



Daniel Brown/CIVIC Photo

INFORMATION ACCESS: A Self-Protection Shield for Civilians in Ukraine

ABOUT CENTER FOR CIVILIANS IN CONFLICT

Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC) is an international organization dedicated to promoting the protection of civilians in conflict. CIVIC envisions a world in which no civilian is harmed in conflict. Our mission is to support communities affected by conflict in their quest for protection and strengthen the resolve and capacity of armed actors to prevent and respond to civilian harm.

CIVIC was established in 2003 by Marla Ruzicka, a young humanitarian who advocated on behalf of civilians affected by the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Honoring Marla's legacy, CIVIC has kept an unflinching focus on the protection of civilians in conflict. Today, CIVIC has a presence in conflict zones and key capitals throughout the world where it collaborates with civilians to bring their protection concerns directly to those in power, engages with armed actors to reduce the harm they cause to civilian populations, and advises governments and multinational bodies on how to make life-saving and lasting policy changes.

CIVIC's strength is its proven approach and record of improving protection outcomes for civilians by working directly with conflict-affected communities and armed actors. At CIVIC, we believe civilians are not "collateral damage" and civilian harm is not an unavoidable consequence of conflict — civilian harm can and must be prevented.

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OVERVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Access to information plays a critical role in civilians' ability to protect themselves and their communities during crisis and conflict. Research has increasingly shown that information is an important humanitarian need,¹ which helps people make informed decisions, access services, and hold authorities accountable. Some organizations to label access to information as a human right, and the United Nations has recognized it as a fundamental human right under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.² Healthy information ecosystems can promote resilience during crises, while weak information ecosystems can severely hinder preparedness.³

In many conflicts, mobile phone communication has allowed civilians to rapidly adapt to changing situations on the ground and has enabled them to call for help from outside their communities.⁴ The growing availability of mobile telephones and Internet connectivity in many countries has also inspired efforts by humanitarians, civil society, non-governmental organizations, and private sector actors to crowd source data for mapping violent incidents and has helped improve the speed with which assistance is delivered.⁵ Additionally, social media platforms can help humanitarian organizations engage with and include civilian feedback in response efforts.⁶

However, misinformation and disinformation can have harmful consequences, exposing civilians to false information that can leave them unable to secure their needs and expose them to psychological suffering.⁷ In Ukraine, approximately 61 percent of the population was using smartphones and approximately 68 percent had access to the Internet at the start of 2022. In this context, information, misinformation, and disinformation have been central aspects of the war since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022.⁸

This Issue Brief is a snapshot of civilian information needs in the early months of the February 2022 full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. It details how some civilians coped with gaps in critical information needs as well as conflicting and misleading information. The main information needs of civilians included: information on shelter locations, evacuation routes, and conditions in evacuation locations; the locations and availability of food and medicine supplies; how to improve the security of homes and shelter sites; Russian troop movements in areas under siege or occupation; and the well-being and locations of relatives. This brief analyzes the role that information played in people's efforts to protect themselves from the negative consequences of the conflict, and it provides a set of recommendations to governments, donors, NGOs, and civilians on identifying and meeting these critical information needs.

