

PEOPLE PERCEPTION ON DIFFERENT ISSUES DURING WAR IN UKRAINE

In this newsletter, we delve into an important and multifaceted topic: public perception in Ukraine regarding key pillars of society, including education, health, justice, government services, and security. These aspects of daily life not only shape individual well-being but also influence the nation's progress and resilience.

Over the years, numerous surveys and reports by international organizations have shed light on how Ukrainians view the performance and accessibility of these essential services. By examining these perceptions, we gain valuable insights into the successes achieved, the challenges faced, and the areas that require focused attention to enhance societal trust and functionality.

Public Perceptions of Russia's War Against Ukraine

Between December 1 and 9, 2024, the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) carried out an all-Ukrainian public opinion survey as part of its "Omnibus" research project. At the request of the Center for Strategic Communications "Forum," specific questions were included to gauge Ukrainians' attitudes toward the establishment of a Government of National Unity.

The survey was conducted using the CATI (computer-assisted telephone interviewing) method, with randomly generated mobile phone numbers and statistical weighting. It covered all regions under the control of the Ukrainian Government, with 1,000 respondents aged 18 and older participating. Residents of territories not currently controlled by Ukrainian authorities were excluded, although internally displaced persons (IDPs) from these areas were included. Additionally, citizens who left Ukraine after February 24, 2022, were not part of the sample.

However, given the ongoing war, additional systematic deviations may occur, as previously noted by KIIS. Despite these factors, the results are deemed highly representative and provide a reliable insight into public sentiment.

Attitude Toward the Creation of a Government of National Unity

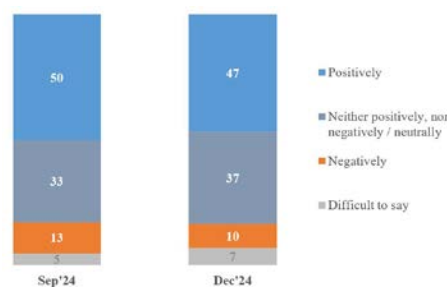
The concept of forming a Government of National Unity often resurfaces in Ukraine, particularly during times of heightened criticism of the parliament or government. In September 2024, KIIS asked Ukrainians about their views on establishing a broad coalition of patriotic forces within and beyond parliament. This question was revisited in December 2024.

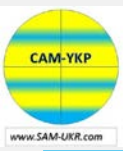
According to the results:

- 47% of respondents have a positive view of this initiative,
- 10% hold a negative view,
- 37% are neutral.

These figures are consistent with the September 2024 survey, indicating sustained interest and support for this proposal.

the survey.





PEOPLE PERCEPTION ABOUT EDUCATION

The Vox Populi Sociological Agency

The education sector in Ukraine has received relatively positive evaluations. A study by the Sociological Group Rating assessed the level of integrity across various sectors on a scale from 0 (no integrity culture) to 10 (very high integrity culture). The education sector received a score of 6.0, indicating a moderate level of public trust.

The Vox Populi Sociological Agency, with support from the U-LEAD with Europe Programme, conducted a survey as part of the "Providing Education Services in War Conditions in Ukraine" project.

The majority of students (87% based on student responses and 89% based on parent responses) continued their education during the 2022-2023 academic year at the same school they were attending as of September 2023. This typically applied to studying in the same community, either in person or online, though in some cases it included attending the same school while living abroad.

Additionally, 7% of students studied exclusively at other schools within Ukraine. Meanwhile, 6% reported combining their education in Ukraine (usually at their current school) with attending a school abroad.

Impact of War on Schools and Education

Despite the education sector earning a relatively positive score of 6.0 in a recent integrity assessment by the Sociological Group Rating, the ongoing war has taken a heavy toll on Ukraine's schools. According to government reports, over 3,000 educational institutions have been damaged or destroyed since the conflict began in February 2022. This has disrupted learning for millions of students, with many schools transitioning to online or hybrid formats to ensure continuity of education.

Efforts to rebuild and modernize the education system are underway, with support from international partners. However, the challenges of infrastructure loss, displacement, and psychological trauma among students and teachers highlight the long road ahead for Ukraine's education sector.

Key Findings

Youth Opportunities

- One-third of youth feel they have enough opportunities for self-fulfillment, with better ratings in regional centers, Kyiv, and among those under 21.
- Leisure, education, and creativity opportunities are well-rated, while economic opportunities are lower, especially in rural and eastern areas.
- Youth centers improve perceptions of local opportunities, particularly in leisure and arts.

Priorities and Challenges

- Top priorities: safety, family, and Ukraine's independence.
- Key concerns: corruption, low income, unemployment, and mobilization. Rural youth and IDPs highlight economic challenges and housing issues.

Youth Centers

- 47% report having youth centers locally, with significant urban-rural disparities.
- Centers are seen as safe spaces with positive impacts, but views on job support are mixed.
- Visits and Benefits
- 19% have visited youth centers, mainly youth under 25, women, and urban residents. Visitors highlight socialization, personal development, and safe spaces.

