

# **Impact of Ukraine's Non-Recognition on the "Facts of Life" in Uncontrolled Parts of Donetsk and Luhansk Region**

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## **Introduction**

The Russian aggression against Ukraine led to the annexation of the Crimea peninsula and the occupation of a part of Donetsk and Luhansk region<sup>1</sup>. As a result, Ukraine is deprived of the control over a part of its state borders, facing a problem of the so-called "lines of demarcation" occurring instead. Not the state borders in legal terms, they actually perform this function. On both sides of the demarcation lines, there are control points. While crossing them, people undergo personal identification and inspection of personal belongings; there is a list of restrictions for import and export of belongings and foodstuff, the customs control is in place. In order to enter the territories, which are out of Ukraine's control, the citizens of Ukraine have to get a permit from the Security Service of Ukraine. It is formed online during 10 days. Having turned the internal territories into the actual border areas, these demarcation lines changed the everyday life of the average citizens of Ukraine.

Since 2014, more than 2 mln people have left the uncontrolled territories of Ukraine. Some of them have received the IDP status (internally displaced person). As of December 2015, there were 1,678,587 persons among them. According to the Ministry of Social Policy, there are 1,512,435 internally displaced persons registered in Ukraine<sup>2</sup> as of January 02, 2019. Since 2014, Ukrainians have been forcefully leaving Ukraine as well. As of December 2015, in the countries that have common borders with Ukraine, such as Russia, Belarus, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Moldova, there were 388,690 Ukrainians seeking refuge, and 730,100 Ukrainians seeking other forms of legal stay in the mentioned countries<sup>3</sup>. The estimated population of the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions is 3.7 mln<sup>4</sup>. These are mostly people who formally remain the citizens of Ukraine.

Loss of control over the occupied Ukrainian territories and continuation of the hostilities have led to significant complication of provision of the state services and issuance of documents confirming identity or status of a person. In this research, we define the combination of such situations as "recognition or non-recognition of facts of a person's life by the state." "Facts of a person's life" shall be understood as situations and

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Law of Ukraine "On Peculiarities of the State Policy of Ensuring the State Sovereignty of Ukraine on the Temporarily Occupied Territories in Donetsk and Luhansk Regions of January 18, 2018, DPR and LPR are recognized as the administrative units occupied by RF in Donetsk and Luhansk regions / Electronic resource available at: <http://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2268-19>.

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine. The official web portal / Electronic resource available at: <https://www.msp.gov.ua/main/prescentr.html>

<sup>3</sup> The Big Migration: How Many Displaced Persons are there in Ukraine, and what is their Fate // The Ukrainian Truth: Economic Truth / Electronic resource available at:

[https://www.epravda.com.ua/publications/2016/07/7/598316/view\\_print/](https://www.epravda.com.ua/publications/2016/07/7/598316/view_print/)

<sup>4</sup> Vyhnevskyi Yu. Demography of the Separate Districts of Donetsk and Luhansk Regions / Electronic resource available at: <http://www.dsnews.ua/static/longread/donbas-ukr/demographiya-ordlo.html>

states of a person which require an official record (passport, birth certificate, death certificate, certificate on the secondary education, higher education diploma, pension certificate, person with a disability ID, proof of registration, etc.). Issuance of such documents was a part of the standard bureaucratic process during peacetime. For Ukrainian citizens who are in some way related to the occupied territories, issuance of these documents turns into a complicated process, which causes a situation of uncomfortable and exhausting border crossing and humiliating procedure of identification, while at the same time creates new types of transboundary practices and services.

## **Research methodology**

The fieldwork of the research included conduction of 45 semi-structured in-depth interviews with representatives of three groups: residents of Luhansk region territories not controlled by Ukraine (16 respondents), internally displaced persons who stay on the territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions controlled by Ukraine (17 respondents), and experts (12 respondents). Experts are represented by the employees of *the Right to Protection*, an international organization providing legal assistance for people at the checkpoints and on the territory of Luhansk region controlled by Ukraine; by the local authority and self-government members, and by the public activists.

The project's geography: Stanytsia Luhanska (the only pedestrian crossing to the uncontrolled territory of Luhansk region), towns Shchastya, Sievierodonetsk, Sviatohirsk, and Sloviansk. The fieldwork of the research was performed in June 2018<sup>5</sup>.

Parts of the interview guide: description / evaluation of the situation in the uncontrolled parts of Donetsk and Luhansk region by the respondents; in case of IDP – experience of relocation, its reasons and motives; assessment of activity of the government of Ukraine and the collaborative authority structures on the territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions not controlled by Ukraine regarding minimization of the population's problems; key problems with evaluation of their recognition and / or non-recognition by the state; the everyday practices, experience of crossing the actual border (checkpoints); issues of adaptation, integration, getting used to the situation.

Conversations with respondents proceeded according to the following logic. First, a respondent was proposed to discuss in general the problems, which were the most relevant for her or him at the moment. Then, the problems indicated by the respondent were reviewed more deeply. In the end of the interview, the respondent filled in a table with proposed list, where they indicated the intensity of certain problems ("a very serious problem", "rather a problem", "it is hard to say whether this is a problem or not", "rather not a problem", "this is not a problem at all, it should be like this"). Also, they indicated whether they had had a personal experience of dealing with a certain problem, or got to know about it from other sources of information, or from other people (not from the close surroundings). This made it possible to identify the problems, which are the most relevant for the respondents, to deepen understanding of their essence, as well as to differentiate between assessments based on one's personal experience on the information one receives from the available sources. In addition to the options proposed in the table, respondents could add their own options of situations. They also had to point out three key situations/problems among all discussed during the interview. Tables were adjusted for the situations on the uncontrolled territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and for those parts of the regions which are controlled by Ukraine. The advantage of this method was that the respondents not only provided direct answers to the questions (defined level of the problem expression, as well as

<sup>5</sup> This research is a part of The Gender Pilot Project of PAX (PAX is a non-profit, non-governmental peace organization working in The Netherlands and around the world).

presence/absence of personal experience of it), but also commented, explaining what the essence of this or other problem was for them and how it was expressed. As a result, we have not only a list of problems, but also a deep understanding of the problems described from different sides and positions.

