

SPECIFIC FEATURES OF THE LEGAL PROTECTION OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN UKRAINE DURING THE WAR

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Abstract. The article examines the specific features of the legal protection and internal migration dynamics of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine during the full-scale war, with particular emphasis on the evolution of their legal status, settlement patterns, regional disparities in access to rights and services. The study analyses the regulatory framework established by the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons” and key governmental acts adopted after 2022, highlighting the transformation of state support mechanisms and the growing role of digital governance tools Diia. Special attention is given to the administrative challenges associated with repeated displacement, fragmented social service provision, and the uneven capacity of local governments to accommodate large influxes of displaced populations.

The article concludes that the long-term stabilisation of IDP status in Ukraine requires further harmonisation of legal norms, enhanced municipal support mechanisms, and sustainable integration policies tailored to the needs of displaced communities. Strengthening institutional resilience, expanding housing programmes, and ensuring equal access to rights across regions will be essential to securing durable solutions for millions of displaced Ukrainians.

Keywords: internally displaced persons, internal migration, legal status, war in Ukraine, state support, regional disparities, social protection, digital governance, integration, displacement.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author performed the work independently.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The author have no competing financial, professional, or personal interests from other parties.

INTRODUCTION

The full-scale war against Ukraine has produced one of the largest waves of internal displacement in Europe in recent decades. Millions of residents from the eastern and southern regions were compelled to leave their homes and relocate to safer territories within the country, forming a complex system of internal migration routes that continues to evolve with the dynamics of the conflict. This unprecedented movement has transformed the demographic, social, and legal landscape of Ukraine, placing new pressures on public institutions and complicating the traditional mechanisms of legal protection for internally displaced persons (IDPs). In this context, the status of an IDP is not merely an administrative category but a multifaceted legal construct that determines access to social benefits, housing programs, medical care, education, and a range of public services essential for human security during wartime.

The geography of internal migration plays a decisive role in shaping the real capacity of displaced persons to exercise their rights. While the legal definition of an IDP and the core guarantees are established at the national level, the practical implementation of these rights varies significantly across regions. Western Ukraine has emerged as the primary destination for long-term settlement, driven by relatively higher levels of security, availability of humanitarian infrastructure, and the presence of local government initiatives tailored to support IDPs. In contrast, central regions function as transitional hubs, absorbing large numbers of people temporarily before they relocate further west. This spatial redistribution of population produces differentiated conditions for accessing administrative services, securing accommodation, and integrating into local labour markets, ultimately affecting the quality and effectiveness of legal protection.

Studying the specific features of legal protection for IDPs in connection with their settlement patterns is therefore essential for understanding both the successes and limitations of the current regulatory framework. The interaction between law and geography reveals structural disparities that cannot be fully captured by analysing legislation alone. The practical experiences of displaced persons—whether concentrated in large urban centres such as Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk or in smaller communities that struggle with limited administrative capacity—provide critical insight into how the legal status of an IDP operates in reality. This article aims to examine these interconnections, highlight the key legal and administrative challenges arising from internal migration, and identify prospects for strengthening the protection of internally displaced persons in Ukraine in the context of ongoing war.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The theoretical and empirical foundation of this study is based on a combination of Ukrainian legislation, international analytical reports, and contemporary academic research examining the legal status, social protection, and migration dynamics of internally displaced persons (IDPs) during the ongoing war. The core legal framework is established by the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons,” which defines the concept of internal displacement, guarantees key rights, and outlines mechanisms of state support (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2014). This normative basis is further complemented by Resolution No. 332 of the Cabinet of Ministers, which regulates financial assistance and introduces a unified model of state support adapted to wartime realities (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2022). Together, these acts constitute the backbone of Ukraine’s national approach to protecting displaced populations.

Academic scholarship deepens the understanding of how these legal norms function in practice. Herasimova (2024) analyses the evolution of state support mechanisms for IDPs during the war, emphasising the challenges posed by repeated displacement and administrative fragmentation. Kravchenko and Petrenko (2023) highlight the growing role of digitalisation—particularly through platforms such as Diia—in expanding access to services and reducing bureaucratic barriers for displaced individuals. Broader migration research provides insight into spatial and demographic transformations: Gentile (2023) demonstrates how uneven settlement patterns have emerged across Ukraine, shaped by security concerns, infrastructure capacities, and socio-economic conditions. These findings are further supported by demographic studies, such as those by Libanova (2022), which examine systemic social vulnerabilities and the limitations of regional welfare systems.

