



COLLECTIVE SITE(S) IN FRONTLINE OBLASTS: ACCESSIBILITY ASSESSMENT



Dormitory of the State University of Biotechnology, Dokuchaevske village, Kharkiv district

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Overview

This assessment, conducted by Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) from July 2025 to October 2025, evaluates the current conditions of collective sites (14) accommodating internally displaced persons (IDPs) in frontline oblasts — Khersonska, Donetsk, and Kharkivska — and identifies urgent repairs needed to improve accessibility, particularly for people with disabilities and the elderly. This assessment is especially critical given the escalating security risks caused by intensified shelling, missile strikes, and drone attacks in these areas which have led to a growing number of IDPs seeking refuge.

While relocation to safer sites further from the frontline remains advisable and has been encouraged by both governmental bodies and the UN structure, Nonviolent Peaceforce has observed that many IDPs — particularly elderly people and those with disabilities — prefer to remain closer to their place of origin. This preference is often driven by several factors, including the physical and psychological strain of long-distance travel, the high cost and logistical complexity of securing specialised accommodation and transport, and a desire to stay near familiar surroundings, where they are closer to existing, or previously existing services.

However, collective sites with closer proximity to the frontline are often the least prioritised in terms of repair and investment. As a result, those that choose to stay in collective sites near the frontlines — often elderly people or those with disabilities — suffer from damaged infrastructure and accessibility challenges. This leaves residents increasingly exposed to both safety and security risks. NP's assessment reveals structural weaknesses and safety gaps, such as broken windows, absence of anti-blast protection, inadequate shelter facilities, poor accessibility for persons with special needs (ramps, specialised beds etc.), and substandard hygiene conditions in shelters.

The relative proximity of these sites to active conflict further heightens the vulnerability of IDPs, including those with disabilities/limited movement. Ensuring that collective sites are structurally secure, accessible, and equipped with safe shelter facilities is therefore a necessary protection act. Timely repairs and accessibility upgrades will not only protect current residents but also strengthen the host community's capacity to accommodate displaced families in future emergencies, strengthening existing support structures rather than replacing them. Moreover, improving site conditions may increase the willingness of individuals still residing along the frontline to relocate to a safer area, reducing their exposure to risk.

Ultimately, this assessment provides an evidence-based foundation for prioritising repairs that enhance accessibility, safety, and quality of life for all residents — while reinforcing preparedness and protection amid ongoing security threats.

General overview



The site is officially recognised as a collective site by the authorities and accommodates 40 evacuees (including 5 persons with disabilities). In the last quarter, there have been explosions within 100–200 meters, creating potential safety risks. The site is used for multiple functions alongside hosting residents/IDPs. Some damage was observed but not affecting structural safety. There are several broken windows on one side of the building.

Safety, accessibility and inclusion

- The collective center is largely inaccessible for people with special needs/disabilities.
- Missing ramps, lifts, threshold-free doors, and non-slip flooring.
- Lack of Braille signage, tactile paving, or accessible toilets and kitchens.
- Shelter (bunker/safe space) is available but in very poor condition (structural and hygiene).
- The basement/shelter is fully insulated, but too small for all residents.
- Not accessible for residents with limited mobility.

Needs priorities / Recommendations

- Shelter: Poor structural condition, no proper toilet, inadequate capacity - full structural
- Renovation; install proper toilets and ventilation; clean and disinfect; improve hygiene; ensure enough space for all residents.
- Windows & Structure: Broken windows, no anti-blast film - replace all damaged windows.
- Install anti-blast film; seal gaps to improve protection from blasts and weather.
- Accessibility (Mobility): No access for wheelchair users or people with reduced mobility - build ramps/lifts; widen entrances and corridors; install threshold-free doors; introduce non-slip flooring throughout.
- Sanitation: toilets and showers inaccessible, lacking grab bars - install accessible toilets and showers with grab bars and raised seats for people with reduced mobility
- Security & Protection: High risk due to recent nearby explosions - reinforce structural stability; establish emergency exits and signage; review evacuation plan.



General overview

The site demonstrates significant progress in accessibility compared to many others, though some gaps remain. The building's structure is stable, with no major damage to the walls, roof, or foundations. However, anti-blast film is only partially installed on windows, requiring full coverage and periodic structural checks. Currently it accommodates 52 IDPs (no information on how many of these identify as having a disability).