### **Rating of the key problems as per evaluation of the respondents**

As a basis for our further review, we shall take the rating, which demonstrates intensity of situation/problem expression. This rating is a basic one as it shows the frequency of facing a certain situation based on the answers of all the respondents<sup>6</sup>:

1. The current issues of the pensioner identification procedure in the “Oschadbank”<sup>7</sup>.
2. Receiving free medical care by residents of territories in the conflict area (both controlled by Ukraine and uncontrolled territories).
3. Restriction of the political rights of IDPs (for instance, the right to vote and to be elected at local elections).
4. Absence of the general state strategy in Ukraine regarding the uncontrolled territories.
5. Ukraine’s non-recognition of the self-proclaimed republics and refusal to conduct a direct dialogue with their authorities.
6. The current Ukrainian procedures of assignment of social benefits for different categories of population in need on the uncontrolled territory.
7. The current Ukrainian procedures of property rights protection for people who have housing on the uncontrolled territory.
8. The current procedures of issuance of death certificates in Ukraine.

### **Pensioner identification procedure in the “Oschadbank”: respondents’ evaluation of the current situation**

Analysis of the comments respondents gave while filling in the table allows us to determine the key reactions to the problematic situation:

- The conceptual disagreement with the state pension policy:

R.: It's a very big problem. Because the retired people, regardless of where they lived, on that territory or on this territory, they worked for the benefit of Ukraine. That's why Ukraine must pay them. No matter where they are, on that territory or on this territory... What are they guilty of, these old people? What are they guilty of? Absolutely nothing. This is all our guilt, the youth is guilty. We are not fighting for our rights. The old people aren't guilty. They worked hard. What state farms we used to have! What factories, everything. It's our guilt that we cannot provide a good living to our elderly.

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, man, 32)

- The disagreement with the state policy with the emphasis on the procedure of identification:

R.: This is also, well... How can I tell you. We are separated now, and here is the problem. People stand in queues, they spend nights here to, as one can say, get into “Oschadbank”, into the Pension Fund. Sometimes, it takes a week to get into the Pension Fund and get officially registered.

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<sup>6</sup> The rating includes situations experienced by more than a half of the surveyed.

<sup>7</sup> The Public Joint-Stock Company “State Savings Bank of Ukraine”. The founder of the Bank is the State in the person of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

I.: Because of the queues?

R.: Because of the queues. This is the problem!

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, woman, 67)

R.: Yes, this is a very big problem, my wife is also retired, it's a madhouse here, this is such a humiliating procedure, just a nightmare. While getting the pension card, they take away all the documents, they take a picture of you, then in order to activate this card you undergo all this again, they authorize you and take a picture of you again. Then, when there is no more money in the cash machine and you cannot get this pension you go to the cahier's office, and they photograph you with this card again, like a monkey...

I.: Why do they take a picture with the card?

R.: Identification.

I.: Isn't there a picture on the card?

R.: No. The idea is just to torture people, that's it.

I.: The procedure itself, yes?

R.: You have to confirm everywhere that you are you, that this is your card, that you are a pensioner, and that the money you want to take out is yours. This is so humiliating.

(IDP, man, 44, Sviatohirsk)

- General loyalty to the state policy of identification, claims towards the identification procedure:

I.: Is this a problem for you?

R.: A problem? Well. If it's needed, then it's needed. But it would be better to deal with it not so often.

I.: And how often is it done now?

R.: Those who have electronic ones, they say they undergo it every three months. For us who have normal ones it's every two months. I don't know what the reason is. We are retired people. We die often. Maybe that's why. Well, in summer, the procedure is not so problematic. In winter, it is cold to stand, of course. Probably, this is the problem.

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, woman, 76)

- Expression of the internal tension between people in the uncontrolled area, revanchism:

R.: And it is unfair that this granny remained in Luhansk getting two pensions and speaking ill of Ukraine. I'm ashamed to say this, but she buys food here, eats and meanwhile trash-talks. And another person pays for a flat, gets one pension and pays taxes.

I.: Then, do you agree that such identification procedure should take place?

R.: Sure! It should take place every two weeks! So that they stood in these queues and knew what they were fighting for. Go to Putin, ask him! They were shouting: Russia will give us 15 thousand [pension]! Why do you stick to Ukraine? Didn't you want? You've betrayed, so go to Putin and say, "Give us 15 thousand! We want this way!" Want!

I.: So there is a need to check?

R.: They should be checked every month. Every ten days.

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, woman, 53)

- Revealing the practices of double pension income:

R.: And pensions, people who worked there, they register it, as my friend has done, who deregistered my suddenly. She used to be registered at my place [*in Luhansk, uncontrolled Ukrainian territory*]. But then she canceled this registration.

I.: And registered somewhere else?

R.: But she gets pension in Luhansk.

I.: She lives here [*Stanytsia Luhanska, territory controlled by Ukraine*] and gets pension in Luhansk?

R.: Yes.

I.: So she registered there [*in Luhansk, uncontrolled Ukrainian territory*] and gets pension there?

R.: It's like that, and there is help.

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, woman, 67)

Granularity of this problem allows to speak about ambiguousness of the assessments of the state pension policy regarding population of the occupied territories even from the perspective of the object of this policy. We can see the whole range of evaluations: from condemnation of the Ukrainian state for its pension policy to completely revanchist sentiment towards the population of the occupied territories. The fact that the latter position was demonstrated by the representatives of the occupied territories, confirms the presence of high level of internal conflict there.

Most of the respondents focus not that much on the fact of identification, but more on the procedure itself which is presented as exhausting, and violating human rights and humiliating human dignity.

Another important aspect is revelation of the practices of "double pension income". In Ukrainian public discourse, only the population of the occupied territories is frequently accused of such practices. But we can see the reverse tendency – when residents of Stanytsia Luhanska, for instance, who used to work in Luhansk before war, register their place of residence on the occupied territories and get double pension. Revealing this tendency allows us to abandon the stigmatizing view on the problem and to transfer our interpretation to the level of studying transboundary survival practices in extreme conditions. Because a person lives on the territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions controlled by Ukraine it does not automatically make him/her loyal, as well as staying by a person on the occupied territory does not automatically make him/her non-loyal to the state of Ukraine.

### **Receiving free medical care by residents of territories in the conflict area**

Comments of respondents regarding the essence of problems related to medical treatment allow us to identify the following key moments:

- Phenomenon of the "transboundary health care"

Respondents confirmed different practices of crossing the border between the territories under and out of control of Ukraine in order to receive medical services. In most cases, such mobility is a result of comparison of expenses, comparison of qualification of specialists and quality of medical equipment, as well as decision to continue to visit a familiar doctor one visited before the war.

