

Barriers to Accessing the Register of Damage for Ukraine

A Practical Analysis of Enquiries
from War-Affected People
and Recommendations for
Improving the Accessibility of
the Compensation Mechanism



UDK 341.231.14:347.53](477):351.853-058.6
B86

*Nazarii Fedorovych Boiarskyi,
Andrii Sergiyovych Yevstihnieiev,
Vadym Anatoliyovych Sydorenko*

**BARRIERS TO ACCESSING THE REGISTER OF DAMAGE
FOR UKRAINE:
A Practical Analysis of Enquiries from War-Affected People and Recommendations for Improving the Accessibility of the Compensation Mechanism**

This publication was prepared within the framework of the project «*Access to Justice and Dignity: Humanitarian Support for War-Affected People in Submitting Compensation Claims*», implemented by the NGO *Democratic Initiatives Incubator* with the support of *LIBERECO — Partnership for Human Rights*.

The views expressed by the authors do not necessarily reflect the position of *LIBERECO — Partnership for Human Rights*.

Design: *Iryna Viktorivna Lysikova*
Photo: *Alexander Zvir* (www.pexels.com)

B86 Boiarskyi N. F. Barriers to Accessing the Register of Damage for Ukraine: A Practical Analysis of Enquiries from War-Affected People and Recommendations for Improving the Accessibility of the Compensation Mechanism / N. Boiarskyi, A. Yevstihnieiev, V. Sydorenko — Kharkiv: ASSA Publishing House,. — 38 c.

ISBN 978-617-8131-17-3

This publication examines the practical experience of war-affected people in exercising their right to submit claims to the Register of Damage for Ukraine (RD4U). The report is based on a qualitative thematic analysis of 253 enquiries received through the consultation hotline and questions raised by 203 participants in educational webinars.

The authors examine the functioning of the international compensation mechanism through a human rights-based approach and find that the main difficulties faced by claimants are not related to the absence of a right to compensation, but rather to accompanying barriers encountered in the practical exercise of this right.

UDK 341.231.14:347.53](477):351.853-058.6

ISBN 978-617-8131-17-3

@ Boiarskyi N. F., Yevstihnieiev A. S.,
Sydorenko V. A., 2026
@ Alexander Zvir, 2026

Contents

Key Findings	4
1. Introduction. Access to Compensation as an Element of Restoring Justice	6
2. Methodology. People's Experiences as a Source of Change.....	8
3. Key Challenges in Ensuring Accessibility of the Register of Damage for Ukraine	10
3.1. Information Accessibility: Knowing Your Rights	12
3.2. Legal Accessibility: Understanding How to Exercise Your Rights	15
3.3. Procedural Accessibility: Navigating the Procedure Without Unnecessary Barriers	17
3.4. Digital Accessibility: Digital Services Should Expand, Not Restrict, Access to Compensation	19
3.5. Institutional Accessibility: No One Should Be Left Alone to Navigate a Complex Procedure.....	21
3.6. Psychological and Psychosocial Accessibility: The Procedure Should Provide Support, Not Intensify Distress.....	23
3.7. Accessibility as a Comprehensive Condition for Exercising the Right to Submit a Claim to the Register ...	25
4. Recommendations.....	26
5. Conclusions	31
Annex 1. Data Sources and Method of Analysis	33
Annex 2. Main Topics of Enquiries	34
About the Project.....	35
Acknowledgements	38

Key Findings



About This Report

This report summarises practical experience gained from providing consultations to people on submitting claims to the Register of Damage for Ukraine (hereinafter referred to as the «Register» or the «Register of Damage for Ukraine»). It is based on an analysis of 253 enquiries received through the hotline and questions raised by 203 participants in three open webinars.

The purpose of the report is to identify the main challenges that arise in exercising the right to submit a claim to the Register and to formulate practical recommendations for improving the accessibility of the international compensation mechanism.

Key Findings

1. The greatest difficulties relate not to the right to compensation itself, but to its practical exercise.

Most enquiries concerned selecting the appropriate category of claim, the procedure for submitting a claim, the required documents, the use of digital services, and the subsequent stages of claim processing.

2. Accessibility of the Register has six interconnected dimensions.

The analysis of enquiries identified information, legal, procedural, digital, institutional, and psychological (psychosocial) accessibility as key components of effective access to the international compensation mechanism.

- 3.** Consultation support significantly enhances people's ability to exercise their right to compensation.

The hotline and webinars demonstrated that even a brief individual explanation often enables a person to complete the submission of a claim independently and navigate the procedure with confidence.

- 4.** People in vulnerable situations require particular support.

Older people, internally displaced persons, residents of communities near the frontline, people with lower levels of digital skills, as well as people who have experienced serious human rights violations, are more likely to require additional information and consultation support.

- 5.** The further development of the Register should be accompanied by the development of a support system for claimants.

Alongside improvements to digital services, it is important to develop consultation infrastructure, practical guidance, partnerships with civil society organisations, and mechanisms for obtaining feedback from claimants.

Key Recommendations

- strengthen the information campaign on the Register through both digital and offline communication channels;
- introduce the possibility of tracking the status of a claim and receiving information on the key stages of its processing;
- establish systematic cooperation with civil society organisations to regularly update the official Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section;
- expand access to consultation support, including through a permanent contact centre and consultation points based at Administrative Service Centres;
- ensure the application of a human rights-based approach and a trauma-informed approach in interactions with claimants.

