# Submission on Situation in Ukraine, reference CRPD/27th session

Inclusion Europe is the European movement representing 20 million people with intellectual disabilities and their families from 38 countries.

* **Inclusion Europe’s member**in Ukraine is the[All-Ukrainian NGO Coalition for Persons with Intellectual Disability](http://inteldisabilities-coalition.com.ua/).
* The Coalition brings together 118 NGOs in Ukraine, representing 14,000 families of people with intellectual disabilities.

There are over 2.7 million people with disabilities in Ukraine, of which 260,000 are people with intellectual disabilities.[[1]](#footnote-2)

* They often experience severe discrimination and a restriction of their autonomy, frequently facing institutionalisation when their families can no longer provide care for them.
* Some local governments promote social inclusion, but they are the exception.
* It is estimated that at least 82,000 children are segregated from society in “care home” institutions, with thousands of adults with disabilities also living in institutions.
* Before the war, about 41,000 people with disabilities had been declared legally incompetent, stripping them of their basic human rights, including the right to vote, work or marry, as well as the possibility to make autonomous decisions.[[2]](#footnote-3)

The lives of Ukrainian people with intellectual disabilities and their families were very difficult already before Russia launched this phase of its war in Ukraine on 24 February 2022. And the war made everything much worse.

* Most people with disabilities cannot use shelters because they are inaccessible or crowded.
* They cannot evacuate as the routes are inaccessible.
* They lack daily supplies, including food and medicine.

Despite these obstacles, many people with disabilities have fled their homes, becoming refugees in Ukraine and outside of their country.

Crisis make existing neglect and discrimination more pronounced, acute, and much worse. If you are being overlooked in normal times, it is unlikely that anyone will take you into account during a crisis. We saw that with the Covid pandemic[[3]](#footnote-4), and we see it again during the war in Ukraine: the lack of accessibility, information, and consideration when designing support is not “only” affecting everyday life, but makes it almost impossible for people with disabilities to survive or receive the support they need.

## Lack of support from humanitarian organisations and agencies

Until very recently, people with disabilities in Ukraine were left out by international humanitarian organisations.[[4]](#footnote-5)

We have seen the refusal to evacuate people with disabilities and no effort to reach out to disability organisations or families to distribute help. Most of the support to refugees with disabilities has been provided by local disability organisations and NGOs.[[5]](#footnote-6)

This has started to change recently,[[6]](#footnote-7) but we are yet to see anything that would suggest these agencies and organisations are providing systemic, structured, targeted support to people with disabilities.

## Unknown fate of people with disabilities in Russia-occupied areas, and those who may have been taken to Russia

Russia occupies over 20% of Ukraine.[[7]](#footnote-8) And there are hundreds of thousands[[8]](#footnote-9) Ukrainian citizens deported to Russia, including children.[[9]](#footnote-10) We can assume people with disabilities are among them too.

The situation of people with disabilities both in the occupied territory, and deported to Russia is unknown.

There is no attention paid to them as far as we are aware.

## The need for disability-inclusive rebuilding

In the Kyiv region alone, 4,835 private houses and 161 high-rise buildings were completely destroyed, with 13,292 private houses and 975 high-rise buildings partially damaged. At the moment, 11,319 families need housing.[[10]](#footnote-11) Over 400,000 people lived in Mariupol before the war. Now the city is no more – with tens of thousands likely dead, and hundreds of thousands with no housing. And this is not the only such city in Eastern Ukraine.[[11]](#footnote-12) The need for housing is enormous. [[12]](#footnote-13)

There is an acute risk of many people with intellectual disabilities being left without care or being forced to go into “care homes” because they lost relatives and have nowhere to go. There will be huge psychological impact on people who faced unimaginable suffering and trauma. It will impact all aspects of their daily lives, including their capacity to find and keep housing or employment.

These aspects need to be considered by everyone involved in the reconstruction of Ukraine. To avoid further damage to people who suffered too much already, rebuilding and relevant policies must be disability-inclusive, creating a better future for Ukrainian people with intellectual disabilities. This includes providing support and accessible housing to prevent segregation in “care homes” or homelessness.

