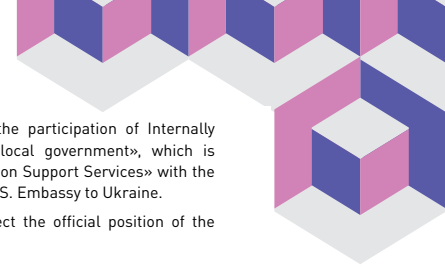
	Activity	Period
1.	Preparation and approval of the screener and guide for focus group discussions	07-13 May 2020
2.	Focus group discussions	14-19 May 2020
3.	Preparation and approval of a questionnaire for expert online interviews	12-22 May 2020
4.	Online interviews	25 May - 11 June 2020
5.	Processing the results and compiling a report on the results of the research	12-23 June 2020

## Limitations of the needs assessment research:

- formalized / subjective attitude to evaluation;
- refusal of answers / interviews;
- inaccurate answers due to unstable psycho-emotional condition.



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## METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in May-June 2020 by the Charity Foundation “Stabilization Support Services” in cooperation with InMind Analytics.

### Study design

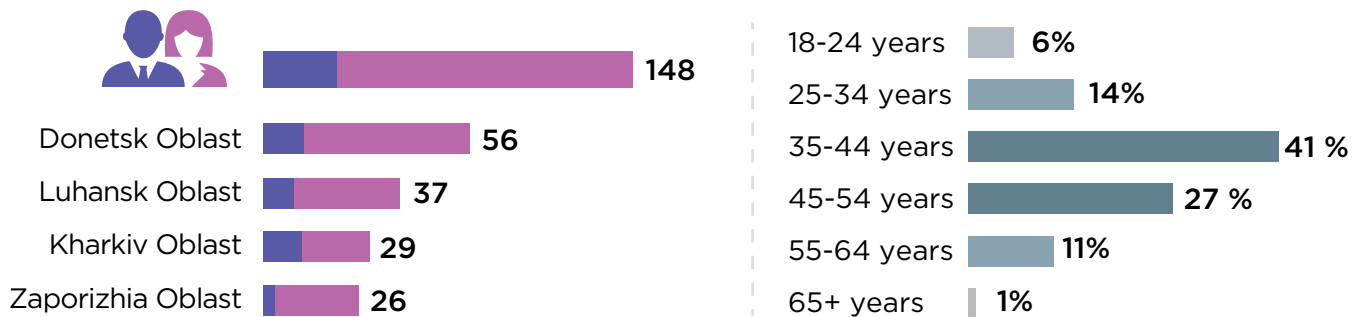
- **Geography:** Luhansk, Donetsk, Kharkiv and Zaporizhia regions.
- **Qualitative stage:** 4 online focus group discussions (hereinafter FGD). 1 FGD in each region, 4 experts took part in each discussion in May 14-19, 2020.
- **Quantitative stage:** 148 expert online interviews (at least 25 in each region) during May 25 to June 11, 2020.

#### Oblast, the number of interviews



- **Target audience:** experts on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), namely, representatives of relevant civil society organizations, representatives of local authorities and local self-government bodies, IDP activists, etc.

#### Experts distribution on gender/age



#### Area of activities, number of interviews





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## KEY RESULTS

1. According to the interviewed experts, the urgent problems of IDPs before quarantine were the issues of housing, family welfare and employment. Thus, 53% of experts noted that the main problem of IDPs is the purchase of their own housing,

32% named the possibility to rent it,

27% mentioned adequate housing.

45% of respondents stated that the economic situation of families is their main priority.

Employment, including job search in the trade, was identified as a problem by 34% and 24% of experts, respectively.

2. In connection with the pandemic, the problem of closed Entry/Exit Checkpoints (hereinafter EECF) came to the fore – 61% of experts stated the greatest impact of this issue on the lives of IDPs. Closed EECF have deprived them of the freedom of movement between government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas, and the problem of separated families has become more acute.

Due to the loss of work or forced leave during quarantine, the economic situation in many families deteriorated, as evidenced by 59% of respondents. According to 49% of IDP experts, the pandemic has made it difficult to pay rent and utilities. In addition, 47% of respondents noted a deterioration in emotional and psychological state - increased anxiety and negative moods.

According to 58% of experts, the problems caused by quarantine restrictions affected both women and men. If respondents saw a difference between the impact of quarantine on different sexes, this impact, in their opinion, was manifested in the fact that women felt an additional workload at home, and men were more likely to face loss of income, inability to provide for their families.

3. 59% of experts stated that the most difficult situation in connection with the pandemic was experienced by the unemployed and the poor – those who did not have a permanent source of income. Special attention was needed for people with chronic diseases, the elderly, as noted by 57% of respondents. 53% of experts believe that single parents also became vulnerable during the quarantine.

4. According to 47% of experts, the abolition of mandatory verification (according to the authors of the report, these are changes provided by the Law of Ukraine *On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine Aimed at Preventing the Occurrence and Spread of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)*, according to which JSC Oschadbank for



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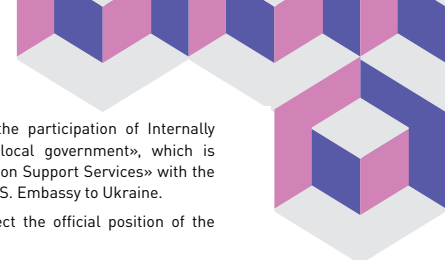
the period of quarantine or restrictive measures, associated with the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), and within 60 days from the date of its cancellation stopped blocking expenditure transactions on the card account of Internally Displaced Persons who had to undergo physical identification) is the most visible measure of assistance for IDPs. 44% of respondents said that now the problems are solved through programs initiated by international and non-governmental organizations (related to the provision of humanitarian or social monthly assistance to individual families, psychological and legal assistance). Most experts (55%) do not know about the new local and regional programs of assistance / support to IDPs from regional and local authorities.

5. After the easing / end of quarantine, the financial situation of families, housing and employment will remain the most pressing issues - 43% of respondents stated each of the problems. In addition, in the conditions of quarantine the payment for utilities (before quarantine 18% of experts named it, after easing the quarantine 32% of experts find this problem relevant) and organization of summer holidays for children have become an issue (9% named this problem before quarantine and 20% after its easing, respectively).

6. IDPs expect from the authorities, measures aimed at solving the housing problem - this was stated by 34% of experts, as well as assistance in employment - 18% of respondents. According to experts, support steps should be set out in the form of specific programs and clearly defined mechanisms.



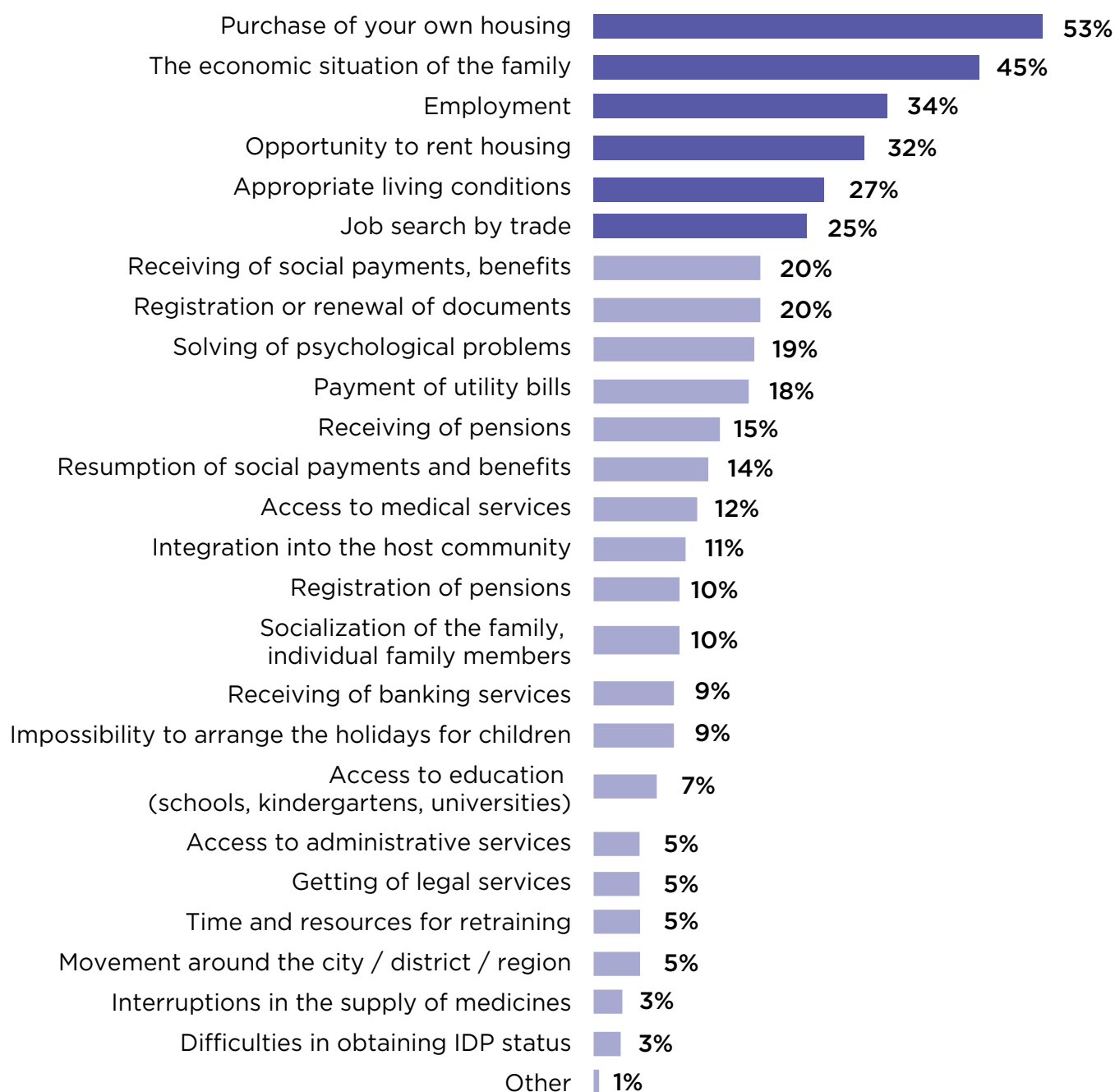
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## 1. BASIC NEEDS OF IDPs BEFORE QUARANTINE

The issues of housing, family welfare and employment remained the most urgent problems of IDPs before quarantine (see Diagram 1.1).

**Diagram 1.1. The main needs of IDPs before quarantine**





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## 1.1. Housing

Experts note that the lack of housing for IDPs is the most acute problem without a specific solution for a long time. Most IDPs do not have their own housing within 6 years after leaving a non-government-controlled area, and they do not see an effective housing mechanism, even in the long run.