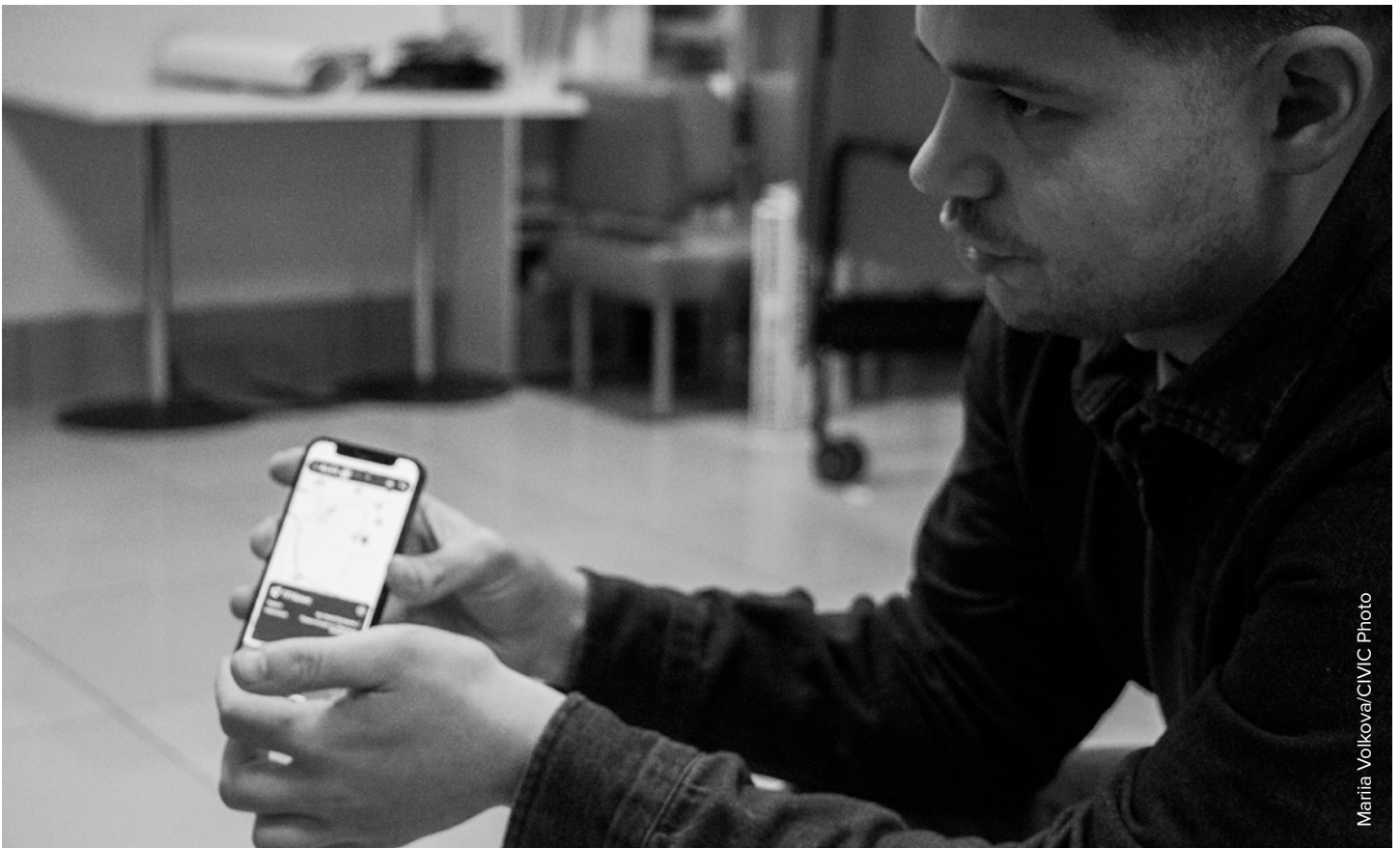
CIVIC's research shows how important access to this information was for civilian self-protection efforts. Civilians relied heavily on Telegram and other social media and mobile messaging applications as sources of information because of their speed and the detailed information these platforms offered. So that they would not lose access to critical information networks, many civilians who lived under the Russian occupation took significant risks to maintain possession of mobile phones, access wireless network signals, and keep telecommunications devices charged despite regular power outages. Because of the prevalence of false and misleading information,

civilians favored information from local government officials. They also consulted multiple sources of information before acting on it, even in moments of crisis when time for decision-making was limited. Despite the importance of information for self-protection, many civilians reporting needing to disengage from constant connectivity at certain phases of the Russian invasion to preserve their mental health.

This Issue Brief is based on 45 interviews with civilians, as well as military officials, journalists, and civil society leaders. Interviews were conducted remotely with stakeholders in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Bucha, Irpin, Hostomel, and Borodianka between June and August 2022. It is the second Issue Brief in CIVIC's series examining civilian self-protection practices in Ukraine since February 24, 2022. CIVIC is building on this initial exploratory research regarding the information needs and gaps for civilians in Ukraine with additional research into the harmful effects that misinformation and disinformation can have on civilian protection. This latter issue will be covered in future CIVIC publications.

This brief analyzes the role that information played in people's efforts to protect themselves from the negative consequences of the conflict.

CIVIC's findings, alongside data being collected by members of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster⁹ and other national and international organizations working in Ukraine, can help identify information needs and priorities that the Ukrainian government, donors, and international humanitarian agencies can consider in their interventions. Interventions will need to be reassessed regularly to accommodate changing information needs. They will also need to consider the level and amount of detail civilians are able to absorb, as well as the mental health concerns associated with the current information environment.



June 2023, Okhtyrka, Sumy oblast

It may be beneficial for Ukrainian officials and international protection actors to take steps that further improve the ability of civilians to leverage information and communication in their own self-protection efforts, including by:

- Continuing to improve early warning systems and ensuring civilians have several different ways of accessing alerts.
- Trying to consolidate and share details on which actors are providing services at the local level and how to access these services.
- Exploring effective means and methods of providing civilians with up-to-date information on road and border-crossing conditions in different areas, as well as safe transit points for fleeing occupied areas.
- Given the trust in and reliance on information shared by local officials, fully

utilizing this means of communication to share priority information while also balancing timeliness with accuracy of information.