# Details about the impact of the war on Ukrainians with intellectual disabilities and their families

As reported by the VGO Coalition in Ukraine:[[13]](#footnote-14)

* fear of constant sirens about air alarms, explosions, alarming information.
* very nervous and depressed state, anxiety due to lack of understanding of the prospect of returning home.
* many have exacerbated chronic diseases.
* epileptic seizures are more common, in some people up to three times more often than before.
* more panic attacks for people with autism.
* feel isolated, suffer from lack of communication.
* suffer from a lack of useful and favourite things,
* they are afraid to leave the apartment, go to shelters and stay at home during bombings and rocket attacks, their mothers stay with them.
* those who are in shelter experience constant stress from being indoors, inability to participate in classes and rehabilitation, constant stress when moving to shelters.

The war created new barriers for Ukrainians with intellectual disabilities :

* loss of social, rehabilitation, educational, medical services.
* lack of psychological assistance.
* lack of activity and uncertainty.
* premises for their temporary residence unsuitable for the needs of persons with disabilities.
* limited opportunities or complete impossibility of using bomb shelters.
* restrictions for certain medicines that require a prescription from a psychiatrist.
* restriction of access to psychiatric care.
* inability for people with autism to be in overcrowded bomb shelters.
* often the impossibility of evacuation from combat zones due to exacerbation of behavioural disorders.

## Families of people with intellectual disabilities’ situation

* they have to choose what to spend their resources on – access to treatment, queues for medicines, products or care for a person with intellectual disabilities who needs constant attention.
* it is not always possible to accompany a person with intellectual disabilities at work, and if so they are forced to put them at risk when using transport
* fatigue and exhaustion of mothers (often from single-parent families).
* difficulty to find, or complete lack of necessary medicine.
* feelings of fear and increased anxiety due to imminent danger, psychological stress.
* difficulties in meeting basic needs, isolation, inability to obtain all necessary social services.
* many have lost their jobs, or their salaries have decreased.
* there is no access to consultations with specialists, barriers to accessing professional advice in case of urgent need.
* it is difficult to draw up documents, especially for those who escaped military shelling, they need help with advocacy.
* families do not have what they need to stay in shelters (basic first aid kits, lanterns, sleeping bags, rugs, thermal underwear, power banks, folding chairs, etc.)
* lack of access to the day care program and transport (many of our beneficiaries are from rural areas and they do not have the opportunity to come),
* Frequent air alarms frighten people with intellectual disabilities, and they need extra attention.
* increased psychological tension in families.
* increase in financial costs, expensive costs for the purchase of drugs for both the underlying disease and comorbidities.
* limited treatment.
* difficulties to move around for persons with intellectual and complex disabilities.

## Urgent needs

* No access to rehabilitation or not available at the new place of temporary residence.
* special conditions of evacuation: professional support, equipment, psychological support to overcome the post-traumatic syndrome.
* social services both for a person with a sole proprietorship (psychological rehabilitation, support, employment or asylum, personal assistant) and for a person caring (consultation, care).
* humanitarian aid to meet basic needs (food, medicine, accompaniment during the walk, hygiene items, safe living).
* training in digital skills (for people with intellectual disabilities, and elderly mothers) to gain access to humanitarian aid.
* material assistance, as prices have risen sharply, and there is no access to free medicines and services (medical, educational, rehabilitation, social);
* special things to make it easier to stay in shelters (blankets, thermoses for food and drinks, power jars, comfortable chairs).
* rehabilitation equipment.

## Expected needs in the next 2-3 months

* special funds for the launch of transit houses (for learning independent living skills) and group houses for emergency and planned accommodation of aging mothers, funds needed to purchase premises, their adaptation, promotion of current expenditures from local budgets, professional support of new staff may not know the practical principles of community inclusion);
* financial assistance for psychological rehabilitation courses for people with intellectual disabilities and their care-providers (mostly mothers) so that they can receive temporary assistance;
* costs of rebuilding NGO services (including renovation of premises, purchase of missing equipment, restoration of buildings in case of demolition), costs of covering services, as well as assistance to families and employees to return home;
* costs of providing daily services (supported employment) as soon as the military situation becomes sufficiently secure to cover the costs of rent (including their arrears of rent and utilities) and the remuneration of service personnel;
* support for families wishing to return from places of relocation (transportation, job search or other livelihoods, restoration of destroyed houses);
* temporary rest and rehabilitation of families;
* support of personal assistants and protection of personal assistants by local authorities;
* support for the referral to foster families of those persons with intellectual disabilities who remained abandoned;
* new equipment for the workshop to try to earn money to cover the needs of day care;
* costs of covering access to information, including the purchase of digital equipment and relevant training courses;
* humanitarian aid to families to meet their physiological needs (food, medicine, sanitation and hygiene items);
* purchase of a minibus for the organization transportation of service users.

