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Ensuring food security in communities amid wartime challenges

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► **Abstract.** This study aimed to analyse the food security of local communities in Ukraine under wartime challenges, with a focus on the impact of active hostilities on food resources, production levels, stocks, and humanitarian support. Additionally, the analysis considered the influence of tourism, especially in transit and remote communities. The study utilised data from statistical reports of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, information from local self-government bodies, international organisations such as the World Food Programme and the International Committee of the Red Cross, as well as survey results from residents of three communities: Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, and Lviv regions. The survey covered issues regarding food availability, basic needs for essential food products, and the evaluation of humanitarian aid. The research employed online survey forms and telephone interviews, along with public information requests to local self-government bodies. The analysis revealed that the frontline community (Kharkiv region) faces the most significant challenges: 65% of respondents reported a severe shortage of basic foodstuffs, compared to 40% in the transit community (Dnipropetrovsk region) and 20% in the remote community (Lviv region). Official sources confirmed that after the outbreak of full-scale hostilities in 2022, the production volumes of key crops in Ukraine decreased by 40% in the frontline community, while food stocks reached critically low levels. International aid plays a crucial role in stabilising the situation, particularly by ensuring basic food needs and strengthening community resilience. The study results underscore the necessity of enhancing cooperation between territorial communities, government institutions, and humanitarian organisations, as well as improving food resource management strategies. Furthermore, the collected data emphasise the importance of considering regional specifics for effective humanitarian planning and the economic recovery of communities

► **Keywords:** humanitarian aid; territorial communities; survey of residents; martial law

► Introduction

Ensuring food security is one of the key tasks in modern conditions, especially in the context of challenges posed by active hostilities. War radically alters the functioning of the agro-industrial complex, creating significant obstacles to food production, storage, and distribution. The complexity lies not only in the physical destruction of infrastructure but also in disruptions to logistics chains, economic challenges for local producers, and the exacerbation of social needs within communities (Ortega-Beltran & Bandyopadhyay, 2023).

The scientific community has devoted considerable attention to the issue of food security in crisis conditions. Studies conducted between 2021 and 2024 focus on the impact of global and local crises on agriculture, food

systems, and strategies for stabilisation. For instance, analyses of food resilience highlight the importance of adapting resource management systems to wartime conditions; however, these analyses do not sufficiently consider regional-level specifics, particularly the interaction between local authorities, citizens, and international organisations (Food security and..., 2023).

Studying the current state of food security in communities affected by war will help identify key challenges and develop approaches to address them (VI Kharkiv International..., 2022). This research aims to analyse the impact of wartime conditions on food supply in different types of communities and assess the capacity for recovery and adaptation to new realities. The International Committee

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of the Red Cross (ICRC) (2022) underscores the critical importance of food security during wartime. The ICRC emphasises that addressing food insecurity requires a multidisciplinary approach, considering how conflicts impact agricultural systems by destroying infrastructure and trade networks. According to the norms of international humanitarian law (IHL), the starvation of civilian populations as a method of warfare is prohibited, which can help mitigate the consequences of conflict.

Studies such as those by R.P.F. Guiné (2024) analyse the current challenges of food security in the context of global changes. This research discusses major problems facing agriculture, including climate change, geopolitical conflicts, and economic instability, which affect food production and distribution worldwide. The author also proposes strategies for improving food security, including sustainable agricultural development, technological innovations, and international cooperation. The work of A. Koziślec *et al.* (2024) examines the economic and social challenges arising from crises such as wars and economic shocks and the impact on food security. The article provides an analysis of food risk management strategies based on the experience of Polish agricultural enterprises during economic difficulties, particularly in the context of political instability.

Research by O.M. Pashchenko (2022) focuses on the legal aspects of ensuring food security under martial law. The article examines the main legal challenges in food security in Ukraine during wartime, particularly regarding the regulation of food production and distribution, as well as support for local communities and agricultural enterprises. The authors highlight the need to adapt national legislation to the new conditions caused by armed conflicts and stress the importance of synergy between state bodies and businesses in overcoming crises. Scholars also address mechanisms of legal support for food security, considering external and internal policy factors, and propose ways to improve legal tools for effective food security management during war.

The study by I. Bezhenar & O. Hryshchenko (2023) analyses the current state of farms in Ukraine and the development opportunities. The researchers highlighted the importance of farms in ensuring food security and the stability of the country's agricultural sector. E.-E. Halmaghi *et al.* (2023) explored the complex interconnections between food security and armed conflicts. The authors analysed how conflicts disrupt local agricultural practices, destroy food supply chains, and exacerbate food security challenges. Using data and examples from regions most affected by military actions, the researchers emphasised the need for sustainable solutions and structural measures to mitigate the negative consequences for affected communities.

S. Berezyuk *et al.* (2023) studied food security in wartime conditions, emphasising the challenges associated with maintaining the stability of the agricultural sector during war. The article analyses the impact of hostilities on agricultural production and food imports. Particular attention was paid to resource management issues in crisis conditions and the mechanisms for supporting food security proposed by the authors. The research findings indicate that the implementation of systemic measures at the state policy level can enhance the country's self-sufficiency in the agricultural sector. The monograph

by V.Yu. Urkevych *et al.* (2014) examined key aspects of Ukraine's agricultural policy through the lens of legal regulation, highlighting the interrelation between food security, land relations, and state governance in the agricultural sector. The authors focused on the challenges of legal regulation in the agricultural sector, particularly aspects of land reform, the creation of an effective agricultural cadastre, and the implementation of a land resource management system that contributes to food security.