Those who rent housing face the inflated rents for IDPs, the lack of concessions on the amount and timing of payments. People who cannot afford to rent use social housing (collective centres for IDPs, dormitories, sanatoriums, etc.), which does not allow them to fully integrate into the community (*For reference: According to the Unified Information Database on Internally Displaced Persons of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, the number of registered IDPs as of April 1, 2020 was 1,446,881. Of these, 367,849 people of working age, 197,672 children, 51,355 people with disabilities, 724,427 pensioners, 1,173,283 families. According to the Ministry of Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine, less than 0.01% of the total number of registered IDPs live in collective centres and social dormitories. As of April 1, 2020, there are 170 CCs in Ukraine with a total of 13,078 places where 6,960 IDPs live, of which 1,653 are minors and 2,014 are elderly*). Referred housing conditions limit IDPs in social contacts necessary for full assimilation. Displaced persons in collective centres do not have long-term plans and, according to experts, intend to return home. Only gained social ties for oneself and one's family create the foundation to remain (*focus group study in Donetsk Oblast: IDPs, representative of international organization*).

The state program «Affordable Housing», according to experts, does not work. The main reasons: long queues and the need to pay a contribution for housing. For IDPs, even this amount is unavailable in a situation of relocation, permanent rent and job search.

As the statistics on the number of IDPs provided by the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine are not true, accordingly, the need to build social housing is not properly addressed (*focus group study in Luhansk Oblast: representative of a civil society organization*). The queue for social housing is also not true, as not all IDPs in need of housing apply. Experts emphasize that when a person needs to get a large number of documents, certificates, including the paid ones, the desire to participate disappears. (*focus group study in Donetsk Oblast: IDPs, representative of international organization*).

## 1.2. Employment

According to experts, many IDPs have not been able to find a job that matches their specialty in their new place of residence (specifics of the region: specialties in industry, mines, manufacturing are not in demand in the host community). There is a need for retraining or employment in other specialties with lower wages (*focus group study in Kharkiv Oblast: IDPs, a representative of a civil society organization*).



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Occasionally, but experts still note the problem of prejudice of employers towards IDPs - they do not hire those with residence registration in Donetsk or Luhansk Oblasts (*focus group study in Donetsk Oblast: IDPs, local government representative*).

Experts state that it is difficult for displaced women to find a job in a new place with a flexible schedule in order to be able to pick up a child from kindergarten, school, or stay at home when a child is ill. After all, their older relatives (grandparents) are often forced to stay in non-government controlled territory and are unable to provide assistance in child care (*focus group study in Donetsk Oblast, IDPs, activists*).

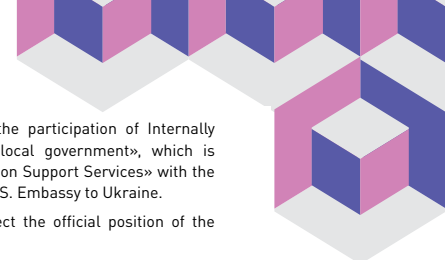
A particular livelihood issue concerns students of relocated higher education institutions. When confirming the right to a social scholarship, there is a delay between the submission of information about the end of the session and the actual accrual and payment of funds. Young people whose parents are not around and cannot help are forced to work in parallel with their education in order to provide a living (*focus group study in Kharkiv Oblast: IDPs, a representative of a civil society organization*).

### 1.3. Registration of documents and payments

Experts note that there are obstacles to obtaining / renewing passports or residence permits for children. The constant need to confirm one's IDP status is called offensive and useless. IDP certificate, according to experts, does not bring significant benefits to the owner, but significantly complicates life, movement, freedom of action (*focus group study in Kharkiv Oblast: IDP, activist*). (*For reference: like an adult, an IDP child will be deprived of all social benefits if he or she chooses to study at a foreign educational institution or leaves the country for more than 90 days. Any social benefits and benefits, even in no way related to IDP relocation, may be received only through JSC Oschadbank on a special social card for IDPs, which, compared to other cards, contains significant restrictions on use.*)



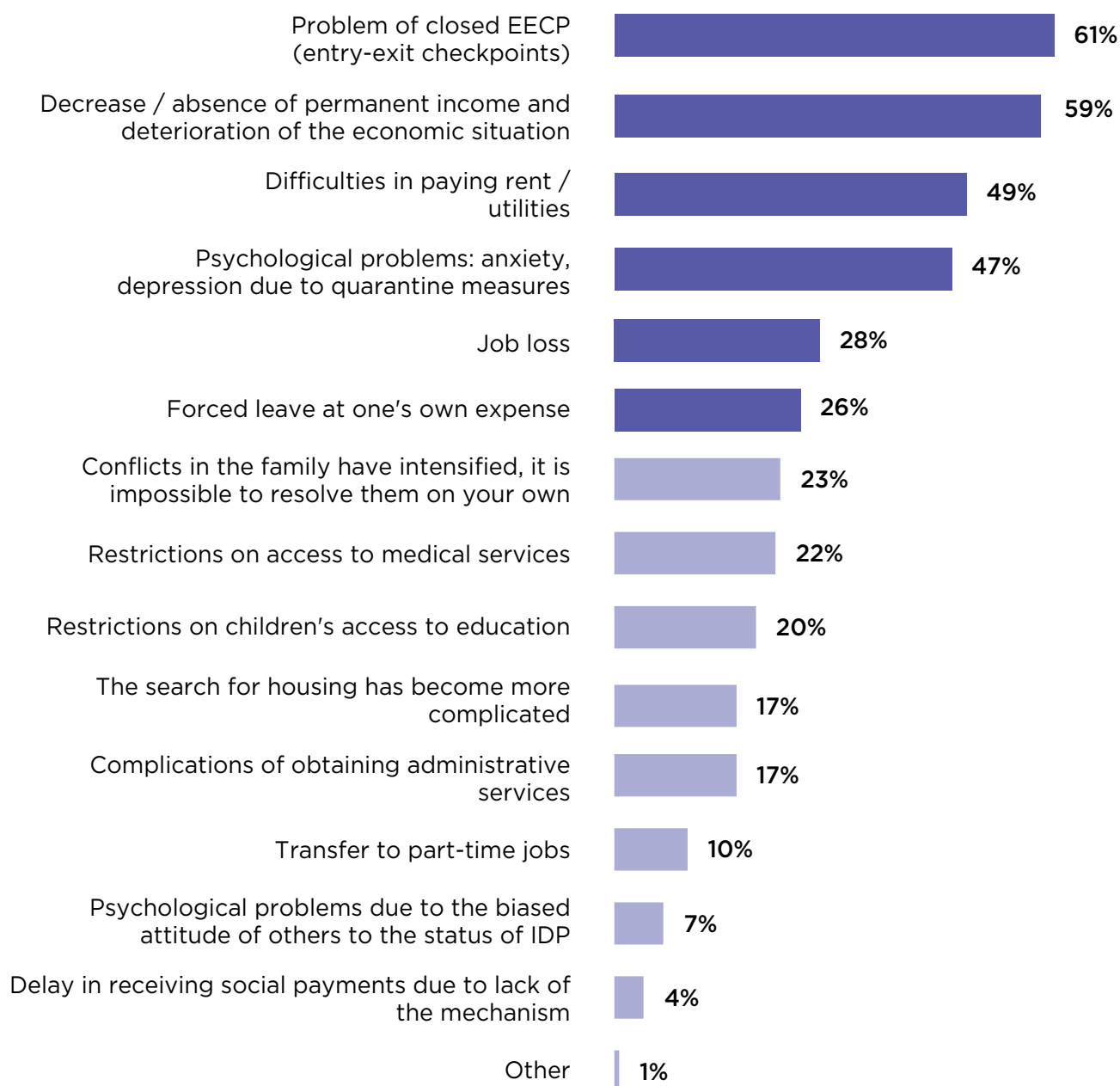
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## 2. IMPACT OF QUARANTINE DUE TO CORONAVIRUS INFECTION ON THE LIVES OF IDPs

In connection with the pandemic, the problems of closed EECP and the deterioration of the economic situation due to job loss or forced leave have become relevant. The unstable financial situation has caused difficulties in paying rent and utilities, as well as led to a deterioration of emotional and psychological condition (see Diagram 2.1).

**Diagram 2.1. The impact of quarantine due to coronavirus infection on the lives of IDPs**





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## 2.1. Crossing of EECP

At the time of quarantine, EECP were closed, respectively, some IDPs were unable to return to the controlled part of Ukraine (those who visited relatives or were in the uncontrolled territory on other business). Those who live in the uncontrolled territory and entered the controlled part before the beginning of the quarantine, could not come back. In general, the problem of separated families has worsened – IDPs have relatives in need of medical care, elderly parents in the non-government-controlled territory (*focus group study in Zaporizhia Oblast: IDPs, a representative of a civil society organization*). Experts noted that the ability to communicate with relatives was significantly limited, which increased nervousness and anxiety. Due to the closed EECP, persons living in the uncontrolled territory who reached the retirement age during quarantine were not able to draw up a pension on time. And pensioners who were in the uncontrolled territory could not receive pension payments in time (*focus group study in Donetsk Oblast: IDPs, a representative of a civil society organization*).

According to experts, the situation, especially after quarantine, requires a clear mechanism for crossing the EECP, responsible epidemiological control to prevent the spread of the virus from uncontrolled areas (*focus group study in Zaporizhia Oblast: IDPs, a representative of a civil society organization*).

## 2.2. Loss of income

Experts noted that during the quarantine period there was a significant decrease in income, in particular, due to job loss, reduction or partial reduction of wages. The loss of livelihoods mostly affected IDPs engaged in production and trade, both employees and entrepreneurs. If the activity allowed them to work remotely, the sources of income were preserved at least partially (*focus group study in Donetsk Oblast: IDPs, a representative of an international organization*). Some internally displaced single mothers have been forced to leave jobs due to childcare and the arrangement of distance learning.

## 2.3. Problems with paying rent and utilities

Given that the vast majority of IDPs do not have their own housing but rent apartments, most of them, according to experts, cannot pay for rent. Landlords acted at their own discretion: some made concessions by reducing the rent, others evicted tenants (*focus group study in Kharkiv Oblast: IDP, activist*). The risk of debts and loss of housing, uncertainty about the future have led to a deterioration in the moral and psychological condition of IDPs.



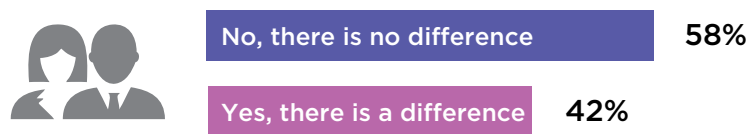
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### 3. NATURE OF PROBLEMS OF DISPLACED WOMEN AND MEN IN QUARANTINE

According to experts, the problems caused by quarantine restrictions affected both women and men (see Diagram 3.1).