- Because of the importance of radio to specific subsets of the population during occupation, considering increasing access to radios for at-risk civilians; or, considering whether using radio broadcasts to send important information on security developments, services, and evacuation efforts would support improved civilian self-protection.

Ukrainian civilians can also learn from the information and communication practices of their peers who have evacuated, experienced bombardment, or survived the occupation. They should consider the following to prepare and protect themselves, if necessary:

- Identifying, in advance, trusted sources for different types of critical information needs likely to arise from the conflict, and pre-programming a range of support systems and resources into devices while also keeping a hardcopy of vital information in case access to electronic information is cut off.
- Setting up, in advance, chat groups in messenger applications with trusted contacts for different contingencies. Examples of chat groups include family members and friends spread out throughout a city or within a building or street block, and uses include early warnings of bombardment.
- Maintaining awareness of new applications that may support improved communication or early warning among community members or between national authorities and civilians.
- Supporting community members who may not be familiar with social media or mobile messaging application technology to facilitate access to the critical information being shared on these platforms.
- Comparing different information sources, if time allows, before drawing conclusions.
- Remaining cognizant of the mental health effects of constant consumption of news about the political and security situation in Ukraine and taking measures to manage these effects.

INFORMATION NEEDS

The lack of preparedness for a full-scale invasion, which CIVIC discussed in an earlier Issue Brief, created an immediate need for rapid access to reliable information to help decision-making around self-protection.¹⁰ Some interviewees who spoke with CIVIC had received briefings or seen preparatory documents at their places of employment before the Russian invasion, but for most, the scale of the invasion and the immediacy of the danger was a paralyzing shock.¹¹ One civilian described feeling “a complete misunderstanding of what’s next...what to do, how to be...as if something

was turned off in you, and that’s it. You can’t decide.”¹²

As a result, most interview participants reported drastically increasing the amount of time spent searching for and consuming news content. Many told CIVIC that they were constantly monitoring information in the first days and weeks of the war.¹³ As one civilian explained, “In February, I was using the phone all the time. It seems to me that I lived on the phone, that I even ate [with it] and didn’t put down the phone.”¹⁴ A second civilian recalled that to find out what was happening, “We read so much information every day, every second. We didn’t take our phones out of our hands.”¹⁵ Another participant observed, “We were reading the news non-stop, and we were absorbing everything we read because, before that, we had no information in our heads at all.”¹⁶

“We read so much information every day, every second. We didn’t take our phones out of our hands.”

Because of the critical importance of having access to information in making decisions about how to protect themselves, a primary fear for many civilians was the loss of electricity and its possible consequences. Therefore, a key self-protection measure was keeping phones and laptops actively charging whenever possible.¹⁷ Interviewees noted how important it was to find alternative means of keeping their devices charged when utilities went down, such as using generators, solar power banks, car cigarette lighters, and running wires into car batteries to recharge communication devices.¹⁸ As one civilian stressed, “I charged my phones and the neighbors’ phones from the car battery. In fact, at that moment the most valuable thing for us was the connection.”¹⁹

The main information needs described by the civilians CIVIC interviewed included:

- Where to find shelter.
- How to adapt their basements and homes

- against the risk of bombardment.²⁰
- How to devise “basement rules” and coordinate to maintain harmony when living among groups of people while sheltering.
- How to determine when it would be safe to return to their home cities, if possible.²¹
- Which stores had supplies at various times.²²
- How to exchange provisions between neighbors.²³
- Where to find medications at an affordable cost.²⁴
- Where to collect water and firewood.
- How to coordinate local humanitarian aid efforts and supply deliveries to vulnerable members of their families and communities.²⁵
- Where to seek psychological support in the face of financial and logistical obstacles.²⁶
- Where to charge electronic devices like phones and laptops, as well as where to find a wireless signal.
- How to behave, specifically during combat; for example, when caught in a bombardment during provision outings, when encountering Russian soldiers, and when passing through checkpoints.²⁷

Two civilians highlighted, in particular, the importance of knowing which of the above-mentioned services were available, who was providing them, and how to contact service providers—whether government, humanitarian, or volunteer.²⁸ One of these civilians lauded the efforts of local administrators to share these types of details. Another, however, highlighted the challenges of not having access to such information, noting, “I didn’t have a clear understanding of where I had to go and who I needed to ask for help. So, the first thing, I’d say [is important], would be having someone who could clearly guide, like saying... ‘the next step is to go to the registration office or here or there.’ This would have helped a lot.”²⁹