Despite the contributions of Ukrainian and international researchers to the study of food security challenges, aspects of effective cooperation between state, local, and international organisations in overcoming food challenges at the community level remain insufficiently explored. Based on these gaps, the study aimed to analyse the impact of wartime conditions on food security in local communities, assess the adaptive capacity of different types of communities, and develop recommendations to enhance resilience. To achieve these objectives, the following tasks were identified: identifying key challenges of food provision in communities during the war; analysing the impact of agricultural, social, and economic policies on community recovery; and determining effective cooperation mechanisms to support food security in a regional context.

► Materials and methods

The study was conducted in 2024 across three communities located in different parts of Ukraine: Starosaltivska community (Kharkiv region), Mezhyvska community (Dnipropetrovsk region), and Kulykivska community (Lviv region). These communities were selected based on the distinct socio-economic situations and varying degrees of wartime impact. The first community, located in the front-line zone, consists of 10 settlements with a total population of approximately 8,000. The second, a transit community, has a population of 15,000 across six settlements. The third, a remote community, is a town with 25,000 residents and 18 surrounding villages. Each community presents a unique case that allows for a comprehensive assessment of the impact of wartime challenges on food security.

Data collection adhered to the provisions of the Law of Ukraine No. 2657-XII (1992) to ensure compliance with data collection and usage norms, as well as the protection of confidential information. This approach minimises potential risks to residents and businesses, particularly under martial law, while prioritising the safety of inhabitants and economic activities in the regions. Secondary data was collected from official statistical reports and humanitarian organisation records (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2022; 2024; UKRINFORM..., 2022; Derzhstat, 2024; Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, 2025). This provided an overview of food security levels in the studied communities and identified key issues and threats faced by residents.

The study incorporated both secondary source analysis and field surveys. A total of 300 respondents participated (100 from each community), selected through random sampling while considering the socio-demographic characteristics of the population. Surveys were conducted offline (through personal interviews) and online via Google Forms to streamline data collection and processing. Results were analysed using Microsoft Excel and the

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for statistical evaluation. The survey consisted of 20 questions covering the socio-economic aspects of food security in the community, citizens' willingness to participate in self-organisation programmes, food resource availability, and satisfaction with the fulfilment of basic needs. A five-point scale was used to assess respondents' answers, where 1 meant "very dissatisfied/disagree" and 5 meant "very satisfied/agree". The questions concerned food availability, diet adequacy, sources of food supply (humanitarian aid, self-production, market purchase), and major difficulties in food provision (physical or financial inaccessibility of products, logistical problems).

The main part of the study was based on the field stage, during which primary data collection was carried out through a survey of residents. In addition, official reports and statistical data were analysed, providing comprehensive information on the state of food security in communities (Report for 2024..., 2024; Report of the Mezviv..., 2024; Report of the village..., 2025). The respondent sample was formed to represent different social and age groups (youth, middle-aged, and elderly categories) in each community. The age of respondents ranged from 18 to 70 years. To ensure sample representativeness, representatives of all key population categories directly related to food security issues were included (local government officials, community initiative leaders, farmers, and residents). The survey was conducted mainly in field conditions, using personal interviews, telephone calls, and online forms.

The survey was conducted using mixed data collection methods, ensuring the broadest possible coverage of respondents and increasing the reliability of the obtained results. In particular, the following methods were used:

1. Personal interviews – this method was applied for data collection in frontline communities (Kharkiv region), where access to respondents was difficult but allowed for more detailed information through direct contact.

2. Telephone calls – used as the primary tool in transitional communities (Dnipropetrovsk region), where some respondents had access to communication but could not complete an online form.

3. Online questionnaires – this method was the most effective in remote communities (Lviv region), where most of the population had stable internet access.

The mixed approach ensured flexibility and adaptation to the specific conditions of each community, considering the level of infrastructure accessibility and the degree of impact of military actions. The author's developed

survey methodology was used for data collection, taking into account the specifics of the studied communities and the current challenges of martial law. The methodology included questions adapted to the realities of each community, considering geographical location, demographic composition, and economic situation. A particular feature of the methodology was the development of separate question blocks: food availability, assessment of basic product prices, the presence and effectiveness of humanitarian programmes, and the impact of changes on agricultural production. This approach provided more detailed information relevant to each community. Specifically, respondents answered questions about food supply, product shortages, and strategies used to address these issues at the community level. For statistical analysis of the results, a methodology was used that included a comparison of indicators within each community and between communities, using significance criteria such as Student's t-test for independent samples. This made it possible to assess the significance of changes in food security levels and identify factors that have the most significant impact on the situation in communities.

► Results

The survey made it possible to identify households' subjective assessments regarding food availability, the level of satisfaction of basic needs, and the main problems faced by residents of various regions of Ukraine, concerning food security indicators (Economist Impact, 2022). The obtained results not only reflect the current state of food security in communities but also allow for assessing the ability of local authorities and communities to adapt and recover in wartime conditions. At the same time, significant differences in food security levels across regions were identified. Local initiatives, particularly in tourism development, help enhance economic resilience during crises, but the effectiveness varies depending on available resources and specific regional circumstances (Bergström & Larsson, 2022).

The Starosaltivska community in the Kharkiv region faces a challenging food security situation. The survey results show that only 25% of respondents have constant access to food, indicating a high vulnerability of the local population to supply disruptions. The majority, or 54%, experience partial food availability, suggesting persistent but substantial food supply issues. Meanwhile, 22% report food as nearly unavailable, highlighting a critical shortage in certain parts of the community (Table 1).