Pharmaceutical tourism is a part of "medical migration" too. Comparison of prices, quality and availability of medicine determines its permanent circulation through the border.

I.: Okay, is it possible for people who live there [on the occupied territories] to get free medical care in Ukraine?

R.: Maybe.

I.: And vice versa? Can someone from here go there? For instance, to get medical care in LPR?

R.: I know a few people. She's ill with cancer. People who... it is kind of a sore subject for me. My father died of cancer. And, people who had been visiting a certain doctor before the war started, they continue to visit him anyway.

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, man, 41)

R.: In this sense, yes, there is a problem, let's say, the problem is even not that it's free, it's not for free, it's really cheaper there now, but actually specialists, many of them have

stayed in Donetsk, they haven't left. I mean, specialists are the same, hospitals are the same. I went there with my disabled child to treat his teeth. I paid three thousand rubles for it there, and here I was offered it for four-five thousand hryvnias.

(Sviatohirsk, woman, 47, expert)

- The systemic problems of the Ukrainian health care

A part of respondents emphasize the presence of systemic problems in the Ukrainian health care, which are not related directly to war. Above all, they speak about unofficial payment for medical services which are declared to be free of charge and about poor provision of required specialists, equipment and medicine for hospitals.

R.: I was helping a girl recently. Here [*territories of Luhansk region controlled by Ukraine*] they asked for 70 thousand [hryvnias]. The kid studies in first grade. She had her hand broken and it didn't heal properly. Here we have only one traumatologist for children in Sievierodonetsk, and he told me boldly, "There is no way out for you. You will pay me the money, because I am the only one here!" 70 thousand for a piece of plate! I took the girl to the other side, and they did everything for 250 rubles.

I.: Did you go her along "goat pathways"?

R.: Yes.

I.: With a child?

R.: With a child.

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, woman, 39)

R.: Here [*area controlled by Ukraine*], health care with this reform is just, everybody comes to us [*uncontrolled area*]. I had surgery in January. I came here [*area controlled by Ukraine*] because I got operated by my husband's friend. That's why I came here. The price was the same for me, but here it was done by my acquaintances. And even so, I called the president hotline. I was sitting and waiting for anaesthesia for a week. We didn't have medicine for anaesthesia in Ukraine. They haven't had medicine for anaesthesia since January. Can you imagine how was it?

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, woman, 39)

R.: Oh, here we have a total problem in general, a global problem with what is going on in health care. It's just horrible, just horrible.

I.: In other words, is there a normal access to the medical services or not?

R.: Here in Sviatohirsk, it's really hard. We have one health center, minimum of doctors, minimum of specialists; we have to go to Sloviansk all the time, so that's why it is very hard.

I.: Is it possible there, in Sloviansk, to get the expected level of medical services?

R.: Also not, also not, because if you want to visit a good doctor, then money is needed everywhere. The displaced people don't have money, so they content themselves with what they have. And not always it's qualitative and timely.

I.: Money, do you mean unofficial payments or is it the official fee for medical services?

R.: Both official and unofficial, anything...

(Sviatohirsk, IDP, man, 44)

- Compensation of the systemic problems in the medical sector through the work of mobile military medical teams:

R.: It's not a problem. When I drive to Popasna, military doctors come there, military units are dislocated there. I can easily make a medical appointment, even though I am from Luhansk.

I.: Regardless of registration?

R.: Yes. Nobody looks at registration there. They don't care. And they do surgeries. And they fix teeth for free, what is telling. Dentistry is usually so problematic.

I.: And why for free? Are these hospitals private?

R.: If you come to a military unit, they can even do a surgery, not a global one, but free of charge. I know it, my sister did so.

I.: With the internally displaced persons' documents or not?

R.: Yes, with this certificate.

In general, we can see controversial assessments depending on the personal experience of dealing with problems within medical services. However, they have the asymmetric nature, – the negative comments obviously prevail. Respondents demonstrate the whole range of transboundary adaptation practices such as monitoring of prices for medicine and services and comparing quality and cost of medical services. Territories of Donetsk and Luhansk region controlled by Ukraine are mostly considered profitable in terms of purchase of medicine. While solving the questions related to serious medical services, particularly operative treatment, respondents (regardless of where they permanently reside) choose mostly familiar doctors and regional hospitals on the uncontrolled territories. Possibility to use a financial aid based on the registration within the humanitarian program "Reunion of Donbas People"<sup>8</sup>, which operates on the occupied territories, is an important factor for making decision by the elderly displaced people who have restricted financial resources.

The general evaluation of health care and the quality and costs of medical services in Ukraine is rather negative. Within the group of IDPs additional stress is made on the unavailability of health care because of high level of unofficial payments for officially free medical services.

### **Restriction of the political rights of IDPs (for instance, the right to vote at local elections)**

This point concerns only a part of the respondents, those who have status of IDP – 30 persons. Our previous research regarding the IDPs' electoral preparedness showed that the majority of IDPs consider their exclusion from participation in the process of local election as a serious restriction of rights<sup>9</sup>. The active work of the NGO "Group of Influence"<sup>10</sup> helped the Ukrainian IDPs to develop a common position on this problem, so the majority of the interviewed IDPs speak confidently about violation of rights.

Exclusion of IDPs from the processes of election of the local authority bodies is actually turning them into the “invisible” people because they are not an electoral resource for the majority of the local deputies. Consequently, the deputies are not interested in solving the problems of IDPs.

In this research, we can identify a great tension between the local population and the forced migrants. However, one shall take into consideration that we speak about a special case. In 2014, Sviatohirsk with its population of 4.5 thousand accepted 15 thousand forced migrants during the critical stage of military actions. As of today, the actual number of IDPs who live there permanently reduced a lot, but their number is still two times larger than the number of locals. Obviously, such mass relocation causes significant changes in the everyday life of the town, forms a group of people who actively control and force the local authority to act, but do not have means of influence, as they were excluded from the processes of local elections. This adds a negative dynamics to the relations between "insiders" and "outsiders" (locals/non-locals):

I.: Tell me please, now migrants don't have the right to vote at the local elections, is it right or wrong?