The following needs to be taken into account in all future post-war plans:

* Replace institutional-care model with new types of services.
* Examples of support and services that need to be developed:
* Resource Centre for Children with Disabilities for their inclusion
* Inclusive sports and playgrounds
* Supported accommodation for people with intellectual disabilities
* Transit houses for people with intellectual disabilities
* supported employment for people with intellectual disabilities
* temporary care of persons with intellectual disabilities and temporary rest of families
* Accessible information
* Rules for the provision of both public and private information (including official websites, FB and Instagram pages, Telegram channels, etc. should include the provision of easy-to-read information).
* Employees of public and private services, specialists in health and social services, educators, police, courts, public transport, employees of cultural and sports institutions and other persons to have training to communicate with children and adults with intellectual disabilities using clear language.
* Special inclusive procedures with the use of plain language, psychological support should be provided in the work of those services, institutions and agencies where decisions are made on basic life issues, such as the judiciary, social work services, employment services, medical services, etc.

Decision-making processes for approving plans for the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine must include procedures for close consultations with Ukrainians with intellectual disabilities using plain language and relevant support.

## Reports and resources

[Ukraine - Inclusion Europe (inclusion-europe.eu)](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/ukraine-disability-rights-inclusion/)

[100 days: Ukrainians with intellectual disabilities and their families surviving the war](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/100-days-people-intellectual-disabilities-ukraine/)

[One months of the Russian war on Ukraine in the words of families of people with intellectual disabilities](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/ukraine-war-in-words-of-families-people-with-disabilities/)

[NGO are at the forefront providing disabilities and their families surviving the war](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/refugees-with-disabilities-in-poland-moldova-romania-czechia/)

[Weeks of horror. And we cannot leave](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/weeks-of-horror-and-we-cannot-possibly-leave/)

1. ["Weeks of horror. And we cannot possibly leave." - Inclusion Europe (inclusion-europe.eu)](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/weeks-of-horror-and-we-cannot-possibly-leave/) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [100 days: Ukrainians with intellectual disabilities and their families surviving the war - Inclusion Europe (inclusion-europe.eu)](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/100-days-people-intellectual-disabilities-ukraine/) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. [Neglect and discrimination. Multiplied - How Covid-19 affected the rights of people with intellectual disabilities and their families (inclusion-europe.eu)](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/covid-report-2020/) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. [War in Ukraine: What support do people with disabilities need? | TV News | Al Jazeera](https://www.aljazeera.com/program/the-stream/2022/4/9/war-in-ukraine-what-support-do-people-with-disabilities-need) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. [Protect the Rights of People with Disabilities and Older People in Ukraine – The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies](https://disasterstrategies.org/sign-on-now-protect-the-rights-of-people-with-disabilities-and-older-people-in-ukraine/) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. [Виховуєте дитину з труднощами розвитку чи інвалідністю і потребуєте кризової підтримки в час війни? | UNICEF](https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/support-for-families-children-disabilities) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. <https://www.newstatesman.com/world/europe/ukraine/2022/07/ukraine-war-map-occupied-territory-interactive> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. <https://abcnews.go.com/International/ukrainians-forcibly-deported-russian-filtration-camps/story?id=86898080> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. <https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/russia-transporting-ukrainian-orphans-over-154013930.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. [UkraineWorld on Twitter](https://twitter.com/ukraine_world/status/1541837474997190662)  [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. “90% of the housing stock is damaged; 60% require demolition and rebuilding" in Severodonetsk  [(cnn.com)](https://edition.cnn.com/europe/live-news/russia-ukraine-war-news-07-08-22/h_541e46d82d4b7aed59751ac35e4f45b6) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. [Russia’s war in Ukraine has caused a housing crisis. This is the way out | openDemocracy](https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/russia-ukraine-war-housing-crisis-displaced/) [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. <https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/100-days-people-intellectual-disabilities-ukraine/> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)