Civilians also had many information needs regarding evacuation, including: whether or not to evacuate; what to pack in “grab bags”; which

routes they could take most safely; where to find safe transit points when trying to flee occupied areas without official support; where they could find accommodation at their intended destination;³⁰ where to safely evacuate to; whether evacuation was affordable; and what conditions to realistically expect in their host communities so that they could pack accordingly.³¹

Russian occupation was a major fear for those who CIVIC interviewed. Some specifically had concerns that community members with Russian sympathies might act as informants for Russian troops.³² Interviewees thus sought information about Russian troop movements, as well as what signs or signals could indicate that collaborators were operating nearby or that a potential attack could be imminent.³³ For those who actually experienced occupation, up-to-date information on how close Russian troops were to one’s home was critical because, as one civilian explained, “a huge number of decisions depended on it.”³⁴

Access to information and frequent communication with others was also crucial in maintaining psychological well-being and morale, as well as for mitigating panic that could hinder effective decision-making.³⁵ Access to information and communication can help empower civilians by giving them the ability to preemptively protect themselves rather than simply becoming victims or survivors. As one interviewee described, the instructions about taping windows and preparing basements that she read on the Internet made her feel “focused.” She explained, “You are no longer in despair. You somehow react to being told something, that something needs to be done. You somehow mobilize yourself and act according to the instructions. Some kind of confidence or certainty appears.”³⁶ A second interviewee emphasized that short videos “supported us a lot” and “eased helplessness.”³⁷

Although obtaining information to make decisions about their safety and security was a top priority for civilians at the start of the full-scale invasion, protecting their mental health sometimes meant civilians had to disconnect from information as the

war dragged on. Several interviewees reported decreasing the amount of time spent searching for information to aid their self-protection efforts. Most interviewees became exhausted by information overload: “250 messages daily on a Telegram channel is just mind-blowing and very time-consuming,” said one civilian.³⁸ Many people felt that if they continued to constantly monitor war-related news, they would go “mad” or “crazy.”³⁹ One civilian stopped reading Telegram, stating, “Nothing there raises our spirits. There is too much noise there now.”⁴⁰ Some specifically felt worn down by “the brutality in the information field,”⁴¹ such as photos or video footage of bombings, dead Russian soldiers, burned bodies, and news about the number of children killed.⁴²

INFORMATION GATHERING AND COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS

Because the information environment was chaotic in the early days of the invasion, interviewees relied on a wide range of sources to meet their information needs. These information sources included personal contacts, television, websites (particularly local forums and local and regional government web pages), as well as social media and messaging applications such as Telegram and Viber. They used these various sources to collect information and make decisions about how to protect themselves.

One civilian described searching the Internet to understand how many people were estimated to be at each border point to determine which would be the least crowded. She then created an Excel spreadsheet to decide which direction she should flee. However, because she was unsure if she could trust these statistics, she supplemented her research with information from relevant Telegram channels, Instagram, and her own phone calls and text messages to friends who had already evacuated.⁴³ Other interviewees who spoke with CIVIC sought information about how to protect themselves from bombardment through online news sites, official government websites, social media, and messaging apps. They also recalled memories from relatives who had lived through

World War II, as well as scenes from Soviet war films and news coverage of past wars—such as the war in former Yugoslavia—for ideas.⁴⁴

Word of mouth and informal networks were essential to civilian efforts to find information for their self-protection, especially when the situation on the ground was changing rapidly.⁴⁵ One interviewee gave an example of how these informal networks were used: “Let’s say, the public transport did not work. There was only the subway, but there was no communication between the left and right banks. So, if someone, for example, from the left bank had to be brought to the train station, then it was all spread through acquaintances. They called someone who had a car, who could help.”⁴⁶

Some interviewees mentioned asking for information about the security situation from members of the Territorial Defense Forces who were stationed at checkpoints close to their homes or along their evacuation routes in order to make better self-protection decisions.⁴⁷ They explained that these soldiers were an important source of guidance because they had a more holistic picture of events than civilians and remained “absolutely calm”⁴⁸ at moments when they themselves were feeling panic due to the security situation. At times, interviewees asked family members and friends in the military for news about the war or for advice about self-protection.⁴⁹ They also turned to other personal contacts who had previous experience living through conflict—particularly those with experience in Israel, Afghanistan, and the ongoing war in the Donbas—for advice on how to protect themselves.⁵⁰