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<sup>8</sup> More details on different aspects of this humanitarian program: Tuka H. Mild Strength of Russia: "Humanitarian Program of Reunion of Donbas People" / Electronic resource available at:

[https://censor.net.ua/blogs/3053941/myaka\\_sila\\_ros\\_gumantarna\\_programma\\_vozzdnannya\\_narodu\\_donbasu](https://censor.net.ua/blogs/3053941/myaka_sila_ros_gumantarna_programma_vozzdnannya_narodu_donbasu)

<sup>9</sup> Strengthening Electoral Preparedness and Political Participation in Ukraine" (USAID, Canada, IFES) / Electronic resource available at: <http://sociology.ucu.edu.ua/strengthening-electoral-preparedness-2017/>

<sup>10</sup> Civil Holding "Group of Influence". Official Page / Electronic resource available at: <https://www.vplyv.org.ua/>

R.: I'm all for it, I think they shouldn't vote at the local elections. I think that they may elect their person who will manage the resources, not only finance, but also land, and I don't want non-locals to control them. [...] I can imagine, well, they will not worry about our resources the way we do. That's why I think that [...] They can nominate somebody for election. So, I am against it.

I.: I got it. How much time shall it pass for a person to stop being a migrant, to become a local?

R.: I cannot tell, maybe it's enough to get a registration [...] I think that yes, there should be some period of time. Maybe a minimum of ten years.

(Sviatohirsk, woman, 37, businesswoman, worker of local CO dealing with question of IDP integration)

We can also see a general agreement that this is a restriction of rights, which shouldn't exist. But despite this, the majority of interviewed speak about the additional conditions of eligibility for voting at the local elections:

R.: I think, they are obliged, they must vote. The person came to this territory, registered officially, that's all – please, vote [...]. You live here, go and vote [...]. Well, sure, it's better if a person gets familiar with the town problems, maybe some time is needed, if some law for this was adopted, then it could be defined in it.

I.: So, for instance, how long should it take?

R.: Well, I think two years would be enough.

(Sviatohirsk, man, 43, local self-governance)

IDPs themselves speak about the presence of a problem of non-recognition of their rights by the local authority and community, creation of the "parallel" realities, absence of real cooperation:

R.: The local authority does not recognize these rights of mine. Let's take Sviatohirsk... I would say, because we live in different realities with them, it's not significant at all. I mean, in some towns I can see that, yes, there is cooperation, between people and authority, activists and everything else. But in some other towns it's parallel reality. I mean it's still, I don't know what else more horrible than war should happen to make people start living together.

(Sviatohirsk, woman, 30, IDP, NGO)

Consequently, we can see quite a complicated social group dynamics which involves more strong division between "insiders" and "outsiders", "locals" and "non-locals". On the other hand, it is important to realise the scope of challenge for the stable population in places of mass displacement. In this case, we speak about people who haven't moved from their place while their place of living, their social environment has rapidly changed.

### **Absence of Ukraine's general state strategy regarding the uncontrolled territories as a problem for respondents**

Although the respondents confirm the high intensity of the problem and the presence of personal experience of facing it, the problem is not detailed much in their comments. This may mean either the obviousness of the need for such strategy for the respondents, or non-critical perception of the problem on the level of informational cliché.

In the detailed comments, the necessity of such strategy is voiced in the following contexts:

- The strategy for work with people, who found themselves on the occupied territories, is needed as an instrument of returning them (physically and mentally), integrating into the Ukrainian society:

R.: Yes, it is needed. They need it, the strategy, in order to return people. Ordinary people. Not to put these blocks. I think like this, yes.

I.: What should be written in it?

R.: That people from that side are normal, I don't know which military lists they have, I don't know their lists... so the ordinary people should walk, as if nothing happened, with Ukrainian passports. They should walk! And children, who were born there, they should come here with that birth certificate and get the Ukrainian one. If Ukraine considers that this is its territory, then everything done there has to be recognized. And people have to come easily here. Then people will return, I think they will return [in Ukraine].

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, woman, 39)

- The absence of the strategy sounds like a claim to the state who does not execute its obligations regarding its citizens:

R.: You know, there is no such document, but our president, when he was becoming a president, he was clearly telling so that everybody could hear through all mass media, that in three days we would do this, in two weeks we would liberate that, and so on, and so forth, but for some season everything so quickly progressing became so slowly progressing and impossible. I mean, till today, when the authority representatives visit us, we ask – do you have any strategy at all of what is waiting for Ukraine in general? Because it would be probably honest to come to people and say that at the moment we cannot tell you anything specific, because we are freaked out. Or, we have a clearly developed plan which we are going to implement from certain date.

I.: But hasn't such plan been voiced?

R.: No. So to speak, everything is in a suspended mode now, and I think that maybe they have such plan, but...

(Sviatohirsk, woman, 61, IDP)

- Absence of the general state strategy is considered as a reason for "postponing life":

R.: Mothers with children, and young fathers. In general, the youth who have little children. So many children are there being walked in the carriages, and pregnant women, young. They live, life is passing by, and one is worrying, God please save, it [*active phase of the war*] can start again.

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, woman, 76)

R.: It is needed for people to understand what they have to do further. Again, by my example, I would like to say that I've been waiting for four years for something unknown. I am waiting for the situation to change, but if I knew something specific, I would know whether to return to the place where I was born and grown, or to start my life from the beginning. [...] Let's assume I don't want now to go back there, but if I had a choice whether to wait till everything gets better there and Donbas becomes Ukraine...

(Sviatohirsk, woman, 61, IDP)

- Certain skepticism is being recorded regarding perspectives of such strategy developing without participation of representatives of the occupied territories:

R.: You know, it is a little bit complicated question, because I don't deal with it, but we have a state, which, it is a pity, is good in writing something, the other thing is the quality of such writing, and the third thing is implementation and the things which happen in fields, roughly speaking. There are three different realities, and that's why when people who haven't suffered and those who suffered, who are now on the uncontrolled territories, don't participate in creation of this strategy, I have a question: who are they writing this strategy for? Just a formal document?

(Sviatohirsk, woman, 30, IDP, expert)

Most of the respondents recognize that this problem relates directly to them. However, while providing details, many of the respondents have difficulty in answering what this state strategy is for and which things this strategy shall describe, declare, etc.

In cases where some details are provided, respondents speak about the general claim towards the state, which didn't fulfil its obligations and promises to people on the occupied territories; the stress is on the absence of the prominent view of the current situation. The latter reinforces practices of the "postponed life" (when a person is not living a fulfilled life, but is waiting for some logical outcome of the situation which would allow her or him to develop personal strategies in the context of understandable and defined situation).