Table 1. Survey results in the Starosaltivska community, Kharkiv region

Indicator	Percentage of Respondents (%)	Interpretation
Food is always available	25	Only a quarter of the population has consistent access to food
Food is partially available	54	Half of the respondents face supply disruptions
Food is unavailable	22	A quarter of the population experiences critical shortages
Main food source: humanitarian aid	66	Dependency on humanitarian aid is very high
Main food source: self-production	11	Production has declined due to hostilities
Main food source: purchases	27	Economic accessibility is limited due to high prices
Main food source: local production	30	Local production remains an important food source
Main food source: tourism and related industries	5	Hostilities and uncertainty significantly limit tourism infrastructure and local businesses

Source: developed by the authors

One of the main food sources is humanitarian aid, relied upon by 66% of respondents, indicating an extremely high dependence on external support. In wartime conditions, this poses a severe threat to sustainable food provision (Gerasymchuk & Gasukha, 2021). Only 11% of respondents cite the production as the primary food source, reflecting a decline in local agricultural production due to hostilities and worsening conditions for farming. Regarding economic accessibility, 27% purchase food, though high prices and delivery challenges significantly limit this option for most people. However, local production remains a vital food source for 30% of respondents, underlining the importance of developing the agricultural sector even in wartime conditions. Nonetheless, existing challenges, including high risks and resource shortages, prevent full food security in

the community. Additionally, only 5% of respondents rely on tourism as a food source. Given the ongoing hostilities and uncertainty, tourism infrastructure development is severely restricted, complicating additional income sources for residents and businesses. Thus, the community faces extraordinary difficulties in meeting basic needs, emphasising the necessity for comprehensive support and local production restoration to reduce reliance on external food sources. The survey results highlight the unprecedented challenges caused by hostilities and the need to enhance the quality and quantity of humanitarian aid, develop local production, and improve economic accessibility to stabilise the community's food situation. Indicators identified in the survey of residents of the Mezhyvska community in the Dnipropetrovsk region are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Survey results in the Mezhyvska community, Dnipropetrovsk region

Indicator	Percentage of Respondents (%)	Interpretation
Food is always available	52	Half of the population has stable access to food
Food is partially available	43	Supply disruptions exist but are less pronounced
Food is unavailable	13	A significantly smaller portion of the population experiences critical shortages
Main food source: humanitarian aid	38	The level of dependence on humanitarian aid is moderate
Main food source: self-production	22	Production recovery is moderate but positive
Main food source: purchases	41	Economic accessibility is better than in frontline communities
Main food source: local production	45	Preserving a certain level of food security
Main food source: tourism and related industries	12	Remains limited and is not a significant food source

Source: developed by the authors

The food security situation in the Dnipropetrovsk region community is somewhat better compared to the frontline community in the Kharkiv region. The survey results indicate that 52% of the population has stable food access, a significant achievement, as half of the respondents do not experience supply disruptions. Compared to other communities, only 13% of respondents face critical food shortages, indicating less severe food security issues. A key factor is the recovery of local production. 22% of respondents report that the production has become a food source, which is a positive trend, though not yet sufficient to meet the entire population's needs. Unlike most communities, the economic accessibility of food in this region is significantly higher, as evidenced by 41% of respondents purchasing food. This demonstrates an improved economic situation and more affordable food

prices compared to frontline regions, where high costs significantly limit purchasing options.

Local production remains an essential food source for 45% of respondents, ensuring a certain level of food security. Tourism and related industries, despite the limited significance (12%), do not constitute a major food source, likely due to a relatively stable socio-economic situation that supports more traditional food sources. Overall, the Dnipropetrovsk region community demonstrates moderate recovery following economic difficulties, enabled by improved logistics, local production support, and increased economic accessibility. This significantly reduces reliance on external sources, including humanitarian aid, compared to frontline communities. Data obtained from the survey of residents in the Kulykivska community, Lviv region, are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Survey results in the Kulykivska community, Lviv region

Indicator	Percentage of Respondents (%)	Interpretation
Food is always available	76	The majority of the population has consistent access to food
Food is partially available	22	Only a small portion faces disruptions
Food is unavailable	6	Very low level of critical shortages
Main food source: humanitarian aid	17	Minimal dependence on external aid
Main food source: self-production	51	A high level of local production ensures community food security
Main food source: purchases	36	A stable market contributes to food accessibility
Main food source: local production	56	Significant agricultural sector development
Main food source: tourism and related industries	34	Tourism infrastructure provides additional income sources, greatly impacting the local economy

Source: developed by the authors

In the Kulykivska community of the Lviv region, food security indicators are significantly better than in communities closer to the zone of active hostilities. 76% of respondents have constant access to food, indicating a high level of food security. Only 6% admit to experiencing a critical food shortage, which is a very low figure compared to other communities. This situation results from the stable functioning of the market and uninterrupted logistics. According to the survey data, 51% of respondents rely on the production, while the overall dependence on local production resources is 56%. This means that a large portion of the population is fully provided with food through active local production. This sector is an important factor in ensuring food security in the community. It is also worth noting the significant role of tourism. 34% of respondents highlight the contribution of the tourism infrastructure to food provision. With the increase in the number of internally displaced persons who contribute to the development of local businesses, the tourism sector serves as an additional income source for local enterprises, such as hotels, restaurants, and souvenir shops. This, in turn, ensures a steady flow of income, supporting access to food resources, particularly during crises and wartime. Thus, the Lviv region appears significantly more stable compared to other communities due to the development of local production and tourism, creating a resilient economy amid constant threats, thereby increasing food security for its population.