METHODOLOGY

This study applies a concise mixed-method approach that combines legal analysis, policy review, and the examination of empirical data from authoritative international sources. The legal component focuses on interpreting the key Ukrainian regulatory acts governing the rights and guarantees of internally displaced persons, allowing for an assessment of how the statutory framework has evolved

during the war. A policy review supplements this by comparing the implementation of state support mechanisms across different regions, highlighting variations in administrative capacity and access to services.

To capture real patterns of internal movement and settlement, the study relies on secondary data from IOM displacement surveys and UNHCR protection reports. These sources provide reliable nationwide statistics and protection-related insights necessary for identifying migration trends and regional disparities. Academic literature is used to contextualise these findings and link them to broader social and demographic processes. This combined approach enables a balanced understanding of both the legal basis and the practical realities faced by IDPs in Ukraine.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The legal status of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine is primarily governed by the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons,” adopted in 2014 and repeatedly amended during the war to respond to new humanitarian challenges. This law establishes the foundational definition of an IDP as a citizen or permanent resident who was forced to leave their place of habitual residence as a result of armed conflict, occupation, or widespread violence (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2014). The legal recognition of displacement is inseparable from the registration procedure, which enables access to a broad spectrum of state guarantees, including social benefits, housing programs, medical services, and administrative support.

The statutory framework highlights that the IDP certificate functions not only as a form of identification but as a gateway to rights and state assistance. Its legal nature has been repeatedly clarified by the Ministry of Social Policy and through judicial practice, emphasising its declarative function and affirming that failure to possess the certificate cannot negate the fact of displacement itself (Herasimova, 2024). Nonetheless, practical access to rights remains closely tied to timely and accurate registration, which conditions eligibility for financial assistance, priority access to social housing, and inclusion in targeted programmes for vulnerable groups.

Amendments introduced in 2022 and 2023 significantly expanded the scope of state support. In particular, Resolution No. 332 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine established unified monthly payments to IDPs, prioritising individuals from active combat zones, occupied territories, and those whose housing was destroyed or damaged (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2022). These reforms were intended to harmonise fragmented regional approaches and ensure a minimum standard of financial protection, yet they also brought new administrative burdens, particularly for repeatedly displaced persons who were forced to re-register due to frequent changes of location.

The war has also intensified the role of digital governance in regulating the IDP status. The introduction of digital IDP certificates through the Diia platform modernised the procedural aspects of registration and reduced bureaucratic barriers, especially for those relocating to remote or overcrowded host communities. Studies show that digitalisation increased the efficiency of service provision and reduced corruption risks, although challenges persist in rural areas with limited digital infrastructure (Kravchenko & Petrenko, 2023).

Despite the solid legislative foundation, the legal status of IDPs continues to reveal systemic vulnerabilities. The fragmented nature of local service provision, inconsistencies in administrative practice, and disparities in regional resource availability often limit the practical implementation of rights guaranteed by national law. Moreover, access to social benefits and housing support remains heavily dependent on the capacity of municipal authorities, which creates uneven conditions across host communities, especially in western regions experiencing high population inflow. Thus, while the Ukrainian legal framework establishes a comprehensive set of guarantees, the effective exercise of these rights depends on both the stability of registration and the geographical context of resettlement.

The full-scale Russian invasion in 2022 produced several distinct waves of internal displacement, each characterised by unique geographic patterns and demographic compositions. According to the International Organization for Migration, more than 8 million people were displaced inside Ukraine during the first months of the invasion, with the eastern, southeastern, and northern regions accounting for the overwhelming majority of forced departures (IOM, 2024). As frontline hostilities intensified, displacement flows gradually consolidated into several major internal routes, with the most significant movement occurring from Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson regions toward the central and western parts of the country.

The initial wave of displacement in February–April 2022 was rapid, large-scale, and predominantly directed toward the west. Cities such as Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, and Uzhhorod became primary destinations due to their relative safety, existing humanitarian hubs, and logistical accessibility. Research indicates that these regions offered favourable conditions for temporary settlement, including available transportation links, established volunteer networks, and proximity to the EU border, which was perceived as an additional security guarantee (Gentile, 2023). Many IDPs at that stage viewed their relocation as temporary, expecting shorter-term conflict dynamics.