### **The problem of non-recognition of the quasi-republics by Ukraine and refusal to conduct dialogue with their authorities**

For the respondents from the occupied territories, these questions had a different form ("unrecognition by Ukraine of DPR and LPR"<sup>11</sup>), according to the terminology used by the respondents.

On the level of quantity parameters, we have 2/3 of those who indicate that the situation relates to them personally, and almost 2/3 of them consider it a problem. However, detailed explanations of the position shows that most of the respondents cannot explain their choice of this or that option. In most cases, explanations regarding the necessity of such dialogue are confused and vague, contradictory, illogical, too wordy, making it hard to identify a respondent's own position. This relates to all groups of the respondents.

We can assume that in the present situation, the respondents feel a serious complication because of a great contradiction between own expectations and feelings and the ruling discourses both in Ukraine (that portrays the leaders of quasi-republics as the occupation administration of RF on the temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions) and in the self-proclaimed republics (which mostly see Ukraine as the aggressor). Taking into account that the majority of the respondents, regardless of the group (IDPs, residents of the temporarily occupied territories, experts), try to avoid naming the conflict parties, in this case we have double "non-disclosure", - if the conflict parties are not named, then the question of who shall speak with whom remains open as well.

I.: Regarding the authorities of "LPR", "DPR". Ukraine does not recognize them as the government establishments, consequently does not recognize their ruling. Consequently, it does not maintain a direct dialogue with them. Is this a problem or should it be like this?

R.: Yes, sure, this is a problem. To my mind, these issues should be connected. I think, if Ukraine will have an agreement with Moscow on the direct dialogue on problems of average people, then it is Moscow who will influence... The main thing here is not who is going to speak with whom, but who can really change something. And, "LPR" and "DPR", they cannot change because they cannot act as the independent actors in this situation.

I.: Russia does not recognize itself as a conflict party. How can one conduct negotiations with the party that does not recognize itself as a conflict party?

R.: But we know that Russia has influence on these territories. Russia can influence. That's why, on the official level, if the negotiations are being conducted, then one can say that the USA and Russia will agree, and then Ukraine with these guys will also reach agreement.

I.: So Ukraine should not speak... I am just trying to figure out your position.

R.: Okay, sure, it needs to speak. Just the efficiency of that they can propose for Ukraine from their part, it is not high, because they are not able to make decisions. If they could make a decision, then for sure. Then it would be possible to sit at the negotiation table, talk and decide. Otherwise, one shall talk anyway. That's why it is a problem that Ukraine does not recognize.

I.: And does not conduct a direct dialogue? Ok, I got it.

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<sup>11</sup> DPR – Donetsk Public Republic, LPR – Luhansk Public Republic – self proclaimed republics in the occupied territory of a part of Donetsk and Luhansk region which are not recognized by Ukraine.

R.: It does not conduct, because it considers them as terrorists, right? And one cannot conduct negotiations with terrorists... [irony]  
(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, woman, 36)

I.: Look, if you've started a direct dialogue, it means that you actually recognize them, that's why these are interrelated things.

R.: Oh, I don't completely agree, because recognition is a political level, and in order to solve problems of average people you can start, please, at least from identification of the retired people here, they are surviving, I am exaggerating, but...

I.: But is a dialogue with DPR, LNR needed for this...?

R.: If, but why then, here I can see the first part is recognition, it's a political will, roughly speaking, and dialogue for solving of average people, it is the second, but not more...[Pause]

I.: But the end of war is also a solving of average people's problems. Shall they be reviewed as a dialogue party?

R.: As for me, there is no difference. There should always, I think... [Pause]

I.: But look, they are not present in Minsk as a dialogue party, yes?

R.: They are sometimes present, sometimes not, roughly speaking, openness... [Pause]

I.: No, they are not a party, the fact they are present there does not mean that they are included in the negotiation process. In other words, they are not recognized and respectively they cannot be subjects of the negotiation relations.

R.: That is absolutely right. The non-recognition exists, but in fact, in fact, I can see that some coordination exists, that's why, roughly speaking, if we speak about reintegration, in any case, in order to speak about some common future and co-existing, then a dialogue must take place.

I.: In other words, today absence of this dialogue is a problem, right?

R.: For sure.

I.: Rather a problem or a serious one?

R.: A serious, an extraordinary problem. Initially, because we hadn't had this dialogue we got this war. Maybe, if it happened at the beginning, we would, sorry, have not as big number of victims.

(Sviatohirsk, man, 43, expert)

Therefore, in general, we can assume that in this case we have a situation of confusion of an average resident of the conflict area, his/her uncertainty about his/her assessment of the course of events, their reasons and consequences. The high level of recognition of significance of this problem in combination with actually full absence of rational justification of this position allows to make an assumption about the artificial nature of the statement, its "external origin", and not a gradual formation in one's consciousness.

### **Current Ukrainian procedures of administering social allowances for the categories of population in need residing on the uncontrolled territory**

Within the assessments of situation regarding social allowances for the population categories in need on the temporarily occupied territory of Luhansk region we can identify two key positions:

- Emphasizing the complicated nature of the procedures of obtaining the social allowances:

R.: My stepfather was paralysed, the first group. I had a hard time bringing him there. I was taking him to all those... I had to bring him to social protection, Pension Fund, bank. It was hard for him to come through it, we came to Stakhanov and he died in just two months. Maybe it was just his time... He was 77 or so. A very big problem.

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, man, 41)

- Emphasizing the ambiguity of the situation and complication of solving such issue:

R.: Well, from the human perspective, I understand that when a baby is born, one has to help the mother in any case. Or an elderly man, who cannot stand up and go. But if this mother gives dumplings with poison to Ukrainian soldier, what payment should it be? Based on all human relations principles, the state has to help. Or the disabled. Maybe, he thinks in Ukrainian way. But the one who came to Stanytsia [Luhanska], and instead of a jar with honey, he gave a grenade. Is it possible to imagine something like this? Which pension should he get? He should sit in a basement!

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, woman, 53)

- Another aspect is the information on the coordinated actions of the social services of both controlled and uncontrolled parts of Luhansk region regarding the allowances:

R.: You know, I am thinking about this question. I have a small comment. As I have told already, we all know each other. Who is registered here, and who is registered there. For instance, compensation for miners, which is not a pension, but a «regress» [*specific additional pension for miners which compensates damage to health*]. It's not possible to get a regress on that territory. One submits a statement that one has experience, really worked, and wants to get this social allowance. He will get it on that territory, then come here and do the same here. So, basically, he will get it there and here. But, it will not work!