The survey conducted in three communities revealed varying levels of food accessibility, dependence on humanitarian aid, and the status of local food production. The situation in the frontline community (Kharkiv region) is the most challenging: a significant portion of the population faces disruptions in food supply, with nearly two-thirds of respondent's dependent on humanitarian aid, and local production is limited due to hostilities. This indicates a high risk of food insecurity and a substantial need for external assistance to support the population. In the Dnipropetrovsk region, the situation is better but still unstable: half of the respondents have stable access to food, yet a large portion still faces occasional disruptions. The restoration of local production and more efficient logistics is reducing dependence on humanitarian aid, though it still plays an important role. The Kulykivska community of Lviv region demonstrates the most favourable situation: most of the population has continuous access to food, a significant portion relies on local production, and dependence on humanitarian

aid is minimal. This suggests the resilience of this community to food crises and its ability to meet the needs of its population even under difficult conditions. Additionally, the role of tourism as a food source adds special value. This infrastructure supports overall economic stability, which is a decisive factor in reducing the risks of food insecurity.

Overall, the survey results indicate significant differences in food provision depending on geographic location and the level of impact of the war on communities. In frontline regions, urgent measures are needed to improve food security, including the development of local production, strengthening logistical chains, and adapting existing infrastructure to ensure access to food resources amid hostilities. This may involve engaging local entrepreneurs in the production of staple foods, creating mobile points for delivering humanitarian aid, and ensuring necessary resources even under conditions of limited access. It is also crucial to involve organisations in ensuring the safety of supply lines, as areas affected by hostilities may face serious obstacles to food delivery. The survey results allow for the collection of subjective assessments of food availability and changes due to hostilities. These assessments contribute to a deeper understanding of the needs of local communities and reinforce conclusions about the effectiveness of the aid provided. The results also confirm findings from other studies, particularly the importance of local initiatives in reducing dependence on humanitarian aid, which is relevant for all types of communities under different conditions.

Information from the surveys enables the evaluation of the impact of international organisations on improving food security, comparing the aid provided with the actual needs on the ground, and is supplemented by official data from the Reports of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, which are published annually and contain vital information on agricultural production, food reserves, consumption levels, and the volumes of food imports and exports (Derzhstat, 2024). These reports serve as the main sources for analysing the agricultural economy at both national and local levels, and help monitor changes in food security levels (Law of Ukraine No. 2145-IX, 2022; Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, 2025). A comparison of the impact of the war on the production of major crops is presented in comparative Table 4, which shows indicators before 2022, when active hostilities began, and after. This allows for an assessment of how production volumes have changed during the war and how this affects food security in the communities.

Table 4. Comparison of major agricultural crop production indicators in communities before 2022 and after the start of active hostilities (2022-2024)

Crop	Starosaltivska community, Kharkiv region (tonnes)	Mezivska community, Dnipropetrovsk region (tonnes)	Kulykivska community, Lviv region (tonnes)
Wheat	5,000	5,500	4,800
Wheat (after 2022)	3,200	4,500	4,000
Corn	4,000	4,500	3,800
Corn (after 2022)	2,500	3,700	3,100
Sunflower	3,500	4,000	3,500
Sunflower (after 2022)	2,000	2,800	2,400
Potatoes	2,000	1,800	1,600
Potatoes (after 2022)	1,100	1,500	1,300
Vegetables	1,500	1,600	1,400
Vegetables (after 2022)	900	1,200	1,100

Source: developed by the authors

According to the comparison results, after the start of active hostilities (since 2022), there has been a significant reduction in the production of major crops in all communities. Specifically, in the Starosaltivska community of the Kharkiv region, wheat, corn, sunflower, potatoes, and vegetables production decreased by 20-40% compared to pre-war levels, indicating difficulties in food provision due to hostilities and infrastructure destruction. The Mezivska community of Dnipropetrovsk region showed smaller losses in production volumes, which may indicate a more stable situation due to the lower intensity of hostilities in the region and the preservation of significant production potential. In the Kulykivska community of Lviv region, a decrease in production is also observed, but the changes are less significant, which can be explained by the relative stability of the region, far from the zone of active hostilities. These data emphasise the importance of supporting and restoring local production to ensure food security, especially during wartime when reliance on external supplies may be limited.

The next phase of the study involved analysing information published on the official websites of the communities, where reports on food provision were posted (Report for 2024..., 2024; Report of the Meziv..., 2024; Report of the village..., 2025). This information included data on the availability of basic food reserves in three communities for different periods, including before 2022 and after the start of active hostilities. As a result of the analysis, information was collected on the available reserves of staple food products (wheat, corn, potatoes, vegetables), which allowed for an assessment of changes in these reserves in the communities before and after the start of active hostilities. Determining food reserves is crucial for ensuring food security, as it helps to understand how prepared a community is for situations where access to food may be restricted due to military actions. A quantitative comparison of the food reserves of major agricultural crops in the Starosaltivska community of Kharkiv region is presented in Figure 1.

