



UKRAINE JUSTICE & ACCOUNTABILITY SURVEY 2024

(Data from November 2023)



HARVARD
HUMANITARIAN
INITIATIVE



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INTRODUCTION

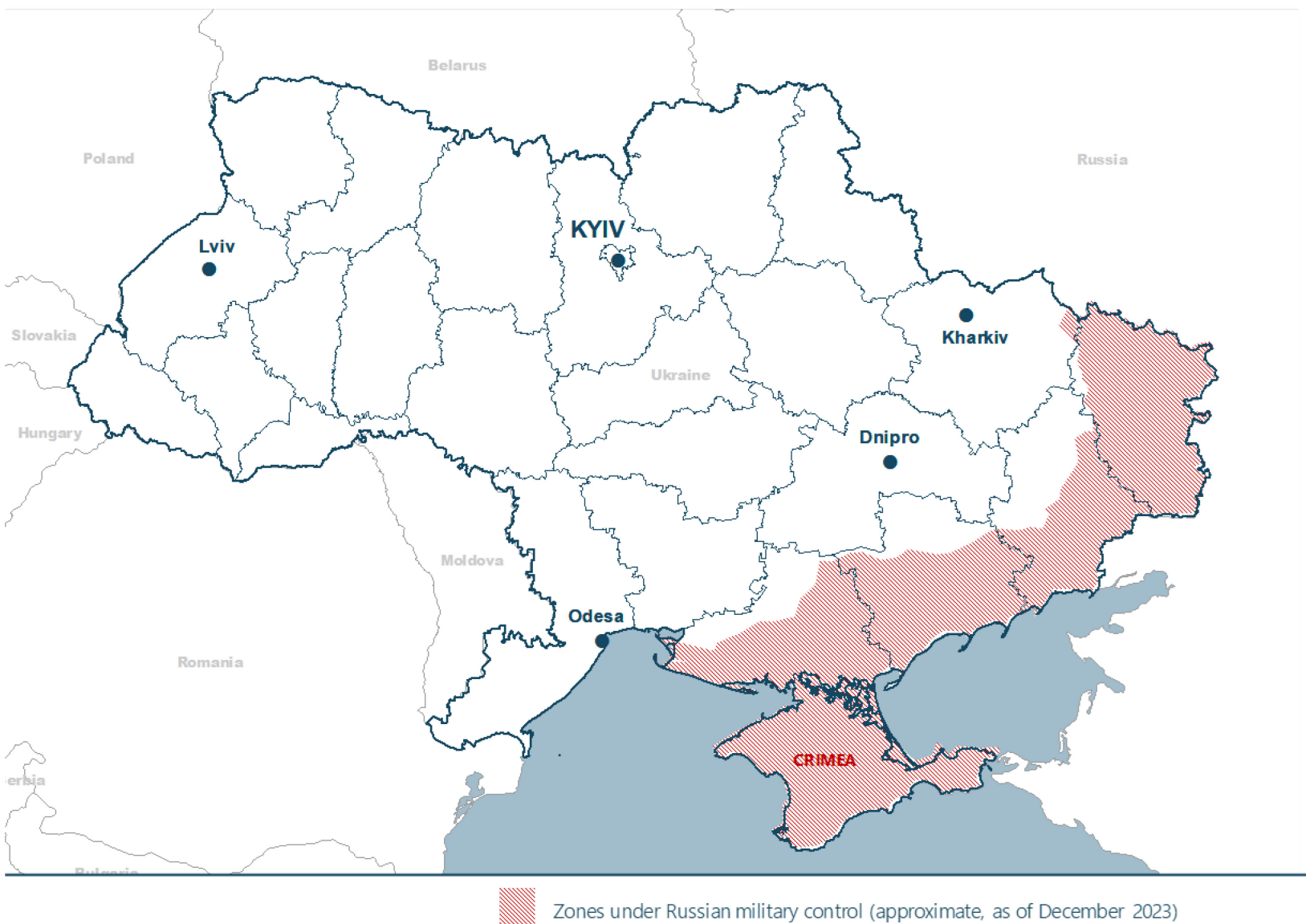
In February 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, following almost a decade of military support for separatists in the Donbas region and the annexation of Crimea in 2014. The ensuing conflict has displaced over 10 million Ukrainians, with 6.5 million seeking refuge abroad and an additional 3.5 million internally displaced within the country. The humanitarian crisis has been worsened by atrocities and human rights violations, including the deliberate targeting of civilians, including women and children, the destruction of critical civilian infrastructure, extrajudicial executions, torture, unlawful deprivation of freedom, forcible transfer of civilians, and abuse of prisoners of war.

In response, officials in Ukraine, along with various international bodies, have initiated efforts towards justice and accountability for war crimes and human rights violations. Ukrainian authorities are investigating over 125,000 potential crimes recorded, highlighting the widespread and severe nature of the accusations against Russian forces. The International Criminal Court (ICC) has also been proactive in its response to the situation in Ukraine. In March 2024, the Court issued arrest warrants for two Russian military officers for targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure. A year earlier, in March 2023, the ICC issued arrest warrants for Russian President Vladimir Putin and his children's rights commissioner, Maria Lvova-Belova, for the alleged unlawful deportation and transfer of Ukrainian children from occupied areas to Russia. More generally, governments around the world, international bodies, and civil society organizations have engaged in various accountability efforts, ranging from supporting Ukraine's own criminal investigations to establishing an international commission of inquiry. However, achieving justice beyond evidence collection and prosecutions in the context of the war in Ukraine will be complex and challenging given the high number of individuals implicated and incidents.

Research in other conflict settings indicates that potential challenges in prosecuting all crimes associated with the conflict with Russia will make it difficult to meet Ukrainians' high expectations for justice. Such research makes clear that, while prosecutions are important in meeting these expectations, measures other than prosecutions are significant in helping a population feel that justice has been done. Determining precisely what a population's expectations of justice are and what measures it regards as meeting them will vary across conflict settings. It is, therefore, vital to engage with survivors of conflict and their communities to understand their experiences and viewpoints to ensure that justice and accountability mechanisms are responsive to their needs.

This report is an important step toward such an engagement and can help lay the groundwork for meaningful consultations with victim groups, a global best practice in ensuring that victim-centered justice is not simply rhetoric but becomes a reality. This report presents the results of a large-scale national population survey and, separately, the results of the survey among urban residents and IDPs in selected cities of Ukraine. In total, 4,500 randomly selected adults were interviewed, reporting on their experience of the conflict, their perception of justice and justice actors, and their priorities with regard to the range of accountability and justice measures, including criminal accountability, truth-seeking and reparations. ■

▼ Figure 1: Map of Ukraine and zones under Russian military control as of December 2023, during data collection.



▼ Figure 2: Study components.



THE STUDY

STUDY DESIGN

This cross-sectional study utilized a survey methodology with two components: a nationwide phone survey based on a random digit dialing sample, and an in-person survey in five cities (Dnipro, Kyiv, Odesa, Kharkiv and Lviv) based on a stratified multi-stage random cluster sampling procedure. For the in-person city survey, interviews were conducted with city residents (n=400) and among a smaller sample of IDP residents (n=100), displaced by the 2022 invasion. The five cities were selected as the largest five urban areas, excluding areas under Russian military control.

SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING METHODS

Eligible participants for the surveys were Ukrainian residents aged 18+ years. The target sample size was 400 per city for the city residents based on a sample size for comparing two equally sized groups, assuming a 50% baseline proportion, 90% confidence level, 80% power, a 20% minimum detectable difference, and a design effect of 2 to reflect the complex design compared to a simple random sample, and after increasing the required sample size by 20% to account for non-response. An oversample of 100 IDPs per city was added to provide an overall comparison (n=500). For the nationwide survey, we anticipated comparing results for up to five groups based on demographic characteristics, resulting in a sample of 2,000.

For the nationwide survey, telephone numbers were randomly generated and called, thus providing all individuals with a phone an equal chance of being selected, including those with unlisted numbers. For the city surveys, a random route protocol was used to randomly select households, with interviewers randomly assigned to starting points throughout the city. Within households, respondents were randomly selected using the next birthday sampling.