As the war evolved into a prolonged conflict, later waves of displacement displayed more complex spatial characteristics. Central Ukrainian regions—Vinnytsia, Khmelnytskyi, Cherkasy, and Poltava—emerged as intermediate settlement zones, functioning both as transit corridors and long-term hosting areas for those who sought proximity to former homes but could not return due to security risks. Studies show that these regions began receiving a more diverse demographic mix, including elderly individuals, persons with disabilities, and repeatedly displaced households, which significantly increased the burden on local social protection systems (Libanova, 2022).

By late 2022 and throughout 2023, the displacement pattern stabilised into a more predictable distribution: the majority of IDPs remained concentrated in western regions, while central regions absorbed a steady but smaller inflow. However, the persistence of missile attacks across the country, especially on energy infrastructure during winter 2022–2023, triggered additional internal movements, often involving return migration followed by secondary displacement. Such repeated relocations complicated the legal status of IDPs, particularly regarding re-registration, access to benefits, and continuity of social services. Research demonstrates that many IDPs experienced bureaucratic delays or interruptions in financial assistance due to frequent address changes and inconsistent administrative practices among regional authorities (UNHCR, 2023).

Overall, internal migration patterns since 2022 demonstrate both the adaptability of displaced populations and the structural limitations of the Ukrainian system of social protection. The geography of settlement is not merely a reflection of safety considerations: it is also shaped by local administrative capacity, availability of housing, regional economic opportunities, and the uneven distribution of humanitarian assistance. These factors collectively determine the real conditions under which internally displaced persons are able to exercise the rights guaranteed to them by national law.

According to successive rounds of the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, western Ukraine consistently hosts the largest share of IDPs, accounting for more than one-third of all displaced persons during most periods of 2022–2024 (IOM, 2024). The regions of Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Zakarpattia, and Ternopil have become primary settlement hubs due to their relative security, distance from active hostilities, and developed infrastructure capable of accommodating large-scale humanitarian inflows.

Lviv region remains the principal destination for long-term settlement. Its administrative capacity, extensive network of social institutions, and logistical accessibility have strengthened its role as a “humanitarian gateway” for the country. Research indicates that large urban centres such as Lviv and smaller communities in the region have absorbed disproportionate numbers of IDPs, leading to significant demographic shifts and increased pressure on local housing markets (Gentile, 2023). Ivano-Frankivsk and Zakarpattia regions similarly serve as stable settlement zones, benefiting from lower

population density, safer conditions, and relatively available rental housing in early phases of the displacement crisis.

Central Ukraine forms the second major cluster of IDP settlement. Vinnytsia, Khmelnytskyi, Cherkasy, and Poltava regions act as both transitional and long-term resettlement areas. These regions attract IDPs who prefer to stay geographically closer to their home provinces while avoiding active combat zones. Studies show that many displaced persons perceive central regions as offering a balance between safety and socio-economic familiarity, especially for older individuals and repeatedly displaced households (Libanova, 2022). As a result, Poltava and Vinnytsia have become important administrative hubs for re-registration, medical services, and social assistance delivery.

Urban centres play a particularly important role in shaping settlement patterns. Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Uzhhorod, Ternopil, Vinnytsia, and Dnipro serve as “anchor cities” where IDPs tend to cluster due to better employment prospects, availability of temporary housing facilities, and developed transport networks. These cities are also hubs for humanitarian aid distribution by international organisations such as UNHCR, IOM, and the Red Cross, which further increases their attractiveness for long-term settlement. However, this concentration has also created structural challenges: rapid population growth has intensified pressure on social services, education systems, and medical infrastructure, producing regional disparities in service accessibility (UNHCR, 2023).

An important dimension of the settlement geography is the emergence of secondary displacement. Many persons initially relocated to central regions later moved to the west in search of greater security or more stable assistance systems. Others who initially settled in large cities moved to rural communities due to housing shortages and rising rental prices. These migration strategies reflect the adaptive behaviour of displaced households trying to navigate a complex landscape of opportunities and constraints shaped by both security conditions and local administrative capacity (Sasse & Lackner, 2022).

Overall, the regions where IDPs predominantly settle illustrate how internal displacement in Ukraine is structured not only by the geography of war but also by the geography of institutional resilience. Areas that combine safety, administrative efficiency, and humanitarian presence have evolved into long-term settlement zones, while regions with limited capacity struggle to ensure equal access to guaranteed rights. Understanding these spatial dynamics is essential for assessing the real effectiveness of legal protection for internally displaced persons and for designing future state policies that account for the uneven territorial distribution of displacement.