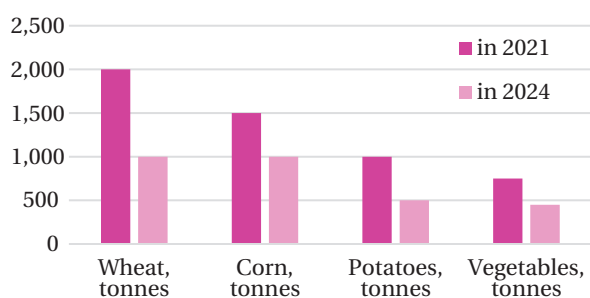


Figure 1. Indicators of food stock levels in the Starosaltivska community of Kharkiv region

Source: compiled by the authors based on Report for 2024 of the community police officers of the Starosaltiv territorial community (2024)

Figure 1 shows a significant reduction in food stocks, particularly wheat and corn, due to active combat operations. Wheat stocks have halved, while corn stocks have decreased by 40-50%. The situation is further complicated by the risks to agricultural enterprises due to combat activities, infrastructure damage, and landmining, which

hinder the preservation of food reserves. A quantitative comparison of food stock levels for key agricultural crops in the Meziv community of Dnipropetrovsk region is presented in Figure 2.

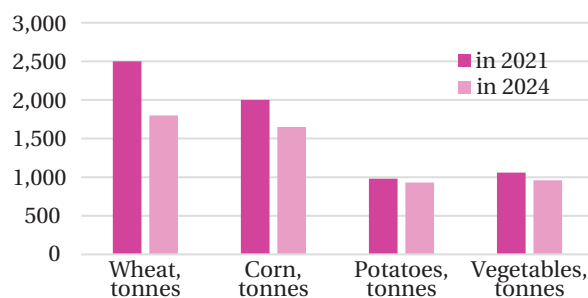


Figure 2. Indicators of food stock levels in the Meziv community of Dnipropetrovsk region

Source: compiled by the authors based on Report of the Meziv village head for 2023 (2024)

Although the situation with food reserves in the Meziv community of Dnipropetrovsk region is somewhat more stable compared to front-line territories, it still reflects the overall trend of decreasing stocks of essential products. Wheat stocks have decreased by 40-50%, and corn stocks have dropped by 30-40%. This indicates certain logistical problems and increased demand due to population displacement, though the situation has not yet reached a critical level. The analysis of agricultural crop production in the Kulykiv community of Lviv region is presented in Figure 3.

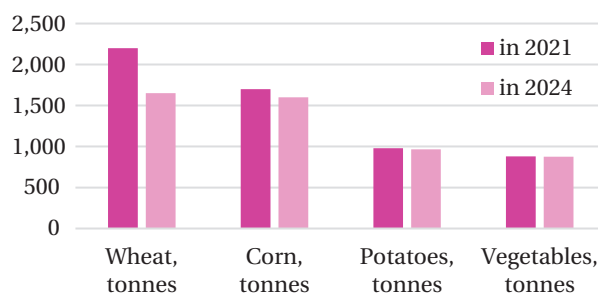


Figure 3. Indicators of food stock levels in the Kulykiv community of Lviv region

Source: compiled by the authors based on Report of the village head Liliya Bova on the work of the Kulykivska village council and its executive bodies for 2024 (2025)

In the Kulykiv community of Lviv region, changes in food stocks were less significant, with a 10% decrease, which suggests a lower intensity of crisis factors compared to front-line communities. However, the trend toward a reduction in food resources persists, likely due to disruptions in logistics and increased demand due to changes in the local market. Overall, the results of the analysis highlight the need to strengthen support for agricultural enterprises, particularly in communities located in high-risk zones. It is also essential to develop rapid food recovery plans, particularly through collaboration between local authorities, humanitarian organisations, and the enterprises themselves.

The next source of information for the study came from official UN resources, particularly the WFP and ICRC. These organisations actively publish reports and analytical materials on official websites, particularly on the WFP portal and the information pages of the International Committee of the Red Cross (2022; 2024). The data includes information on the amount of aid provided, its distribution directions, and cooperation mechanisms with local communities and authorities. The UN and ICRC use data from field surveys, local population interviews, and reports from local authorities to identify communities with the greatest need for food and other resources. The needs assessment is based on criteria such as the number of internally displaced persons, the level of provision of basic food products, the condition of local infrastructure, access to medical services, and proximity to active combat zones.

Priority is given to communities that have found themselves in a humanitarian crisis zone, especially those located in front-line areas or temporarily occupied territories. The contribution of these organisations includes

providing basic food products, which typically include cereals, legumes, vegetable oils, and baby food. Since the beginning of active combat in 2022, the World Food Programme (2023) has provided food to more than 3 million people in Ukraine, including in the most remote communities. The ICRC, for its part, provides targeted assistance in the form of food packages, drinking water, medicines, and essential items (Useful information for..., 2022).

Collaboration with local farming enterprises is an important element of these organisations' work (Nivievskiy *et al.*, 2021; Foote, 2022). By involving local producers, not only are logistics costs reduced, but the local economy is also supported. In the contribution of international organisations to ensuring food security in communities under military action, significant importance lies in cooperation between state and civil structures, as well as the direct involvement of international organisations in solving humanitarian issues. As shown in Table 5, the main mechanisms of assistance are food supplies, stock creation, and providing targeted support to the most vulnerable categories of the population.