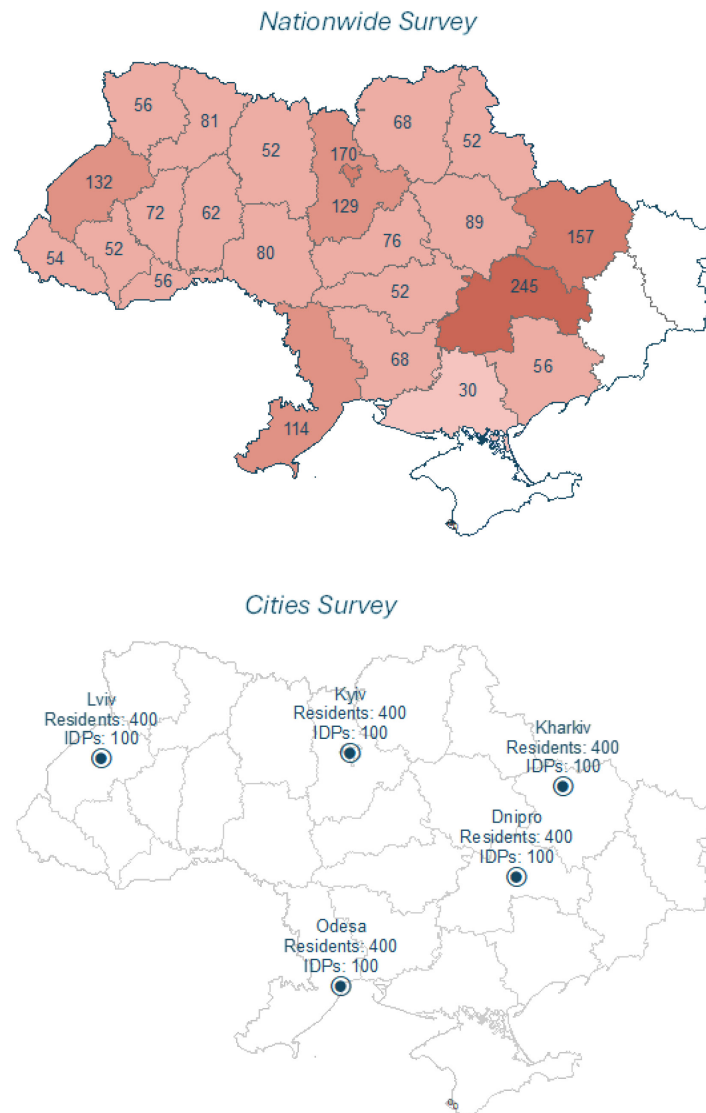
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The research team designed and developed a standardized, semi-structured questionnaire and consent form in English after consultation with over 20 key informants and stakeholders. The instrument was then translated into Russian and Ukrainian, and an independent expert review was performed. The questionnaire underwent a pre-test to ensure clarity of language, and necessary amendments were made to create the final version for interviewing study subjects. The final instrument included questions on demographic characteristics, exposure to violence and victimization, priorities, measures for victims, justice and accountability reconciliation and social cohesion.

DATA COLLECTION

Interviewers were trained in Kyiv on the study methodology, instruments, and data collection protocols. For the nationwide survey, interviews were conducted by phone from a call center. For the city surveys, interviews were conducted in-person by visiting sampled locations. Data collection took place over a two-week period in October and November 2023. All survey responses were recorded electronically. Interviews took an average of 20 minutes to complete, regardless of the mode of administration.

▼ *Figure 3: Sample distribution.*



DATA ANALYSIS

After collection, basic descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations by city and other factors were produced using statistical software (SPSS). The analyses account for the complex sampling design and weight factors for the nationwide survey and urban population. No weights were applied for the IDPs populations.

ETHICAL REVIEW

The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at Georgetown University. In absence of a similar functioning board in Ukraine, the study was reviewed by national experts, including a psychologist, to ensure the protection of human subjects.

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

NATIONWIDE SURVEY

For the nationwide survey, a total of 2,003 interviews were conducted nationwide, above the target sample of 2,000, with an 8.9% response rate, which is common for phone surveys. Out of 27 first-order administrative divisions in Ukraine, data was collected in 23. No data was collected in four administrative areas currently under Russian control, including Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, and the city of Sevastopol.

Among this sample, 55% of participants are women. Those aged 18 to 35 years old account for 29% of the sample, while those aged 36 to 50 account for 27%. The largest percentage (44%) is 51 years old or more. A majority report being married or in a marital relationship (59%); fewer report being widowed (13%), divorced or separated (11%) or single, never married (16%). About half the sample have secondary education or less (52%), while 47% report higher than secondary level education. Most report speaking predominantly Ukrainian (61%) at home compared to Russian (11%), or both (27%), with important regional differences.







CITIES SURVEY

For the cities survey, 400 interviews were conducted with randomly selected residents and 100 with IDPs, for a total of 2,000 interviews with adult residents and 500 with IDPs, meeting the target sample for both groups. The response rate across groups was 64%. For comparison purposes, data are aggregated for the city residents and IDPs.

Among city residents, 55% of participants are women. Compared to the nationwide survey, participants are slightly younger on average, with 30% aged 18 to 35 years old, 30% aged 36 to 50 years old, and 40% aged 51 years old or above. More than half (54%) are married, and 24% indicate being single, never married; 11% are widowed and 10% are divorced / separated. More than half the participants (56%) report higher education than secondary education, more than the nationwide survey (47%). City residents are also more likely than nationwide survey participants to report speaking predominantly Russian at home (34%) or both Ukrainian and Russian (30%), while 36% report speaking predominantly Ukrainian.

Among IDPs in the selected city, a higher proportion of participants are women (67%) compared to the nationwide and city residents' sample. This sample is also, on average, younger than the other samples, with 36% aged 18 to 35 years old, 27% aged 36 to 50 years old, and 36% aged 51 years old or above. Half the sample indicate being married or in a marital relationship (50%), while 23% are single, never married, 14% are divorced / separated, and 13% are widowed. Half the respondents (50%) report higher than secondary education. Like the city residents, respondents in the IDPs sample are more likely to predominantly speak Russian (36%) or both Russian and Ukrainian (36%) at home compared to the nationwide sample. About one-third (29%) of the city IDPs predominantly speak Ukrainian at home. ■

▼ Table 1: Sample characteristics.

			Nationwide survey	City residents	City IDPs
		Sample size	2,003	2,000	500
Gender		women	45%	45%	33%
		men	55%	55%	67%
Age		18-35	29%	30%	36%
		36-50	27%	30%	27%
		51+	44%	40%	36%
Marital Status		Never married	16%	24%	23%
		Divorced / Separated	11%	10%	14%
		Widowed	13%	11%	13%
		Married / Relationship	59%	54%	50%
Education		Less than secondary	1%	1%	1%
		General secondary	19%	14%	20%
		Technical secondary	32%	29%	29%
		Higher than secondary	47%	56%	50%
Language		Ukrainian	61%	36%	29%
		Russian	11%	34%	36%
		Both	27%	30%	36%