PEOPLE PERCEPTION ABOUT ELECTIONS

Recent Elections in Ukraine

The last national elections in Ukraine took place in 2019:

- **Presidential Elections:** In March and April 2019, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, a political newcomer and former comedian, won a landslide victory with over 73% of the vote in the second round, defeating the incumbent, Petro Poroshenko. Zelenskyy's campaign focused on anti-corruption measures, reforms, and restoring trust in government institutions.

- **Parliamentary Elections:** Following his presidential win, Zelenskyy's political party, "Servant of the People," achieved significant success in the parliamentary elections held on July 21, 2019, securing 254 out of 450 seats in the Verkhovna Rada (parliament). This victory provided Zelenskyy with a strong mandate to implement his reform agenda.

Reasons Elections Were Not Held in 2024

The elections scheduled for 2024 have been postponed due to the ongoing conflict following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which began on February 24, 2022. Key reasons for this decision include:

- 1. Security Concerns:** Ongoing military operations and attacks pose significant risks to voters and the electoral process.
- 2. Displacement of Citizens:** Millions of Ukrainians are either internally displaced or have fled abroad, complicating voter registration and participation logistics.
- 3. Focus on National Defense:** The government's resources and efforts are primarily directed towards national defense and managing the humanitarian crisis, limiting capacity for organizing elections.

Likelihood of Elections in 2025

Under martial law, the Ukrainian constitution explicitly prohibits elections. For elections to occur in 2025:

1. Martial law would need to be lifted or temporarily suspended for electoral purposes.
2. The security situation across the country, especially in frontline areas and those currently under occupation, would need to stabilize to allow safe and inclusive participation.

Key factors influencing the decision:

Security Conditions: Free and fair elections require access and safety across all regions, including areas affected by conflict or under Russian occupation.

International Pressure and Support: Ukraine's democratic allies may encourage a return to normal political processes, possibly supporting mechanisms for secure voting (e.g., remote voting for displaced persons and military personnel).

Political Will: The government may balance the urgency of restoring democratic processes with the need to maintain public safety.

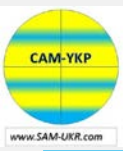
Likely Timing of Elections

If martial law is lifted or suspended:

Presidential Elections: Originally scheduled for March 2024, they are delayed indefinitely. If martial law is lifted early in 2025, elections could occur in late spring or early summer (May–June 2025) to allow preparation.

Parliamentary Elections: The term of the Verkhovna Rada (parliament) officially ended in 2023, but elections were postponed due to martial law. These could also be scheduled alongside or shortly after presidential elections.





GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Public perception of government services varies by sector.

Local government authorities received a score of 5.1 in the integrity assessment, while civil service integrity was rated at 4.9. These scores suggest moderate trust levels in government services.

The Prospect of New Elections in Ukraine

National elections, originally scheduled for 2024, were postponed due to the ongoing war and martial law. However, discussions about resuming the democratic process

Organizing free and fair elections in a war-torn country, particularly with millions of displaced citizens and occupied territories, would require substantial international oversight and support.

Key Findings

Should Presidential Elections Be Held?

- 69% of Ukrainians believe that President Zelenskyi should remain in office until martial law is lifted.
- 15% support elections, with 4% suggesting suspending martial law temporarily, and 11% advocating legal amendments to allow elections during martial law.
- 10% propose that Zelenskyi step down in May 2024, transferring his powers to the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada until a new president is elected.

Trust in the President and Views on Elections

- Among those who trust President Zelenskyi, 87% favor him staying in office until martial law ends.
- Among those who distrust him, 54% support a change of leadership, with 31% endorsing elections and 23% preferring a transfer of power to the parliamentary chairman.

War and peace talks

A survey released on November 12, based on computer-assisted telephone interviews in Kyiv-controlled territories conducted in late September and early October, found that 88% of Ukrainians believe Ukraine will win the war. This figure, while lower than 98% in June 2022, has remained steady since February 2024.

Similar findings were reported by Ukrainian pollsters. The Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) survey from September-October 2024 revealed that 81% of Ukrainians believe victory is possible with adequate Western support, though 14% now feel Russia is too strong—up from 7% in December 2023.

Another survey by the Ilko Kucheriv Foundation "Democratic Initiatives" and the Razumkov Center in August showed strong resistance to capitulating to Russia's territorial demands. Only 9% of Ukrainians would accept recognizing occupied territories as Russian for peace (up from 5% in August 2023), while 81% still consider it unacceptable (down from 90% in August 2023).

Pollsters attribute variations in findings to differences in survey methodologies.

A Growing Divide in Support for President Zelenskyy

The surveys also highlight mixed sentiments toward President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. While his leadership remains a unifying symbol for many, fatigue with the war and slow progress on the battlefield have eroded some public confidence. A September-October 2024 KIIS poll found that 68% of Ukrainians approve of Zelenskyy's handling of the war, down from 85% in mid-2022.

Criticism often focuses on his "victory plan," which includes NATO membership and long-range strikes on Russian territory, with some Ukrainians questioning its feasibility and impact on international support. Despite this, a majority still back his firm stance against negotiating territorial concessions, reflecting strong national resistance to compromise with Russia.