**Diagram 3.1. Difference in the impact of quarantine on displaced women and men**



If the respondents saw a difference between the impact of quarantine on different sexes, then this impact, in their opinion, was manifested in the following:

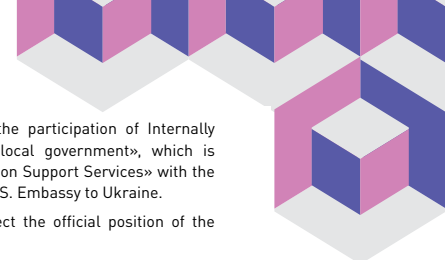
- women during quarantine experienced additional workload in household chores and education of children due to the stay of all family members at home (*focus group study in Zaporizhia Oblast: IDPs, a representative of a civil society organization*). Internally displaced single mothers were not able to work full-time during quarantine (there was no one to leave their children at home with, help with schooling) and were at risk of losing their livelihood. Experts also noted that cases of gender-based violence against women in families became more frequent during quarantine.
- men more often faced loss of work, inability to provide for the family financially. As a result, men were more likely to suffer from psychological problems and abuse alcohol (*focus group study in Luhansk Oblast: IDPs, NGO representative*).

*For reference:* According to the results of the study of UN Women Ukraine “Rapid gender assessment of the situation and needs of women in the context of COVID-19 in Ukraine”, quarantine has exacerbated gender stereotypes and patriarchal social norms about the roles of women and men in the family. The study states that: “as a significant burden of housework and care at home is placed on women, women who work from home are forced to combine paid work, housework and care for children who stay at home due to quarantine in educational institutions. In particular, 63.5% of respondents noted they spend more time on cleaning now, 50.5% - on cooking, 53.3% - to the psychological and emotional support of adult family members. There are also significant differences in the responses of women and men. Thus, only 27.8% and 44.1% of men noted an increase in time spent on cooking and cleaning, respectively.



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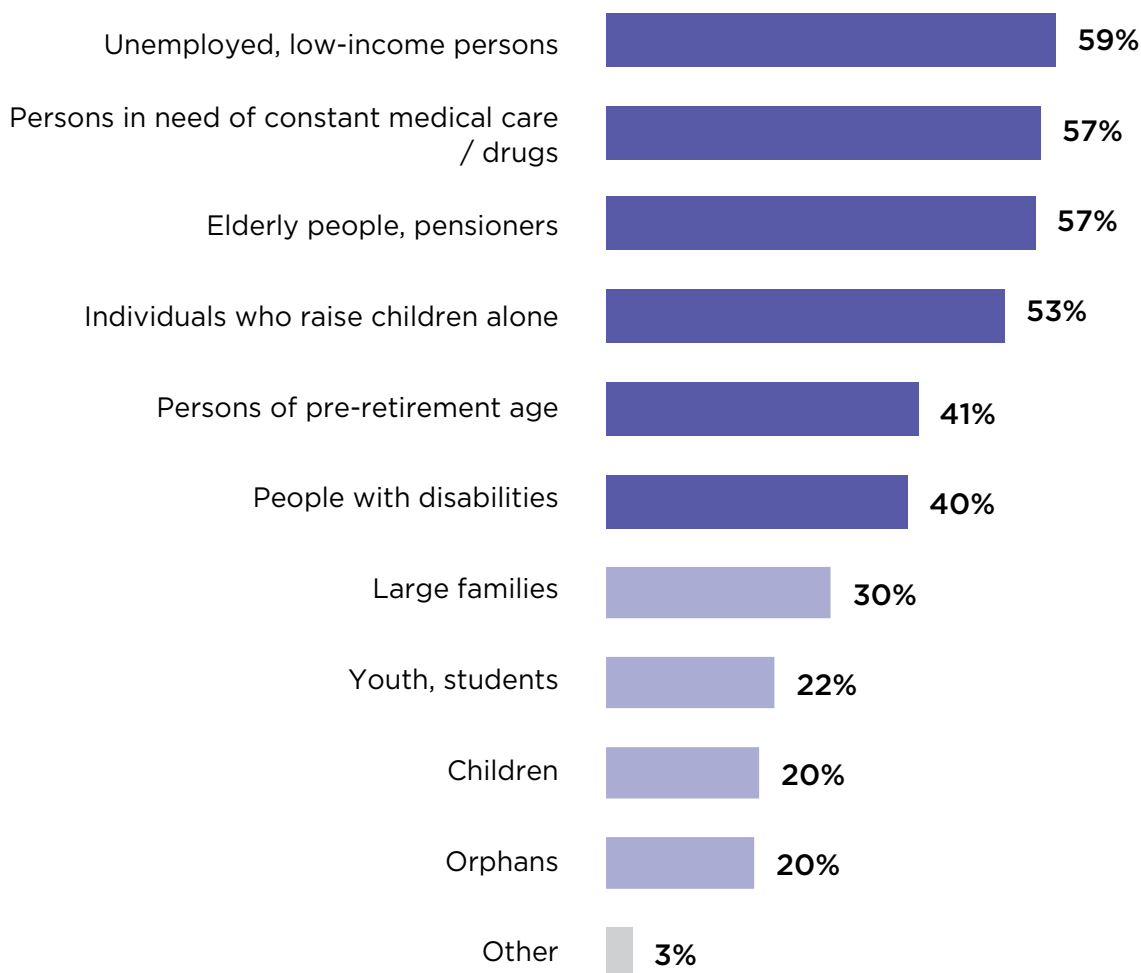
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## 4. IDP GROUPS THAT BECAME THE MOST VULNERABLE DURING QUARANTINE

According to experts, the unemployed and the poor found themselves in the most unfavourable situation (see Diagram 4.1). Special attention was also paid to people with disabilities and health problems, the elderly. Single parents lost the opportunity to work full-time and support their children (*focus group study in Kharkiv Oblast: IDPs, a representative of a civil society organization*)

**Diagram 4.1. IDP groups that became the most vulnerable during quarantine**



At the same time, the experts noted that persons in need of permanent medical care and pensioners were not left without support - they received payments, targeted assistance, food delivery was organized for them (*focus group study in Donetsk Oblast: IDPs, local government representative*). But young able-bodied people who lost their jobs were forced to solve problems on their own (*focus group study in Luhansk Oblast: a representative of a civil society organization*).



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## 5. ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

According to experts, the abolition of mandatory verification is the most visible measure of assistance for IDPs.

According to the authors of the report, this is a set of changes provided by the Law of Ukraine «On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine Aimed at Preventing the Occurrence and Spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19)» and the Resolution No.266 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of April 8, 2020 «On Amendments to Certain Resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine », which amended the following resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine:

- No.505 of October 1, 2014 «On the provision of monthly targeted assistance to Internally Displaced Persons to cover living expenses, including the payment of housing and utilities»;
- No.509 of October 1, 2014 «On registration of Internally Displaced Persons»;
- No.637 of November 5, 2014 «On the implementation of social benefits to Internally Displaced Persons» in order to implement subparagraphs 1-3 of paragraph 3 of section II «Final Provisions» of the Law of Ukraine «On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine Aimed at Preventing the Occurrence and Spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19)».

These changes included:

1. If the expiry of the current six-month cash benefit period occurs during the period of quarantine or restrictive measures related to the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and within 30 days from the date of its cancellation, the cash benefit is granted for the next six-month period without appropriate applications and documents that were previously provided, in the same amount in which it is paid within the current six-month period.

2. The terms determined by the above resolutions are not included in the period of stay in the temporarily occupied territories in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

3. For the period of quarantine, it is prohibited to make a decision to revoke the IDP certificate.

4. Public joint-stock company “State Savings Bank of Ukraine” shall not suspend expenditure operations on the current account of an Internally Displaced Person in the absence of physical identification.

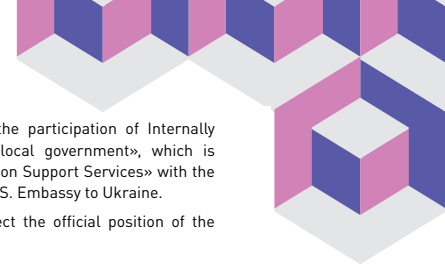
Therefore, it is not just a matter of cancelling the identification meaning a visit to a bank branch, but a comprehensive measure that allowed IDPs to continue receiving benefits without risking their health without delays and debt accumulation.

Experts are also aware of IDP assistance programs initiated by international and non-governmental organizations – humanitarian assistance, targeted assistance to individual families, psychological and legal assistance (see Diagram 5.1).



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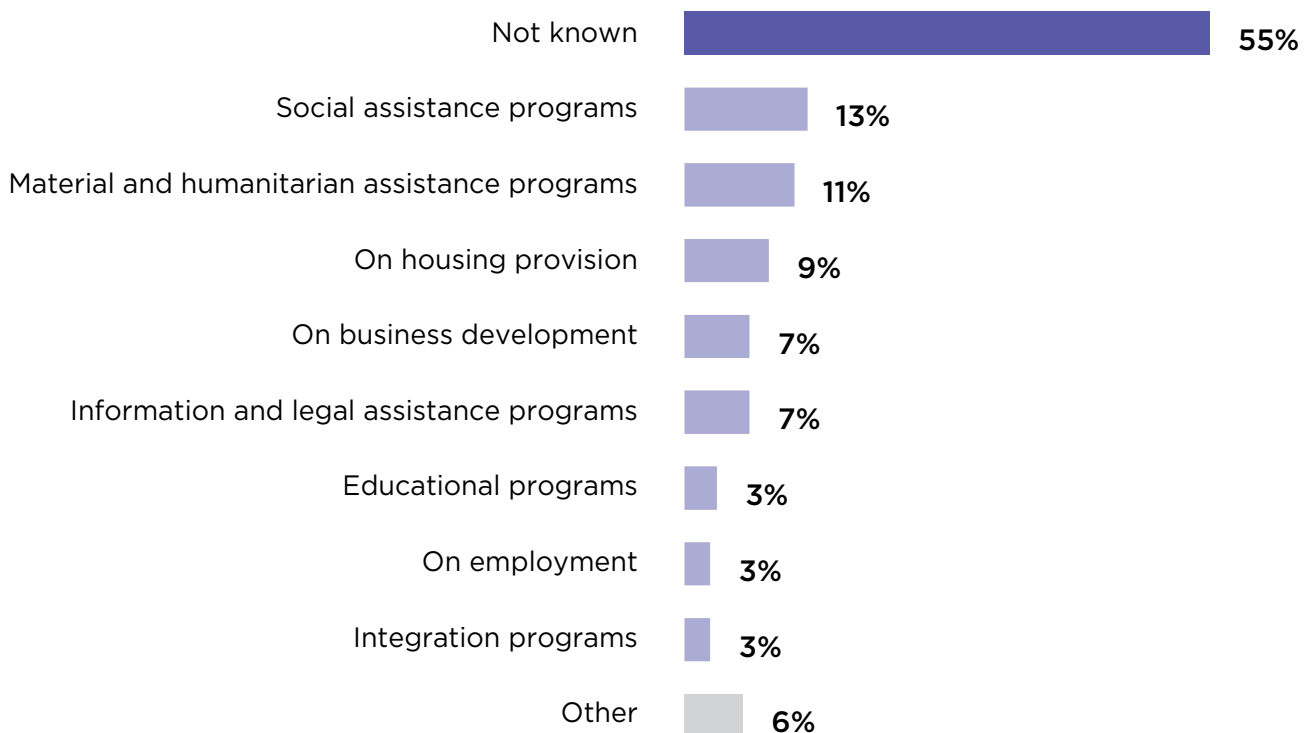


**Diagram 5.1. Assistance programs to address IDP issues during quarantine**



Most experts were unable to name effective steps by regional and local authorities to support IDPs (see Diagram 5.2).

