

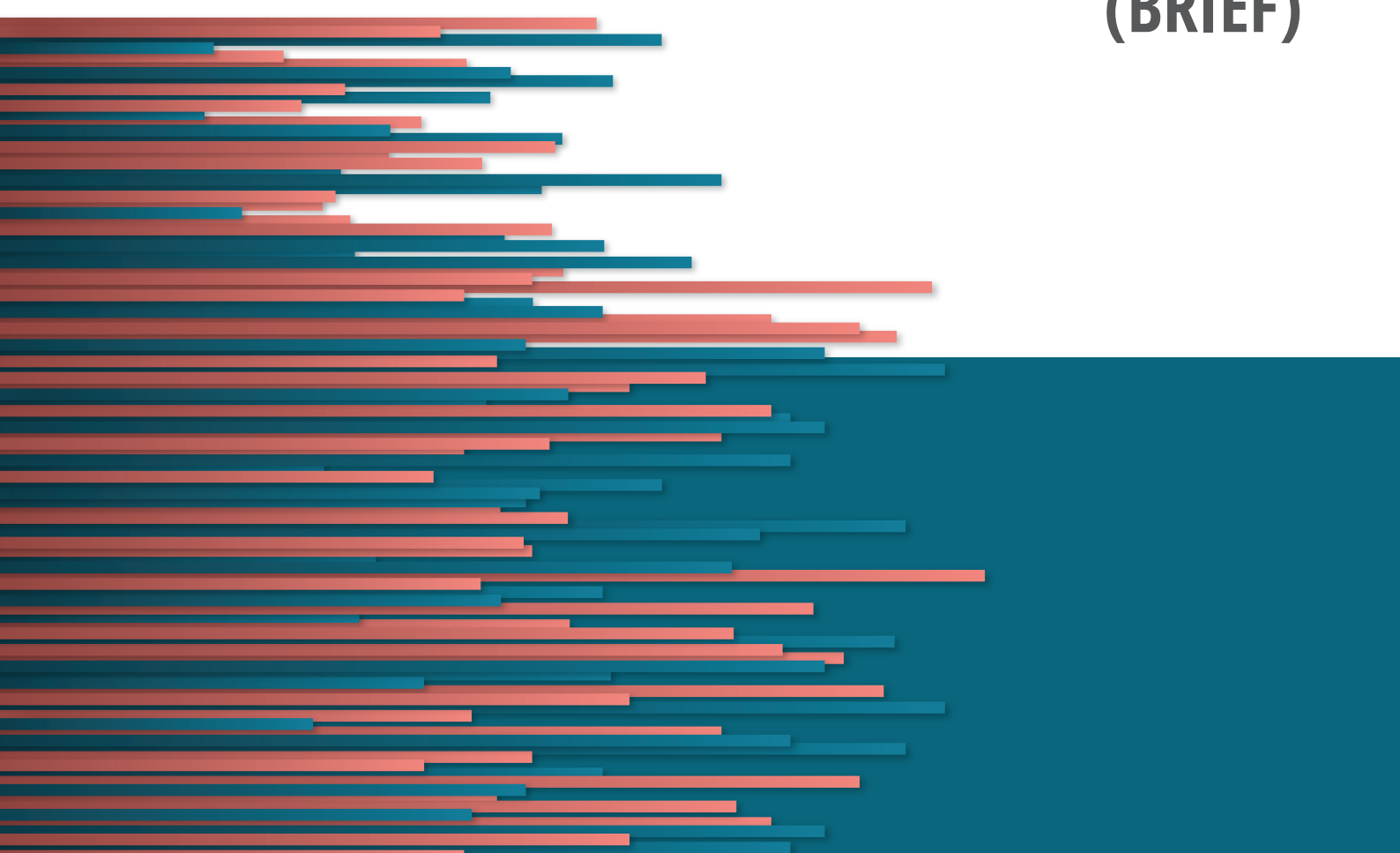


Kharkiv institute for social research

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN UKRAINE

# ASSESSMENT OF THE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF THE MAIN DIRECTORATE OF THE STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE IN LUHANSK OBLAST

**(BRIEF)**





This report contains the results of the assessment of the institutional capacity of the Main Directorate of the State Emergency Service in Luhansk Oblast, including studies of work activity management, human resources, interaction with the community, logistics and maintenance support and other factors. It also includes some conclusions and recommendations for improving the work of the police in the oblast.

A special original toolkit has been developed to implement this assessment. The questions therein were based on the provisions of the UNDP Capacity Assessment Methodology and the Criminal Justice Assessment Toolkit created by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, taking into account the specifics of local legislation and the system of management of governmental authorities.

The information was obtained from responses to inquiries and collected during interviews with key members of the State Emergency Service in Luhansk Oblast. In total, 20 in-depth interviews were completed between October 2019 and February 2020.

This report may be useful to State Emergency Service officers and representatives of local authorities, international and national NGOs, as well as to anyone interested in community safety and the population's involvement in law enforcement in Ukraine.