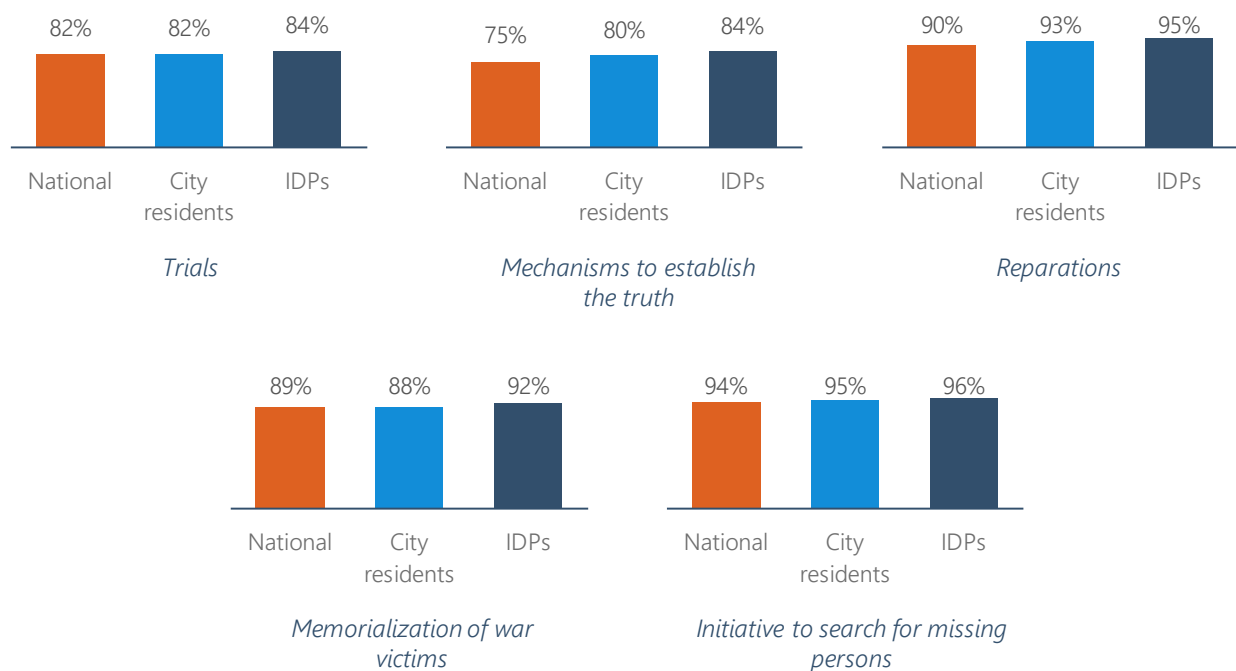
RESULTS

HIGH IMPORTANCE GIVEN TO JUSTICE MEASURES

Mechanisms like trials, truth commissions, memorial projects, and reparations aim to address atrocities and support justice and healing in different ways. The survey asked participants to rate the importance of having mechanisms that seek to do things like hold trials, uncover the truth, support memorialization efforts, search for missing persons, and provide reparations to victims. This question did not refer to any specific policies, processes, or institutions, but rather focused on trials, truth seeking, memorialization or reparations in general.

The result show that a large majority, from 75% to 96%, saw mechanisms for trials, establishing truth, memorializing victims, finding missing persons, and providing reparations as "very important" across the national survey, city resident, and IDP respondent groups. Nearly all participants (99% or more) viewed these types of mechanisms as at least "rather important." This demonstrated widespread agreement on the importance of such efforts.

▼ *Figure 4: How important is it to you to have mechanisms that seek to do the following:*
(% very important)

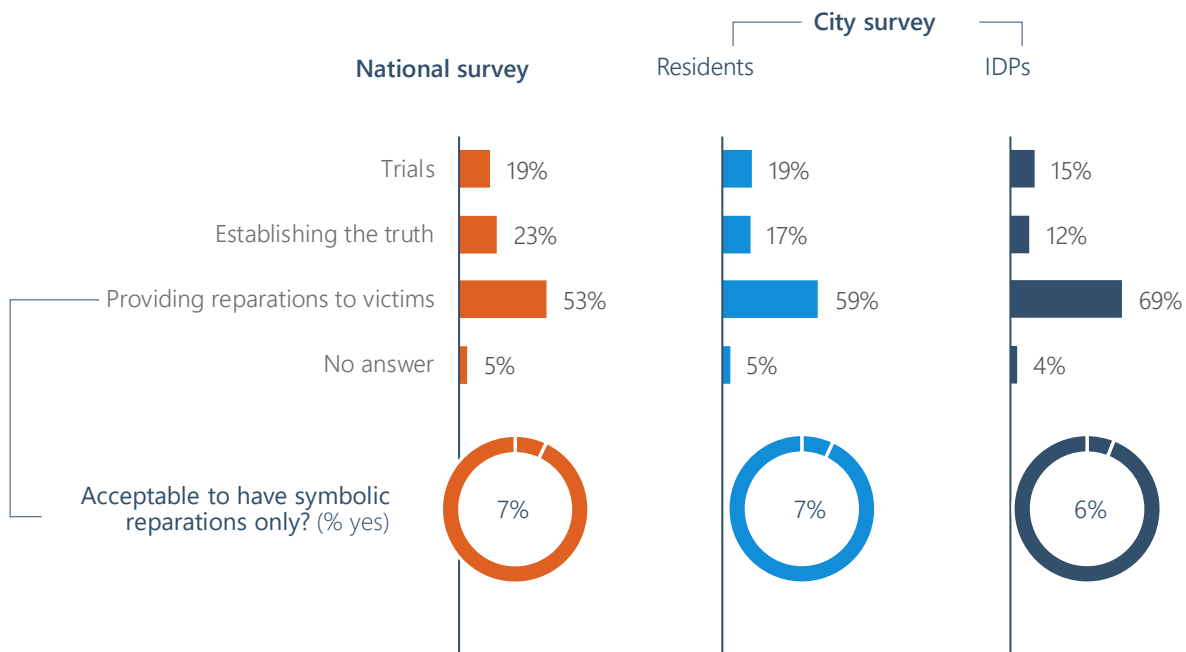


PRIORITY FOR (NON-SYMBOLIC) REPARATIONS

To further understand priorities for justice, the survey asked respondents to prioritize among three options: holding trials, uncovering the truth, and providing reparations to victims. The results show that reparations were the clear preference according to majorities both nationally and among the city groups. Over half of national respondents (53%) prioritized reparations, as did 59% of city residents and 69% of city IDPs. Trials and truth-telling processes were less frequently selected as the priority. Considering reparations, few respondents (6% to 7% across samples) found it acceptable to have symbolic reparations only.

These results suggest that, at the time of the survey, respondents report that addressing tangible harms through compensation for victims should take precedence. As noted above, trials and truth-telling are still important, but reparations are seen as the most pressing initial priority. This also likely reflects current needs for assistance in the context of a humanitarian crisis.

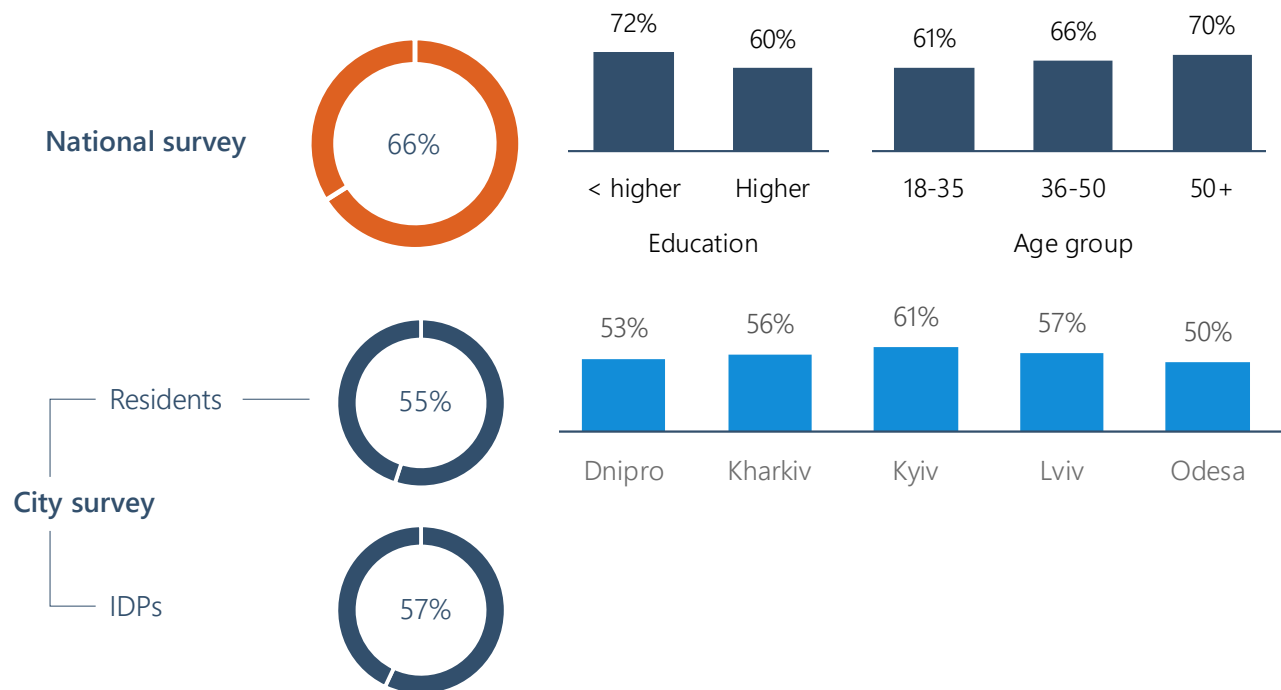
▼ *Figure 5: If such mechanisms happen - which should come first?
Trials of perpetrators, establishing the truth about past violations, or reparations for victims?
(% of respondents)*



OPTIMISM ABOUT JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS

The survey asked participants if they thought justice could be achieved for victims of the war with Russia. Most (66%) are positive in the nationwide sample. Answers differed in some groups as older people tend to be more hopeful, while those with more education are less so. City residents and displaced people living in cities are, on average, less optimistic than those in the nationwide sample. This may reflect different demographic composition and experience with the war and justice system.