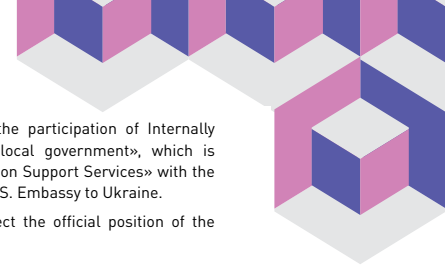
**Diagram 5.2. Assistance programs or new services introduced in the region to address the problems of IDPs during quarantine**





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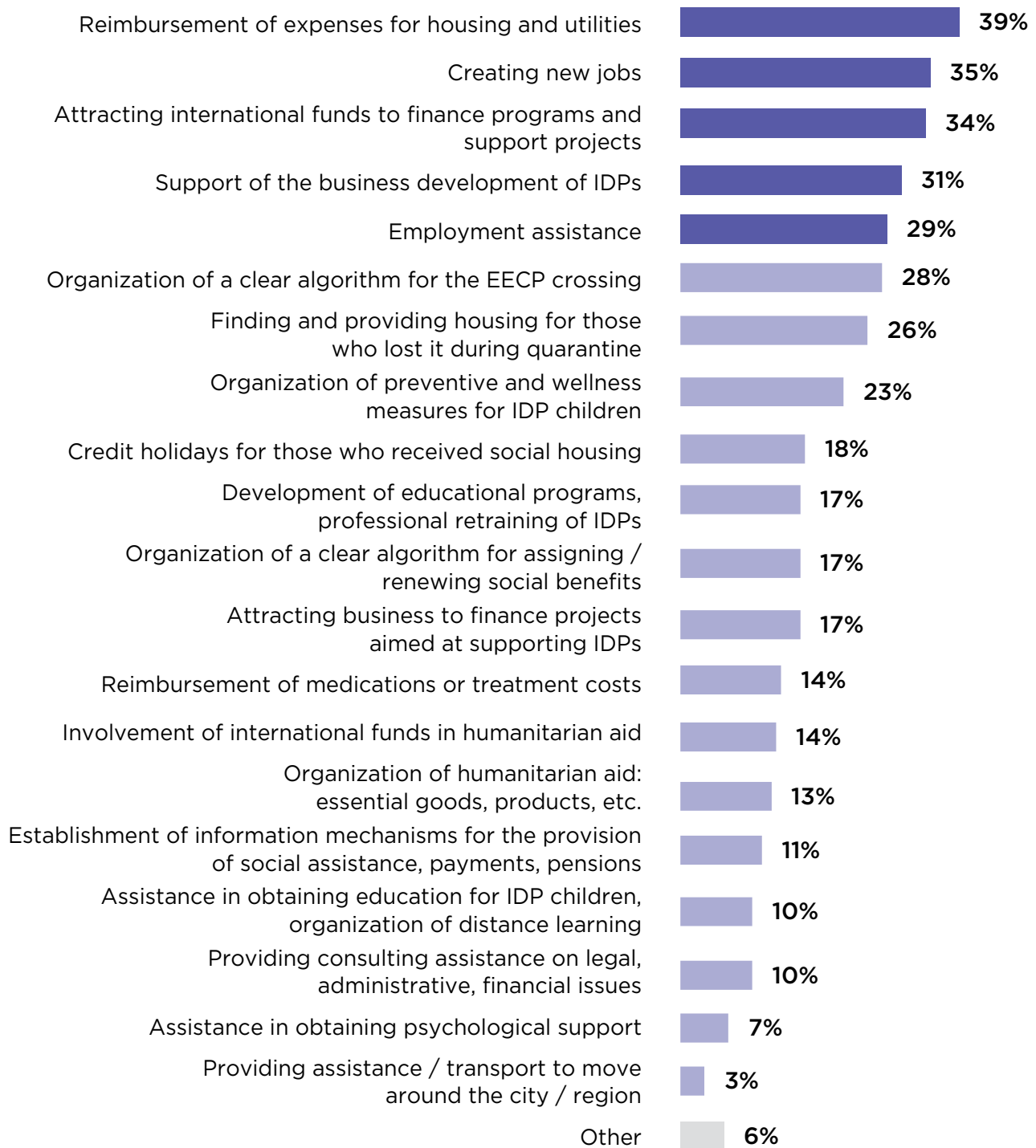
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## 6. EXPECTATION OF MEASURES FROM THE AUTHORITIES DURING THE QUARANTINE AND IN THE CONDITIONS OF ITS EASING

First of all, IDPs expect assistance from the authorities with payment for rent and utilities, as well as employment support (see Diagram 6.1).

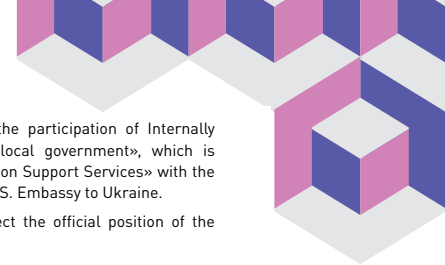
**Diagram 6.1. Expectations of measures from the authorities during the quarantine and in the conditions of its easing**





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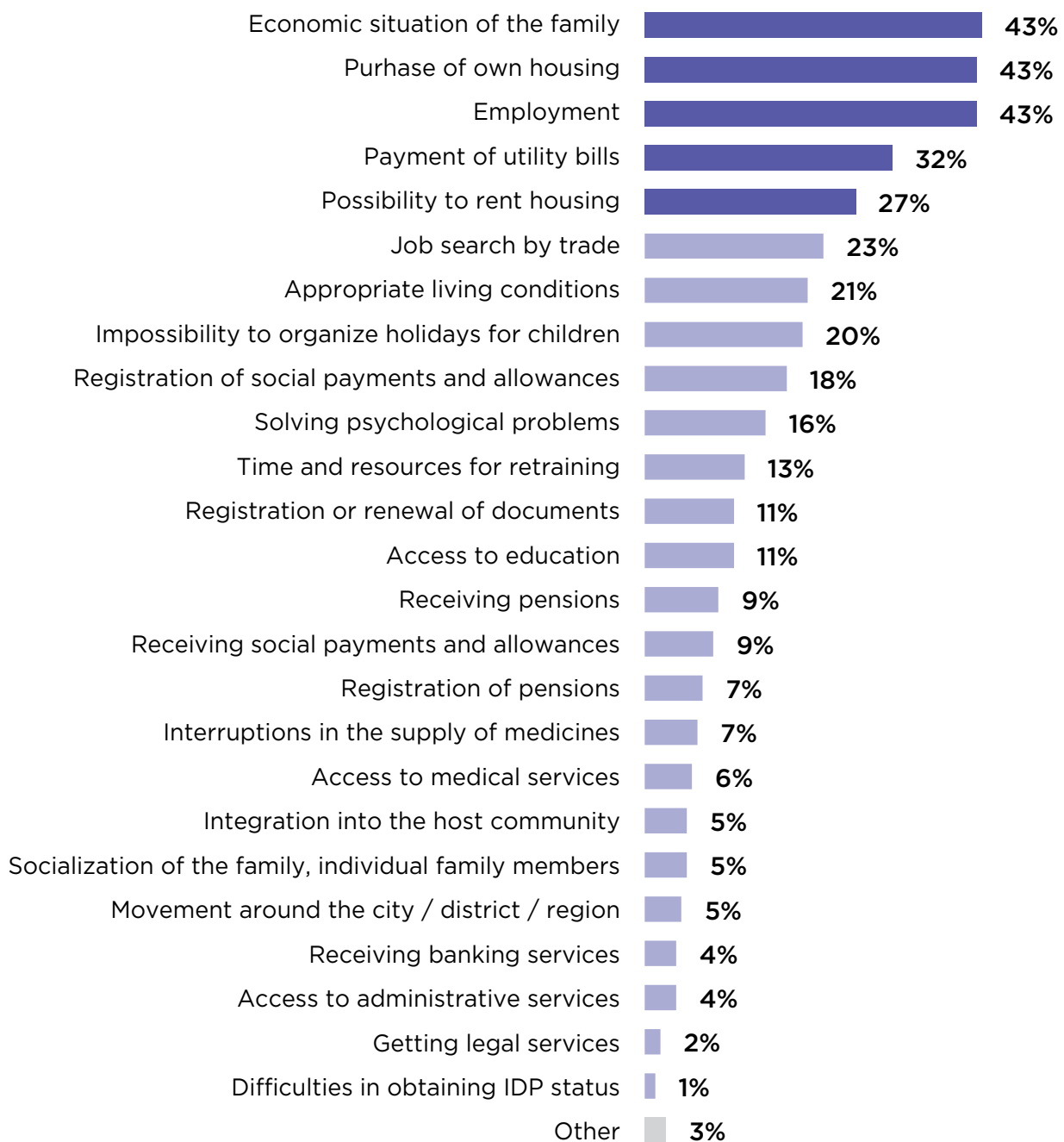
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## 7. PROBLEMS THAT WILL BE THE MOST ACUTE FOR IDPs AFTER THE END OF QUARANTINE

After the easing / end of quarantine, the financial situation of families and housing will remain the most urgent issues. In addition, quarantine exacerbated the issue of payment for utilities (+ 14% compared to «Basic needs of IDPs before quarantine») and the organization of summer recreation for children (+ 11%) (see Diagram 7.1).

