
**RETHINKING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES
IN THE FRONTLINE REGIONS OF UKRAINE**

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INTRODUCTION

The full-scale armed aggression of Russia has caused profound transformations in the spatial, social, and economic development of Ukraine. The frontline regions – territories that have suffered significant destruction, population loss, changes in functional profiles and long-term security threats – have become among the most vulnerable and, at the same time, strategically important. Under war conditions, these regions perform key defensive, humanitarian and logistical functions, while simultaneously demonstrating high potential for recovery through the implementation of new models of local development.

Tourism, as one of the sectors capable of generating a multiplicative socio-economic effect, is gradually becoming a component of the strategy for resilience and reconstruction of the frontline territories. Despite the apparent risks, several regions in Ukraine are creating the preconditions for the development of specialised, safe, and regulated tourism practices based on local resources – including cultural, natural, industrial, and military-historical assets. Despite the complexity of the situation, tourism in Ukraine continues to operate. It adapts to new realities, finds solutions, lays the groundwork for future development, and works towards a common goal¹. In global practice, tourism has proven effective in post-conflict development zones as a tool for restoring local economies, strengthening communities, reinterpreting traumatic events, and shaping new narratives for territories. The experience of Croatia, Israel, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, and Georgia is a vivid confirmation of this.

However, in the Ukrainian context, a comprehensive scientific model for planning and managing tourism in frontline regions is still lacking. There is

¹ Машіка Г., П'ятка Н. Особливості функціонування суб'єктів туристичної індустрії в умовах війни. *Економіка та суспільство*. 2022. №44. С. <https://doi.org/10.32782/2524-0072/2022-44-70>

a need for systematic development in issues related to tourist flow safety, territory typology, assessment of tourist resource potential, institutional mechanisms, and project creation that can drive regional recovery. Equally important is understanding how tourism strategies can contribute to strengthening local identity, developing civil society, and integrating frontline regions into the all-Ukrainian and international tourism space.

In this context, the purpose of the study is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the specifics of Ukraine's frontline regions, identify promising tourism directions for promotion in these territories, and justify strategic approaches and project solutions that will contribute to the development of innovative, safe, and sustainable tourism models.

1. The State of Tourism Activity in the Frontline Regions of Ukraine

As of October 25, 2023, the full-scale Russian aggression has resulted in the destruction or damage of 1612 cultural heritage sites and 2427 cultural infrastructure objects in Ukraine. Among the damaged cultural heritage sites, 149 have the status of national importance, 1311 – local importance, and 152 – newly discovered.

Overall, damage has been reported in 18 regions of Ukraine, including Kyiv. The greatest destruction has been inflicted on heritage sites in Kharkiv region – 342, Kherson region – 294, Odesa region – 182, Donetsk region – 173, and Kyiv region together with the city of Kyiv – 156.

In addition, as a result of shelling and hostilities, 2,427 cultural infrastructure facilities have been affected, 493 of which have been completely destroyed.

The most severe losses to cultural infrastructure have occurred in the Donetsk, Kharkiv, Kherson, Kyiv, Sumy, and Mykolaiv regions.

Destruction has been documented in 327 territorial communities of Ukraine. The highest numbers are found in communities of Donetsk (46 territorial communities), Sumy (37), Kharkiv (33), Chernihiv (31), Zaporizhzhia (29), Mykolaiv (23), Dnipropetrovsk (22), Kyiv (21), and Luhansk (12) regions². The absolute majority of the damaged heritage is concentrated in Ukraine's frontline regions and its occupied territory.

Frontline regions of Ukraine are territories that directly border areas of active hostilities or are subjected to systemic military threats (artillery shelling, missile strikes, sabotage, mine danger). Since 2022, these regions have consistently included parts of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipropetrovsk, and Mykolaiv regions, as well as separate communities in

² В Україні за час повномасштабної війни зруйновані й пошкоджені 1612 об'єктів культурної спадщини. URL: <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-culture/4056292-v-ukraini-za-cas-povnomasstabnoi-vijni-zrujnovani-j-poskodzeni-1612-obektiv-kulturnoi-spadsini.html>

Sumy and Chernihiv regions. Communities in Odesa and Zhytomyr regions were also added to the List of Territories where military operations are being (or have been) conducted, or which are temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation, dated September 11, 2025³. Frontlineness is determined not only by spatial proximity to the front line but also by a complex of social, humanitarian, infrastructural, and economic consequences that affect the development of any activity, including tourism.