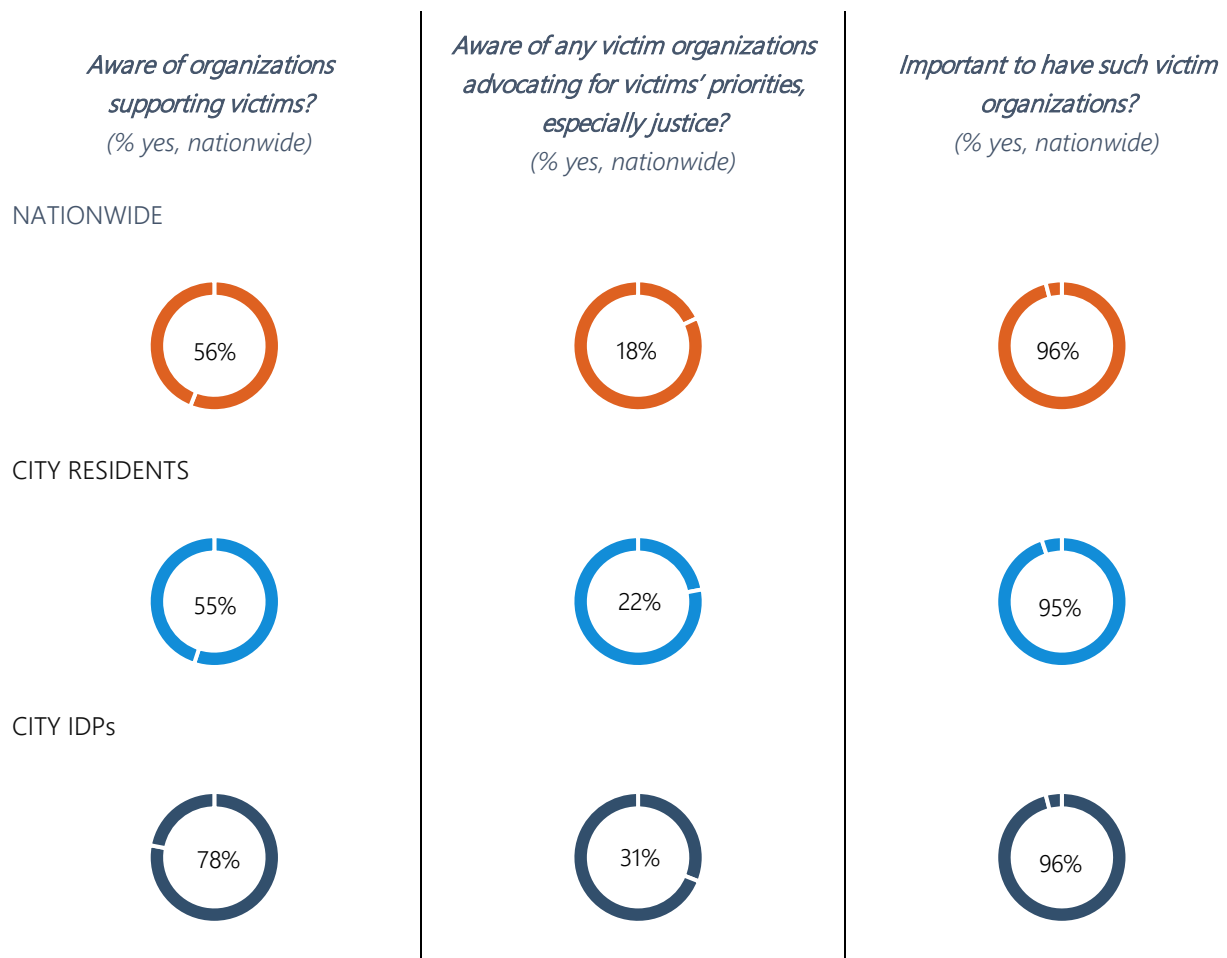
▼ Figure 6: In your opinion, will justice be possible for the victims of the war with Russia? (% yes)



AWARENESS OF AND SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS' ORGANIZATIONS

The survey shows that nearly all participants (over 95% nationwide and across cities) think it is important to have advocacy organizations for victims. However, while a little more than half the general population nationwide and across the cities (56% and 55%, respectively) are aware of organizations that support victims, only 18% of participants nationwide, and 22% among city residents were aware of the existence of victim organizations that are advocating for victims' priorities, especially justice. Awareness of organizations supporting victims is higher among IDPs.

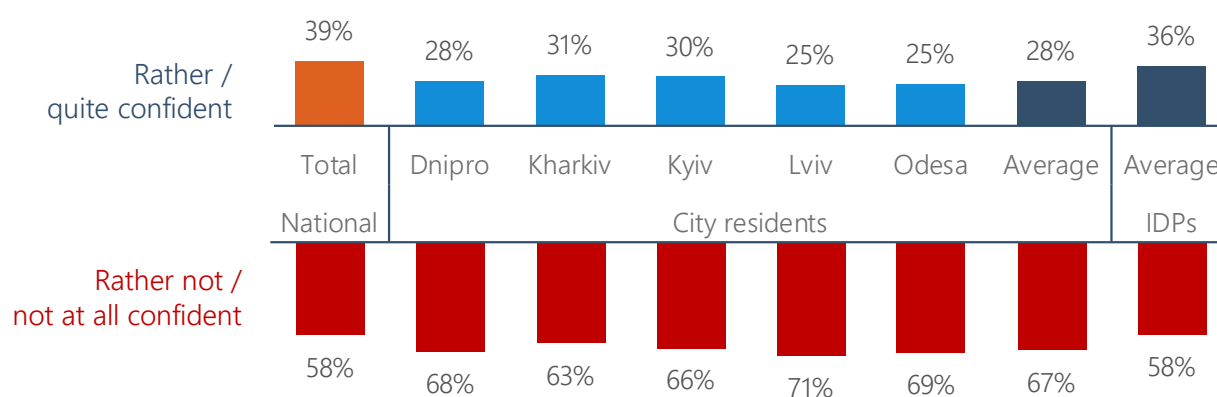
▼ Figure 7: Civil society support for victims.



CONFIDENCE IN THE UKRAINIAN JUSTICE SYSTEM

The survey assessed general confidence (trust) in the Ukrainian justice system. Nationwide, 39% of participants express trust in the justice system. Trust is lower among city residents (28%) on average, but similar among city IDPs (36%). These results are higher than the levels of trust previously documented in Ukraine. Generalized trust in the judiciary branch was estimated at 10% in 2020, according to a USAID funded survey of the Ukrainian population.¹ Recent surveys have put the level of trust in the courts at 25% and 12% in 2022 and 2023, respectively.² The level of trust shown in this data is also higher than similar indicators collected by our team in countries experiencing internal conflicts, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (25% in 2021), or Ethiopia (29% in 2023).³ No comparable data is available for countries with interstate war. For comparison, trust in justice documented in countries like France (49%)⁴ or the United States (49%)⁵ is higher, but still below 50%.

▼ *Figure 8: In general, how confident are you in the Ukrainian Justice system?*



¹ Infosapiens. Survey of Ukrainian Population Regarding Trust in the Judiciary and Other Branches, Judicial Independence and Accountability, Perception of and Reporting Corruption. 2021. USAID Ukraine

² Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. Dynamics of trust in social institutions in 2021-2023.