1. Introduction. Access to Compensation as an Element of Restoring Justice

The right to an effective remedy and reparation is one of the fundamental principles of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. It is enshrined, inter alia, in the [UN Basic Principles and Guidelines](#) (2005), which emphasise that people who have suffered such violations are entitled to effective access to justice, adequate reparation, and access to information concerning mechanisms for the protection of their rights.

In this context, the accessibility of a compensation mechanism is no less important than its establishment in law. International standards are based on the principle that people should have a genuine opportunity to learn about their rights, understand the procedures for exercising them, and obtain the necessary support regardless of their age, place of residence, level of digital skills, disability, or other life circumstances. Only under such conditions can the right to reparation be effectively exercised in practice.

The full-scale aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine has resulted in unprecedented human losses and widespread destruction. Millions of people have been forced to leave their homes, have lost loved ones, housing, property, and livelihoods, or have suffered other serious human rights violations. In response, the international community has begun establishing a compensation mechanism intended to provide for future reparation for the damage caused.

The first stage of this mechanism was the establishment of the Register of Damage for Ukraine (RD4U), created under the auspices of the Council of Europe. Its mandate is to receive, process and record claims concerning damage, loss and injury caused by the internationally wrongful acts of the Russian Federation in or against Ukraine, as well as the evidence related to such claims. The Register does not make decisions on the payment of compensation; however, it lays the foundation for the operation of the future international compensation mechanism.

As of [30 April 2026](#), nearly 150,000 claims had been submitted to the Register, while the Board of the Register had already recorded more than 45,000 claims. At the same time, the Register [expects](#) to receive at least 6–8 million claims, and potentially as many as 10 million, making it one of the largest compensation

mechanisms in global practice. A mechanism of this scale requires not only effective digital solutions, but also conditions that ensure that every person, regardless of their individual circumstances, has a genuine opportunity to exercise their right to submit a claim.

For this reason, the accessibility of the Register is of particular importance. Practical experience demonstrates that the mere establishment of a mechanism does not in itself guarantee its effective use. People may face informational, legal, procedural, digital, institutional, and psychological barriers that make it more difficult to exercise their right to compensation. Identifying these barriers and finding ways to overcome them are essential prerequisites for the effective functioning of the international compensation mechanism.

2. Methodology. People's Experiences as a Source of Change

Within the framework of the project «Access to Justice and Dignity: Humanitarian Support for War-Affected People to Claim Compensation», implemented by the NGO Democratic Initiatives Incubator with the support of LIBERECO – Partnership for Human Rights, an information campaign was conducted, a consultation hotline was operated, and three open webinars were held for people seeking to submit claims to the Register of Damage for Ukraine.

The report is based on an analysis of practical consultation experience, 253 enquiries received through the hotline, questions raised by 203 webinar participants, as well as the applicable legal and regulatory framework and official documents of the Register of Damage for Ukraine.

The purpose of this report is not to evaluate the work of the Register of Damage for Ukraine. Rather, it seeks to examine people's practical experiences, identify common difficulties they encounter when exercising their right to submit a claim to the Register, and formulate recommendations for improving the accessibility of the international compensation mechanism.

Unlike legal and regulatory analysis, which focuses on assessing legislation and procedures, this report is based on an analysis of the practical experiences of people who sought information and consultation support concerning the Register of Damage for Ukraine. This approach makes it possible to assess how the international compensation mechanism functions from the perspective of a person seeking to exercise their right to submit a claim.

A qualitative thematic analysis was applied in preparing the report. This approach is widely used in qualitative research to identify recurring themes, patterns, and practical barriers in people's experiences. The analysis focused not on individual legal questions, but on recurring information needs, practical difficulties, and systemic barriers encountered by claimants when interacting with the Register.

The analysis was conducted using a human rights-based approach and a trauma-informed approach. This means, in particular, that the primary focus was on identifying systemic factors that may hinder the exercise of the right to compensation, as well as on identifying practical ways to overcome them.

It is important to note that this report is not a sociological study and does not claim to provide a representative account of the experiences of all people affected by the war. Its findings are based on an analysis of enquiries from people who voluntarily accessed consultation support within the project.

Accordingly, the analysis does not cover people who are unaware of the Register, do not have access to consultations, or have not sought assistance for other reasons.

At the same time, the practical experience reflected in these enquiries made it possible to identify common information needs, procedural difficulties, and systemic barriers that may be taken into account in the further development of the Register of Damage for Ukraine and the international compensation mechanism.

3. Key Challenges in Ensuring the Accessibility of the Register of Damage for Ukraine

The analysis of enquiries received through the hotline and during the webinars showed that the exercise of the right to submit a claim to the Register of Damage for Ukraine depends not only on the existence of the relevant international mechanism. Equally important is the extent to which this mechanism is accessible to people seeking to exercise their right.

Practical experience gained through consultations indicates that the difficulties faced by claimants are complex and multidimensional. They may relate to insufficient awareness of the Register, the complexity or ambiguity of legal provisions, specific aspects of the claim submission procedure and the need to collect and/or submit additional evidence, the use of digital services, access to consultation support, or the psychological consequences of the events people have experienced. In most cases, these factors are interconnected and reinforce one another.

For this reason, this report considers the accessibility of the Register as a multidimensional concept encompassing different aspects of a person's interaction with the international compensation mechanism. This approach is consistent with the contemporary understanding of access to justice, according to which the effectiveness of a mechanism is determined not only by its legal framework, but also by a person's genuine ability to exercise their rights without undue barriers.

The analysis identified six interconnected dimensions of accessibility.