Already in 2022, a significant reduction in the number of tourism entities and a catastrophic decline in tourist tax revenues were recorded across Ukraine. The decrease in tourist tax revenue was recorded in 14 regions, the absolute majority of which are frontline: Kherson region: decreased by 95%; Mykolaiv region: decreased by 90%; Donetsk region: decreased by 83%; Luhansk region: decreased by 80%; Odesa region (80%), Zaporizhzhia region (78%), Kharkiv region (61%), Sumy region (58%), Kyiv region (54%), and Chernihiv region (53%) also experienced significant drops⁴. At the same time, tourist tax indicators in the western regions grew, which is due to a significant outflow of the population to safer regions and a certain activation of domestic tourism. In the context of tourism activity development, this has only exacerbated the existing imbalance in tourism development across different regions of the country.

In most regions that became frontline territories, active work was underway before the full-scale invasion to lay the normative foundation for establishing tourism activities. This is confirmed by a number of documents: the program “Marketing, Promotion and Tourism of the Sumy City Territorial Community for 2022-2024”⁵, the Regional Target Program for Tourism Development in Chernihiv Region for 2021-2027⁶, and the draft Tourism Development Strategy of Zaporizhzhia Region for 2021-2027⁷, none of which, of course, took into account the possibility of military intervention and the catastrophic nature of its consequences.

In Dnipropetrovsk Region, the tourism development program, initially planned for 2014-2022, was extended until 2025; however, the last changes

³ Про затвердження Переліку територій, на яких ведуться (велися) бойові дії або тимчасово окупованих Російською Федерацією. Наказ №376 від 28.02.2025. URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0380-25#Text>

⁴ Hryhorchuk D. Tourism in Ukraine in the war conditions: the European integration aspect. *Economics, Finance and Management Review*. 2023. Issue 2 (14). P. 130-136. DOI: 10.36690/2674-5208-2023-2-130-136

⁵ Програма «Маркетинг, промоція та туризм Сумської міської територіальної громади на 2022-2024 роки». URL: https://smr.gov.ua/images/documents/Proekty/Poriadok_sesii/2022/19_ses_26.01.22/1/8.pdf

⁶ Обласна цільова програма розвитку туризму в Чернігівській області на 2021-2027 роки. URL: <https://surl.li/hlsfil>

⁷ Стратегія розвитку туризму Запорізької області на 2021-2027 роки. Проект. URL: <https://surl.li/fwnyas>

were made on August 6, 2021⁸. The “Program for the Development of Industrial Tourism in the city of Kryvyi Rih” was also extended⁹, though only one addition was made in the context of military action, specifically “Implementation of measures for organising tourist safety, including security conditions during martial law”.

There are a number of documents that have been adopted since the full-scale invasion and which take into account current realities: the City Target Program for the Development of International Cooperation, Tourism, and Marketing of Odesa for 2024-2026 (extended until 2028)¹⁰ and the Program for the Development of Culture, Tourism, and Protection of Immovable Cultural Heritage of Kharkiv Region for 2024-2028¹¹.

The “Program for the Restoration of Tourism Infrastructure and Development of Tourism in the Kherson City Territorial Community for 2025”¹² currently appears overly optimistic, as planning the restoration of infrastructure during ongoing active hostilities is clearly irrational. And the “City Program for Tourism Development in Zaporizhzhia for 2023-2025”¹³, which was approved in December 2022 but completely ignored both the full-scale invasion and the war’s impact on the tourism sector, looks utterly incomprehensible and inadequate. Therefore, this situation further emphasises the need to change approaches to forming tourism development strategies in the most vulnerable industrial regions.