I.: Why?

R.: Because the social services that do the calculations are connected. They agreed, maybe even unofficially. So they exchange the lists of those who get a regress. And a person has the right to receive it only once.

I.: Is this on a local level, or the state agreements?

R.: Just people who occupied high positions, they moved behind this line, and their subordinates are still there. They communicate. They control the budgets from both sides.

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, woman, 36)

The issue of social allowances in some sense continue the issue of pension provision. In conditions of war, the key problem of pension provision is that Ukraine considers pension as one of the types of social allowances. The latter are related to the local budgets and are provided as per registration. Consequently, similarly to the pension issue, the dominant position in the description of this problem is emphasizing the complicated procedure of receiving an allowance. All respondents generally demonstrate loyalty in the question of paying allowances to people in need on the occupied territories; the position within which one may emphasize that not everyone deserves the social payments is rather marginal and shows the presence of a strong internal tension in relations between people on the occupied territories (this position belongs to a few representatives of the occupied territory).

The story about cooperation between the staff of social services of both sides of the demarcation line may be a mythologem aimed at reducing the number of claims (if everybody knows that this is impossible, then there is no sense in trying). It may also be a real local practice, possibility of which can be assumed as among the representatives of social service there are former residents of occupied territories who have IDP status and live on the territories of Luhansk region controlled by Ukraine, therefore the contact with former colleagues on the level of personal connection is quite possible. In this case, we deal with individual initiative, not the state policy. However, this story may be an interesting example demonstrating how extreme conditions and the lack of state influence trigger mechanisms of establishing social justice on the level of citizens.

### **The current procedures of property rights protection for people who own housing on the occupied territory**

Speaking about procedures of property rights protection, the respondents assess them as a certain problem, but do not perceive it in the context of human rights

violation. The property rights question is reduced to the problem of housing: access to it, threat of occupation, robbery and double payment.

Low sensitivity to rights violation may be illustrated with the following expressions:

R.: But the flats stay there, nobody takes them.

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, man, 41)

R.: Probably, they are protected if nobody takes these flats. It means they are protected.

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, woman, 76)

Depriving people of the right to manage their own property, absence of access to it is not perceived as a violation. Only taking housing away, its redistribution without the will and consent of its owners is considered to be in the area of violation. Such a situation when housing remains untouched (even if its owners have no access to it) may be even presented as a situation of property rights “protection”.

Respondents express apprehension regarding a possible robbery of the abandoned flats, they constantly worry about rumours on the potential redistribution of the abandoned housing.

R.: Not protected. There are flats where the doors were broken down. And I'll tell you. There aren't many people there, there is no heating. [...] District police officers, representatives of the municipal services come together with neighbours. They open, and if the radiators are blocked, they cut them and make a direct circuit. I saw it in one flat. If no one lives there, they turn off the radiators. Nothing is being paid. They leave, lock, and I think they make a mistake writing a paper and putting a seal. This gives robbers a sign that they can come here, nobody lives here. This is bad.

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, woman, 67)

R.: I think that if a person is here, and his property is there, then half of his property has already been taken away. Because if not us, all property of our neighbours would have been robbed.

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, woman, 39)

*To this day* the state has no adequate mechanisms for property rights protection. The latter becomes a personal problem of the population affected, increasing the financial load of people who need help in this situation:

R.: I have a flat, I cannot go to the uncontrolled territory now in order to re-register all documents there, I don't have such an opportunity. My wife has no opportunity, because she is a former police officer, she is retired now, but she is blacklisted there as an enemy of the people.

I.: And cannot enter the territory?

R.: She simply cannot enter the territory, I have a real property there which I cannot re-register, and which I cannot pay for. We have such unclear situation, we were paying here and we need to go there and re-register documents, and pay, and will this be legal in the end?

I.: Whom to pay, right?

R.: Yes, we have asked lawyers, and they don't know, I mean this hasn't been legalized yet.

I.: No procedure, no understanding of what to do in this situation, right?

R.: No, not at all. We have been asking in different ways, trying to figure it out what we have to do, whether to go there and re-register those agreements, pay for utility services, which are constantly being charged there, and housing costs, and so on. What shall we do? – Silence.

(Sviatohirsk, man, 44, expert)

R.: I think, they started writing everything off to the war. Roughly speaking, as I have already told, Donetsk and Luhansk regions have been excluded from any type of insurance, as I know. Because of this, I don't think that there have been any compensations, to be honest.

(Sviatohirsk, woman, 30, expert)

R.: Our friends have housing, they pay for this property, it is closed, the problem is only that they cannot live there, and the property, as far as I know, is there, they don't worry about it. They pay for it and they don't worry that something may happen there.

I.: But then this is double payment, I mean they pay for housing there and they rent a place here...

R.: ...Well, it is a problem, as the expenses increase.

(Sviatohirsk, woman, 37, expert)

The next problem that is worth attention is the illegal selling and buying of housing on the occupied territory. As Ukraine does not recognize the quasi-state formations "DPR-LPR", and consequently does not consider the documents issued by them as the legal ones, the procedure of buying and selling a flat described by respondents is actually a system of illegal actions which involves the legal bodies on both sides of the demarcation line. Violations done by all participants of buying and selling in the future will create many precedents for review of the status of property in case of deoccupation of this territory.

I.: But it is prohibited to sell housing on the uncontrolled territory, isn't it?

R.: Why? It's possible!

I.: Not in the official way.

R.: It is possible. I tell you. You register documents according to the laws of LPR, go to the notary, re-register documents, so that they weren't obsolete. They issue you the new documents with all the LPR stamps, you cross the border and register here. I can say that it is possible. If it is your property, you didn't steal it, didn't occupy it. You have documents issued before the war confirming either buying, or legacy, then in any case you need to get new documents in LPR. A certificate that certifies the other certificate.

I.: That the housing has an owner?

R.: Yes. However, you can do it only based on the previous documents. But I don't agree with you because it is possible to sell. But, anyway, I think it is a problem.

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, woman, 36)

The unlawfulness of buying and selling of property on the occupied territory causes rumors about its redistribution during and after the war, which have a mirror nature in their essence:

R.: Just recently, my colleague said, "What if they suddenly take my flat?". I asked, "Olesia, where does this fear come from, has anything happened?" She answered that she had been told something, that she had read something.