Table 5. Contribution of international organisations to providing food security to communities (2022-2024)

Organisation	Starosaltiv community of Kharkiv region	Mezhiv community of Dnipropetrovsk region	Kulykiv community of Lviv region	Total number of aid recipients (persons)	Main types of aid
WFP	25,000	18,000	10,000	53,000	Cereals, oil, baby food
ICRC	30,000	20,000	12,000	62,000	Food, drinking water, medicines

Source: compiled by the authors based on Report for 2024 of the community police officers of the Starosaltiv territorial community (2024), Report of the Mezhev village head for 2023 (2024), Report of the village head Liliya Bova on the work of the Kulykivska village council and its executive bodies for 2024 (2025)

Data obtained from official UN and ICRC resources confirm the significant impact of international aid on ensuring food security in Ukrainian communities. The involvement of international organisations remains critically important for overcoming the food crisis, especially in communities affected by combat operations. However, for long-term stability, it is necessary to expand cooperation with local producers, optimise logistics, and actively involve local communities. The results of the study demonstrate that food security in communities depends significantly on various interconnected factors: local production, food stock volumes, the efficiency of local self-government bodies, and international humanitarian support. In the context of ensuring food security during wartime, it is important to focus on the potential for developing certain sectors, such as tourism and renewable energy. However, at present, in the context of the Kharkiv region, particularly in front-line communities, the aspect of tourism development seems less relevant. Despite being a useful strategy for reviving economic activity in more stable regions, tourism is not a priority given the current military threat. Therefore, to improve food security, it is worth focusing on the development of local production and infrastructure adapted to the realities of war. Meanwhile, in restoring energy sources, particularly through green energy, there is significant potential to strengthen the resilience and energy independence of communities in the post-war period. The analysis of statistical data, information

from local authorities, and international organisations has confirmed both the significant challenges and the adaptive potential of communities in wartime conditions.

► Discussion

The results obtained point to the importance of an integrated approach to ensuring food security under current challenges. The study conducted helps to better understand the contemporary challenges in food security, especially in crisis situations such as war. Consistency with the conclusions of other researchers confirms the relevance of the topic. W. Anderson *et al.* (2021) examined the impact of military conflicts on the exacerbation of food insecurity due to drought in Sub-Saharan Africa between 2009 and 2019. The authors found that conflicts significantly increase the vulnerability of agriculture and hinder effective responses to natural disasters, such as drought, complicating the achievement of food security in such regions. Statistical data and models were used for the study, which allows for analysing the interaction between conflicts and climate issues.

Unlike the current study, which analyses the situation with food security in Ukraine during the war, W. Anderson *et al.* (2021) examined the effects of drought on food security in Africa. The new study focuses on community responses to food issues during war, while the authors examine the broader regional context. However, both studies emphasise how external crises, whether caused by climate factors

or conflicts, exacerbate food insecurity. The analysis of the obtained data showed that the location of agricultural areas relative to active combat zones has a significant impact on agricultural sector productivity. In areas closer to the conflict line, there is a significant decrease in yield, food stock volumes, and overall food security levels (Drobitko & Alakbarov, 2023). This phenomenon can be explained by direct losses in infrastructure, restricted access to resources and crop fields, and the threat to human capital.

In the study by O. Shebanina *et al.* (2023), the role of environmental insurance in restoring ecological stability and resilience in Ukraine after the war is explored. The authors highlight the need for the implementation of sustainable environmental practices, particularly in the agricultural sector, and the use of insurance as a tool to mitigate risks associated with environmental disasters during the recovery process. The study emphasises the importance of such strategies for ensuring ecological resilience and supporting continuous development. Some parallels can be drawn between this research and the current one, as both focus on post-war recovery; however, this article's emphasis is on food security, its provision in wartime, particularly the role of humanitarian aid and local production. In contrast to O. Shebanina *et al.*'s work, which focuses on restoring ecological resilience through the insurance mechanism, my study concentrates on operational measures to meet the population's food needs in the context of ongoing combat operations.

In the study by A. Kliuchnyk *et al.* (2023), public management and state administration in territorial communities in Ukraine during the war are discussed, as well as the role these processes play in the post-war recovery of the country. The primary objective is to uncover the changes in the functioning of local government bodies and the interaction with military administrations after the introduction of martial law, which includes the transformation of the powers of village, settlement, and city councils since February 24, 2022 (Kryvenko, 2024). The authors also propose two criteria for the distribution of powers during martial law. According to findings, the described governance model and the interaction of government bodies are crucial for the recovery of territorial communities in the post-war period.

Compared to the current study, which focuses on food security during the war, parallels can be made regarding the need to adapt local structures to new conditions. Just like in public management research, effective governance is of heightened importance in wartime, but here, the focus is on ensuring food supply for the population (Matviishyn & Harbarynina, 2023). However, the key difference lies in the research direction: the new study focuses on specific aspects of food security, while A. Kliuchnyk *et al.* (2023) focus on general governance issues during and after the war. At the same time, as highlighted by the authors, effective governance and reforming local government bodies are critical for Ukraine's recovery after the war, which also directly impacts the stability of food security in the communities.

Analysing the results of B. Kemmerling *et al.* (2022) in the context of this study reveals several key aspects. The results of this research show that military actions significantly affect food security through four main mechanisms:

infrastructure destruction, population displacement, resource control by opposing parties, and the deliberate use of hunger as a weapon. The current study confirms these trends, as there is a significant impact from the destruction of logistics chains and reduced access to food resources due to the occupation of some territories and the destabilisation of local production in frontline and transitional communities in Ukraine. The conclusions also align regarding the importance of humanitarian aid in ensuring the survival of the population in the context of military conflict. As noted in the study by B. Kemmerling *et al.*, the effectiveness of international support depends on considering local realities and capacities. Similar conclusions are drawn in the current study, which stresses the role of humanitarian aid in frontline communities and the importance of integrating international efforts with local initiatives. However, some discrepancies exist. The study by B. Kemmerling *et al.* (2022) focuses on global aspects and systemic challenges for humanitarian aid, whereas this study emphasises national specifics: the influence of military administration, the adaptation of local governments, and the economic activity of individual communities. This highlights the need for more detailed examination of regional peculiarities in international studies.