**Diagram 7.1. The most acute problems for IDPs after the end of quarantine**





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## 7.1. Employment and income search

The quarantine has forced employers to reconsider the workload and redistribute it in such a way that some IDPs have lost their jobs (*focus group study in Kharkiv Oblast: IDPs, a representative of a state institution*). For small businesses, the task is to preserve the staff, which is extremely difficult in the absence of revenue and turnover, the impossibility of bank lending to persons with residence in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts (*focus group study in Donetsk Oblast: IDPs, a representative of an international organization*).

*For reference:* According to the Resolution No.244 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of March 29, 2020 “Amendments to the Procedure for Registration, Re-registration of Unemployed and Accounting for Job Seekers”; for the quarantine period, employment centers have a temporary order of customer service. It stipulates that the status of the unemployed is granted from the first day of submission by the job seeker, the application for granting the status of the unemployed, as well as the allocation of unemployment benefits - from the first day of registration of the unemployed. Citizens are served (in particular, personal reception) remotely by any means of communication (telephone, electronic means, etc.). For the period of quarantine, unemployment benefits are paid without a personal visit of the unemployed person to the employment center, provided that the unemployed person confirms the intention to remain unemployed by any means of communication (telephone, electronic means, etc.). The specialist of the center informs the registered unemployed person about the need to submit to the employment center within 10 working days, and it can be done remotely, a certificate of the bank about opening an account to transfer funds.

On March 12, shops were closed, except for grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations and banks. The movement of land transport in the cities was stopped, as well as intercity and interregional car, railway and air communication. According to the Donetsk Regional Employment Center, as of May 1, the number of unemployed persons in the Donetsk Oblast increased by 69% compared to the beginning of the year and amounted to 18,200 people. According to the Kharkiv Regional Employment Center, as of May 1, 2020, employers provided information on the planned dismissal of almost 6,000 employees, which is 5 times more than in January-May 2019.

## 7.2. Unclear identification algorithm for receiving social assistance

Experts fear that a large influx of people into the Social Protection Departments after the end of quarantine could lead to an increase of new cases and a worsening of the pandemic situation (*focus group study in Kharkiv Oblast: IDPs, a representative of a civil society organization*).

*For reference:* Experts of the CF SSS recorded cases of calling (invitations by phone) IDPs for a personal reception to the Department of Labor and Social Protection during quarantine. In particular, the grounds for the summons were: the need to write an application for extension of targeted assistance to IDPs, submission of documents, etc. In these cases, IDPs were forced to wait for reception in unventilated corridors without the possibility of social distancing



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### 7.3. Looking for the ways to organize children's summer holidays

IDP parents face the challenge to organize the leisure of children left at home alone. Experts note the impossibility of sending children to older relatives living in an uncontrolled area, or to sanatoriums or children's camps that will not function this summer due to a pandemic (*focus group study in Zaporizhia Oblast: IDPs, a representative of a civil society organization*).

*For reference:* On May 28, 2020, the Prime Minister of Ukraine D. Shmygal signed an order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No.20002/1/1-29 on the organization of rehabilitation and recreation of children in 2020. The order defines the tasks of the central executive bodies and regional state administrations regarding the adoption of comprehensive measures to prepare children's health and recreation facilities for the reception of children.

On June 16, 2020, the State Commission for Technogenic and Ecological Safety and Emergencies adopted a decision on the inexpediency of opening children's health camps before July 1, 2020.

## 8. EXPECTATIONS FROM THE AUTHORITIES

IDPs expect from the authorities, first of all, measures aimed at solving the housing problem, as well as assistance in employment (see Diagram 8.1).

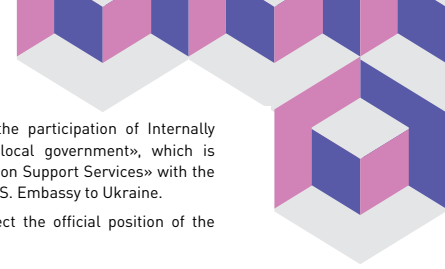
*For reference:* According to the State Statistics Service, in 2019 the average monthly rent for a one-room apartment in Ukraine was 3,700 UAH. The total income of every second IDP family before quarantine did not exceed 7,000 UAH per month.

Specific steps in this direction may be:

- Construction or establishment of affordable social housing with effective mechanisms to submit it to IDPs for temporary living. Provision of social or departmental housing, compensation for rent and lost housing in the non-government-controlled territory, financing of state programs that provide soft loans for the purchase of housing. Almost all experts note that housing is the most painful issue.
- Organization of retraining and employment programs for IDPs (*for example: strengthening subsidy programs for employers who employ IDPs*).
- Split up of IDP assistance and IDP rights renewal programs at the state level with clear distinction of the obligations between local and regional authorities. Establishment



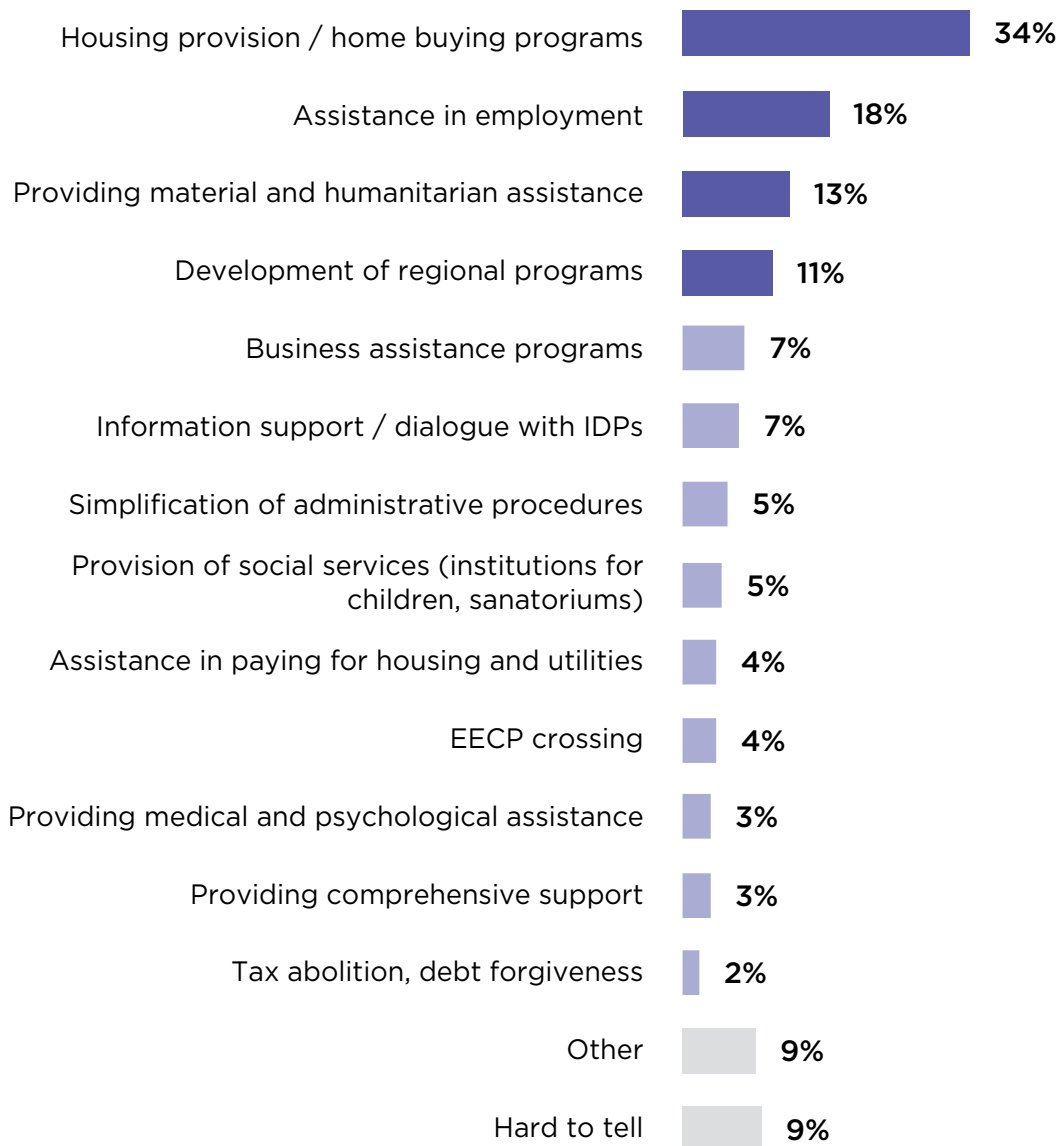
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and strengthening of programs to assist and promote integration (*focus group study in Luhansk Oblast: IDPs, a representative of a civil society organization*).

- Consolidation of efforts of local authorities and civil society organizations to assist IDPs – acceptance of mutual assistance and expertise on both sides.
- Formulation of clear mechanisms for the work of social services to provide effective assistance to IDPs in the first days after the abolition of quarantine, to avoid queues and additional emotional and psychological burden, to prevent the deterioration of the epidemiological situation.

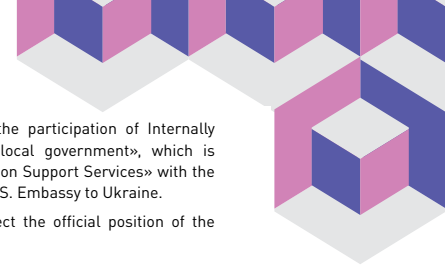
**Diagram 8.1. Expectations from the authorities**





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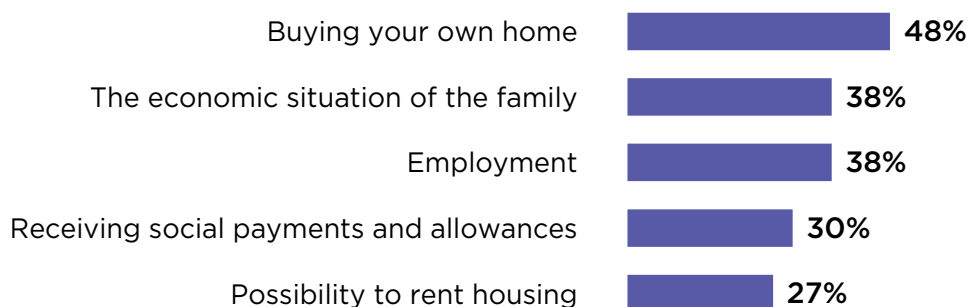
## 9. REGIONAL SPECIFICS

According to the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, as of March 1, 2020, most IDPs still live in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts - 508,240 people and 279,573 people, respectively. 133,473 people live in Kharkiv Oblast, and 55,872 people in Zaporizhia Oblast.