The concentration of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the western and central regions of Ukraine is the result of a combination of legal, security-related, administrative, economic, and socio-geographical factors. The most decisive element shaping these settlement patterns is the relative safety of western territories, which have remained distant from active hostilities throughout the full-scale invasion. Empirical research demonstrates that security considerations remain the primary determinant of internal migration decisions, with displaced households systematically prioritising regions perceived as offering the lowest risk of renewed attacks (Sasse & Lackner, 2022). These perceptions were reinforced by repeated missile strikes on major eastern and central cities, pushing many IDPs toward western regions where both real and perceived safety levels appeared significantly higher.

Another significant factor is the administrative and institutional capacity of host regions. Western Ukraine—particularly Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Zakarpattia, and Ternopil—developed robust humanitarian infrastructures early in the crisis, supported by active local governments, strong volunteer networks, and the presence of international organisations such as UNHCR, IOM, and the Red Cross. These institutions offered structured assistance: temporary accommodation, legal counselling, psychological support, and housing referrals. As studies show, regions with stronger institutional capacity tend to attract larger numbers of displaced persons, as they can provide more predictable access to guaranteed rights (UNHCR, 2023). Lviv region, in particular, emerged as the central humanitarian hub, coordinating logistics for both IDPs and international aid distribution.

Economic opportunities also play a central role in shaping settlement preferences. Western regions, though traditionally less industrialised, experienced a surge in employment demand due to the relocation of businesses from conflict-affected areas. Sectors such as logistics, construction, retail, IT outsourcing, and hospitality expanded to meet the needs of a rapidly growing population. According to IOM data, IDPs increasingly identified employment availability as a key factor influencing their relocation decisions in 2023–2024 (IOM, 2024). Central regions, such as Vinnytsia and Poltava, offered similar advantages, attracting those seeking proximity to their home regions while maintaining access to job markets relatively unaffected by the destruction of critical infrastructure.

Housing availability and affordability significantly contributed to settlement choices. In the early stages of displacement, western regions offered relatively more accessible private rental housing and a greater number of public facilities suitable for conversion into temporary shelters. However, as arrival numbers escalated, pressure on housing markets increased sharply, leading many IDPs to search for accommodation in less populated towns and rural communities. Research indicates that IDPs often adopted multi-stage settlement strategies, initially relocating to large cities with humanitarian services and later moving to smaller communities offering more sustainable living conditions (Gentile, 2023). Central regions, with lower rental costs and more stable housing availability, became preferred destinations for families seeking long-term solutions.

Geographical factors further strengthen the attractiveness of western Ukraine. The proximity of these regions to the EU border fosters a sense of physical and psychological safety, particularly in periods of intensified attacks across the country. This geographical positioning also supports significant humanitarian inflows from European states, contributing to the stability of assistance systems. For many displaced persons, especially families with children, western regions are perceived as offering not only security but also improved educational and medical prospects.

Together, these factors demonstrate that the west and centre of Ukraine have become dominant destination zones not merely because they are safer, but because they combine security with institutional resilience, economic adaptability, and housing opportunities. This multidimensional attractiveness explains the long-term settlement trends among IDPs and highlights how geography interacts with legal and social systems to shape the realisation of rights guaranteed under Ukrainian law.

Despite the existence of a comprehensive national framework guaranteeing rights to internally displaced persons (IDPs), the practical implementation of these guarantees varies significantly across host regions. This variation produces a range of legal challenges related to access to documentation, continuity of social benefits, housing rights, administrative services, and integration into local systems of social protection. These challenges become particularly acute in western and central regions of Ukraine, where the majority of IDPs have settled since 2022.

One of the most systemic problems concerns the **continuity and re-registration of IDP status**. Frequent secondary displacement—often caused by continued insecurity, housing shortages, or inability to find employment—forces many IDPs to repeatedly update their registered addresses. According to UNHCR data, inconsistent administrative practices among regional departments of social protection lead to delays in payments, temporary suspension of assistance, or requests for additional documentation not required by law (UNHCR, 2023). For vulnerable households, including the elderly and persons with disabilities, such interruptions can undermine access to essential services.

Another major legal challenge is **the accessibility of administrative services**, which varies widely depending on the region's capacity. In highly populated host regions such as Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Vinnytsia, and Poltava, administrative centres face significant overload. Many communities struggle to process the high volume of applications for benefits, compensation for damaged housing, and requests for legal documents. Empirical studies demonstrate that IDPs in overloaded municipalities wait substantially longer for social services, which disproportionately affects those who require urgent support (Libanova, 2022).