³ Vinck P, Zikomangane, P, Makoond A, Buroko K, Pham PN. Peacebuilding and Reconstruction Polls – Democratic Republic of

the Congo #22. (May 2021). Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, United Nations Development Program.; Pham PN, Metekia TS, Deyessa N, Mah A, Vosniak L, Vinck P. 2023. Ethiopia Peace and Justice Survey 2023. Harvard Humanitarian Initiative

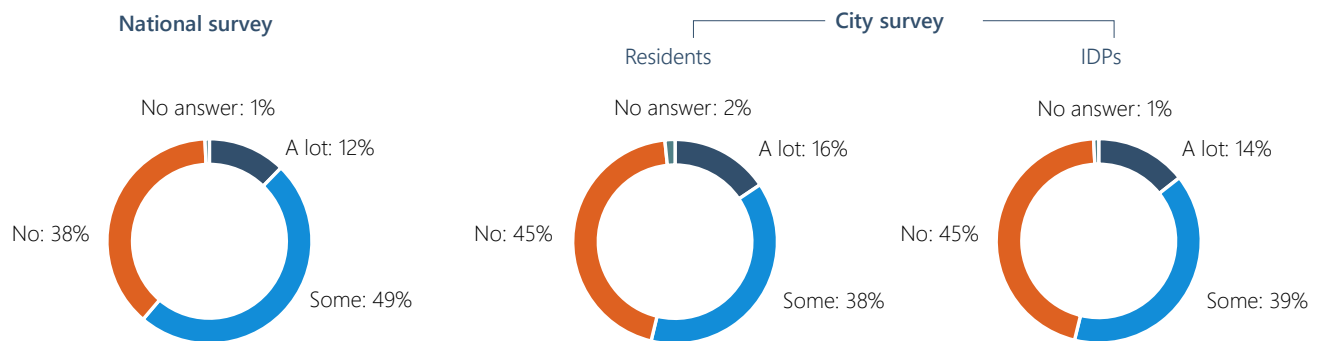
⁴ 2023 CSA / CNEWS poll

⁵ 2023 Gallup Poll. Americans Trust Local Government Most, Congress Least

AWARENESS OF TRIAL EFFORTS

Optimism about justice for war victims and trust in the justice system may be associated with the level of awareness of the population about such efforts. The survey shows that about two-thirds of the population (61%) have heard “some” or “a lot” about the efforts of the Office of the Prosecutor General to hold trials for Russians responsible for crimes during the war. Awareness is slightly less frequent among city populations (54% among residents, 53% among IDPs).

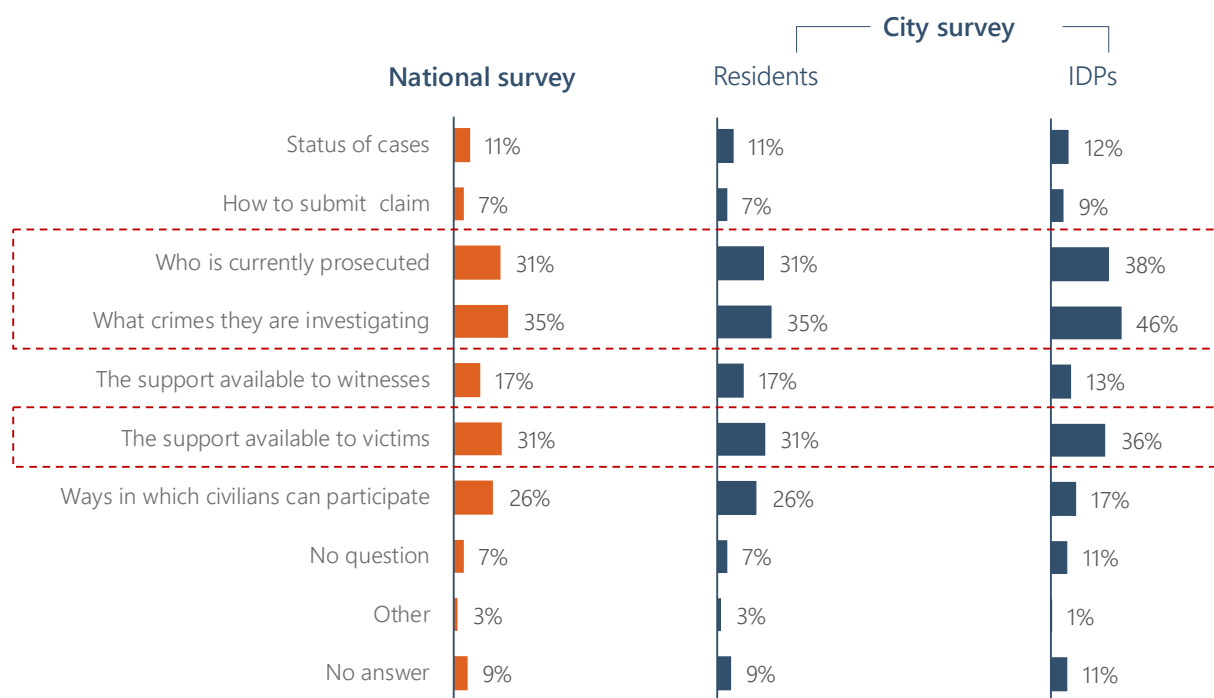
▼ *Figure 9: Have you heard about the efforts of the Office of the Prosecutor General to hold trials for Russians responsible for crime during the war?*



DESIRE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CRIMES, PROSECUTION, SUPPORT

As a follow-up question, the survey asked what additional information participants would like from the OPG. The top requests related to details about which crimes are under investigation, who is currently being prosecuted, and support available for witnesses and victims. Other common answers included the support available to witnesses and ways in which civilians could participate in the trials.

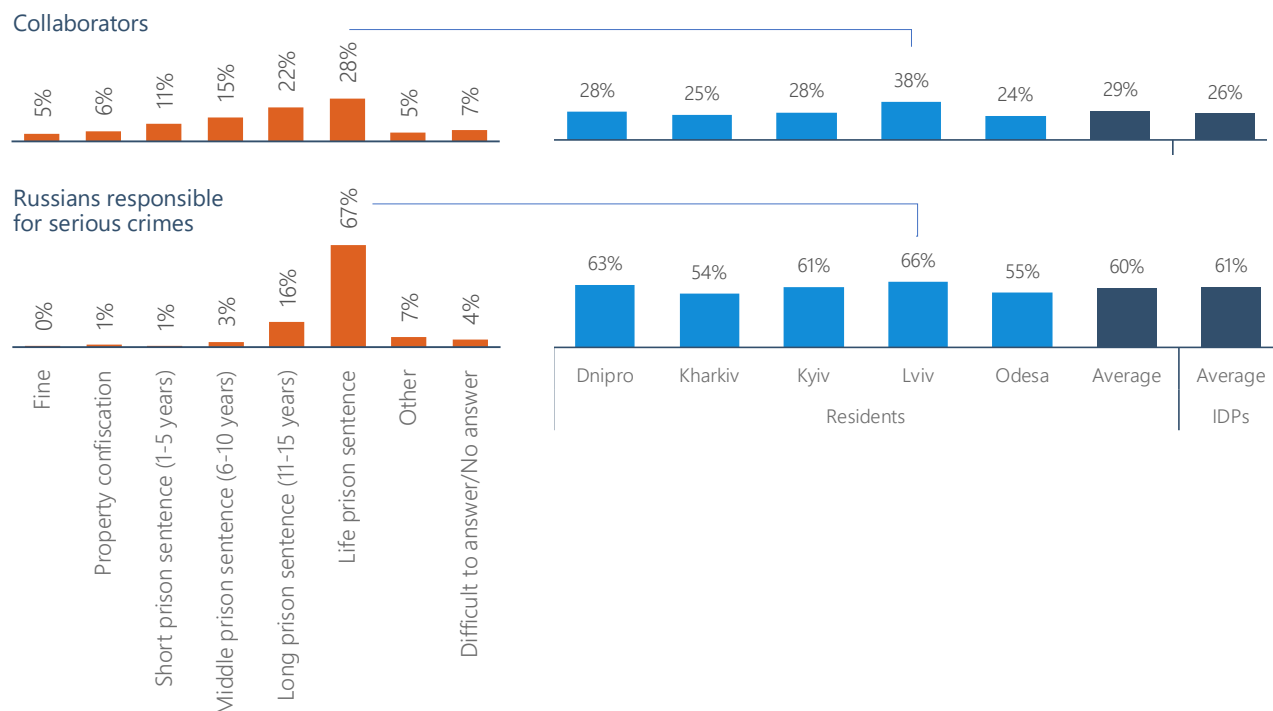
▼ Figure 10: On what aspects would you like to have more information from the Office of the Prosecutor General?



EXPECTATIONS FOR PUNISHMENT

Survey participants were asked their views on appropriate punishments for certain actors associated with the conflict: Russians responsible for serious crimes and “collaborators”. The term collaborator was not defined at this point but is discussed in the following section. Participants expressed a desire for severe punishments for both groups. Concerning the punishment for Russians for serious crimes, 67% suggest a life prison sentence. For collaborators, as many as 50% suggest sentences longer than 10 years (22%: 11 to 15 years, 28% life sentence). Results are similar among city residents and IDPs, with respondents in Lviv slightly more likely to demand harsh punishment compared to the other cities.