Dimension of Accessibility	Key Question
Information accessibility	Is the person aware of the Register, their rights, and the possibility of submitting a claim?
Legal accessibility	Does the person understand whether the mechanism applies to their situation and how to exercise their right?
Procedural accessibility	Is the claim submission procedure clear, consistent, and predictable?
Digital accessibility	Is the person able to use digital tools regardless of their level of digital skills?

Institutional accessibility Can the person obtain timely consultation and practical support?

Psychological and psychosocial accessibility

Is the procedure organised in a way that minimises additional stress, upholds human dignity, and prevents retraumatisation?

The analysis made it possible to define the substance of these six interconnected dimensions of accessibility, which determine a person's ability to exercise their right to submit a claim to the Register of Damage for Ukraine, as follows:

- information accessibility — knowing about the existence of the Register, its purpose, and one's rights;
- legal accessibility — understanding whether the compensation mechanism applies to a particular individual situation;
- procedural accessibility — understanding how to navigate the claim submission procedure and the subsequent stages of claim processing;
- digital accessibility — being able to use electronic services regardless of one's level of digital skills;
- institutional accessibility — being able to obtain timely consultation and practical support;
- psychological and psychosocial accessibility — being able to engage with the mechanism in a manner that minimises additional stress, fosters trust, and ensures respect for human dignity.

These dimensions do not exist in isolation. In practical situations, they are interconnected and influence one another. The analysis that follows therefore examines each dimension separately while also demonstrating how their interaction affects a person's ability to exercise their right to submit a claim to the Register.

3.1. Information Accessibility: Knowing Your Rights



Why This Matters

The right to compensation cannot be exercised without access to information. People need to know that a compensation mechanism exists, understand its purpose, and be aware of the opportunities it provides in relation to their particular circumstances.

The analysis of enquiries showed that, for many people, the first barrier is not the claim submission procedure itself, but insufficient awareness of the Register of Damage for Ukraine.



What the Enquiries Showed

People were particularly interested in basic questions¹:

«What is the Register of Damage for Ukraine?»

«Who is eligible to submit a claim to the Register?»

«Which categories of claims are already open?»

«Do I need to wait until compensation payments begin before submitting a claim?»

«How is the Register different from the eRecovery programme?»

Some people reported that they had first learned about the Register through information published in print newspapers or through recommendations from acquaintances, legal professionals, or civil society organisations.



What This Means

The enquiries received indicate that the information barrier is related not only to the insufficient availability of information, but also to its complexity and fragmented nature.

For many people, the following remain unclear:

¹ In this section and throughout the remainder of the report, the examples of questions and quotations are based on actual enquiries from claimants received through the hotline and during the project webinars. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity without changing their meaning.

- the place of the Register within the international compensation mechanism;
- the difference between the Register and other compensation programmes;
- the reasons for submitting a claim at this stage;
- the sequence of subsequent stages after a claim has been submitted.

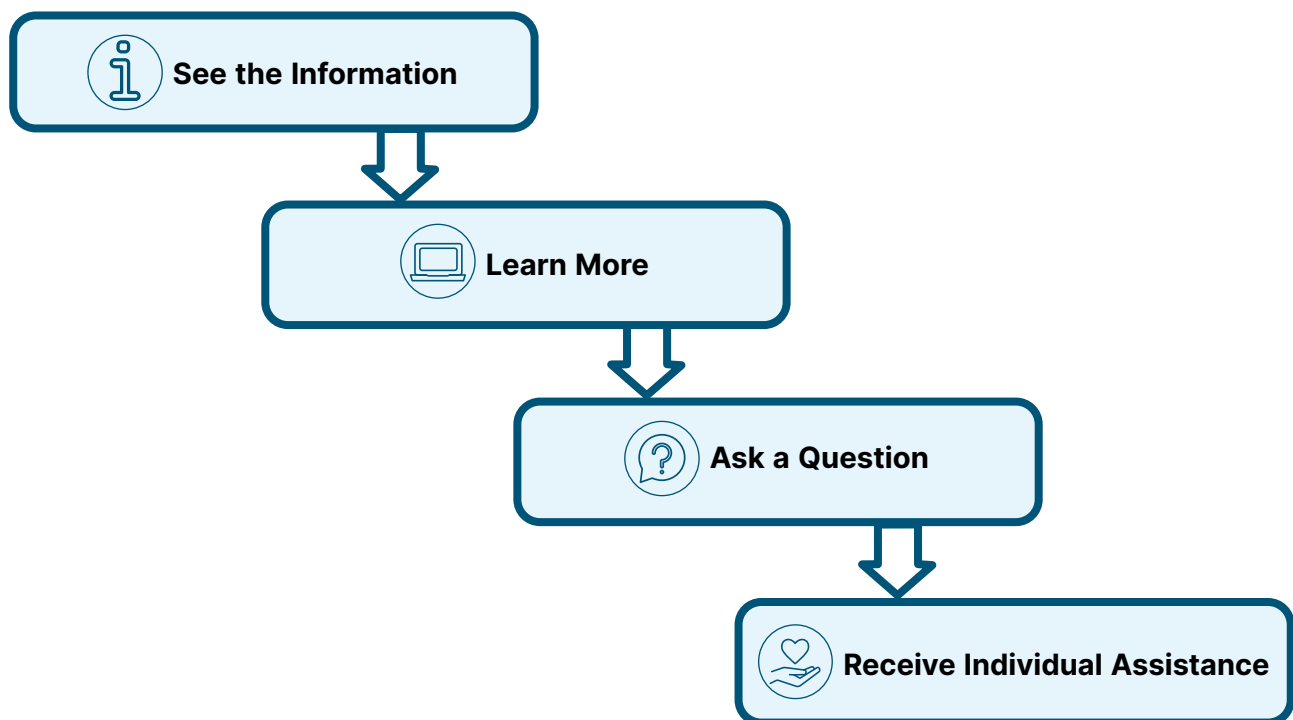
At the same time, the consultation experience showed that, after receiving a clear and understandable explanation, most people expressed their readiness to exercise their right.