(Sviatohirsk, woman, 30, IDP, expert)

R.: I'm completely fine. But people who have left their flats, some of them don't pay. They were telling that the flats would be taken away, but they aren't yet. And the Ukrainian ones, who came here from there, they say, "If we come, then we will take not only ours, but also the neighbours' flats. They are also angry. So this is a problem, these flats, sure. I don't know. Everybody needs housing. If there's none, there's none."

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, woman, 67)

The respondents also confirm the instances of housing occupation. The figures of this case are Russian military or local residents who represent army or security forces of the quasi-republics:

R.: I know that the two-storey houses were taken away, and a person has no options of returning, even if there are acquaintances within the official structures. Regardless of who knows whom and what an attitude was there before the war. It is so.

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, woman, 67)

R.: Yes, I know that such cases occur in the area of military actions, yes, they occupy, and the violation of the property rights takes place from both sides. It wouldn't be there so much, these are mostly stories with the security forces involved...

(Sviatohirsk, woman, 30, IDP, expert)

R.: Locals. Russians come and live at dachas [a second home outside the city] for some time. When the troops come, they hide in these dachas. Then they leave, it's rotation. And these [*locals*] occupy the houses...

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, man, 41)

In general, despite recognition of absence of access to their own housing, double payment for housing (the rented one on the territory of Ukraine and the one left on the occupied territories), the flats being unprotected against robbery and unlawful occupation, the majority of respondents do not speak about this situation in terms of human rights violation.

### **The current situation with issuance of a range of key documents, which record different stages of a person's life: birth, obtaining a passport, death.**

The extreme social circumstances allowed seeing the imperfection of the system of documentary evidence of different states of people, absence of mechanisms for responding to the extraordinary situations.

In calm conditions, the average people were not thinking about the problems of documenting their lives, there was no request for a range of documents from the official establishments (for instance, divorce certificate which should be taken from the Civil Status Registry Office by former marriage partners independently from each other), some documents may be lost during moving away or doing repairs, etc. But in the conditions of occupation, forced displacement and commuting, the practices of double documentation are being formed (commuters often have a double document package, which allows them to communicate with both Ukrainian institutions, bodies and structures and the ones of the quasi-republics).

R.: This is what I'm saying, all those documents, which Ukrainian citizens always get easily, we have problems with them. Someone died - go to court, someone was born - go to court. What is court? It is legal costs. People lived their lives, and there was a range of documents, just a very big range of documents that a very big number of people simply did not need in their everyday life at all, but now they suddenly became needed, and very often there is no possibility to obtain a duplicate.

(Sviatohirsk, woman, 47, IDP, expert)

The key problem during documenting of passports and death certificates is establishment of the fact of registration. Despite the cancellation of "propyska" [the previous type of registration] in Ukraine and its replacements with registration, the key package of state services is still tied to registration. Therefore, the forced displacement of more than a million people has questioned such territorial order of the state services with its registration of a person in a certain place.

Here we have to point out the controversy within Ukrainian's attitude towards the fact of registration. For many forced migrants, registration is an important thing, which shows a symbolic connection with the previous place of residence, and may later become at least some tool for property rights protection through official proof of the fact of living in and owning a property<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Strengthening Electoral Preparedness and Political Participation in Ukraine (funding by USAID, Canada, IFES) / Electronic resource available at: <http://sociology.ucu.edu.ua/strengthening-electoral-preparedness-2017/>

However, when it comes to obtaining a passport or a death certificate, the process of confirming a registration is characterized by the respondents as time consuming, expensive and imperfect. In a number of situations, when it was impossible to determine and officially confirm the registration of a parent, teenagers received passports without information on registration. Thus, a category of people is formed who have restricted rights in comparison with those who can document registration without any barriers. This leads to restriction of access to a range of state services which require official registration of a person.

R.: Usually, it is not a big problem to obtain a passport. There is a problem of getting a registration. I mean a person or parents of a child have to prove that the child was registered in Donetsk region. The parents' passport is often enough, and they just copy the place of registration from there. But there were some instances, we had such situation in Zaporizhzhia last year, that father and mother were registered at different addresses and for some reason they couldn't present the house books where this child was registered, so they couldn't register him at any of their addresses, and such children received documents without registration.

(Sloviansk, man, 28, expert)

R.: The paper is in the police office where you received your passport, on that side, and it turns out that my passport, which I have now, is not a document for the passport office now. I mean if I submit this passport, then it is not me, it's like this parents should initially prove that they are parents. Both parents must come, and if mother and father are not officially divorced, but they have been living separately for twenty years in different corners of the city, or even Ukraine, then it is a big problem to bring father in order for the child to get a passport. Mothers become crafty, they file for divorced and then, with these papers, they run for passport. So there is a huge problem, starting with the parents' documents.

(Sloviansk, man, 28, expert)

A teenager getting a passport faces one more problem - crossing the demarcation line, passing through the checkpoints. In order to pass through the Ukrainian checkpoint, a person needs to obtain a permit from the Security Service of Ukraine. This permit is issued basing on a certain document, a birth certificate for a child and a passport for an adult. When one obtains a new passport, the permit to cross the border issued by the Security Service becomes invalid. Consequently, one needs to apply for a new document with the new passport. This procedure may last for a few weeks.

R.: We came with my granddaughter and stayed overnight. She had an international passport from when she was 14. They let us out. We did not think when we were going back. We received a passport. But we also had to apply for the permit. My acquaintance applied for my permit by computer, and for her as well. We needed to leave, and we needed a permit for the new passport.

I.: But the old one remained with her!

R.: We didn't think about showing that international passport again. Because we were so glad that we had the Ukrainian passport, we showed the new one. And you know what happened? "You go, but the child is our Ukrainian, we will not let her go!" "And how can you not let her go? She is my own blood!" - "So why doesn't she look like you?" - "She looks like her father!" I cannot prohibit her to look like her father. We went back, it's good that I have friends there [...] So they let me live with them. And we were living there for two weeks. ... And the connection was bad. It was hard to [speak to] daughter. She was waiting for us to get home, and we didn't come. She was getting mad. And we couldn't call her. We barely managed to reach her.

(Uncontrolled territories of Luhansk region, woman, 67)

When there are no official mechanisms of establishing and confirming the facts of people's lives, replacing mechanisms occur, often absurd in their essence, but efficient in the extraordinary circumstances.