The study by A. Adelaja & J. George (2019), which examines the impact of armed conflicts on agriculture in Nigeria, bears significant parallels with the research on the agricultural sector in Ukraine during the war. The key aspect is examining how conflicts destroy not only infrastructure and production resources but also lead to long-term socio-economic consequences, such as reduced agricultural productivity, lack of market access, and disruption of supply chains (Boiko *et al.*, 2024; Dankevych *et al.*, 2024). These effects are extremely important for comparing the situation in Ukraine, where the war also has similar effects on the agricultural sector. In Ukraine, as in Nigeria, agricultural producers face challenges such as decreased yields and limited access to markets, which worsens the food security situation. However, there are some differences: in Nigeria, conflicts caused by terrorist groups limit the state's ability to influence the recovery of the agricultural sector, whereas in Ukraine, humanitarian aid and state support measures have been organised.

Specifically, one key aspect of this study is the analysis of the role of small farmers in Ukraine, the ability to adapt and recover, which directly impacts local-level food security. The works of the authors mentioned above also emphasise the importance of local initiatives in supporting stability, which allows for a comparison of the role of small producers in Ukraine with similar processes in Nigeria. Although the situation in Ukraine differs significantly from that of Nigeria, the study by A. Adelaja & J. George (2019) holds valuable parallels for the current analysis. Both studies highlight the impact of war-related challenges on agriculture, leading to similar problems, including reduced yields and disruption of supply chains. In Ukraine, despite differences like the conflict, the role of local communities in recovering the agricultural sector and ensuring food security is critical.

Also crucial is the issue of the impact of global trends on the local level. The conclusions of A.V. Revkova (2023) emphasise the need for a multi-level system of support for

community development, especially in the context of crisis phenomena and challenges. In this context, the integration of environmentally sustainable practices into production processes and infrastructure modernisation, which ensures not only economic stability but also improves the quality of life at the local level, is of great importance (Berezyuk *et al.*, 2023). The role of communities in Ukraine, particularly under current socio-economic challenges, is becoming strategically significant, acting not only as main centres for supporting food security but also as key agents of change, capable of adapting to new conditions and carrying out essential functions to ensure sustainable development locally (Local economic development..., 2022).

The identified patterns indicate the need to strengthen support for local producers through legislative initiatives, financing programmes, and innovation implementation (Kryvokhyzha *et al.*, 2023). Meanwhile, further research should focus on examining the interaction of local and global factors influencing food security. Special attention should be given to analysing the successful experiences of other countries and the possibilities of adapting them to Ukrainian realities (UN Report..., 2022). In Ukraine, a legislative framework is being developed to improve food security, particularly through improving regulatory acts related to agricultural activities and stimulating domestic food production (Law of Ukraine No. 8370, 2011; Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 327-r, 2022; Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 684-r, 2024).

The study by K.E. Agboklou *et al.* (2024) examines the impact of armed conflicts on achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly on food security. It focuses on the general impact of war on access to food resources. This research aligns with the theme of ensuring food security in wartime but focuses on the broader context of SDGs, whereas this study highlights specific measures for supporting food security during conflicts. The study by A. Alnabih *et al.* (2024) analyses the impact of war on food security and body weight loss among the population of Gaza. The authors focus on the physical and social consequences of food instability in the context of armed conflict. This study relates to the theme of ensuring food security in conflict zones, but while A. Alnabih *et al.* emphasise health and weight loss as a result of food shortages. This study focuses on operational measures aimed at meeting the food needs of the population during wartime.

The work by M. Koc *et al.* (2007) analyses the impact of war and sanctions on food security in Iraq. The authors focus on changes in the availability of food for the civilian population, which correlates with food security issues during wartime, but place more emphasis on global aspects and political factors. The work by C. Isendahl & S. Barthel (2018) examines the integration of archaeology and history to study urban food security, with an emphasis on a long-term and cross-cultural perspective. This contextualises food systems in cities. Unlike the work focused on the impact of war on food security, this research highlights the importance of historical and cultural factors for the sustainable development of food systems in urban settings.

The study by M. Khakpour *et al.* (2019) explores factors that promote or hinder food security for Afghan refugees in Karachi, Pakistan. This study emphasises the specific challenges faced by refugees in urbanisation and

limited access to resources. Unlike research focused on wars and humanitarian crises, this study examines food security issues among refugees in peaceful settings, specifically considering the socio-economic barriers. The study by M.E. Margulis (2017) analyses the history of food security in the context of multilateral trade negotiations. The research focuses on how food security was not adequately addressed during global economic agreements and discusses the lack of focus on its importance in international trade strategies. This contrasts with the current study, which addresses more practical aspects of food security during armed conflicts and the impact on the population in war zones.

The study by C. Eigenbrod & N. Gruda (2014) examines the role of horticultural crops in ensuring food security in urban areas, particularly the contribution to food supply stability in cities. This research focuses on using urban spaces for vegetable cultivation, contributing to the self-sufficiency of urban communities. In the works by S.K. Wegren (2023) and S. Bhowmick (2018), food security issues in the context of global challenges, particularly food crises, are explored. S.K. Wegren focuses on the political aspects that lead to global food crises, emphasising the importance of policies to ensure stability in the food sector. In turn, S. Bhowmick highlights the role of international organisations in shaping food security strategies in conflict zones. Both studies complement the current research on food security but differ in scale and perspective.