Importantly, the need for accessible information is not limited to older people. Similar questions were also raised by internally displaced persons, residents of communities affected by hostilities, as well as legal professionals who provide consultations to war-affected people.



What Helps Overcome the Barrier

The experience of implementing the project **«Access to Justice and Dignity: Humanitarian Support for War-Affected People to Claim Compensation»** demonstrated the effectiveness of combining different information channels.



The information campaign combined print, online, and social media, making it possible to reach different groups of potential claimants. Information about

the Register was published in the print media outlets **Na Pensii**, **Zhyttia**, and **Poradnytsia**, with an estimated potential reach of approximately 220,000 readers, primarily older people, residents of smaller communities, and people with lower levels of digital skills. Information was additionally disseminated through the online media outlets **Na Pensii** and **Odeske Zhyttia**, as well as through their official social media pages, significantly expanding the campaign's audience. Further support was provided through the hotline and open webinars, where people could receive answers to questions arising from their specific individual circumstances.



Key Finding

Insufficient awareness is not merely a communication issue, but also a barrier to exercising the right to compensation. Ensuring access to information that is presented in plain language and disseminated through diverse communication channels is one of the essential conditions for enabling people to make timely use of the Register of Damage for Ukraine.

3.2. Legal Accessibility: Understanding How to Exercise Your Right



Why This Matters

The right to compensation must not only be enshrined in international instruments, but also be understandable to the people seeking to exercise it. If a person cannot determine whether the mechanism applies to their particular circumstances, or does not understand under which category to submit a claim or what evidence to provide, the right risks remaining merely declaratory.

This is particularly relevant for international compensation mechanisms, as they cover a broad range of human rights violations and diverse individual circumstances that cannot always be addressed through universal rules.



What the Enquiries Showed

After general questions about the Register, the largest number of enquiries concerned the application of the rules to specific individual circumstances.

People asked:

«Under which category can the owner of a destroyed home in Kherson submit a claim?»

«Can I submit a claim in relation to housing located in a temporarily occupied territory if it has not been destroyed, but I have lost control over it?»

«Can co-owners of property submit separate claims?»

«What should I do if the housing was inherited?»

«Can a claim be submitted if the property was not owned by the claimant?»

«I have already submitted four claims. Do I need to submit another one if new documents become available?»

A separate group of enquiries concerned specific situations related to temporarily occupied territories, co-ownership, inheritance, unfinished construction, forced displacement, and combinations of several types of damage suffered.



What This Means

The analysis of enquiries shows that the greatest difficulty for people lies not in the legislation governing the submission of claims to the Register itself, but in the need to apply it to their own individual circumstances.

The vast majority of questions arose in situations where people could not find answers in publicly available information materials that addressed their particular circumstances. This was especially characteristic of situations involving prolonged occupation, forced displacement, co-ownership, property located in areas of active hostilities, inheritance rights, or the simultaneous occurrence of several categories of damage.

At the same time, the project experience showed that, after receiving an individual explanation, most people were able to identify the appropriate course of action independently and prepare their claim.

This indicates a high demand not so much for legal representation as for accessible, individualised explanations on how the Register's rules apply to a specific set of circumstances.



Key Finding

The legal accessibility of the international compensation mechanism depends not only on the quality of the regulatory framework, but also on how understandable the rules are for people in different circumstances. Consultation practice confirms the importance of individual explanations, practical examples of how specific categories of claims apply, and regular updates to information materials as the Register continues to develop.

3.3. Procedural Accessibility: Navigating the Procedure Without Unnecessary Barriers



Why This Matters

Even if a person is aware of their rights and understands that they can submit a claim to the Register of Damage for Ukraine, the exercise of this right depends on how clear and consistent the claim submission procedure itself is. Procedural accessibility means that a person can understand the steps they need to take, prepare the necessary information and documents, and confidently navigate all stages of the process without undue difficulty.

For people who have experienced the loss of their homes, forced displacement, or other consequences of the war, complex administrative procedures can become an additional source of stress. It is therefore important that the claim submission process be as clear and predictable as possible and be accompanied by clear guidance.



What the Enquiries Showed

A significant proportion of consultations concerned not the right to submit a claim as such, but the practical aspects of navigating the procedure for exercising that right.

People asked:

«What is the step-by-step procedure for submitting a claim?»

«What should be taken into account when entering information into the Register?»

«Can a claim be edited after it has been submitted?»

«What documents should I prepare before I start completing a claim?»

«What are the most common mistakes people make when submitting claims?»

«How long does it take for claims to be processed?»

«I have already submitted a claim but have not received any information. What does this mean?»

Some questions concerned the sequence of steps to be taken in complex individual circumstances, including cases involving loss of control over property,

inability to access property for inspection in order to determine the extent of damage or establish whether it has been destroyed, the submission of multiple claims, or the need to update information that had already been submitted.



What This Means

The analysis of enquiries shows that people need not only a description of the procedure, but also an understanding of its underlying logic. For many, it was important to understand what happens after a claim is submitted, what subsequent stages the claim goes through, and what actions, if any, will be expected from the claimant.