### 9.1. DONETSK Oblast

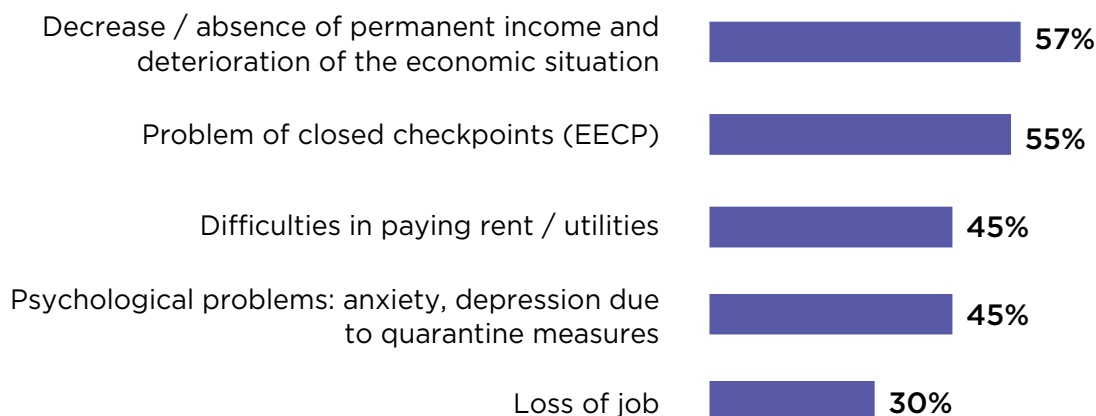
The most acute problems for IDPs in the Donetsk Oblast, as well as for IDPs in general, are the provision of housing, family welfare and employment (see Diagram 9.1.1).

**Diagram 9.1.1. TOP-5 needs of IDPs before quarantine in Donetsk Oblast**



Due to the pandemic, the economic situation of IDPs has deteriorated due to job losses or forced unpaid job leaves. Also, among the problems that emerged during the quarantine period, experts paid considerable attention to the impossibility of crossing EECP. The volatile financial situation has made it difficult to pay rent and utilities, as well as heightened anxiety levels. As a large number of IDPs have occupations that are not in demand in the host community, the problem of finding a job remains relevant during the quarantine period (see Diagram 9.1.2).

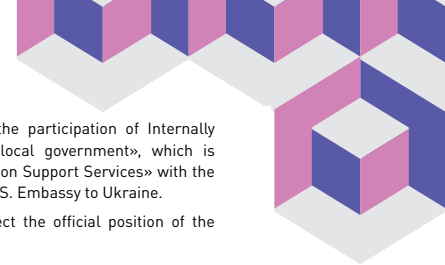
**Diagram 9.1.2. TOP-5 factors of the impact of quarantine due to coronavirus infection on the life of IDPs in Donetsk Oblast**





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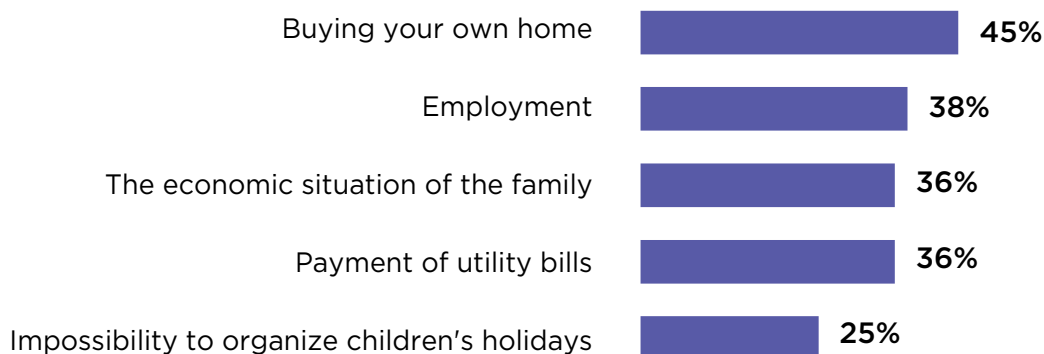
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*For reference:* Since the beginning of the conflict, 929 IDPs have been provided with housing in the Donetsk Oblast, of which 3 are provided with housing for permanent residence, 72 with social housing, and 854 with temporary housing (including 224 apartments purchased as a communal ownership for temporary use of IDPs: 183 apartments in Mariupol, 18 apartments in Pokrovsk, 2 apartments in Lyman, 10 apartments in Slovyansk and 11 apartments in Velykonovoselkivskyi district). Within the framework of the Regional Program of Support and Integration of Internally Displaced Persons in Donetsk Oblast 2019-2020, at the expense of the European Investment Bank works on overhaul of 8 dormitories are underway: in Myrnohrad, Bakhmut, Druzhkivka, Kramatorsk, Slovyansk and the village of Mangush.

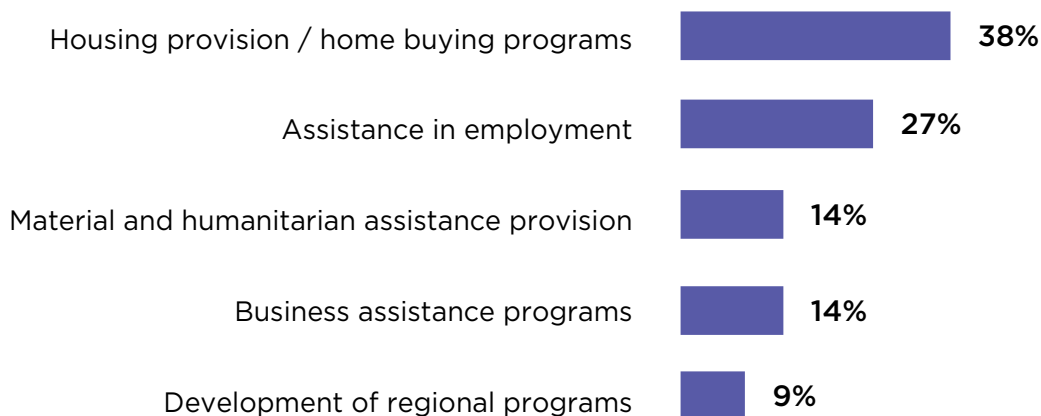
After the easing of quarantine / end of the pandemic, the most urgent issues will be the provision of housing, employment, and the financial situation of families. In addition, in the conditions of quarantine, the issues of payment of utility bills and the organization of summer holidays for children became acute (see Diagram 9.1.3).

**Diagram 9.1.3. TOP-5 problems that will be the most acute for IDPs after the end of quarantine in the Donetsk Oblast**



The main expectations of IDPs regarding the actions of regional and local authorities are assistance in solving the housing issue and assistance in employment (see Diagram 9.1.4).

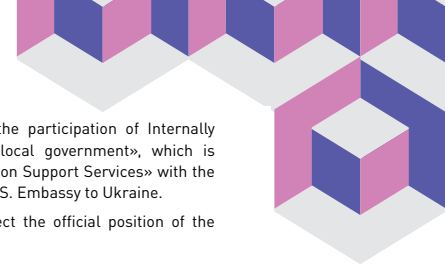
**Diagram 9.1.4. TOP-5 steps that IDPs expect from the authorities after quarantine in Donetsk Oblast**





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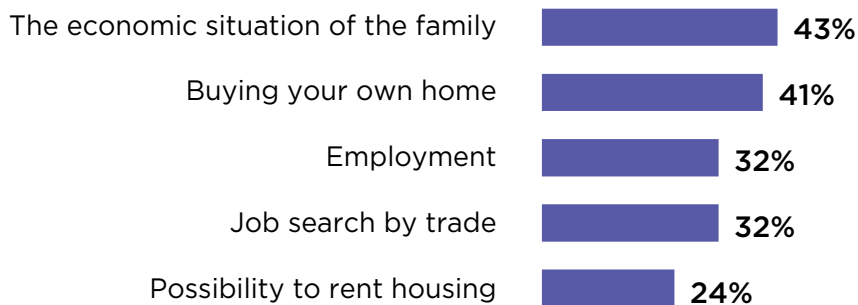
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## 9.2. LUHANSK Oblast

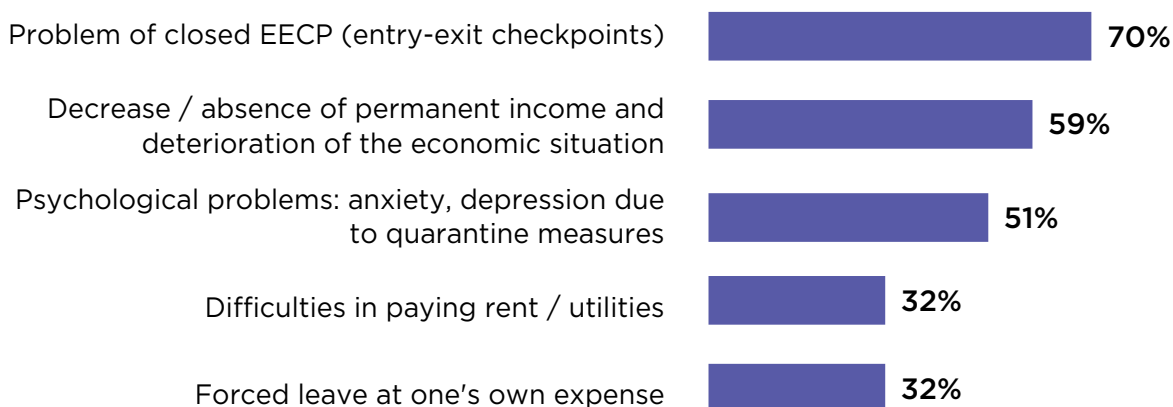
For IDPs in the Luhansk Oblast, as for IDPs in general, the priority issues are the economic situation of families, the purchase or rental of housing, employment, including in the trade (see Diagram 9.2.1).

**Diagram 9.2.1. TOP-5 needs of IDPs before quarantine in Luhansk Oblast**



The impossibility of crossing EECP has become the main problem that worries IDPs during quarantine. Loss of jobs or forced leave during the pandemic worsened the economic situation, making it difficult for IDPs to pay rent and utilities on time. The current situation has led to psychological problems, increased tension and a sense of uncertainty (see Diagram 9.2.2).

**Diagram 9.2.2. TOP-5 factors of the impact of quarantine due to coronavirus infection on the life of IDPs in Luhansk Oblast**



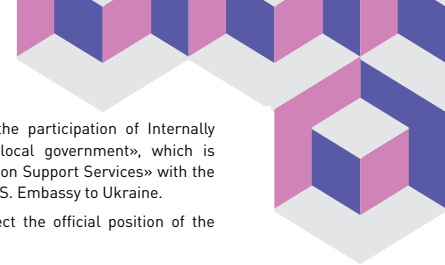
During the focus group discussions, the experts noted the low availability of medical care in the Oblast (in particular due to the lack of municipal and intercity transport communication), the growing workload of existing medical institutions and the need to receive specialized care in Kharkiv or Dnipro.