Civilians speaking with CIVIC noted that they urgently needed information about missile attacks. There were gaps in the national air raid alert system in the early days of the war that led civilians to form personal networks for sharing information on bombardments. When they became available, most interviewees told CIVIC that they also installed air raid alert phone applications, which give off a loud noise in anticipation of or in the event of an attack. Such alerts supplement public air raid sirens, which



May 2023, Bucha

did not always function properly in the early period of the war. Indeed, data on application downloads in Ukraine during the first month of the Russian invasion showed that an air raid warning application was the most downloaded application.⁵¹ According to interviewees, informal networks amplified the efficiency of these phone applications, as individuals would immediately follow up on alerts with messages to their chat groups about expected bombardments and advise chat members to take appropriate self-protection measures.⁵²

Despite the popularity of air raid alert telephone applications and the limitations of older networks of physical sirens, one participant highlighted how these physical sirens alerted her older relative who did not use mobile phone applications to danger at a critical moment: “My grandmother said that when she came out of the store and heard the siren, she was quickening her pace because she knew that something might happen next. ...Sirens are more

relevant for people who do not use gadgets...for the grandparents.”⁵³ Another civilian noted that electricity outages made it difficult to rely solely on mobile phone-based air raid applications.⁵⁴ Moreover, civilians appear to have become both exhausted by constant air raid alerts on their phones and frustrated with inconsistencies in the accuracy of alerts, which sometimes sounded warnings when no missile attacks occurred or gave warnings after missile attacks had already begun. As a result, many interviewees told CIVIC that they stopped using or reacting to these applications.⁵⁵ Such findings indicate the importance of continuing to strengthen early warning systems and of maintaining an understanding of how civilians share and react to different types of air raid sirens, including mobile-based applications for air raid warnings.

While interviewees frequently called and texted directly with family members and friends or conducted general internet searches, messaging



Klara V Lisinski/CIVIC Photo

June 2023, Library in Vovchyk village, Lubny rayon, Poltavaska oblast

applications were key for facilitating learning and exchanges of information. Telegram was the most frequently mentioned application, followed by Viber. Group chats at the building, neighborhood, or city level were extremely active, as people searched for information about where shelling was occurring, where services were disrupted, and how to coordinate evacuations and find humanitarian aid.⁵⁶

Public Telegram channels were also widely used by civilians in the early months of invasion as a critical source of information. Some participants indicated that social media was preferable to television because information on the television moved too slowly and could be repetitive.⁵⁷ As one interviewee explained, Telegram was critical because information would be published with specific details “in real time” as events like shelling were happening—as opposed to the news or official sources, which would not cover the events that family and friends were describing via the

messenger app until several hours later or even the next day.⁵⁸ One civilian told CIVIC that she subscribed to local Telegram channels in each town that she passed through while fleeing in order to access the most detailed and current security information available.⁵⁹ Illustrating how useful Telegram was during crisis moments, another civilian said, “[Our] bridge was blown at 6:00 a.m., and at 6:30 a.m. we already had a Telegram chat about evacuation for residents. We discussed who could take or pick up people, that someone had two or three places in a car. There were requests to pick up someone from here and there. All this happened only 30 minutes after the explosion. The number of participants there was just huge.”⁶⁰ As expected from the results of past media surveys in Ukraine, younger interviewees were especially apt to utilize Internet searches, social media, and messaging apps rather than television news for information about the security situation.⁶¹

Information shared by Ukrainian officials through Telegram channels and other social media sites was viewed as one of the most reliable sources of information by a number of respondents.⁶² As one interviewee remarked, “I tried to sign up for the accounts of local authorities, government [officials], the President, Kyiv City Council, the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the Ministry of Defense—everything I could find.”⁶³

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Civilians also used other social media platforms, including Facebook and Instagram, to engage wider audiences. For example, interviewees described launching fundraising activities on these platforms to assist people who could not afford to evacuate. They also described responding to calls for different types of aid, assistance, and volunteer work through social media platforms.⁶⁴

Many civilians described initially feeling encouraged by the way television channels were united into a single marathon of news reporting. However, over time, some people grew more weary and less trusting of this format.⁶⁵ “It just makes me nervous,” stated one interviewee. “They are discussing the same thing too many times. They pour from empty to empty.”⁶⁶