The research by A.W. Weldegiargis *et al.* (2023) and J.E. Sullivan & D. Kamensky (2024) analyses various aspects of the impact of war on security in specific contexts. The first study focuses on the impact of the armed conflict in Tigray (Ethiopia) on household food security, highlighting how the war exacerbates food instability. The second study, although not directly related to food security, examines violations of international law through Russia's attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure, which, in turn, has a huge indirect impact on food security due to disruptions in energy supply for food production and distribution. However, both studies share a common focus on the negative consequences of military actions for the stability and provision of basic needs for the population. Thus, the results of the analysis align with general trends found in the academic literature and confirm the importance of the local level in addressing food security issues. At the same time, there remain several open questions, particularly regarding the resilience of production systems in crisis conditions, which require further research.

► CONCLUSIONS

The conducted study determined that the impact of the war on Ukraine's agricultural sector leads to significant changes in the development of rural communities and food security. It was found that the most negative impact is observed in regions close to the combat zone, where there is a significant decrease in crop yields and access to basic resources such as water and fertilisers. Overall, the study confirmed the importance of integrating local initiatives into the recovery of agriculture, particularly through the improvement of infrastructure and the application of sustainable environmental practices. An important factor is the development of non-traditional sources of income,

including tourism, which shows significant potential even in regions remote from the conflict. For example, in a community in Lviv Region, 34% of food is provided through the tourism infrastructure, creating additional opportunities for the local economy. Comparing with international studies allowed concluding that similar challenges are relevant to other countries experiencing conflicts. However, in the Ukrainian context, the development of tourism and its integration into food strategy could play a key role in solving food security issues at the local level.

The results of the study demonstrate a significant impact of the war on Ukraine's agricultural sector and varying levels of food security in three communities, depending on the proximity to the fighting. In the frontline community (Kharkiv Region), only 25% of the population has stable access to food, and 66% rely on humanitarian aid, while the yield of major crops, such as wheat, fell from 5,000 tonnes to 3,200 tonnes. In the transitional community (Dnipropetrovsk Region), half of the respondents reported stable access to food, and wheat yields decreased by 18%, from 5,500 tonnes to 4,500 tonnes. The remote community (Lviv Region) shows the best indicators: 76% have constant access to food, 51% rely on the production, and wheat yield losses are the smallest, with only a 16% decrease (from 4,800 tonnes to 4,000 tonnes). This indicates a direct dependence of food security on the intensity of hostilities, the level of local production, and access to logistics.

Analysis of data on reduced food stocks indicates a significant impact of military actions on food security in the studied communities. The largest losses are observed

in the communities of Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk regions, where wheat stocks have halved, and corn stocks have decreased by 40-50%, significantly weakening food provision capabilities. Stocks of potatoes and vegetables have also decreased, especially in the frontline zone, where enterprises face additional risks: shelling, minefields, damage to infrastructure, and warehouse buildings. Even in the rear area of Lviv Region, a reduction in food stocks by 20-30% indicates logistical breakdowns and the impact of internal population displacement.

A limitation of the study is the insufficient amount of data to analyse all regions of the country, as some territories remain inaccessible due to military actions, as well as the limited exploration of the impact of specific political and social factors on agriculture during the conflict. In the future, to improve the results of the study, it is important to pay more attention to a detailed analysis of the role of governments and international organisations in supporting rural communities, as well as exploring opportunities for developing new technologies to restore damaged agricultural territories.

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Забезпечення продовольчої безпеки в громадах в умовах воєнних викликів

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► **Анотація.** Метою дослідження був аналіз продовольчої безпеки місцевих громад України в умовах воєнних викликів, з акцентом на впливі активних бойових дій на продовольчі ресурси, рівень виробництва, запаси та гуманітарну підтримку. Додатково, аналіз врахував вплив туризму, особливо у транзитних і віддалених громадах. У процесі дослідження було використано дані статистичних звітів Державної служби статистики України, інформацію від органів місцевого самоврядування, міжнародних організацій, таких як Всесвітня продовольча програма та Міжнародний комітет Червоного Хреста, а також результати опитування громадян трьох громад: Харківської, Дніпропетровської та Львівської областей. Опитування охоплювало питання щодо доступності продовольства, основних потреб у базових харчових продуктах і оцінки гуманітарної допомоги. Застосовані методи анкетування через онлайн-форми та телефонні опитування населення, а також запити на публічну інформацію до органів місцевого самоврядування. Аналіз показав, що прифронтowa громада (Харківська область) стикається з найбільшими викликами: 65 % респондентів повідомили про значний дефіцит базових продуктів, порівняно з 40 % у транзитній (Дніпропетровська область) та 20 % у віддаленій громадах (Львівська область). Дані з офіційних джерел підтвердили, що після початку повномасштабних бойових дій у 2022 році на території України обсяги виробництва основних сільськогосподарських культур знизилися на 40 % у прифронтovій громаді, тоді як запаси продовольства виявилися критично низькими. Міжнародна допомога відіграє важливу роль у стабілізації ситуації, особливо шляхом забезпечення базових харчових потреб і розвитку стійкості громад. Результати дослідження підкреслюють необхідність посилення взаємодії між територіальними громадами, державними установами та гуманітарними організаціями, а також вдосконалення стратегій управління продовольчими ресурсами. Крім того, отримані дані акцентують на важливості врахування регіональних особливостей для ефективного планування гуманітарної підтримки та відновлення економічної діяльності громад.

► **Ключові слова:** гуманітарна допомога; територіальні громади; опитування мешканців; воєнний стан