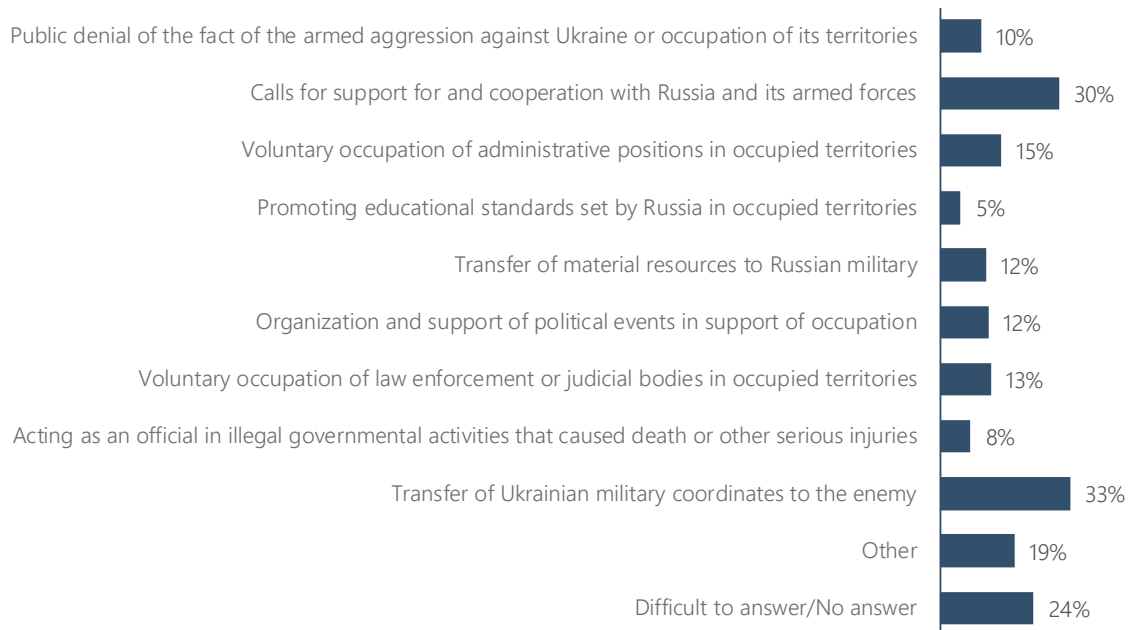
▼ *Figure 11: How should the following be punished?*
(% participant, nationwide survey)



COLLABORATORS

As noted, the survey found that participants generally expressed a desire for harsh punishments, such as long prison sentences, for those deemed collaborators with enemy forces during the conflict. However, "collaboration" can be a subjective term open to interpretation. To gain deeper insight, an open-ended follow-up question was included to allow participants to define collaboration in their own words, without prescriptive response options. The results show that participants most frequently note the transfer of military coordinates to the enemy (33%) and calls for support and cooperation with Russia and its army (30%). However, participants provided a wide range of answers suggesting that the concept of "collaborator" is not uniformly defined or understood.

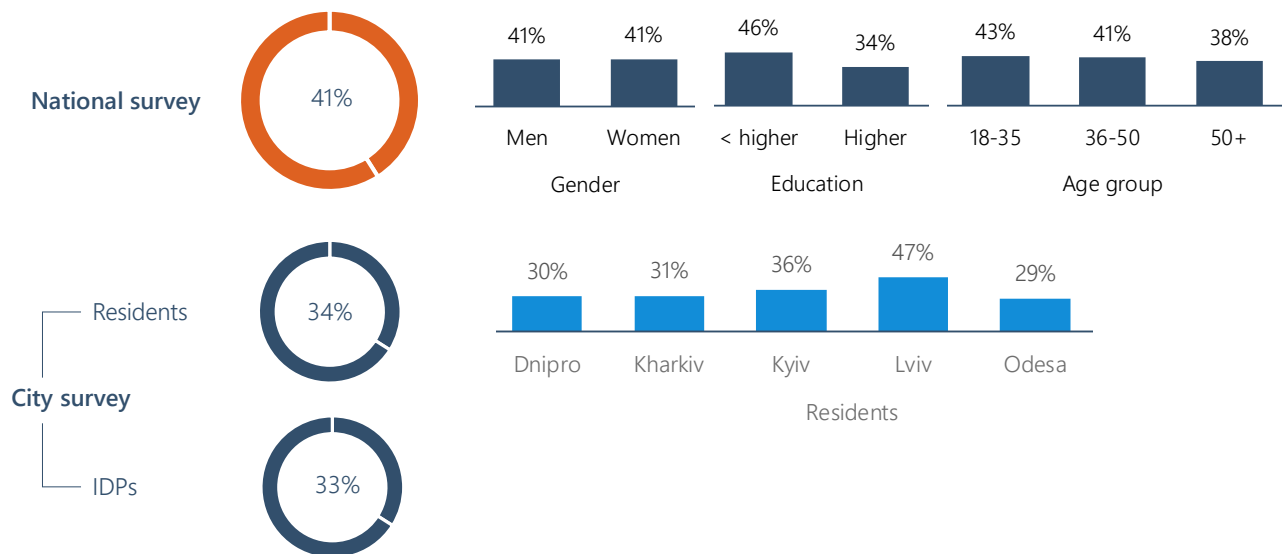
▼ *Figure 12: What constitutes collaboration?*
(% of respondents, open-ended)



RISK OF SELF-ADMINISTERED JUSTICE

The survey aimed to assess public opinions on civilians executing justice for war crimes themselves, without formal legal processes. Participants were questioned about the acceptability of punishing those perceived as guilty of serious offenses during the conflict on their own. Findings reveal that 41% of respondents nationwide view self-administered justice as acceptable. This view is more prevalent among younger and less educated individuals. However, acceptance is lower among urban residents and internally displaced persons (IDPs), at 34% and 33% respectively. The research suggests that the inclination towards self-administered justice may stem from a discrepancy between high expectations for justice and the limited capacity to prosecute all offenders. Reducing this risk might involve introducing alternative justice mechanisms that are broadly acceptable to the community.

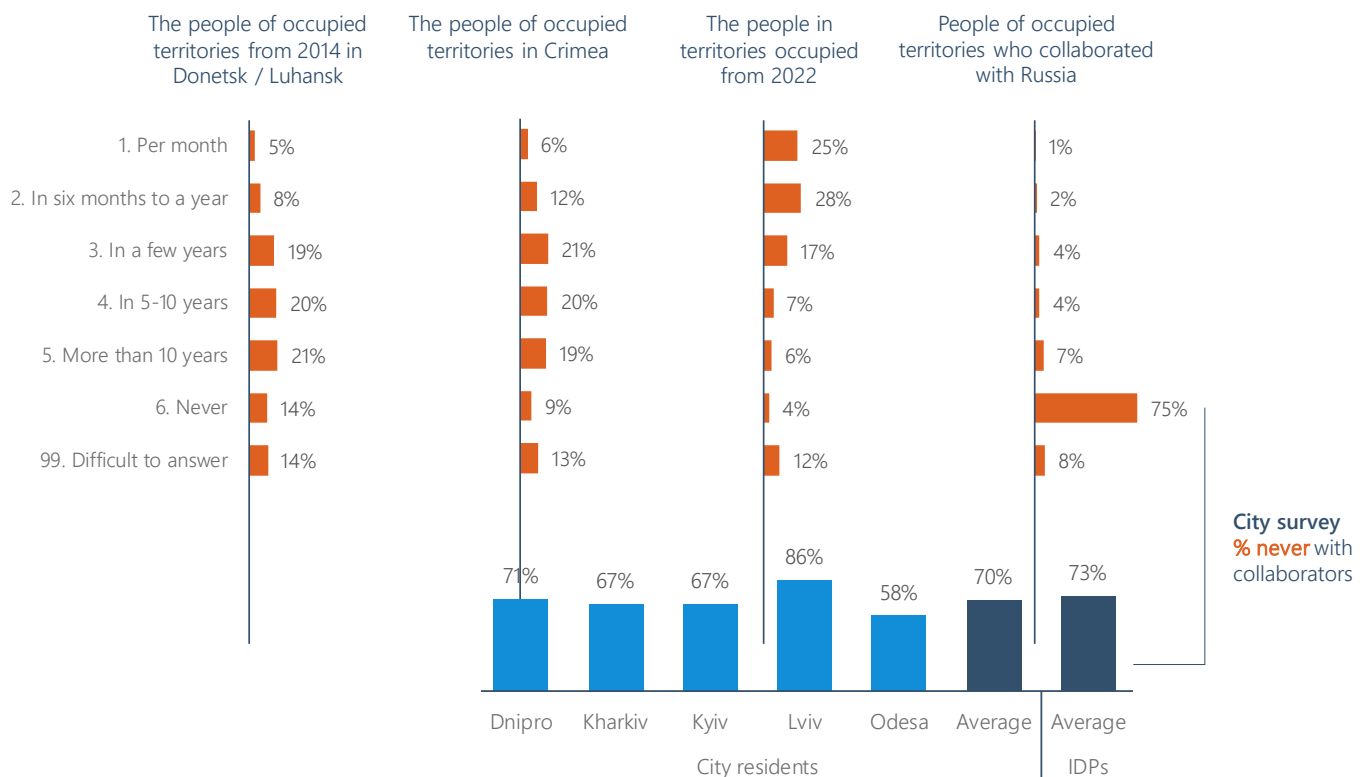
▼ *Figure 13: Is it acceptable for civilians to do justice themselves if they know someone is guilty of serious crimes during the war? (% yes)*