After the quarantine easing, employment, family welfare, and housing will remain the most acute issues according to the experts. After the end of the pandemic, IDPs in



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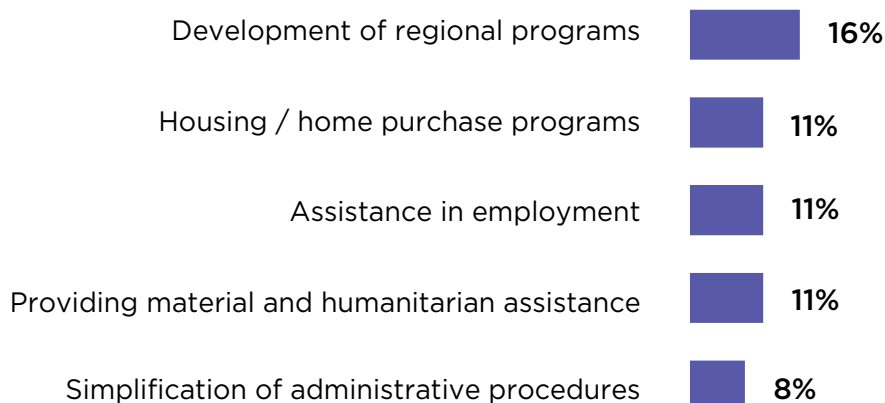
the Oblast will need psychological support, recovery of emotional and psychological state (see Diagram 9.2.3).

**Diagram 9.2.3. TOP-5 problems that will be the most acute for IDPs after the end of quarantine in the Luhansk Oblast**



Experts believe that after quarantine, the most appropriate and effective measures of regional and local authorities would be the adoption of a strategy for the restoration and development of the territory at the state level, assistance in resolving the housing issue and providing jobs (see Diagram 9.2.4).

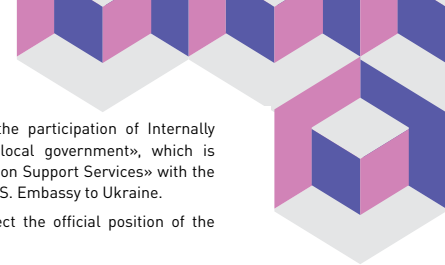
**Diagram 9.2.4. TOP-5 steps that IDPs expect from the authorities after quarantine in the Luhansk Oblast**





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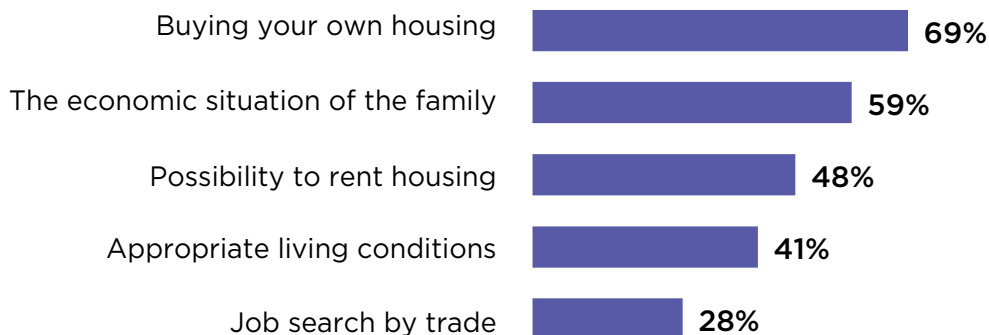
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### 9.3. KHARKIV Oblast

The urgent needs for IDPs in the Kharkiv Oblast, as well as for IDPs in general, are the purchase or rental of housing with adequate living conditions, family welfare and employment (see Diagram 9.3.1).

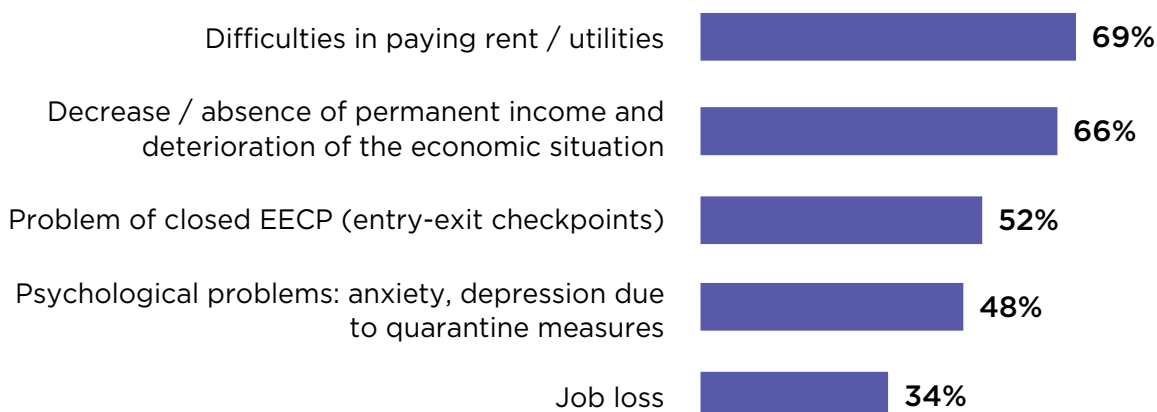
**Diagram 9.3.1. TOP-5 needs of IDPs before quarantine in Kharkiv Oblast**



During the focus group discussions, the experts mentioned obstacles to obtaining / renewing a passport, registration of residence and entering information on registration of residence in the ID card and the need to confirm their “IDP status” (provide IDP certificate to obtain a significant number of social administrative services, in some cases even after registration of permanent residence).

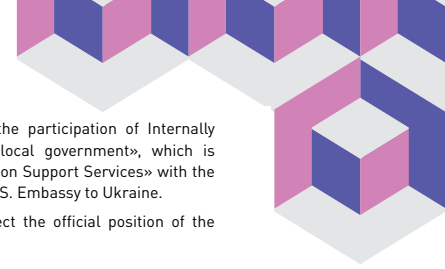
Quarantine due to coronavirus infection has primarily caused difficulties in paying rent and utilities, as IDP incomes have declined due to job losses or forced leave. Every second expert stated the problem of the inability to cross the EECF. The problem of employment remains relevant during the quarantine period, but job search is complicated by the lack of demand for IDP professions in the host community. All these factors exacerbated anxiety, worsened the emotional and psychological state (see Diagram 9.3.2).

**Diagram 9.3.2. TOP-5 factors of the impact of quarantine due to coronavirus infection on the life of IDPs in Kharkiv Oblast**



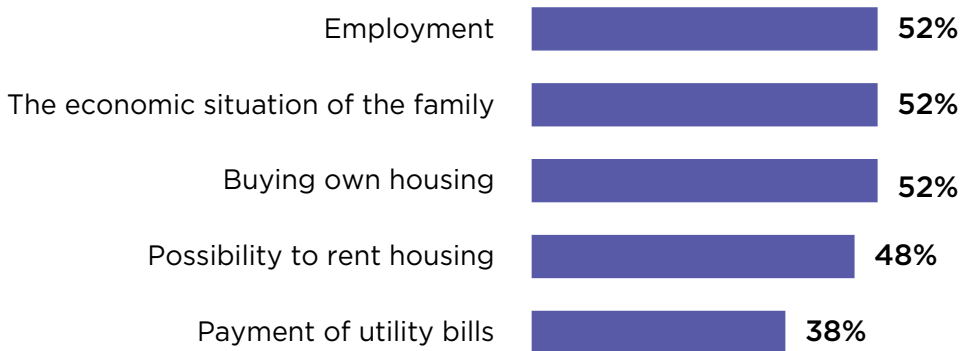


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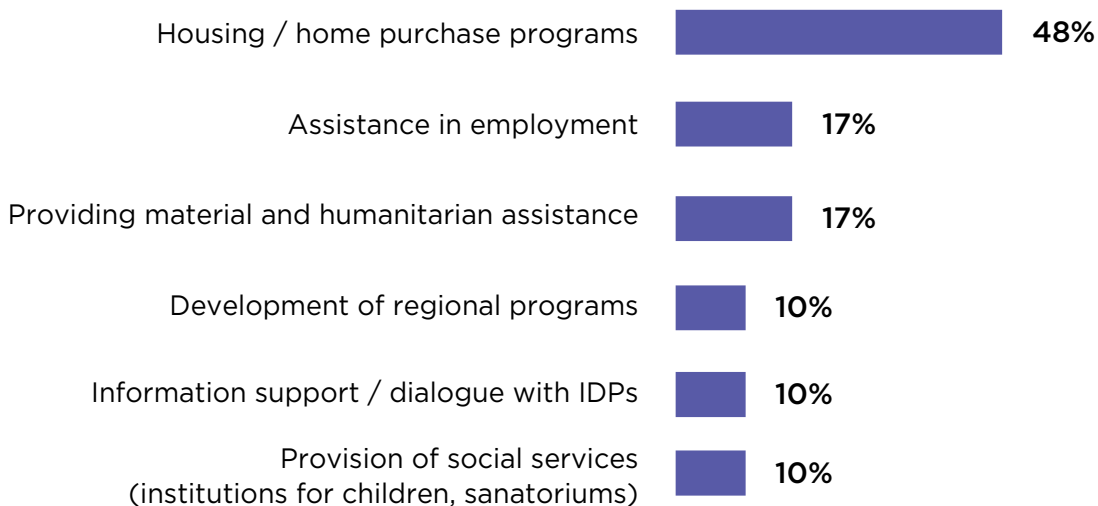
Experts believe that after easing the quarantine / end of the pandemic, the issues of employment, the financial situation of families and the purchase or rental of housing will come to the fore. The issue of utility bills will also need to be addressed in the near future (see Diagram 9.3.3).

**Diagram 9.3.3. TOP-5 problems that will be the most acute for IDPs after the end of quarantine in the Kharkiv Oblast**



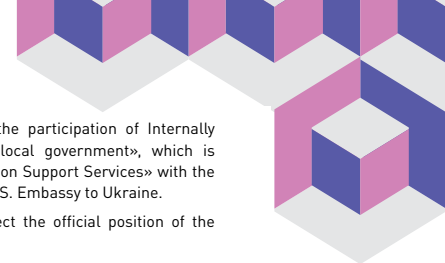
IDPs expect regional and local authorities to provide housing / housing buying programs, employment assistance and material assistance (see Diagram 9.3.4).