The lack of regular feedback after a claim had been submitted was a particular source of concern. For example, one claimant asked:

«I submitted a claim concerning the death of my husband in January 2025, but I still have not received any response or notification. Why do claimants not receive even interim information about the status of their claims?»

Such enquiries indicate that, for many people, not only the final outcome matters, but also having a sense that the process is clear and predictable. A lack of information about the subsequent processing of a claim may increase uncertainty and undermine trust in the mechanism, even where such delays are due to the way the mechanism operates.

The project experience also showed that a significant proportion of procedural questions can be addressed through step-by-step guidance, practical examples, and answers to frequently asked questions. In many cases, a brief explanation of the process was sufficient to enable people to complete the procedure independently without requiring additional legal assistance.



Key Finding

Procedural accessibility is an integral component of the right to compensation. People should be able not only to submit a claim, but also to understand the entire process through which it will be handled — from preparing the necessary information to the subsequent stages of the international compensation mechanism. Clear step-by-step guidance, regular explanations, and appropriate communication about the progress of the procedure help strengthen trust in the Register and enable people to exercise their rights with greater confidence.

3.4. Digital Accessibility:

Digital Services Should Expand, Not Restrict, Access to Compensation



Why This Matters

The Register of Damage for Ukraine was established as a modern digital mechanism capable of processing millions of claims and related materials. The use of digital services significantly facilitates the administration of a process of this scale and contributes to its efficiency.

At the same time, digitalisation should not become a condition on which a person's ability to exercise their right to compensation depends. People affected by the war have different levels of digital skills and varying access to devices and electronic identification. Digital solutions should therefore be accompanied by support mechanisms that enable every person to access the Register regardless of their level of digital competence.



What the Enquiries Showed

Some enquiries concerned not the substance of claims, but the technical ability to complete the submission procedure.

The most common questions included:

«What should I do if Diia.Signature does not work when I try to register in Diia, and the Administrative Service Centre tells me that they do not deal with this issue?»

«I am an internally displaced person and do not have a smartphone, electronic signature, or computer skills. How can I submit a claim?»

«How can I submit a claim if I am abroad?»

«Can I come to the office of a civil society organisation to get help completing the claim on a computer?»

«How can people submit a claim if they do not have a qualified electronic signature or do not use the Diia application?»

During the webinars, questions also regularly arose concerning the functioning of electronic services, electronic identification, and technical aspects of using the platform.



What This Means

The analysis of enquiries shows that digital difficulties were rarely related to an unwillingness to use electronic services. Much more often, people were looking for support that would enable them to navigate the procedure independently.

This was particularly relevant for older people, internally displaced persons, people who had lost their devices during evacuation, and those who lacked sufficient experience in using digital public services. At the same time, some difficulties were also experienced by people who regularly use electronic services but encountered technical failures or situations that did not fit standard scenarios.

It is also noteworthy that people often looked for a place where they could receive assistance offline. This indicates a need not so much for an alternative claim submission mechanism, but rather for the development of a support system that can help people overcome digital barriers.



Key Finding

Digitalisation is an important prerequisite for the effective functioning of the Register of Damage for Ukraine. However, its success depends on the extent to which it takes into account the diverse needs of people. Ensuring access to consultations, practical assistance, and alternative ways of receiving support is essential to ensure that digital services expand people's opportunities rather than becoming an additional barrier to exercising the right to compensation.

3.5. Institutional Accessibility:

No One Should Be Left Alone to Navigate a Complex Procedure



Why This Matters

Access to justice entails not only the existence of a legal mechanism, but also a genuine opportunity for people to make use of it. For many people affected by the war, timely consultation support helps ensure such an opportunity. It helps them understand their rights, navigate the procedure, and make an informed decision about submitting a claim.

Such support is particularly important when a person has experienced the loss of their home, forced displacement, the death of loved ones, or other traumatic events. In such circumstances, even a relatively straightforward administrative procedure may feel excessively complex without an opportunity to ask questions and receive individual guidance.



What the Enquiries Showed

Enquiries received through the hotline showed that people were often looking not only for answers to legal questions, but also for a place where they could obtain practical assistance.

Typical enquiries included:

«Can I come to an office to get help submitting a claim?»

«Who can I contact if I have questions while completing the claim?»

«What should I do if the Administrative Service Centre cannot help me?»

«Is there anyone who can check whether I have completed the claim correctly?»

During the webinars, participants also asked where they could obtain additional consultation after the event or whom they could contact in complex or non-standard situations.



What This Means

The analysis of enquiries shows that, for many people, consultation is not an alternative to submitting a claim independently, but rather a way to gain confidence in their own actions. People wanted to exercise their right to compensation independently, but needed an opportunity to ask questions, clarify specific aspects of the procedure, or receive confirmation that they were proceeding correctly.

At the same time, the enquiries indicate that people do not always understand which institutions can provide the relevant support. In particular, questions were raised about the role of Administrative Service Centres, the Free Legal Aid system, civil society organisations, and other institutions.

The project experience showed that the hotline became not only a source of information, but also an important element of support. In many cases, a single consultation was sufficient for a person to complete the submission of a claim independently or gain a clear understanding of the next steps.

This experience also confirmed the importance of cooperation between civil society organisations, the professional legal community, and public authorities. Ensuring access to consultations significantly strengthens the capacity of the Register to be accessible to different groups of people.