The findings from CIVIC’s interviews align with wider survey data from other organizations that have shown a shift in Ukraine in recent years away from radio and television as sources of news information and toward social media applications, particularly among younger age groups.⁶⁷ In an August 2022 survey of over 2500 people by the National Democratic Institute, for example, 67 percent of respondents reported getting

information about politics and current events from social media and messaging applications. By comparison, 57 percent used television as a source, and only 18 percent turned to the radio. This survey showed that the number of people relying on social media and messaging applications for news was up from 61 percent in May 2022 and 44 percent in December 2021.⁶⁸

Although surveys show that radio use is on the decline in Ukraine and is no longer widely used by Ukrainians as a news source, several civilians who had lived in occupied areas of Ukraine highlighted how they sometimes turned to radio programming for news about conflict developments when all other sources of communication were cut off by Russian troops.⁶⁹ “Of course, I sometimes remembered and regretted that there isn’t a radio in every house as it used to be,” reflected on civilian. “It used to be an independent means of notification.”

CHALLENGES ACCESSING RELIABLE INFORMATION

Because interviewees were often aware of the risk of misinformation, disinformation, and exaggerated information, they implemented different approaches to information verification before deciding what information they could trust.⁷⁰ Most interviewees took the approach of comparing and pairing different sources of information before they considered it actionable.⁷¹ “I don’t have a source of information that I can trust 100 percent to just read a short summary,” observed one civilian. “This is why I need to read different sources.”⁷² Another civilian told CIVIC that information sharing via word of mouth and social media were both flawed. They described a similar approach: “I will try to find a balance between these two pieces of information in order to make a decision; I won’t be using a single source.”⁷³

Several interviewees noted that they only trusted information they could confirm through personal experience or the experiences of close relatives who shared the information directly with them.⁷⁴ Other civilians said they focused on watching television and radio programs they had watched

before the full-scale invasion because they had provided reliable information in the past.⁷⁵ Most reflected trust in official sources, such as direct communication from national or local political figures and military officers.⁷⁶

Some interviewees mentioned specific examples of false information.⁷⁷ For instance, one said that a neighborhood chat on Viber with over 1,500 members was flooded with an additional 1,000 subscribers immediately after the war began. She soon realized that their numbers were coded, they did not have avatars, and they began posting frequently about potential Russian collaborators in the area who were spying on buildings and leaving marks for Russian troops to follow. However, others in the chat disproved these assertions by following up. They discovered that the buildings in question were closed and that the marks did not exist. In addition, this interviewee noted that she would read on Instagram that there was no shooting in Kharkiv and that the situation was calm, when she could hear the sound of gunfire with her own ears.⁷⁸ Another civilian told CIVIC that she read about how Ukrainian forces had repelled Russian attacks and recaptured her village, but she knew this to be false because she could hear ongoing fighting outside while she hid in the basement.⁷⁹

Early on in the invasion, there was no unified approach to dealing with the challenge of misinformation and disinformation beyond comparing sources and confirming specific events through informal networks and personal contacts. While some interviewees mentioned unsubscribing or blocking sources, only one person described having reported suspected disinformation to the Ukraine Cyber Army for investigation and follow up.⁸⁰ When interviewees struggled to find verifiable information and felt deeply uncertain, they tended to rely on “intuition,” ad hoc consultations, or, at times, venturing into unsafe conditions to assess their situation.⁸¹

While CIVIC’s research highlights the importance of local-level access to information about security developments, the large amount of territory affected by the Russian invasion and

bombardments has made crowd-sourcing this information and sharing it with at-risk civilians challenging. One interviewee described using a phone application that provided maps of bomb shelters, but when she went out to find the shelters, she discovered that “in practice, most of them were either closed, boarded up, or, in their places, there were some basement cafes, bars, etc.”⁸² Another interviewee explained to CIVIC that she looked for information about nearby bomb shelters on her city administration’s website, but when she and her husband sought these shelters out, they found that they were either unsafe or in extremely poor condition.⁸³

Moreover, word-of-mouth communication requires having sufficient population density and trusted social connections, both of which were depleted by large-scale evacuations. As a result, some of those who remained behind felt stranded.