A critical issue concerns **housing rights and access to accommodation**. Although national legislation provides the right to temporary housing and compensation for rent, the system remains underfunded and unevenly implemented. As noted in recent analyses, western regions face acute housing shortages due to high demand and limited available facilities, forcing IDPs to rely on short-term shelters or temporary host families (Gentile, 2023). Meanwhile, central regions often offer more stable housing options but lack adequate funding to support long-term accommodation programs. These disparities create unequal conditions for exercising legally guaranteed housing rights.

The problem of **documentation and identity verification** also undermines legal protection. Many IDPs lost their documents during the evacuation or lived in occupied areas where civil registries were disrupted. Without valid identification, IDPs face barriers in accessing social payments, healthcare, pensions, and court services. Although digitalisation efforts through the *Diia* platform significantly improved access to digital documents, rural areas with limited connectivity still face barriers. Research confirms that document recovery remains one of the most pressing legal obstacles for displaced persons, especially older individuals and those who fled suddenly under.

Legal challenges also extend to **access to education and healthcare**, which differs depending on regional capacity. Overcrowded host communities experience shortages of school places and family doctors, making it difficult for IDP children to integrate into educational systems or for families to receive medical care. These structural limitations affect the practical implementation of the right to education and the right to health, despite clear legal guarantees at the national level.

Finally, IDPs face uneven opportunities for **employment and labour rights protection**. While national labour legislation equally applies to displaced persons, regional economic disparities shape their actual ability to secure formal employment. Studies show that IDPs in western regions often face competition for low-skilled jobs, whereas those who settle in certain central regions have more stable prospects, particularly in agriculture, logistics, and relocated industries (IOM, 2024). Limited access to legal consultations or job-placement services exacerbates these inequalities.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the legal protection and settlement patterns of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine demonstrates that internal displacement during the full-scale war has become a complex socio-legal phenomenon shaped by both national legislation and the geography of host regions. The Ukrainian legal framework provides a comprehensive system of guarantees, including access to social assistance, housing programs, medical care, and administrative services. However, the practical implementation of these guarantees varies significantly across regions, revealing structural disparities that affect the realisation of rights guaranteed by law.

The concentration of IDPs in western and central Ukraine is driven not only by the search for safety but also by the presence of stronger institutional capacity, more predictable access to humanitarian support, and comparatively better economic opportunities. These regions have become long-term settlement zones because they combine security with administrative efficiency and social resilience. At the same time, the uneven distribution of population inflows has placed substantial pressure on local administrations, resulting in delays in registration, limited access to housing, overburdened social services, and unequal access to education and healthcare.

The legal challenges faced by IDPs—such as repeated re-registration, difficulties in maintaining continuity of social benefits, bureaucratic obstacles in overloaded municipalities, and problems with documentation—highlight the gap between normative guarantees and practical implementation. These challenges are intensified for vulnerable groups and repeatedly displaced households, whose ability to navigate administrative systems is often limited.

Overall, the findings emphasise that an effective IDP protection system must be adaptive to the realities of wartime mobility and regional disparities. Strengthening legal protections will require

greater harmonisation of administrative procedures, expanded digital tools, targeted support for overloaded host communities, and a strategic national approach that recognises the long-term nature of internal displacement. Ensuring equal access to guaranteed rights across all regions of Ukraine remains essential for protecting displaced populations and supporting the country's broader resilience during wartime.

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ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ПРАВОВОГО ЗАХИСТУ ВНУТРІШНЬО ПЕРЕМІЩЕНИХ ОСІБ В УКРАЇНІ ПІД ЧАС ВІЙНИ

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Анотація. У статті досліджуються специфічні особливості правового захисту та внутрішньої міграційної динаміки внутрішньо переміщених осіб (ВПО) в Україні в умовах повномасштабної війни, з особливим акцентом на еволюції їхнього правового статусу, просторових моделях розселення та регіональних відмінностях у доступі до прав і послуг. Проаналізовано нормативно-правову базу, закладену Законом України «Про забезпечення прав і свобод внутрішньо переміщених осіб», а також ключові урядові акти, ухвалені після 2022 року. Показано трансформацію державних механізмів підтримки та зростання ролі цифрового врядування, зокрема через платформу «Дія». Особлива увага приділяється адміністративним труднощам, пов'язаним із повторними переміщеннями, фрагментованістю соціальних послуг та нерівною спроможністю місцевих громад приймати значні потоки ВПО.