Key Finding

Institutional accessibility is an important component of the right to compensation. People should be able to obtain timely consultation and practical guidance or be referred to an institution capable of providing the necessary support. The project experience shows that developing a network of consultation services and strengthening cooperation between public authorities, the Free Legal Aid system, civil society organisations, and the professional legal community can significantly improve the accessibility of the Register of Damage for Ukraine and contribute to the fuller exercise of the right to compensation by war-affected people.

3.6. Psychological and Psychosocial Accessibility: The Procedure Should Provide Support, Not Intensify Distress



Why This Matters

People who submit claims to the Register of Damage for Ukraine have experienced different forms of harm: the loss of loved ones, destruction of their homes, forced displacement, occupation, captivity, or other serious consequences of the war. For many of them, submitting a claim to the Register means having to revisit painful events, recall details of what they experienced, and describe them in their claim.

A trauma-informed approach requires administrative procedures to minimise the risk of retraumatisation, to be clear and predictable, and to foster a sense of safety, respect, and control over one's own actions.



What the Enquiries Showed

Although most questions concerned practical aspects of submitting claims, during consultations people frequently expressed anxiety, uncertainty, or doubts about the effectiveness of the mechanism itself.

Typical questions included:

«How realistic is it to receive compensation?»

«When will compensation payments begin?»

«I have already submitted a claim but have not received any response. Does this mean that something is wrong with it?»

«Does the process of submitting claims to the Register really work without problems?»

«What if I make a mistake when completing the claim?»

Some people contacted the hotline not only with questions about the Register, but also shared their personal stories of loss, seeking reassurance that their situation was not without a possible way forward. Such enquiries indicate that consultations served not only an informational but also a supportive function.



What This Means

The analysis of enquiries shows that, for many people, what matters is not only the legal correctness of the procedure, but also a sense of confidence that they are proceeding in the right direction.

Uncertainty regarding the timeframes for processing claims, the future compensation mechanism, or the absence of interim information on the processing of a claim may increase anxiety. This is particularly relevant for people who have already experienced significant losses and have been living with uncertainty for a prolonged period.

The experience of the hotline showed that even a brief conversation, during which a person could ask questions, receive a calm and clear explanation, and understand how the Register operates, significantly reduced uncertainty. This confirms the importance not only of the substance of a consultation, but also of the way in which communication takes place.

A trauma-informed approach requires interactions with claimants to be based on respect, empathy, clear communication, and recognition that each person experiences the consequences of war differently. These principles help build trust in the compensation mechanism and support people in exercising their rights more actively.



Key Finding

Psychological and psychosocial accessibility is an important component of an effective international compensation mechanism. Access to clear information, the opportunity to receive timely explanations, predictability of the procedure, and respectful communication help reduce uncertainty and create conditions in which people can exercise their right to compensation without additional psychological burden.

3.7. Accessibility as a Comprehensive Condition for Exercising the Right to Submit a Claim to the Register



The analysis showed that none of the dimensions of accessibility examined above is sufficient on its own. In practice, difficulties in accessing the Register almost always arise from a combination of several barriers that reinforce one another.

For example, a person may be aware of the existence of the Register but may not understand which category of claim applies to their situation. Alternatively, they may correctly identify the appropriate category of claim but lack the technical means to use electronic services. For people who have experienced the loss of loved ones, torture, sexual violence, or other serious human rights violations, these difficulties may be further compounded by the psychological consequences of trauma, which may prevent them from submitting a claim to the Register.

The practical experience of implementing the project shows that the most effective approach is comprehensive support that combines accessible information, legal guidance, clear procedures, technical assistance, and sensitive communication. Such an approach not only facilitates the submission of claims but also strengthens people's trust in the international compensation mechanism.

Ensuring the accessibility of the Register of Damage for Ukraine therefore requires a comprehensive approach that simultaneously takes into account the informational, legal, procedural, digital, institutional, and psychological aspects of a person's interaction with the compensation mechanism. In view of the interconnected nature of the challenges identified, the following section sets out recommendations aimed at further improving the accessibility of the Register.



4. Recommendations

4.1. To the Register of Damage for Ukraine



Improving information support

- expand information and awareness-raising activities through a variety of communication channels;
- regularly update information materials following the opening of new categories of claims and whenever changes are introduced to existing categories;
- develop more step-by-step guidance, practical examples, and checklists;
- use plain and understandable language.



Improving electronic claim forms

- supplement claim forms with contextual guidance on how to complete specific fields;
- explain to claimants the purpose of specific fields in the claim form and how the information provided will be used²;
- provide examples of how to complete complex fields in the claim form.



Strengthening communication with claimants

- introduce the possibility of tracking the status of a claim;
- provide information on the key stages of claim processing;
- where possible, establish or communicate indicative timeframes for the processing of claims;
- continue providing information on the further stages of establishing the international compensation mechanism.

² For example, in Category A3.1, «Damage or Destruction of Residential Immovable Property», as well as in other categories, it would be advisable to explain why claimants are asked to indicate the subgroup to which they belong (for example, military personnel, healthcare workers, critical infrastructure workers, etc.). Without an appropriate explanation, such a question may cause mistrust, raise concerns about the processing of personal data, or create the impression that the response could affect eligibility for compensation or the amount of compensation.



Developing official guidance

- establish cooperation with civil society organisations that provide consultations to war-affected people;
- regularly analyse common enquiries;
- use the findings of such analysis to update the official Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section on the Register's website.



Evidence-related guidance

- expand official guidance on alternative means of providing evidence of damage, loss or injury;
- prepare indicative lists of possible evidence for specific categories of claims.