R.: Again, a certificate is needed proving that the dead was registered in this or that house, and the one who receives the inheritance rights, where he was registered. Because this certificate is required from the communal facilities company, it will contain the seal of DPR, and even if it contains the seal of Ukraine, it is considered as illegal since April two thousand fifteen, as far as I remember, so even if the seal is there...

I.: The date will not coincide, yes?

R.: Yes, the date will simply not coincide, and now the notaries do a small trick, they ask for this certificate to be without any seal at all. So, we've solved this issue somehow.

I.: And is it considered to be a document?

R.: No, it is not considered to be a document, I have asked the notary, so she told me that no, it is not considered a document, but at least there is some reason that a person has been registered there, and because the case cannot even be opened without this statement.

I.: But it is just a sheet of paper, you can print it by yourself, without the communal facilities company.

R.: No, the statement has a certain form, it's not just written on a sheet of paper.

I.: But with modern equipment...

R.: No, there is a form, no, I see, I see, no, well, I think it's not very serious.

I.: But at least it's possible to solve this problem?

R.: I think that yes. Because yes, my husband had to go back and forth, through this border. Bring a certificate, don't bring a certificate, bring this one, no, that one...

I.: Anyway, it is possible.

R.: Yes, he had to go back and forth, but they did it.

(Sviatohirsk, woman, 47, IDP, expert)

Most of the respondents confirm that they have managed to solve the question of registering different facts of life, respective certificates and compensations. However, the procedure itself is very often exhausting for a person (because it includes crossing the border, standing in queues, collection of absurd documents, etc.). Certain questions, which require establishing of registration, can be solved only in court, what makes the procedure even more complicated and takes people's efforts and time.

## **Conclusion**

The key problems for most respondents are those related to the procedure of obtaining pension. Despite the controversial evaluation of this problem by the respondents (from condemnation of the actions of the Ukrainian Government to the revanchist sentiments regarding population of the occupied territories), we can speak about quite objective moments: near-inaccessibility of pension for the citizens of Ukraine with reduced mobility, who live on the occupied territories; exhausting and humiliating procedure of identification; groundless exclusions from the lists for the pension payments, etc. We have to remember that these refers to the elderly people for whom the identification procedure with crossing the demarcation line and standing in long queues turns into a big challenge.

Instead of getting protection from the state and support from the society, the elderly people become an object of stigmatization, they face accusal of collaboration and getting double pension (both on the territory of quasi-republics and in Ukraine). They have to fight for the things which belong to them according to the solidarity pension system of Ukraine.

The hard and traumatic identification procedure breeds illegal services. On the territories near the demarcation line, practices of selling "registration" for getting IDP status are developing. One can buy "package" services, - taxi, overnight stay and a place in the queue at the checkpoint, and get "illegal" consulting which includes addressing the question without queue. There is also cash withdrawal in the cash machines on Ukrainian territory done by the other person for a percentage from the sum withdrawn, etc.

Availability (both territorial and financial) of the medical services is also a serious problem for the respondents. The "transboundary" practices most vividly manifest themselves in this context. The well-equipped regional hospitals and a lot of highly qualified specialists remained on the occupied territories. Therefore, population of Donetsk and Luhansk regions monitors prices for the medicine, quality and costs of medical services on both sides of the demarcation line. According to the respondents' evaluation, the medical help is less expensive on the occupied territories, which makes people, who need medical help, to cross the demarcation line. This is especially significant for the elderly people (because of the financial affordability) and the IDPs (because of the financial affordability and dissatisfaction with the medical services level in the new locations).

The long lasting situation of uncertainty (regarding the status of the territories, further perspectives, etc.) is traumatic for the respondents. It is expressed in the striving of the majority of the respondents to see the state strategy regarding the prospects of these territories, actions and decisions of the Ukrainian Government in the case of renewal of control over the state border of Ukraine. The absence of the prospectives forms people's strategy of the "postponed life", when a person does not live the full life but waits for a logical outcome of the situation, so that it was possible to start planning her or his own life. This phenomenon is especially dangerous for the younger generation, a part of whom has been postponing the start of professional and family careers for five-six years.

The majority of the respondents avoids discussion of the possible conflict parties. It is hard for an average person staying in the epicenter of the events, to interrelate the controversial assessments of the situation (Ukraine officially interprets the leaders of the quasi-republics as the occupation administration of Russian Federation on the temporary occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and in the quasi-republics, Ukraine is proclaimed the aggressor). While generally, recognizing the necessity of the negotiations process, the respondents find it complicated to answer, which countries exactly should be involved in these negotiations. Here, we have double "non-disclosure": if the conflict parties are not named, then the question of who should speak with whom also remains open.

The situation with property on the occupied territories remains specific. The majority of the forced migrants cannot live in their own flats, some of them are not able to come there and check the conditions of their flats because of the direct threat to life due to their active public position. Respondents reveal practices of the illegal selling of housing (which involve notaries on both sides of the demarcation line who register these facts of buying and selling bypassing the law). They also confirm instances of housing occupation, looting, robbery, etc. However, the respondents don't perceive such situations as violation of their rights, which is an evidence of the low legal awareness of an average citizen of Ukraine.

The situation of the armed conflict evidently showed the imperfection of the state services regarding official confirmation of states of people and facts of their lives. Attaching an individual to a paper-based filing system of registration makes losing a passport traumatic for a person. Moreover, passport of a person from the occupied territory is not considered an independent document. It needs additional confirmation through other documents containing a photograph (international passport, driving licence, pension certificate, military ID card, employment certificate, a specific set of documents, which not every citizen of Ukraine possesses). In most cases, IDPs are required to have a displacement certificate in addition to the passport. Many people face the complicated procedures of establishing their personality, the necessity to search for and renew documents, which were not required at all during peacetime.

Due to the specificity of the official confirmation of different states and facts of a person's life, we have not numerous, but problematic cases of stateless persons (people

who actually cannot confirm their citizenship) and "half-citizens" (revealed by the respondents practices of issuance of the new plastic passports of citizens of Ukraine for children from the occupied territories with incomplete data, for instance, without registration). This will lead to restriction of access to a range of state services, which require official registration of a person. The majority of people generally manage to confirm and prove different facts of life, but this requires a lot of effort, from the exhausting crossing of border to confirmation of facts in court.