## KEY OBSERVATIONS

- 1.** In light of the ongoing armed conflict, the Directorate of the State Emergency Service in Luhansk Oblast should change its priorities and coordinate its actions with the Joint Forces Operation headquarters. Threats to the life and health of personnel prevent rescuers from performing their work in a timely manner.
- 2.** The response to fires and emergencies in remote areas operates under a plan to involve the forces and resources of the Luhansk garrison, i.e. the closest free units go to the site of the fire or emergency, accompanied by combat units from other districts or regions if necessary.
- 3.** A local fire-prevention network has also been established around territorial communities in order to ensure a prompt response to emergencies and incidents in the region, as well as to effectively carry out tasks to ensure fire safety and implement a full range of civil protection measures. The network comprises local fire brigades, voluntary fire brigades, voluntary fire teams, and voluntary fire squads. All of their resources can be utilised in their responses as needed.
- 4.** The key factors negatively affecting the effectiveness of the Main Directorate of the State Emergency Service in Luhansk Oblast are the remoteness of settlements in rural areas, poor roads in service areas, and insufficient water sources for fire-fighting. These factors result in rescue team arrival times in excess of the regulation 20 minutes. This situation exists in all rural areas of the region.
- 5.** While there are practically no reserved resources for emergencies in Luhansk Oblast, coordination is structured such that, if necessary, the Emergency Response Headquarters can find out which resources are available and reallocate forces and resources for various types of tasks: extinguishing, evacuation, delivery of materials, equipment, etc.
- 6.** Thanks to the introduction of competitive salaries and a number of additional incentive programs at the Main Directorate of the State Emergency Service in Luhansk Oblast, there are practically no staff shortages at the moment. The shortage of personnel is temporary and does not affect the efficacy of State Emergency Service units in the region. The key factor motivating employees is salary. The higher the salary, the more people are eager to serve in the State Emergency Service. Almost all unit personnel (90%) reside in settlements in the region, particularly in the service area.
- 7.** While rescuer training is ongoing and covers a wide range of topics relating to the practical skills needed for emergency situations, occupational training programmes do not include subjects specific to armed conflict. At the same time, there are regular emergency drills and exercises in the region to ensure public safety. There are no measures for preventing occupational burnout in the region, though there is a need for them.
- 8.** The gradual transfer of property complexes from the state firefighting and rescue units of the State Emergency Service in Luhansk Oblast to united territorial communities (provided for under the State Emergency Service reform strategy) is not taking place. The legal framework for such activities remains insufficient, but communities are either unwilling or unable to maintain the security centres at their own expense. There are currently no public safety centres in Luhansk Oblast despite the need for education in at least 42 local fire brigades in the region.

- 9.** There are 33 chemically hazardous facilities in Luhansk Oblast. No major accidents have been recorded in recent years. Every year, the territorial bodies of the State Emergency Service carry out the certification of territories in terms of the risks of anthropogenic and natural emergencies. This serves as a substitute for risk assessment. According to the Main Directorate of the State Emergency Service in Luhansk Oblast, there are enough resources and skills to conduct regular risk assessments, but the existing methodology does not facilitate the direct implementation of assessment results in the form of specific measures to reduce threat levels. As such, there is a need to develop a risk-analysis methodology related to armed conflict. This will eventually produce specific indicators to enable the clear identification of necessary and sufficient measures.
- 10.** The key form of interaction between the State Emergency Service and the population of Luhansk Oblast is information sharing. Various channels are used for this purpose: the placement of posters, the distribution of leaflets, booklets, and texts with warnings and appeals to the public and brief instructions on the basic requirements of safety regulations and the rules of conduct in the event of the detection of explosives and other suspicious items. For the most part, the population is involved in developing a safe environment via State Emergency Service meetings with working teams and via village meetings where fire prevention and rules of safe behaviour are discussed.
- 11.** Due to its relocation from temporarily uncontrolled Luhansk, the State Emergency Service lost significant assets and had to be housed in premises where conditions were insufficient to meet staff needs. It requires furniture, premises, vehicles, combat clothing and stationary backup generators to ensure that units remain operational at all times.
- 12.** Interaction between the State Emergency Service and local and central authorities is ensured through mutual notification. Every year, the Main Directorate of the State Emergency Service develops plans for main civil protection activities in conjunction with local executive authorities, which form the functional subsystems of the Unified State Civil Protection System. An inspection plan for the region's strategic facilities has been developed and approved, and inspections are carried out alongside recommendations.
- 13.** The establishment of public security centres, which has begun in united territorial communities across the country, comes with certain difficulties in Luhansk Oblast. The overwhelming majority of local self-governing bodies are unable to bear the provision, training and maintenance costs of security centres. This is due to an inability to retain local or voluntary fire brigades at their own expense. In addition, the State Emergency Service has noted the lack of an integrated approach to civil protection, fire and technological safety in rural areas at the regional level.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.** Considering the fact that the risk assessment methodology used in the State Emergency Service in Luhansk Oblast does not take the results of assessments of specific activities aimed at reducing threat levels into account, it is important to develop and approve a risk-analysis methodology related to armed conflict at the national level. This will eventually produce specific indicators that clearly define necessary and sufficient measures for overcoming risks.
- 2.** In order to develop the capacity of the training centre of the Main Directorate of the State Emergency Service, the Oblast needs to provide accommodation for those undergoing training. The training centre also requires English-language training and professional development of teaching staff in occupational areas, training and professional development in pedagogy courses, and training in operating computer equipment and interactive whiteboards.
- 3.** State Emergency Service resources are often insufficient to allow timely access to the scene of incidents. The existing network of local firefighters includes not only trained and specially equipped squads that receive constant funding, but also facilities that have only fire extinguishers, fire shields, sand and pike poles. It is necessary to increase the number of different facilities, volunteer teams and communities capable of handling fires and emergencies through training and the distribution of firefighting and emergency relief equipment.
- 4.** No professional burnout prevention activities have been carried out in the region, although there is a need to do so. In order to carry out such work regularly, it is necessary to arrange professional training for several specialists, their internships and further supervision of their work.
- 5.** According to the Main Directorate of the State Emergency Service in Luhansk Oblast, it is necessary to establish and implement programs to improve the abilities of territorial communities in the field of civil protection, fire and technological safety. At the regional level, it is also necessary to promote the development of an integrated approach to civil protection, fire and technological safety in rural areas.