4.2. To the Ukrainian Public Authorities



Ensuring accessibility of services

- consider introducing a «one-stop shop» approach when processing documents related to recording damage and compensation, enabling people to submit claims simultaneously under national procedures and to the Register;
- ensure that consultations concerning the Register are available through social protection authorities and other institutions working with war-affected people;
- consider introducing a «one-stop shop» approach when processing documents related to recording damage and compensation.



Information support

- facilitate the dissemination of information about the Register through Administrative Service Centres, local self-government authorities, services working with internally displaced persons, and other public institutions;
- support information campaigns targeting people with lower levels of digital skills;
- ensure systematic provision of information and consultation support to Ukrainians abroad, including in cooperation with Ukraine's diplomatic missions, Ukrainian communities, support centres for Ukrainians, and civil society organisations.

4.3. To the Free Legal Aid System, the Legal Profession (Bar) and Civil Society Organisations

- continue providing consultations concerning the Register;
- exchange information on common enquiries, recurring problems, and ways of addressing them;
- contribute to improving information materials and the FAQ section;
- disseminate practical guidance and step-by-step instructions;
- develop partnerships between public institutions and civil society to ensure access to consultations.

4.4. To All Actors Working with War-Affected People

- apply a trauma-informed approach at all stages of interaction with claimants;
- use clear, respectful, and non-discriminatory communication;
- ensure the confidentiality of personal information;
- create safe conditions for submitting claims, particularly in cases involving the death of loved ones, torture, sexual violence, unlawful deprivation of liberty, and other serious human rights violations;
- where necessary, ensure that people are referred to psychological support services.

5. Conclusions

The Register of Damage for Ukraine is the first stage of the international compensation mechanism intended to contribute to restoring justice for people affected by the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. It already performs an important function by recording the claims of affected people and laying the foundation for the future consideration of compensation claims.

At the same time, the experience of implementing the project «Access to Justice and Dignity: Humanitarian Support for War-Affected People to Claim Compensation» has shown that the accessibility of the compensation mechanism is determined not only by the existence of a legal procedure or a digital platform. For many people, clear information, practical guidance, access to consultation support, and confidence that they are exercising their right correctly are of decisive importance.

The analysis of 253 enquiries received through the hotline and questions raised by 203 participants in three webinars made it possible to identify six interconnected dimensions of accessibility of the Register: informational, legal, procedural, digital, institutional, and psychological and psychosocial. Most of the difficulties people encounter relate not to the substance of the right to compensation, but to the practical exercise of that right.

At the same time, the project results confirmed that even relatively simple support tools — accessible information materials, individual consultations, practical step-by-step guidance, and clear communication — significantly enhance people's ability to submit claims to the Register independently. This demonstrates the importance of developing partnerships between the Register of Damage, public authorities, the Free Legal Aid system, the legal profession, and civil society organisations.

Particular attention in the further development of the international compensation mechanism should be given to ensuring its accessibility for people in vulnerable situations: older people, internally displaced persons, residents of smaller communities, people with lower levels of digital skills, as well as those who have experienced serious human rights violations. In this context, the application of a human rights-based approach and a trauma-informed approach is particularly important, as these approaches help make procedures more understandable, safer, and more responsive to people's needs.

The recommendations presented in this report are aimed not only at improving individual procedures, but also at strengthening trust in the international

compensation mechanism as a whole. The right to compensation becomes a reality only when every person has the opportunity, without unnecessary barriers, to learn about it, understand the procedure, obtain the necessary support, and exercise their right regardless of their individual circumstances.

Access to compensation is not only a matter of future payments. It is a matter of trust, dignity, and people's confidence that their losses are recognised and that their right to justice will not be forgotten.

Annex 1. Data Sources and Method of Analysis

The analytical report is based on materials collected within the framework of the project **«Access to Justice and Dignity: Humanitarian Support for War-Affected People to Claim Compensation»**, implemented by the NGO Democratic Initiatives Incubator with the support of *LIBERECO — Partnership for Human Rights*.

Під час аналізу було використано такі джерела інформації:

Source	Scope
Enquiries received through the consultation hotline	253
Participants in three open webinars	203
Practical experience of legal professionals who provided consultations	throughout the project implementation period
Legal framework and official documents of the Register of Damage for Ukraine	ongoing analysis

All enquiries were analysed using qualitative thematic analysis. First, the questions were grouped by theme, after which recurring practical difficulties and needs were identified. On this basis, six interconnected dimensions of accessibility of the Register of Damage for Ukraine were identified, which formed the basis of the analytical section of this report.

To ensure confidentiality, claimants' personal data were neither collected nor analysed. All examples of enquiries and quotations included in the report were anonymised and are used solely to illustrate common practical situations.

Annex 2. Main Topics of Enquiries

The analysis of enquiries received through the hotline and during the webinars made it possible to identify the most common topics that required additional clarification. The examples below are not exhaustive, but reflect typical questions raised by claimants.