The theme of the war's impact on tourism in Ukraine has been quite thoroughly covered in scientific sources and is addressed in the activities of the State Agency for Tourism Development (SATD)¹⁴: the development of the Concept for the memorialization of memorable places, the creation of the

⁸ Про внесення змін до рішення Обласної ради від 20 червня 2014 року № 532-26/vi «Про Програму розвитку туризму у Дніпропетровській області на 2014-2022 роки» (зі змінами) та продовження терміну дії програми до 2025 року. URL: <https://surl.lt/ynntrf>

⁹ Про схвалення змін до Програми розвитку промислового туризму в місті Кривому Розі на 2016-2027 роки. URL: <https://kr.gov.ua/documents/rishennya-vikonkomu-krivorizkoyi-miskoyi-radi/zasidannya-vikonkomu-za-22-08-2025/450129-pro-shvalennya-zmin-d>

¹⁰ Міська цільова програма розвитку міжнародного співробітництва, туризму та маркетингу міста Одеси на 2024-2026 роки. Рішення Одеської міської ради № 2202-VIII від 26.06.2024. URL: <https://omr.gov.ua/ua/acts/council/205026/>

¹¹ Програма розвитку культури, туризму та охорони нерухомої культурної спадщини Харківської області на 2024 – 2028 роки. URL: https://oblrada-kharkiv.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/dr_730-zahody-programy-zi-zminamy.pdf

¹² Програма з відновлення туристичної інфраструктури і розвитку туризму на території Херсонської міської територіальної громади на 2025 рік. Розпорядження начальника Херсонської міської військової адміністрації №1219 р від 19.12.2024 р. URL: <https://miskrada-ks.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/1219r-vid-19.12.2024-pro-zatverdzhennia-prohramy-z-vidnovlennia-turystychnoi-infr-i-rozvytku-turyzmu-na-terytorii-khmth-na-2025-rik.pdf>

¹³ Про затвердження міської програми «Програма розвитку туризму в місті Запоріжжі на 2023-2025 роки» <https://zp.gov.ua/uk/sessions/177/resolution/50333>

¹⁴ Державне агентство розвитку туризму України. URL: <https://www.tourism.gov.ua/>

national project “Routes of Memory”, and the documentation of destroyed and damaged objects of tourist and recreational infrastructure. However, there are still a few studies dedicated to the current state and prospects for tourism development in the frontline regions.

One of the fundamental studies is the joint research conducted by a group of domestic scientists in collaboration with Estonian colleagues as part of the implementation of the study “Development of Ukrainian Frontline Communities and Tourism Business in the Conditions of War,” which took place at Tallinn University from December 2022 to March 2023¹⁵. As part of the research, a sociological survey was conducted among respondents from Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Sumy and Kharkiv Oblasts. The survey helped identify the main threats and problems in the realisation of tourism activities, as well as to form prospects for the further development of tourism activities in these territories. The conducted survey made it possible to understand the state of the tourism sector’s development in the frontline regions and to determine the strategies that can ensure the sector’s survival and reveal its potential for recovery in the post-war period.

2. Current Types of Tourism in the Frontline Regions

Ukraine's frontline regions have undergone significant changes amid the full-scale war, raising questions for the academic community and tourism practitioners regarding the prospects for their restoration and development. At the same time, despite the challenging situation, frontline territories may have the potential to develop various types of tourism. Accordingly, a more thorough assessment of the main challenges faced by frontline territories, an analysis of promising types of tourism for development in these territories, and possible ways to revive them in the post-war period are needed as part of transforming these territories from conflict zones into tourist destinations.

According to the results of the survey conducted at Tallinn University, the types of tourism that tourism specialists consider promising after the cessation of military operations were determined (Fig. 1).

As the results show, most respondents highly rated the post-war prospects of cultural and cognitive (59.8%), sports and active (48%), as well as festival and event tourism (52.8%). However, even now, analysing the trends characteristic of the tourism sector in the frontline regions, it can be stated that, at least in the first post-war period, volunteer, solidarity, and memorial tourism – which were not even mentioned in the said survey – will be more prioritised. Moreover,

¹⁵ Reimann M., Kornus O.H., Patsiuk V.S., Venherska N.S., Kholodok V.D., & Palang H. Tourism in Ukrainian frontline communities: trends, challenges, and development prospects. *Journal of Geology, Geography and Geoecology*. 2023. №32(3). P. 581-597. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15421/112352>

military and rural tourism will also carry significant weight, and despite being rated as unpromising (77%), it will also occupy its niche in the tourism market of the frontline regions.