Safety, accessibility and inclusion

Available features:

- Ramps, lifts, wide entrances, threshold-free access, wide corridors.
- Accessible elevators and dining/kitchen areas.
- Easy-to-open doors, accessible tables, and manoeuvrable passageways.
- Braille and high-contrast informational signage.

Missing or insufficient features:

- No non-slip flooring (stairs, corridors, kitchens).
- No benches with armrests for rest areas.
- No tactile paving for people with visual impairments.

Needs priorities / Recommendations

- Safety / Security: Complete anti-blast window film installation; reinforce shelter ceiling and ventilation; inspect fire safety system.
- Accessibility & Mobility: Install non-slip flooring, tactile paving, accessible parking, and benches with armrests.

Kherson oblast (Kherson, Technical School #2, Tavrichisky District)

General overview

The collective site has structural damage requiring urgent repair, including damaged walls and broken windows leaving it exposed to shocks and weather. The electrical, plumbing, and fire safety systems are in working condition. Room allocation is organized by families, singles, and gender groups. Currently it accommodates 68 IDPs (no information on how many of these identify as having a disability).

Safety, accessibility and inclusion

- The collective site lacks accessibility infrastructure for people with disabilities or reduced mobility (no ramps, wide entrances, automatic doors, tactile paving, etc.).
- The basement is not suitable for use as a shelter due to unclear insulation and ventilation conditions.
- The heating system is non-functional, posing significant risks during winter.

Needs priorities / Recommendations

- Reinforce, insulate, and ventilate the shelter area.
- Ensure accessibility for persons with reduced mobility. Install ramps, automatic/easy-to-open doors, non-slip flooring, and low thresholds at entrances and hallways.
- Equip toilets with grab bars, raised-height toilets, and threshold-free showers.
- Mark stairs and edges with high-contrast colours; Braille signage could be installed.
- Renovate WASH facilities and provide non-slip flooring, and wide access to all sanitary areas to meet accessibility standards.

Kherson oblast (Chornobaivska hromada, Kyselivka Village, Kyselivka Collective Centre)

General overview

Kyselivka collective site remains structurally stable and suitable for continued use. However, urgent improvements are needed to ensure safety, accessibility, and protection for residents. Access to essential services is limited, as the nearest markets and healthcare facilities are in Mykolaiv (45 minutes away). Humanitarian partners such as MSF, ICRC, and R2P provide occasional support, (kitchen sets, tablets for children to use during online classes), but coverage is not regular or sufficient. It accommodates approx. 100 IDPs (no information on how many of these identify as having a disability).

Safety, accessibility and inclusion

- Internal facilities are mostly accessible, but WASH and kitchen areas require adaptation to meet accessibility standards.
- The structure is intact, yet the absence of a proper shelter, partial anti-blast window coverage, and non-functional fire safety systems expose residents to significant risks.
- Repair actions should prioritize establishing a secure shelter space and ensuring fire detectors and extinguishers are fully operational.

Needs priorities / Recommendations

- Construct paved, non-slip, and ramped pathways for wheelchair access between building modules and all other key access points.
- Install grab bars, raised toilets, and shower seats in at least one bathroom per module group.
- Establish a safe and accessible shelter area (reinforced modular space or nearby bunker).

Kherson oblast, Kherson Regional Scientific lyceum (Dormitory)

General overview

The collective site is not suitable for people with disabilities / low mobility. While a few pathways and entrances are adequately wide, most key accessibility standards are not met, creating significant barriers to safe and dignified living. Safety risk levels are high due to proximity to potential shelling zones. Currently, it hosts 60 IDPs (no information on how many of these identify as having a disability).

Safety, Accessibility and inclusion

- External Accessibility: No ramps or lifts for wheelchair users, uneven thresholds, and absence of non-slip flooring or tactile paving. Lacks clear signage, designated parking, and rest areas for people with disabilities.
- Internal Accessibility: No elevators or threshold-free passage between rooms. Missing non-slip flooring, colour contrast markings, and Braille or high-contrast signage.
- WASH Facilities: Toilets and showers are inaccessible for wheelchair users and lack grab bars and support handles.