Information and communication practices rely heavily on phone and Internet connections, which were not always reliable or accessible due to disruptions in service. Disruptions were oftentimes caused by bombardments, as well as by Russian troops in occupied areas deliberately cutting civilians off from some information sources⁸⁴ or confiscating and destroying their devices.⁸⁵ In such cases, civilians were forced to turn almost exclusively to word-of-mouth information. They turned to neighbors and volunteers with information on security and services, as well as for help with charging devices, delivering supplies, and coordinating evacuations. Relying primarily on word of mouth meant civilians could miss news of and opportunities for organized evacuations.⁸⁶ Moreover, word-of-mouth communication requires having sufficient population density and trusted social connections, both of which were depleted by large-scale evacuations. As a result, some of those who remained behind felt stranded.⁸⁷

In addition, civilians sometimes had to expose themselves to dangerous situations when trying to hide devices from Russian occupiers, charge telecommunications devices, or access wireless signals—for example, climbing to the tops of hills or buildings and risking sniper fire in order to find a phone or Internet signal.⁸⁸ One older woman described to CIVIC how her husband was stopped by Russian soldiers while on his way to charge his phone at an electricity source outside their home. The Russian soldiers began searching and questioning her husband, who is a Ukrainian military veteran. She believes they would have killed him if she had not seen the events unfolding and intervened with the soldiers.⁸⁹

The chaotic information environment sometimes complicated decision-making and deterred people from leaving potentially unsafe places at the first opportunity. Anecdotes from personal contacts, data from Google Maps, and images in the media could make evacuation seem too overwhelming.⁹⁰ As one interviewee recalled, “There were such ideas to go, but I didn’t understand where to go when I saw a traffic jam. And then, my friends started writing me messages that there were queues at gas stations, traffic jams—in general, panic. And so, I didn’t understand what to do. I was waiting for what would be offered, in general, how the situation would develop.”⁹¹ Civilians also struggled to determine what kind of self-protection measures to take because their contacts throughout the country were experiencing different types of threats. It was challenging to do risk assessments under these circumstances.⁹²

CONCLUSION

Access to information is an important component of protection in conflicts, where civilians’ ability to make decisions and protect themselves from a variety of threats may depend on having up-to-date and accurate details about security developments. CIVIC’s research provides a snapshot of some of the information needs Ukrainians identified in June and August of 2022, as well as the sources of information they relied on to make protection decisions, the challenges they had accessing reliable information, and how they navigated some of these challenges.

While information needs may evolve, civilians stressed the importance of having sources of electricity to keep their devices charged, maintaining access to the Internet, and having access to multiple sources of information on an issue to cross check and validate information received. They relied on information from trusted pre-war media sources, government officials, and personal networks. They shifted to a heavier reliance on personal networks and technology when information from official sources was limited or incomplete. They used television alongside social media and mobile messaging applications, which were viewed as more agile, timely, and detailed sources of information. Civilian feedback indicates that, over time, they may experience information fatigue, and the volume and types of information they need and seek out may shift as a result. Ukrainian authorities and international organizations operating in Ukraine should remain cognizant of these information needs—and those documented by other research efforts—as they design their own interventions and as they consider when and how to share contextual updates and security information with civilians.

Endnotes

- 1 See, for example, Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network et al., *Understanding the Information and Communication Needs among IDPs in Northern Iraq*, September 2014; Internews, "Humanitarian Information in Nepal: From Crisis to Agency," May 2015; Internews, *Rohingya Refugee Crisis: Internews Assessment*, September 2017.
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- 15 CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Kyiv, July 2022.
- 16 CIVIC interview with civilian, #12, Kyiv, July 2022.
- 17 CIVIC interview with civilian, #15, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #24, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #38, Kharkiv, July 2022.
- 18 CIVIC interview with civilian, #8, Hostomel, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #43, Kyiv, August 2022.
- 19 CIVIC interview with civilian, #8, Hostomel, July 2022.
- 20 CIVIC interview with civilian, #2, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #12, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #14, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #15, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #26, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #29, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #31, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #35, Kyiv, July 2022.
- 21 CIVIC interview with civilian, #11, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #20, Kyiv, July 2022.
- 22 CIVIC interview with civilian, #17, Hostomel, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #28, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #29, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #30, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #36, Kyiv, July 2022.
- 23 CIVIC interview with civilian, #8, Hostomel, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #9, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #27, Kharkiv, July 2022.
- 24 CIVIC interview with civilian, #14, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #20, Kyiv, July 2022.
- 25 CIVIC interview with civilian, #9, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #15, Kharkiv, July 2022.
- 26 CIVIC interview with civilian, #16, Kharkiv, July 2022.
- 27 CIVIC interview with civilian, #11, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #13, Bucha, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #21, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #22, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #23, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #27, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #30, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Kyiv, July 2022.
- 28 CIVIC interview with civilian, #4, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #5, Irpin, July 2022.
- 29 CIVIC interview with civilian, #5, Irpin, July 2022.
- 30 CIVIC interview with civilian, #8, Hostomel, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #10, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #12, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #15, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #31, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #34, Kyiv, July 2022.
- 31 CIVIC interview with civilian, #10, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #12, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #14, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #16, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #20, Kyiv, July 2022.
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- 33 CIVIC interview with civilian, #15, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #24, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #29, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #43, Kyiv, August 2022. See also, Kossov, "Ukrainian law enforcers search for collaborators who helped Russians."
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- 35 CIVIC interview with civilian, #25, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #36, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #42, Kharkiv, August 2022.