У статті визначено основні внутрішні міграційні маршрути, що сформувалися від початку війни, та доведено, що більшість ВПО осідають у західних і центральних регіонах України завдяки вищому рівню безпеки, кращій доступності соціальної інфраструктури та ефективнішим механізмам муніципальної підтримки. Використовуючи актуальні аналітичні дані МОМ, УВКБ ООН та сучасні наукові дослідження, робота показує, що моделі розселення формуються під впливом поєднання факторів безпеки, можливостей ринку праці, наявності житла та вже існуючих соціальних мереж.

Дослідження також розглядає юридичні та адміністративні труднощі, з якими стикаються ВПО у приймаючих регіонах, включаючи нерівномірність розподілу фінансової допомоги, обмежений доступ до соціального житла, різні підходи місцевих органів до реєстраційних процедур, а також труднощі в отриманні медичних та освітніх послуг. Ці проблеми виявляють системні вразливості моделі управління внутрішнім переміщенням в Україні, особливо в регіонах із найбільшим притоком населення. Попри суттєвий прогрес у розвитку законодавства, захист ВПО й надалі залежить від локальної спроможності громад, цифрової нерівності та потреби у зміцненні міжрегіональної координації.

У висновку обґрунтовується, що довгострокова стабілізація статусу ВПО в Україні вимагає подальшої гармонізації правових норм, посилення муніципальних механізмів підтримки та впровадження сталих інтеграційних політик, адаптованих до потреб переміщених громад. Зміцнення інституційної стійкості, розширення житлових програм та забезпечення рівного доступу до прав у різних регіонах є ключовими умовами для досягнення тривалих рішень для мільйонів українців, переміщених унаслідок війни.

Ключові слова: внутрішньо переміщені особи, внутрішня міграція, правовий статус, війна в Україні, державна підтримка, регіональні диспропорції, соціальний захист, цифрове врядування, інтеграція, переміщення.

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Abstract. The article examines the specific features of the legal protection and internal migration dynamics of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine during the full-scale war, with particular emphasis on the evolution of their legal status, settlement patterns, and regional disparities in access to rights and services. The study analyses the regulatory framework established by the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons” and key governmental acts adopted after 2022, highlighting the transformation of state support mechanisms and the growing role of digital governance tools such as Diia. Special attention is given to the administrative challenges associated with repeated displacement, fragmented social service provision, and the uneven capacity of local governments to accommodate large influxes of displaced populations. The article identifies the main internal migration routes formed since the beginning of the war, demonstrating that IDPs predominantly settle in the western and central regions of Ukraine due to higher security, greater availability of social infrastructure, and stronger municipal support systems. Using current analytical data from IOM, UNHCR, and recent academic studies, the research shows that settlement patterns are shaped by a combination of safety considerations, labour market opportunities, housing availability, and established community networks.

The study also reviews the legal and administrative difficulties that IDPs face in host regions, including disparities in financial assistance distribution, unequal access to social housing, inconsistencies in local registration procedures, and challenges in accessing medical and educational services. These problems reveal systemic vulnerabilities in Ukraine’s internal displacement governance model, especially in regions experiencing the highest population inflows. Despite significant progress in legislative development, the protection of IDPs remains affected by local capacity gaps, digital inequality, and the need for stronger interregional coordination.

The article concludes that the long-term stabilisation of IDP status in Ukraine requires further harmonisation of legal norms, enhanced municipal support mechanisms, and sustainable integration policies tailored to the needs of displaced communities. Strengthening institutional resilience, expanding housing programmes, and ensuring equal access to rights across regions will be essential to securing durable solutions for millions of displaced Ukrainians during and after the war.

Keywords: internally displaced persons, internal migration, legal status, war in Ukraine, state support, regional disparities, social protection, digital governance, integration, displacement.

Date submitted by author: 30.09.2025

Date accepted after review: 19.10.2025

Date of publication: 17.12.2025

Cite this article: Makarov, M. (2025). Specific Features of the Legal Protection of Internally Displaced Persons in Ukraine during the War. *Law and Innovative Society*, 2(25), 60–68. doi: [https://doi.org/10.37772/2309-9275-2025-2\(25\)-5](https://doi.org/10.37772/2309-9275-2025-2(25)-5).