Needs priorities / Recommendations

- Mobility and Accessibility: Add ramps or lifts, remove high thresholds, and install non-slip flooring throughout the site.
- Navigation Support: Introduce tactile paving, clear signage, and Braille or high-contrast markings to enable safe, independent movement.
- Internal Access: Ensure threshold-free connections, install elevators or stairlifts, and enhance orientation features for easier navigation.
- Inclusive WASH Facilities: Adapt toilets and showers for wheelchair users with level floors, grab bars, foldable seats, and raised toilets.
- Kitchen and Dining Areas: Provide wide, threshold-free entrances, non-slip flooring, and easy-to-open or automatic doors to ensure full accessibility.

General overview



The building is in good structural condition, with no visible damage to walls, roof, or foundation. Constructed in the 1940s, the facility features thick brick walls and a slate roof with a stable wooden frame. No urgent repairs are required before further works begin.

The shelter in the basement is fully insulated and large enough for 150 people (no information on how many of these identify as having a disability). It is equipped with ventilation, alternative power, and water supply. Fire safety systems (detectors, extinguishers, alarms) are functional and properly installed.

Safety, Accessibility and inclusion

What Is Already in Place:

- Shelter accessibility: The basement shelter includes two rooms for people with special needs / disabilities, and a mechanical chair system enables safe descent along stairs.
- Corridors and thresholds: Corridors are wide, and thresholds are low enough to permit passage for wheelchairs or reduced-mobility users.
- Toilets: equipped with grab bars, adequate space for manoeuvring, and raised-height toilets for easier transfers.
- Doorways: wide and threshold-free, allowing unimpeded access to key facilities.
- Visual accessibility: contrasting colour markings are used on stair edges and level changes for those with visual impairments.
- Tactile paving: Installed at the entrance to guide visually impaired users.

The site provides a safe and inclusive environment, already equipped with many accessibility features such as adapted toilets, wide corridors, tactile paving, contrasting markings, and accessible shelter areas.

Needs priorities / Recommendations

- Accessibility Improvements Needed: Enhance external mobility access with ramps, anti-slip surfaces, and accessible doors.
- Facilities Upgrades: Improve shower accessibility and provide inclusive furniture.
- Overall Assessment: The facility demonstrates high readiness for continued long-term use as a collective site, requiring only targeted accessibility upgrades.



General overview



The collective site in Kharkiv operates within a nine-storey dormitory owned by the Kharkiv State Academy of Physical Culture. It accommodates 224 IDPs, including elderly people and children, across the 2nd to 5th floors (no information on how many of these identify as having a disability). The site is planned to continue operating after essential repairs. It is located in an area where security risks remain due to periodic attacks, though no recent strikes were recorded within 200m. The structure is generally stable, with minor non-critical damage to walls and surfaces.

Safety, Accessibility and inclusion

- The external structure is generally stable, with minor non-critical damage to walls and surfaces.
- Windows lack anti-blast film, leaving residents vulnerable to shockwaves.
- A shelter exists in the building but is too small to accommodate all residents comfortably.
- The shelter is insulated and equipped with seating but lacks reinforced ventilation and emergency lighting.
- Entrance ramps are present, but internal mobility is limited — no accessible elevators, high thresholds, and no non-slip flooring.
- Bathrooms and showers for persons with disabilities are available but require improvement to ensure safety and usability.
- Kitchens are accessible and available on each floor but lack non-slip flooring and adjustable-height surfaces.

Needs priorities / Recommendations

Accessibility priorities focus on better mobility and inclusion by:

- adding anti-reinforcing and ventilating the shelter and checking the fire safety system.
- non-slip flooring, upgrading toilets and showers with grab bars and level access, and adding ramps, clear signs, and accessible parking.

Overall, the site can continue to operate but needs these repairs to improve safety, resilience, and accessibility for all residents.



General overview



The dormitory, owned by the Kharkiv Regional Council Municipal Institution “Kharkiv Professional Higher College of Arts”, continues to serve as a collective site for 184 IDPs, most of whom are older adults (no information on how many of these identify as having a disability). While the building remains structurally stable, the assessment highlights several safety and accessibility gaps requiring prioritized action to ensure protection and inclusion of all residents.

