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FEATURES OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEGAL MECHANISM OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE FIELD OF PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

The current state of implementation of the legal mechanism of public administration in the field of providing services to internally displaced persons in Ukraine is analyzed. The problems of providing services to internally displaced persons are identified, as well as ways to solve problematic issues in this area by improving financial and organizational and legal support.

Key words: *public administration, legal mechanism of public administration, authorities, public, state, social security, social protection, rights, state policy, social services, public services, internally displaced persons, persons with disabilities.*

Problem setting. Providing social services is an important function of any state. However, during the war, the number of people in need of assistance increased significantly. For example, in the first 18 months of the war, the number of disabled people increased from 300,000 to 3 million people. Russia's aggression against Ukraine caused countless human and material losses. Ukrainians faced the destruction of infrastructure, houses, cars, jobs and the loss of basic livelihoods. A large number of people were forced to leave their homes. According to the latest data, about 5 million people lost their homes. As the war continues, the number of those in need may continue to increase [3; 4; 5; 8].

These consequences are particularly severe after the start of a large-scale invasion, especially in communities that have faced temporary occupation and hostility. In such situations, the demand for social services is growing rapidly, but the resources needed to provide them are significantly limited, and the infrastructure is destroyed or damaged. In

general, the start of a full-scale invasion necessitated changes to the legislation in the field of social services. However, the state was not ready for the challenges of war. Including the protection of the rights of internally displaced persons.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Important aspects of the formation and development of the modern pension system are highlighted by such Ukrainian scientists as O. Vakulenko, T. Gitis, T. Golubenko, I. Ivzhenko, K. Mikuljak, I. Lopatchenko, A. Pomaza-Ponomarenko, N. Syvulska, A. Slavkova, I. Fedorovych, and others [1; 2; 3; 4; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10; 11]. Despite this, there is a need to study the topic of social protection in the realities of events and phenomena that influence and significantly emphasize the importance of this issue. Therefore, the problem of implementing social assistance to the population and its protection in war conditions becomes particularly relevant.

Paper objective. The purpose of the article is to determine the specific features of the implementation of the legal mechanism of public administration in the sphere of protection of rights and provision of services to internally displaced persons.

Paper main body. The availability and quality of social services indicate that the state can provide the support that its citizens need in various circumstances, including disability, old age, loss of housing and work, loss of parents. Currently, Ukraine is doing very well in providing social assistance to citizens affected by the war. According to the legislation of Ukraine, social benefits and social services are provided wherever possible (including in remote areas). There is still much work to be done in Ukraine to identify and establish social needs and social services for new groups of citizens affected by the Russian-Ukrainian war, as well as to develop new urgent aspects of the legislation and institutions of Ukraine for financing social services [1]. The transition to market relations requires the creation of an effective system of social protection of the population. In Ukraine, such a system is built and includes the following elements: consumer price index, establishment of the minimum wage and subsistence minimum, minimum pension by age [2]. Thus, the subsistence minimum in Ukraine is approved at the legislative level to ensure established social rights and is based on the possibility of distributing limited budget funds.

The first type of social protection provided for by Ukrainian legislation is the minimum wage. It is obvious that the current minimum wage does not meet the needs of workers and their families. In such a situation, wages lose their motivational function of reproducing the

workforce and ensuring motivation to work. The increase in the minimum wage in Ukraine also led to changes in the social security of pensioners. At the same time, UAH 469 billion is planned for social protection in 2024, which is UAH 25 billion more than in 2023. The minimum wage and the subsistence minimum per person have been increased, and pensions have been recalculated and increased [6]. This is the result of increased spending in other areas, such as economic activity, public order, security, and justice. Since the beginning of the Great War, the share of social spending has decreased significantly and is the lowest in recent years [7]. However, the importance of supporting people under martial law led to a smaller reduction in social protection spending.

Social services in Ukraine take on particular importance in times of war, when challenges become ever more pressing and the number of people in need of assistance increases exponentially. For example, in just over two years of full-scale war, the number of people with disabilities has increased to over 3 million, and the number of internally displaced persons as of June 2024 was 4.6 million. In addition, the proportion of elderly people is steadily increasing and could reach 21% by 2041. Approximately 29% of Ukraine's population lives in poverty [3; 4; 8].

Ongoing hostilities, regular rocket attacks and the associated damage and destruction of homes and infrastructure increased the number of registered IDPs by 55.3 million in 2023, reaching 4.91 million at the end of the year. However, some of the registered IDPs returned to their previous place of registration, although they retained their IDP status. In 2023, 2.54 million (51.7%) of registered IDPs received cash assistance to cover living expenses. In 2022, 39.8% of IDPs received such assistance, while in 2023 it was 39.8%. In 2023, the number of IDPs who received this assistance increased by 602,800 due to changes in the conditions for receiving cash assistance to cover living expenses.

In 2022–2023, despite the full-scale war, the use of local budget funds increased: in 2022, the budget execution for social expenditures amounted to 83.17% of the revised annual plan, with almost UAH 5.9 billion remaining unused; as of 2023, the budget execution for social protection and social security amounted to 90.97% of the revised annual plan, with almost UAH 4.45 billion remaining unspent [3; 4].