HEALTH

The healthcare sector

The healthcare sector was rated at 5.4 in the same integrity assessment, reflecting moderate public trust.

The full-scale invasion by the Russian Federation continues to place extraordinary strain on every aspect of public life in Ukraine. Despite the significant challenges posed by the war, findings show that the country's health system has demonstrated resilience, with access to health services generally remaining strong. This study explores access to primary health care facilities and family doctors in Ukraine as of April 2024, with particular attention to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and residents of frontline regions.

The healthcare sector was rated at 5.4 in the same integrity assessment, reflecting moderate public trust.

Eight percent of households reported having no access to primary health care services, while 7% lack a signed agreement with a family doctor. Additionally, 23% of respondents have changed their family doctor since the war began, often due to dissatisfaction or the need to relocate. Although access to health services is generally high, 54% of respondents required medical assistance recently, with 65% encountering difficulties and 10% unable to obtain the care they needed.

Nearly all households reported challenges in acquiring medicines, primarily because of rising prices. Awareness of Ukraine's Affordable Medicines Programme remains limited. IDPs and those living in frontline areas face greater barriers to health care, including a lack of knowledge about available facilities and higher rates of unmet medical needs.

Healthcare Facilities Heavily Affected by the War

By Russian forces had damaged 1,642 medical facilities and completely destroyed 214 others. The heaviest damage was concentrated in the regions of Kharkiv, Donetsk, Mykolaiv, Kyiv, Chernihiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia. Comprehensive data on the condition of medical facilities in temporarily occupied areas remains unavailable.

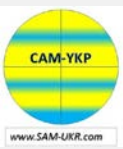
Additionally, 188 ambulances were damaged, 261 were destroyed, and 125 were seized by Russian forces, further undermining Ukraine's ability to provide critical healthcare services in affected regions.

Emotional and Social Experiences in 2023

In 2023, 43% of Ukrainians found strength and motivation through their families and loved ones, an increase from 30% at the end of 2022. Similarly, members of the Ukrainian Defense Forces remained a key source of inspiration for 16% of respondents. This continuity highlights the enduring significance of personal and collective support systems during the second year of the full-scale invasion.

By late 2023, a majority of Ukrainians expressed hope for their personal future (55%) and for Ukraine (61%). Alongside hope, 40% reported feeling anxiety, and 28% felt optimistic about their future. While hope remains the most prevalent emotion, anxiety has grown since 2022 (up from 33%), and optimism has slightly declined (down from 36%). When considering Ukraine's future, anxiety has also increased, rising from 24% in late 2022 to 34% in December 2023.

The war continues to affect nearly all Ukrainians (95%), with 61% describing the impact as decisive. This sentiment is widespread across all regions, but it is particularly pronounced in the East, where 68% of residents report the war as having a dramatic effect on their daily lives. The war's influence transcends age groups, although young people (18–29 years old) are less likely to report a significant impact compared to older groups. Still, a majority of young respondents (54%) acknowledge the war's substantial effect on their lives.



JUSTICE

The Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation

The judiciary in Ukraine has historically struggled with low levels of public trust. In 2021, only 15.5% of respondents expressed confidence in the judicial system. By 2023, this figure had risen to 21%, reflecting a growing, though still limited, belief in the integrity and effectiveness of the justice system. This gradual increase may be attributed to ongoing judicial reforms and heightened public awareness of the importance of accountability during wartime. However, challenges such as corruption and inefficiency remain significant hurdles to further improving trust in the judiciary.

The Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, in partnership with the Razumkov Center sociological service, conducted a nationwide survey from December 8 to 15, 2023.

The face-to-face survey was carried out in the regions of Vinnytsia, Volyn, Dnipropetrovsk, Zhytomyr, Zakarpattia, Zaporizhzhia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kyiv, Kirovohrad, Lviv, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Poltava, Rivne, Sumy, Ternopil, Kharkiv, Kherson, Khmelnytsky, Cherkasy, Chernihiv, Chernivtsi, and the city of Kyiv. In the Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, and Kherson regions, the survey was conducted exclusively in government-controlled areas free from active combat.

Justice system

The police were rated at 4.3, and the courts at 3.7 in the integrity assessment, indicating lower levels of public trust in these institutions.

Additionally, a survey conducted by the Rating Group for the EU Advisory Mission Ukraine revealed varying levels of public trust in law enforcement and the judiciary.

It's important to note that public perceptions are influenced by various factors, including ongoing reforms, geopolitical events, and internal developments. For the most current and detailed information, consulting the latest reports from organizations such as the United Nations, European Union, and World Bank is recommended.

The methodology involved stratified multi-stage sampling with random selection during the initial stages and a quota-based method for the final stage, ensuring respondents were selected based on gender and age quotas. The sample reflects the demographic structure of the adult population in these regions as of early 2022 (by age, gender, and settlement type).

A total of 2,019 respondents aged 18 and older participated, with a theoretical margin of error not exceeding 2.3%. However, additional systematic deviations may have arisen due to the displacement of millions caused by Russian aggression.

For further inquiries, insights, or collaboration opportunities, please visit our website or reach out directly:

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