Safety, Accessibility and inclusion needs

- Accessibility Gaps: The building lacks adequate features for people with disabilities or limited mobility.
- Limited Access: Ramps are available only at the entrance; internal doors and corridors are not adapted.
- Vertical Mobility: The elevator is non-functional, restricting access to upper floors.
- Provide emergency lighting, alarms, and first-aid kits throughout the premises.
- Repair and service the elevator to ensure mobility for residents with disabilities and older people.

Needs priorities / Recommendations

- Install internal ramps and non-slip flooring to enable safe movement throughout the building.
- Adapt WASH facilities with grab bars, raised toilets, and sufficient maneuvering space for wheelchair users.
- Ensure access to a functional and insulated shelter within or near the building.
- Add tactile paving and clear signage (including Braille) for people with visual impairments.
- Provide accessible entrances, benches with armrests, and parking spaces for persons with reduced mobility.



General overview



The collective site in Kharkiv is a nine-storey dormitory owned by the Kharkiv National University of Arts - is home to 70 IDPs (no information on how many of these identify as having a disability), mostly elderly people, sharing space with returning students. While the building is structurally sound and continues to operate, it faces serious safety, accessibility, and infrastructure challenges that require urgent attention to ensure secure and dignified living conditions.

Safety, Accessibility and inclusion

- Electrical system enhancing: the wiring (dating back to 1974) is unsafe and unable to handle modern electrical loads, posing a major fire and safety risk.
- Shelter access: no on-site shelter exists; the nearest one is 100 meters away. A safe and accessible shelter solution within or adjacent to the building is urgently needed.
- The building has no ramps, lifts, or threshold-free access, making it completely inaccessible for wheelchair users or residents with limited mobility.
- Entrances, corridors, and WASH facilities must be adapted with ramps, non-slip flooring, wider doorways, grab bars, and accessible toilets and showers.
- No tactile paving, signage, or designated parking is available for people with disabilities, significantly limiting inclusivity.

Needs priorities / Recommendations

- Current Status: The Kharkiv dormitory remains operational but faces critical electrical hazards, no protective measures, and complete inaccessibility for people with disabilities.
- Priority Actions: Urgent safety and accessibility upgrades are needed to mitigate risks.
- Overall Impact: Enhancing safety and inclusivity will greatly improve living conditions and ensure the continued safe use of the site for IDPs and students.



General overview



The dormitory, managed by the Kharkiv National University of Radio Electronics, currently houses 67 internally displaced persons (IDPs), most of whom are older adults (no information on the exact number of civilians identify as having a disability). It continues to function as a collective site and is expected to remain operational following essential repairs. The building's overall structural integrity is stable; however, several areas require targeted interventions to enhance safety, accessibility, and living conditions. Addressing these needs is critical to ensure that residents can live in a secure, inclusive, and dignified environment, especially under the current security risks in Kharkiv.

Safety, Accessibility and inclusion

- No on-site shelter exists; residents rely on a small room unsuitable for full occupancy. A nearby metro station (300 m away) serves as the only shelter, highlighting the need for a safer, accessible space within or adjacent to the building.
- Fire safety is adequate, with extinguishers on each floor, but regular checks and evacuation signage should be maintained.
- The site is not accessible for persons with disabilities or reduced mobility.

Needs priorities / Recommendations

- Install ramps, automatic doors, and low threshold entrances to allow wheelchair access.
- Repair and reactivate the elevator.
- Install non-slip flooring and tactile or high-contrast signage to support safe movement and orientation.
- Create designated parking for people with disabilities and rest benches with armrests outside the building.



General overview



The dormitory of the State University of Biotechnology in Kharkiv accommodates 167 residents who are mainly IDPs, including elderly residents, persons with disabilities, and families from conflict-affected areas (no information on the exact number of civilians identify as having a disability). Despite partial renovations supported by humanitarian partners, the building requires further repairs to improve safety, accessibility, and essential services. Given Kharkiv's exposure to regular shelling and drone strikes, maintaining and strengthening this facility is critical to ensuring residents' safety and resilience.