General Topic of Enquiry	Typical Questions from Claimants	What This Indicates
General information about the Register	«What is the Register of Damage?», «Who can submit a claim?», «Which categories are already open?»	People need a basic understanding of the role of the Register within the international compensation mechanism.
Determining the appropriate category of claim	«Which category should I choose?», «Does my situation fall within this category?»	The greatest difficulties arise when applying general rules to specific individual circumstances.
Damaged or destroyed property	«How can I submit a claim concerning housing in a temporarily occupied territory?», «What should I do if the commission cannot carry out an inspection?»	People need more practical guidance on non-standard situations.
Loss of access to or control over property	«Can I submit a claim if my home has not been destroyed but remains in a temporarily occupied territory?»	This category is new to many claimants and requires additional explanation.
Forced displacement and deportation	«What evidence should I collect?», «How can I prove that I was displaced?»	Most questions concern evidence requirements and the procedure for submitting claims.
Inheritance and co-ownership	«Can co-owners submit separate claims?», «What should heirs do?»	People seek clarification on how general rules apply to complex legal situations.
Claim submission procedure	«What is the step-by-step procedure?», «Can I correct a claim that has already been submitted?»	There is strong demand for practical instructions and step-by-step guidance.
Digital difficulties	«Diia.Signature is not working», «I do not have a qualified electronic signature», «I do not have a smartphone»	The digital procedure requires a well-developed system of consultation support.
Further processing of claims	«I have submitted a claim. What happens next?», «Why have I not received a response?»	People expect greater transparency regarding the status of their claims.
Future compensation mechanism	«When will compensation payments begin?», «How will the amount of compensation be determined?»	A significant proportion of questions concern not the Register itself, but the future compensation procedure.

About the Project

The project **«Access to Justice and Dignity: Humanitarian Support for War-Affected People to Claim Compensation»** was implemented by the *NGO Democratic Initiatives Incubator* with the support of *LIBERECO – Partnership for Human Rights (Switzerland)*.

The aim of the project was to support war-affected people in exercising their right to submit claims to the Register of Damage for Ukraine by providing accessible information, individual consultations, and practical assistance.

Within the project:

- an information campaign was conducted through the nationwide print media outlets *Na Pensii*, *Poradnytsia*, *Zhyttia*, and *Odeske Zhyttia*, making it possible to disseminate information about the Register to a broad audience, including older people, residents of smaller communities, and people with lower levels of digital literacy;
- a free consultation hotline was established, through which 253 enquiries concerning the functioning of the Register, the claim submission procedure, and practical aspects of exercising the right to compensation were addressed;
- three open thematic webinars were held:
 - [«Register of Damage for Ukraine: Purpose, Eligibility and Grounds for Submitting Claims»](#);
 - [«Register of Damage for Ukraine: Claims Related to Forced Displacement and Deportation»](#);
 - [«Register of Damage for Ukraine: Claims Related to Loss or Damage to Property»](#),



with 203 registered participants. Recordings of all webinars were made publicly available and remain accessible for further viewing and use;

- the analytical report **«Barriers to Accessing the Register of Damage for Ukraine: A Practical Analysis of Enquiries from War-Affected People and Recommendations for Improving the Accessibility of the Compensation Mechanism»** was prepared, summarising practical consultation experience and common questions raised by claimants and providing recommendations for improving the accessibility of the Register of Damage for Ukraine.

The experience of implementing the project showed that people need not only general information about the Register, but, above all, an opportunity to receive

answers to questions related to their specific individual circumstances. For this reason, combining open information activities with the opportunity to receive individual consultations proved to be the most effective form of support.

Participants noted that practical explanations, examples of how to complete claims, and the opportunity to ask questions about their own circumstances were particularly valuable.

«I am now confident about why it is important to do this [submit a claim to the Register]. I needed to hear from professionals on this issue. I myself was forced to leave my city when the war began, and my home has already been destroyed. That is why all of this information was very important to me!» — Inna, Donetsk oblast

«The practical example of completing a claim to the Register was very useful.» — Yelyzaveta, lawyer, Sumy oblast

The project also contributed to strengthening the capacity of legal professionals, representatives of civil society organisations, and other professionals who provide consultations to people affected by the war. Many participants reported that they intended to use the knowledge gained in their further professional activities and to disseminate information about the Register in their communities.

«We will work with the Register and help people who do not have the technical means to submit a claim.» — Tetiana, representative of a civil society organisation, Cherkasy oblast

«Our team of legal clinic members is currently preparing a legal awareness session for our territorial community on obtaining compensation for destroyed or damaged property, so we gained additional ideas about what useful resources we could include and what else we could do.» — Kateryna, lecturer, Vinnytsia oblast

All project activities were implemented using a human rights-based approach and a trauma-informed approach. Particular attention was paid to the accessibility of information, respectful communication, non-discrimination, protection of confidentiality, and the creation of a safe environment for people who have experienced the consequences of the war.

The project results are intended to contribute to raising awareness of the Register of Damage for Ukraine, improving consultation practices, and supporting the development of the international compensation mechanism in a way that makes the right to compensation as accessible as possible to all people affected by the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

Acknowledgements

The authors express their sincere gratitude to everyone who contacted the hotline and participated in the project webinars. Their questions, practical experiences, personal stories, and willingness to share the difficulties they encountered when submitting claims to the Register of Damage for Ukraine formed the basis of this report.

Special thanks are extended to the project partners, experts, and legal professionals who contributed to the consultations and information activities, as well as to the team of *LIBERECO – Partnership for Human Rights* for supporting the initiative.

We also express our gratitude to the *Secretariat of the Register of Damage for Ukraine* for its openness to cooperation and its continued efforts to develop the international compensation mechanism.

We hope that the findings and recommendations of this report will contribute to further improving the accessibility of the Register of Damage for Ukraine and help make the right to compensation more understandable, accessible, and effective in practice for all people affected by the war.

Generative artificial intelligence tools (ChatGPT, OpenAI) were used in the preparation of this report as an auxiliary editorial tool to ensure stylistic consistency, improve the structure of the text, and support language editing. These tools were not used to develop the factual content of the report. All data, analysis, findings, recommendations, and final editorial decisions were developed and made by the authors.