RECONCILIATION WITH COLLABORATORS AND OTHERS

The expectations for harsh punishment for perpetrators align with other findings from the survey, which show that participants in the nationwide survey, as well as city residents and IDPs, generally report that it is impossible for them to anticipate a time when they may reconcile with collaborators (nationally, 75% said never). Across cities, fewer participants say so in Odesa (58%), while the highest percentage is found in Lviv (86%). Less than 10% expressed confidence that such reconciliation could happen within a few years. In contrast, two-thirds of respondents nationwide expressed they would be able to reconcile with people from the territories occupied since 2022 in a few years or less (70%), and one-third said they would be able to reconcile with people from territories occupied since 2014 in Donetsk/Luhansk (32%), and Crimea (39%).

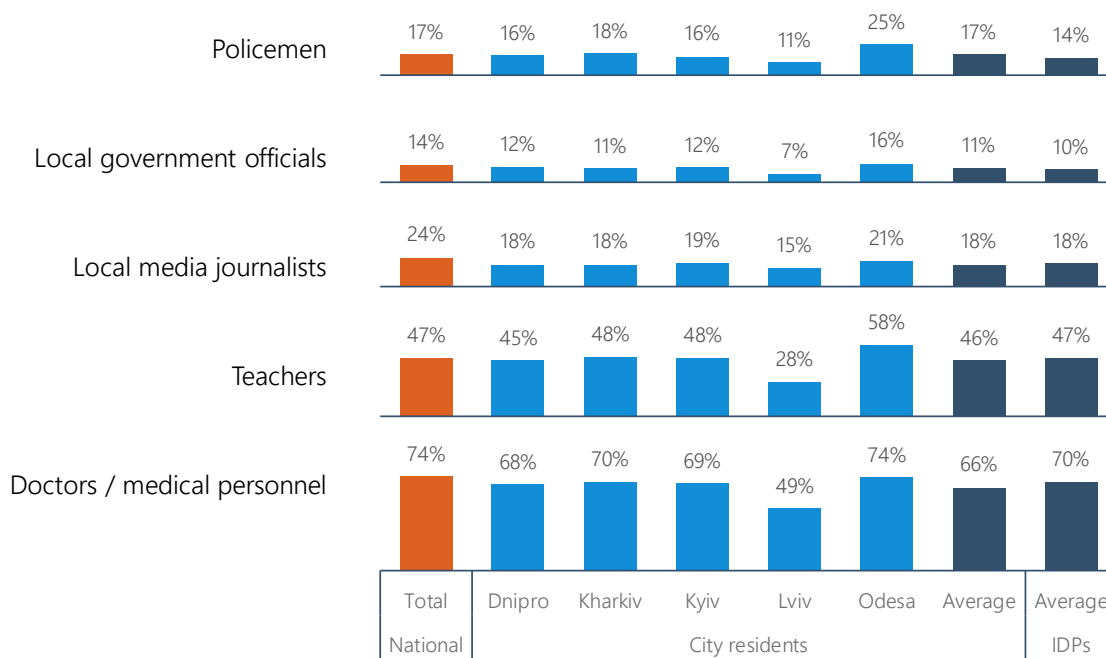
▼ *Figure 14: When will it be possible for the residents of the unoccupied territories to reconcile with the residents of such occupied territories, after their liberation?*
(Nationwide survey, % of respondents)



OPENNESS TO RECONCILIATION

To further understand perspectives on reconciliation, participants were asked about their willingness to reconcile with different actors from occupied territories who may have been associated with the conflict. The survey examined openness to reconcile with people in positions of community authority or service, such as medical professionals, educators, law enforcement, and local government officials. The responses show that participants in the survey are most open to reconciliation with doctors and, to a lesser extent, teachers. Among the nationwide sample, 74% are open to reconciliation with doctors and 47% with teachers. Far fewer participants expressed openness to reconciling with journalists (24%), police (17%), or local government officials (14%). The results are generally similar among city residents and IDPs, although participants from Lviv are less open to reconciliation than others, for all the actors considered.

▼ *Figure 15: How open are you to reconciling with residents of occupied territories in the following professions if they are to stay there after the return of the Ukrainian government there?*
(% 'somewhat to very open')