Safety, Accessibility and inclusion

The dormitory lacks accessibility features for people with special needs or limited mobility:

- No ramps, lifts, or threshold-free access between floors; the existing ramp leads only to the entrance.
- Pathways, doors, and bathrooms are not adapted for wheelchairs.
- No tactile paving, signage, or adapted toilets/showers available.
- The building structure is stable but shows cracks caused by explosions in 2022, requiring urgent wall repairs to prevent deterioration.
- The shelter (basement) exists but needs full renovation — including better insulation, toilet repairs, and accessibility improvements.
- Bathrooms and showers were partially renovated by NGOs but remain insufficient — particularly on lower floors.
- Plumbing is functional but outdated.
- Additional accessible bathrooms and showers are needed for residents with disabilities.

Needs priorities / Recommendations

- Current Role: The dormitory serves as a vital shelter for displaced residents of Kharkiv.
- Key Needs: Strengthen safety infrastructure, improve accessibility, and ensure reliable utilities to enhance protection and living conditions.
- Priority Actions: Focus on electrical and heating system upgrades, shelter renovation, and universal access improvements to safeguard residents amid ongoing security risks.



General overview



The dormitory of the Forest College continues to function as a collective site accommodating internally displaced persons (IDPs), including elderly individuals and persons with disabilities. The site comprises two buildings — a three-floor dormitory and a five-floor building. It is partially in use after missiles heavy attack during the summer 2022, which caused several damages to the roof and the walls on one side, require urgent attention. Some windows are broken, and none are covered with anti-blast film, increasing vulnerability during air attacks. The Collective sites in Kochetok accommodates 53 people, including 15 IDPs with disabilities.

Safety, Accessibility and inclusion

- The site partially meets accessibility standards but needs major upgrades.
- Ramps are missing at key access points, including the main building and shelter.
- Signage is limited, lacking tactile and directional elements.
- WASH and living areas require grab bars, wider doors, and level showers.
- The absence of elevators restricts movement for people with mobility impairments.
- Public transport, healthcare access, and NGO support (Caritas, Proliska, SOS East, IOM, Angels of Salvation) remain strong.

Needs priorities / Recommendations

- Install ramps at main entrances and shelter access points.
- Replace uneven tiles with non-slip flooring.
- Add tactile paving, high-contrast markings, and clear signage.
- Upgrade WASH facilities with grab bars, wider doors, and level showers.
- Install elevators or lifts for access between floors.
- Ensure smooth, barrier-free pathways and door thresholds.
- Designate accessible rooms and toilets on each floor.
- Apply inclusive design standards in all repairs and upgrades.



General overview



The assessed facility is part of a four-entrance residential building, with the collective center occupying Entrance No. 2 of the dormitory. It accommodates 44 IDPs, including elderly individuals and 1 wheelchair user. The dormitory remains operational and is planned to continue functioning after repairs.

While the overall structural condition is stable, multiple critical repairs are required to ensure the site's safety, accessibility, and resilience, especially considering the absence of a nearby shelter and outdated infrastructure.

Safety, Accessibility and inclusion needs

- There is no on-site shelter - only a technical basement - leaving residents without a safe refuge during shelling. The nearest available shelter is 400 meters away at the nearby school, or at subway station.
- The site does not meet accessibility standards for persons with special needs or reduced mobility.
- The entrance, stairs, and common areas are not equipped with ramps or lifts, and door thresholds are high. Non-slip flooring is absent, and tactile signage or paving is unavailable.
- Corridors and kitchens are relatively wide, allowing partial wheelchair access, but toilets and showers are not adapted. A wheelchair user on the first floor must rely on a dry bio-toilet due to lack of accessible sanitation.

Needs priorities / Recommendations

- Urgent basement and balcony repairs, electrical system upgrades, and accessibility improvements are required to address safety and inclusivity gaps.
- The absence of a secure shelter, outdated infrastructure, and limited accessibility pose serious risks to residents.
- Targeted repairs and accessibility upgrades will significantly enhance safety, living conditions, and compliance with minimum protection standards.
- Despite these challenges, residents remain organized and cooperative, supported by NGOs such as Rokada, Dignitas Ukraine, and Spilna Sprava.