This may indicate under-execution of the budget by revenues, poor quality of budget planning in the social sector and sometimes premature management decisions, especially

due to the ongoing war, migration and lack of human resources. Ukraine inherited a complex and extensive social protection system, which has been expanded over time with various social programs and social benefits, thanks to which the majority of the population is covered by various forms of social assistance [9]. However, this has also placed a significant burden on public finances. Basic social benefits in Ukraine remain low, and the state's socially oriented fiscal policy is ineffective in achieving its main goals – poverty reduction, income inequality reduction and improving the quality of life [10]. The war situation places special demands on the state social protection policy and poses many new challenges related to the security of the population, ensuring basic needs and providing assistance to the affected population. In this context, social policy must quickly adapt and confront new realities [3; 4].

Thus, in wartime, social policy focuses on meeting the basic needs of the population, protecting victims, and supporting the most vulnerable segments of the population as a result of the war.

Aspects of social security and social protection in wartime are crucial for supporting socially vulnerable groups and maintaining social stability. As the risks of socially vulnerable groups increase in wartime, the state must adapt the social protection system to the new situation.

All these aspects are aimed at reducing social tension, assisting socially vulnerable segments of the population, and restoring the social structure after the end of hostilities. Optimizing the social protection system in wartime is an important task for supporting socially vulnerable segments of the population and ensuring the stability of the state.

Optimization of social protection systems in wartime requires a flexible approach, rapid response to social changes and active involvement of all levels of government and state authorities. In conditions of martial law, it is extremely important to adhere to the principle of proportionality between social protection of citizens and the financial capabilities of the state and to guarantee everyone's right to an adequate standard of living, which is one of the key elements of regulating social relations in the social sphere. In accordance with these standards, changes should be made to the mechanism for calculating social payments and assistance. In the current conditions, it is also advisable to turn to the experience of Western European countries to determine possible ways to overcome the crisis. In particular, it is important to encourage people who depend on social payments to participate in the labor market as

much as possible. This incentive is called the "labor market activation policy" and has existed since the 1980s. However, this approach must be regulated from an ethical and legal point of view and not be limited to microcredits for opening a small business [11].

Directions and means of optimizing the social protection system

- Mobilization of financial resources
- Budget redistribution, external assistance, introduction of emergency social taxes
- Targeted provision of social assistance
- Identification of the most vulnerable groups, automation of processes, cash payments
- Decentralization of the social protection system
- Strengthening the role of local communities, development of local social support centers
- Employment support
- Creation of temporary jobs, retraining programs, stimulation of small businesses
- Psychological support and social integration
- Rehabilitation programs, ensuring access to medical and psychological services
- Strengthening legal aid
- Legal consultations, protection of the rights of internally displaced persons
- Cooperation with non-governmental organizations
- Partnership with volunteers and joint assistance programs
- Ensuring transparency and monitoring
- Program effectiveness assessment, anti-corruption measures.

The main direction of improving state management of budget finances in the field of social protection of the population is, first of all, increasing the responsibility of local self-government bodies for the use of allocated funds and managing this process. Providing local and regional authorities with sufficient revenues to perform the functions assigned to them can be achieved through budget decentralization, which contributes to achieving balance between regional and local budgets.

Conclusions. After February 2022, the government continued to finance social programs and increase employment in order to maintain wartime benefits, reduce poverty, and increase the resilience of the country's economy. This was made possible by the government's successful negotiations with international financial and humanitarian organizations to secure funding for such programs. Otherwise, the government would not be able to finance social spending, as tax revenues are barely enough to cover defense and security spending. Initially, after February 24, 2022, social policy focused on supporting internally displaced persons and maintaining other social benefits, such as pensions, to ensure social protection for society. Society faced a serious economic crisis that led to all-out war.

However, starting in the fall of 2022, and especially in 2023, the government began to reconsider its social policy priorities and sought to limit spending and, perhaps more

importantly, help stimulate economic activity. Another feature of Ukraine's social policy during wartime is the increased digitalization, with almost all activities carried out online. Funding for social assistance to IDPs has increased due to the growing number of this vulnerable population, but per capita spending has remained low due to budget constraints. In 2022, the government received funding from donors and humanitarian organizations to provide social assistance due to limited budget funds, and one-time payments for IDPs were also introduced. However, since several ministries and numerous organizations were involved in the provision of social assistance, it was difficult to coordinate all assistance.

Therefore, an online platform, eDopomoga, was created to coordinate charitable organizations – one of the promising e-government solutions that emerged during the war. Further development of the social protection system in wartime should be aimed at creating effective programs to support internally displaced persons. The social health care system should be adapted to provide emergency medical care and long-term rehabilitation. Since war can place a heavy burden on the state budget, it is necessary to ensure the timely payment of pensions, unemployment benefits and other social assistance. Developing a strategy for social security during war is an important task to ensure the system's ability to respond quickly to new challenges and meet people's basic needs. The strategy should provide for legal and methodological support for the provision of social services in martial law, the development and improvement of institutional and financial mechanisms to support these services, as well as monitoring and assessing the quality of social services – from support for war victims to the long-term recovery of the country after the conflict.

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