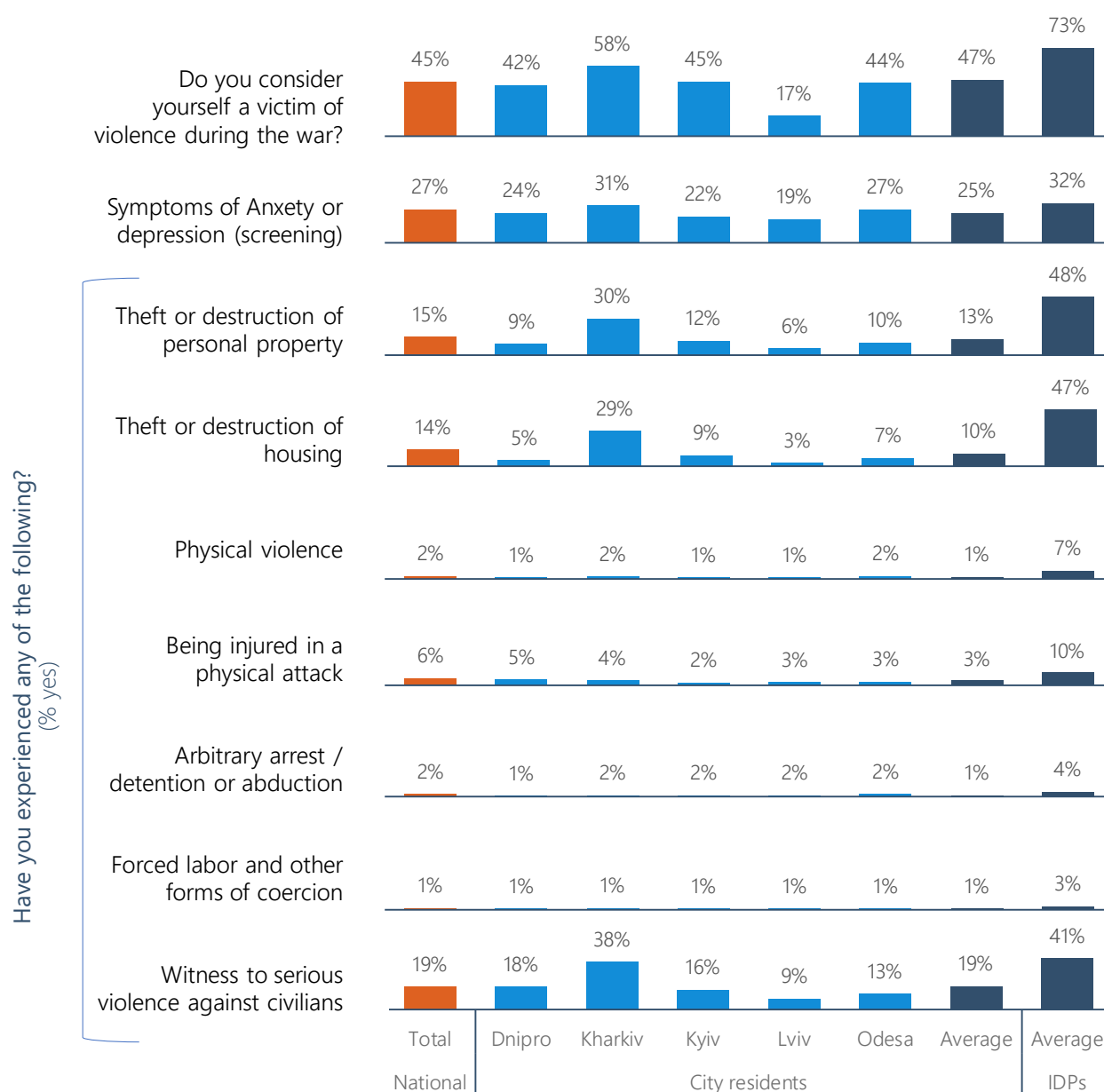


VICTIMS, VIOLENCE AND TRAUMA

Participants were asked whether they considered themselves victims of the conflict and whether they experienced or witnessed any physical harm or suffered property loss or damage. While 45% of participants nationwide regard themselves as victims of violence during the war, a substantially smaller percentage experienced or were exposed to serious violence or property loss or damage. The highest percentage of those suffering physical harm was the 6% who reported being injured in a physical attack, while 15% experienced theft or destruction of personal

property and 14% [loss?] of housing; City figures are similar. Among IDPs, 78% considered themselves victims, with smaller percentages reporting physical harm or suffering property loss or damage. These findings suggest that much of the harm suffered by those who consider themselves victims is not the type for which conventional legal remedies are available. The provision of counseling, medical care, and other services may be necessary. This finding is further supported by the high percentages of people who screened positively for symptoms of anxiety or depression.

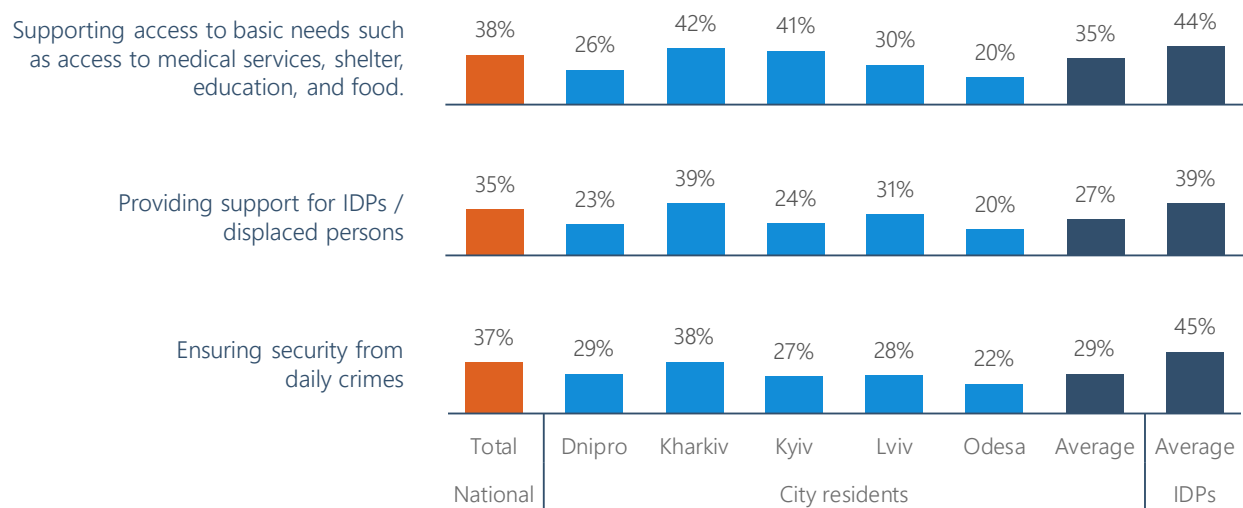
▼ Figure 16: Exposure to violence.



GOVERNMENT PROVISION OF SERVICES

To conclude, the survey asked participants about their perceptions of the work of the national government across different service areas. The responses show that one-third of the population (38% nationwide) expresses satisfaction with the government's efforts to support access to basic needs, such as medical services, shelter, education, and food. Similar percentages express satisfaction with the support being provided for IDPs (35% nationwide) and ensuring security from daily crimes (37%). IDPs generally express higher-level satisfaction with these services compared to city residents and the nationwide sample. ■

▼ *Figure 17: How would you judge the efforts of the national government in the following areas?*
(% good – very good)



CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSION

This report presents new survey data that comes directly from those affected by the war in Ukraine. It seeks to inform discussion and engagement on a range of justice measures to ensure that such measures are grounded in the priorities and experiences of those most impacted. The following are the survey's key takeaways..

First, Ukrainians express strong support for justice and accountability, including for mechanisms that seek to hold trials, uncover the truth, support memorialization efforts, search for missing persons, and provide reparations to victims. In terms of sequencing, a majority prioritizes non-symbolic reparations over trials or truth commissions, likely reflecting the extent of the harm and losses they have experienced and the humanitarian crisis that has resulted from the war.

Second, confidence in the justice system appears to have increased from previous assessments but remains low. However, most participants believe that justice will be possible for the victims of the war with Russia. Beyond the justice system, there is low to moderate satisfaction with government services to meet basic needs during the war.

Third, awareness of accountability efforts through the Prosecutor General's Office and the International Criminal Court is relatively high, but the population would like more details about crimes under investigation, who is currently being prosecuted, support available for witnesses and victims, and opportunities to participate in the process.

Fourth, nearly all participants think it is important to have victim advocacy organizations, but very few are aware of the existence of such organizations.

Fifth, the appropriate punishment proposed by participants tended toward severity for both Russian perpetrators and collaborators. There is a wide range of views on what constitutes collaboration, with no clear consensus. While there is some openness to reconciliation with doctors and teachers who stayed in occupied areas, reconciliation with others perceived as collaborators was seen as unlikely by most. Finally, almost half the population believes that it is

acceptable to take matters into their own hands if they believe that justice is not being done.

The findings reveal both support for and gaps in holistic justice efforts to date, as well as divisions in views that could impact prospects for long-term peacebuilding. Given that these results are a direct representation of population views, they offer important insights that policymakers, international organizations, and civil society groups must consider in designing inclusive, victim-centered programs that meet needs, address harms experienced, and lay the foundation for sustainable reconciliation over the long term. Specifically, the following recommendations emerged from discussions of the results:

- (1) *Prioritize Victim-Centered Reparations:*
Develop and implement reparations programs that directly address the needs and preferences of victims, focusing on non-symbolic reparations. These programs should be designed with active participation from the affected communities to ensure they meet the actual needs and contribute to the healing process.
- (2) *Strengthen the Justice System:*
Continue efforts to build communities' trust in the national justice system. This includes enhancing transparency, increasing accessibility, and improving the efficiency of the justice process. Strengthening the justice system is crucial to upholding the rule of law, ensuring that victims feel their grievances are being addressed fairly and promptly, and enhancing trust in the system.
- (3) *Improve Communication and Awareness:*
Address the information gaps identified in the report by improving the dissemination of information about ongoing accountability efforts, the status of investigations, and support services available for victims and witnesses. This should include clear, accessible, and regular updates to the public to build awareness and understanding of the justice processes.
- (4) *Support Civil Society and Victim Organizations:*
Strengthen support for civil society groups, victim

groups and organizations to ensure they have the resources and platforms to advocate for their own rights, get support services, and participate meaningfully in a range of justice processes.

(5) *Address Divisions and Promote Reconciliation:*

Recognize and address the deep divisions and views on collaboration and punishment. Initiatives should be developed to promote dialogue, understanding, and healing among different community segments, including those affected by occupation. Such efforts should aim to prevent private efforts to seek justice and build a foundation for long-term peace.

(6) *Monitor and Evaluate Justice Efforts:*

Establish mechanisms to regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of a range of justice measures, ensuring they remain aligned with the evolving needs and perspectives of affected communities. Feedback from these evaluations should be used to adapt and refine strategies over time. ■