**Diagram 9.3.4. TOP-6 steps that IDPs expect from the authorities after quarantine in the Kharkiv Oblast**





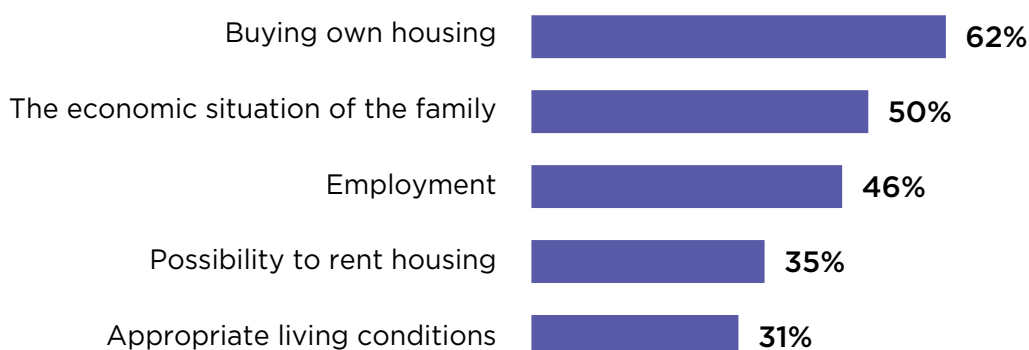
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## 9.4. ZAPORIZHIA Oblast

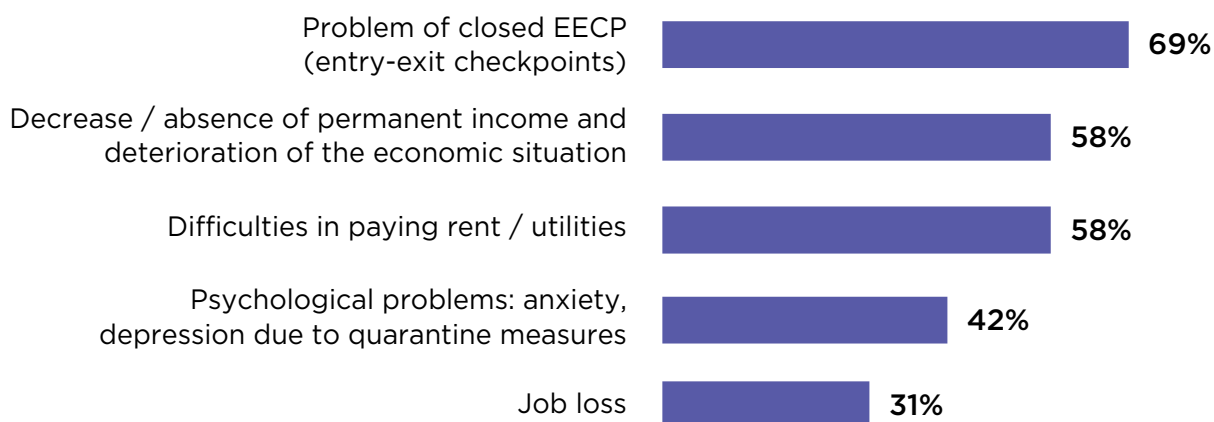
Before the quarantine, for IDPs in Zaporizhia Oblast, the same as for IDPs in other Oblasts, the most important issues were housing provision (own or rented), family welfare and employment (see Diagram 9.4.1).

**Diagram 9.4.1. TOP-5 needs of IDPs before quarantine in Zaporizhia Oblast**



The problem of closed EECP is a major factor that has affected life in the Oblast during quarantine. The pandemic has significantly reduced the income of IDPs, worsened the economic situation of families, and made it difficult to pay rent and utilities. One in three experts stated that IDPs were affected by quarantine due to job loss. The current situation has led to psychological problems, increased anxiety (see Diagram 9.4.2).

**Diagram 9.4.2. TOP-5 factors of the impact of quarantine due to coronavirus infection on the life of IDPs in Zaporizhia Oblast**

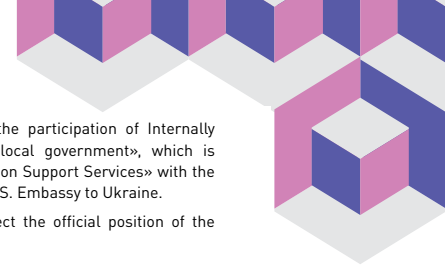


*For reference:* 17 IDP families received a state mortgage loan for apartments within the program «Affordable Housing» in the Zaporizhia Oblast. There are also 3 social dormitories, one 4-apartment social house and a modular town (can accommodate up to 550 people) in the Oblast.



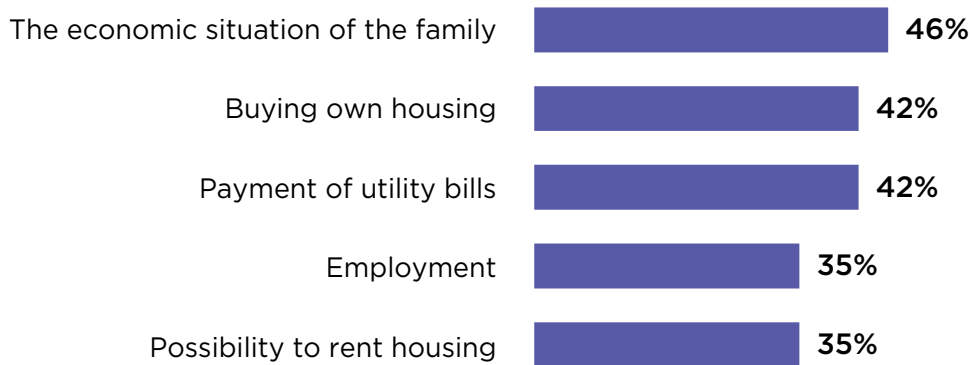
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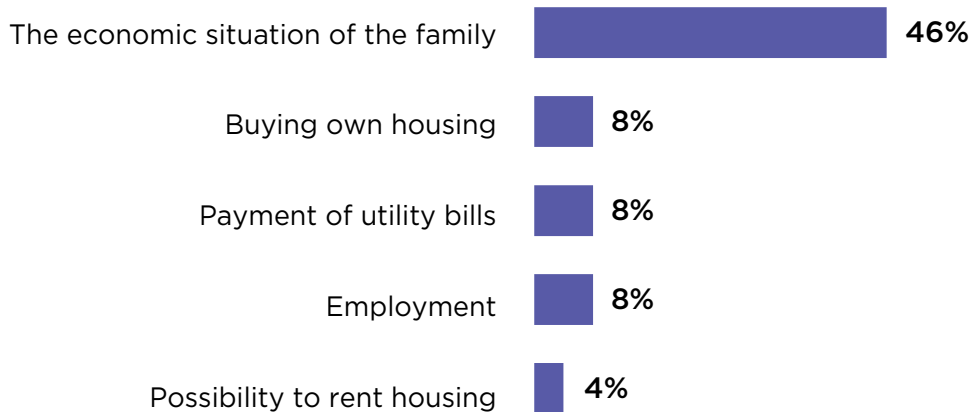
After the easing of quarantine measures the issues of economic condition of families, housing, payment of utility bills and employment will remain urgent (see Diagram 9.4.3).

**Diagram 9.4.3. TOP-5 problems that will be the most acute for IDPs after the end of quarantine in Zaporizhia Oblast**



Experts believe that, in order to provide effective assistance, regional and local authorities should develop assistance programs to address the housing issue of IDPs and create the preconditions for their priority employment (see Diagram 9.4.4).

**Diagram 9.4.4. TOP-5 steps that IDPs expect from the authorities after quarantine in Zaporizhia Oblast**





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## RECOMMENDATIONS

After analyzing the expectations of experts from the authorities, as well as suggestions and recommendations expressed by them during the research, the experts of the CF «Stabilization Support Services» grouped and finalized recommendations in five main areas: housing, household financing, psychological rehabilitation, EECP and access to social and administrative services.

1. Identifying housing problems as priority, the experts have proposed the following methods to solve them:

- increase of «Affordable Housing» programs funding;
- expansion of the list of housing facilities that can be purchased under the program «Affordable Housing»;
- development of rental financing programs (or partial reimbursement of rental costs) for IDPs with chronic diseases or in need of expensive treatment

2. Identifying the problems of employment and financial security of households as priority, the experts have proposed the following methods to solve them:

- finance programs to support small businesses and individual entrepreneurs affected by the quarantine period, in particular those working in the service sector;
- provide additional social protection to families with children for the period of quarantine in preschool and school educational institutions;
- provide local authorities with a subvention for the implementation of programs of public and other temporary works for the unemployed.
- increase the amount of monthly targeted assistance to Internally Displaced Persons to cover living expenses, including the payment of housing and utilities for able-bodied IDPs;
- set the amount of monthly targeted assistance to Internally Displaced Persons to cover living expenses, including the payment of housing and utilities as a certain share of the minimum wage or subsistence level.
- - increase public awareness of existing local and regional programs for IDPs.

3. Identifying the problems of psychological stress and anxiety, the experts have proposed the following methods to solve them:

- develop additional local psychological assistance programs for IDPs;
- increase working hours and methodological support of school psychologists (after the beginning of the educational process);
- raise an awareness on working with stress during quarantine;
- approve the Procedure for psychological rehabilitation of civilians affected by the armed conflict, including IDPs and members of their families;
- take measures at the local level to inform the target audience about the existing opportunities for rehabilitation services and social assistance within the approved social programs.



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4. Identifying the problems of EECP closure as priority, the experts have proposed the following methods to solve them:

- ensure the functioning of all points of access at EECP;
- ensure proper conditions for the transportation of people from the EECP to the contact line and back;
- equip all EECP with first aid points;
- ensure the provision of quality observation conditions for those who need it;
- establish an electronic system for tracking the load on the EECP (it will allow IDPs to plan trips more carefully and estimate the time that will be needed to cross the EECP).

5. Identifying the problem of access to social and administrative services as priority, the experts have proposed the following methods to solve them:

- conduct an explanatory campaign for Oschadbank and Pension Fund of Ukraine on the terms of physical identification;
- extend the action of all positive measures provided by the Law of Ukraine «On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine aimed at preventing the emergence and spread of coronavirus disease (COVID -19)» and Resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 264 and 266 of 08.04.2020 for 3 months from the date of termination of quarantine or restrictive measures related to the spread of coronavirus disease;
- recommend to the social protection bodies, pension fund and JSC “Oschadbank” to determine certain days and hours for work with IDPs and persons living on TOT and to inform the local population about it;
- define legislatively the responsibilities of local self-government bodies in adopting programs and / or taking measures aimed at social adaptation and integration of IDPs;
- separate the payment of pensions to persons living in the occupied territories from the need to obtain an IDP certificate.

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*The authors express special gratitude to internally displaced persons, representatives of non-governmental organizations, public authorities, independent experts, as well as representatives of the international donor community for participating in the discussion and providing advice during the preparation of this document.*

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