- 36 CIVIC interview with civilian, #23, Irpin, July 2022.
- 37 CIVIC interview with civilian, #3, Kharkiv, July 2022.
- 38 CIVIC interview with civilian, #9, Kyiv, July 2022; Also supported by CIVIC interview with civilian #34, Kyiv, July 2022.
- 39 CIVIC interview with civilian, #37, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #36, Kyiv, July 2022.
- 40 CIVIC interview with civilian, #14, Kharkiv, July 2022.
- 41 CIVIC interview with civilian, #25, Irpin, July 2022.
- 42 CIVIC interview with civilian, #12, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #14, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #18, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #31, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #39, Kyiv, August 2022.
- 43 CIVIC interview with civilian, #12, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #41, Irpin, August 2022.
- 44 CIVIC interview with civilian, #30, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #38, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #43, Kyiv, August 2022.
- 45 CIVIC interview with civilian, #7, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #27, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #31, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #42, Kharkiv, August 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #43, Kyiv, August 2022.
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- 48 CIVIC interview with civilian, #21, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #22, Kharkiv, July 2022.
- 49 CIVIC interview with civilian, #5, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #9, Kyiv, July 2022.
- 50 CIVIC interview with civilian, #1, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #7, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #8, Hostomel, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #13, Bucha, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #15, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #33, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #34, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #36, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #40, Kharkiv, August 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #41, Irpin, August 2022.
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- 53 CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Kyiv, July 2022.
- 54 CIVIC interview with civilian, #19, Bucha, July 2022.
- 55 CIVIC interview with civilian, #17, Hostomel, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #22, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #24, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #42, Kharkiv, August 2022.
- 56 CIVIC interview with civilian, #4, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #5, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #27, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #31, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Kyiv, July 2022.
- 57 CIVIC interview with civilian, #7, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #9, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #39, Kyiv, August 2022.
- 58 CIVIC interview with civilian, #27, Kharkiv, July 2022.
- 59 CIVIC interview with civilian, #1, Kharkiv, July 2022.
- 60 CIVIC interview with civilian, #5, Irpin, July 2022.
- 61 CIVIC interview with civilian, #1, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #2, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #4, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #5, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #7, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #8, Hostomel, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #9, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #10, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #12, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #15, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #18, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #21, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #22, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #27, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #28, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #31, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #33, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #34, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #39, Kyiv, August 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #41, Irpin, August 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #44, Kyiv, August 2022. See also, CDAC Network, "Ukraine Media Landscape Guide," March 2022, 8–9.
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- 64 CIVIC interview with civilian, #8, Hostomel, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #15, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #25, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Kyiv, July 2022.
- 65 CIVIC interview with civilian, #3, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #29, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #36, Kyiv, July 2022.
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- 71 CIVIC interview with civilian, #21, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #22, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #33, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #34, Kyiv, July 2022.
- 72 CIVIC interview with civilian, #5, Irpin, July 2022.
- 73 CIVIC interview with civilian, #3, Kharkiv, July 2022.
- 74 CIVIC interview with civilian, #5, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #7, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #14, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #16, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #19, Bucha, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #20, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #21, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #22, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #31, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #33, Irpin, July 2022.
- 75 CIVIC interview with civilian, #16, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #31, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #13, Bucha, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #21, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #22, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #33, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #34, Kyiv, July 2022.
- 76 CIVIC interview with civilian, #1, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #21, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #22, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #27, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #29, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Kyiv, July 2022.
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- 86 CIVIC interview with civilian, #25, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #30, Irpin, July 2022.
- 87 CIVIC interview with civilian, #28, Kharkiv, July 2022.
- 88 CIVIC interview with civilian, #25, Irpin, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #33, Irpin, July 2022.
- 89 CIVIC interview with civilian, #13, Bucha, July 2022.
- 90 CIVIC interview with civilian, #10, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #20, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #34, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #36, Kyiv, July 2022.
- 91 CIVIC interview with civilian, #27, Kharkiv, July 2022. This issue was also raised in CIVIC interview with civilian, #12, Kyiv, July 2022.
- 92 CIVIC interview with civilian, #9, Kyiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #27, Kharkiv, July 2022; CIVIC interview with civilian, #42, Kharkiv, August 2022.



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