General overview



The site, part of the Lozivsky Professional Higher College of Arts is currently functioning as a collective site for IDPs and is planned to continue operating after necessary repairs. However, the overall condition and infrastructure of the facility require significant improvement before it can meet basic safety, accessibility, and comfort standards.

At the time of assessment, no structural damage or ongoing safety threats were observed, but the facility lacks essential functional systems, accessibility features, and emergency preparedness measures. Dormitory hosts 35 IDPs, including 3 persons with disabilities.

Safety, Accessibility and inclusion needs

- The facility lacks infrastructure for persons with disabilities or limited mobility.
- It requires the installation of ramps, lifts, and adapted toilets.
- Internal and external movement for wheelchair users is highly restricted.
- The entrance should be adapted with ramps for better accessibility.
- Although kitchen doorways are sufficiently wide, the overall environment remains inaccessible.

Needs priorities / Recommendations

- Restore essential systems, including heating, plumbing, and electricity.
- Establish basic fire and shelter safety measures.
- Ensure full accessibility for all residents before continued occupancy.
- Equip entrances, corridors, and stairs for wheelchair users by adding ramps or lifts.
- Install non-slip flooring, handrails, tactile paving, and clear directional signage.
- Upgrade WASH facilities to meet accessibility standards by adding grab bars, raised toilets, and level shower trays.
- Maintain the structurally sound walls, roof, and foundation to preserve stability.



Summary

This assessment confirms once again that collective sites that do not meet protection standards are themselves a protection risk, further exposing vulnerable civilians who have already fled their homes to a set of new challenges. Most of the residents of these sites are elderly or have disabilities and reduced mobility. This makes them especially vulnerable in environments not adapted to their needs. Accessible infrastructure – such as ramps, non-slip flooring, wide doorways, grab bars, and adapted toilets and showers – allows residents to move safely and independently, reducing the risk of accidents and dependence on others. These modifications are therefore essential to the safety of residents.

However, most sites lack basic accessibility features, and shelters, toilets, and kitchens remain largely unusable for people with limited mobility. In many cases, simple measures like threshold-free doors or handrails are missing – forcing residents to rely on others for mobility and safety. This not only undermines their dignity but also exposes them to greater danger during emergencies, especially in areas close to active hostilities.

In the context of ongoing war, accessibility has a direct impact on safety and protection: during air alarms or missile attacks, people with limited mobility must be able to reach shelters quickly and without obstacles. In most of the collective sites assessed, this would not be possible. Improvement of inclusivity and accessibility within collective sites is not just about upgrading comfort – it is a humanitarian and protection priority. Inclusivity and accessibility measures ensure equal access to safety, health, and essential services for all residents, strengthens resilience, and upholds the principle that displaced and vulnerable people deserve to live in safe, dignified, and inclusive conditions.

Recommendations going forward

The recommendations below address both accommodation and wider concerns of displaced population with special needs, which must be integrated into the humanitarian response design and implementation to ensure inclusive and accountable approach.

For INGOs, local actors, and donors:

- Strengthen coordination and mapping of collective sites to identify and prioritise those that can adequately accommodate people with disabilities. This will help ensure that individuals are directed to the most suitable and safe accommodation options.
- Prioritise small-scale improvements in collective sites nearer the frontline, to increase accessibility and in turn increase the options for people with disabilities to stay near their place of origin.
- Ensure that evacuation procedures and transport options are accessible and inclusive to begin with. This would include using vehicles adapted for people using wheelchairs or with limited mobility and with sufficient space for personal assistants, mobility aids, or assistive devices.
- Develop tailored information channels for people with disabilities – for example, leaflets specifically for people with disabilities – that clearly highlight which collective sites meet minimum protection and accessibility standards.

- Prioritise and ensure regular training for site staff on protection mainstreaming, safeguarding, and disability inclusion. These “soft” protection components have often been deprioritised, to the detriment of the most vulnerable civilians. Strengthening staff knowledge and accountability ensures that inclusion remains a core protection principle in collective sites.

For the Government and local authorities managing collective sites:

- Develop and implement a clear set of minimum accessibility requirements for all collective sites, ensuring that no site is declared operational unless it meets basic safety and accessibility criteria for people with disabilities.
- Ensure comprehensive accessibility, such as ramps, non-slip flooring, accessible toilets and showers, and sleeping areas.