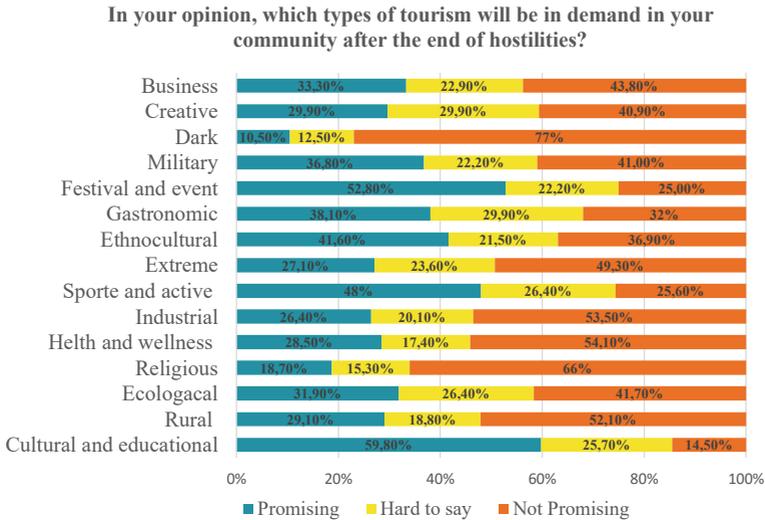


Fig. 1. Assessment of the Prospects for Various Types of Tourism in Frontline Regions

**based on the results¹⁶*

The development of tourism in the frontline regions of Ukraine is feasible, but it requires a tailored approach that prioritises safety, local economic development, and innovative tourism formats and strategies. Below are proven and realistic directions that are already working in regions that have experienced military conflicts in other countries.

Volunteer Tourism. This type of tourism is considered the use of free time and income for travel outside the sphere of regular activity to provide assistance to other people who need it¹⁷.

J. Simpson and A. Schuler Scott note that starting in 2022, the surge in foreign travel to Ukraine for participation in both combat and non-combat

¹⁶ Reimann M., Kornus O.H., Patsiuk V.S., Venherska N.S., Kholodok V.D., & Palang H. Tourism in Ukrainian frontline communities: trends, challenges, and development prospects. *Journal of Geology, Geography and Geoecology*. 2023. №32(3). P. 581-597. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15421/112352>

¹⁷ McGehee N.G., Santos C. A. Social change, discourse and volunteer tourism. *Annals of tourism research*. 2005. № 32(3). P. 760-779. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2004.12.002>

tourism by volunteers to war-torn countries has spurred new research directions in the context of volunteer tourism. Tens of thousands of people from 52 countries have joined the fight in Ukraine as volunteers. In addition, millions of employees of international non-governmental organisations arrive in military conflict zones to provide humanitarian aid. Scholars aim to understand the motivations of individuals who undertake such journeys as volunteers, whether it involves combat participation or peaceful assistance. Researchers classify such trips as military-volunteer tourism, viewing it as a component of the broader field of military tourism studies¹⁸.

In general, several directions of volunteer tourism can be noted for the frontline territories of Ukraine: *Social assistance*: targeted assistance to citizens affected by hostilities, personal delivery or transfer of material aid, assistance to internally displaced persons, etc.; *Physical assistance*: practical help in restoring damaged or destroyed civilian housing; cleaning up the territory; *Animal assistance*: evacuation of four-legged animals, providing shelters with everything necessary, searching for new homes; *Information front*: countering disinformation and propaganda, blocking enemy resources, disseminating truthful information in the media, internet, and social networks; *Medical assistance*: blood donation, work in medical institutions, lectures on tactical medicine, medical evacuation activities in hot spots; *Psychological assistance*: free online consultations, assistance to people experiencing anxiety, panic attacks, or depressive states; *Legal assistance*: free legal consultations for people affected by Russian aggression, recording and documenting war crimes; *Tourism support*: conducting excursions for internally displaced persons and other categories on a volunteer basis, organizing hikes for psychological relief of certain population categories¹⁹.

Solidarity Tourism. This tourism direction is understood as trips during which there is **conscious support** for local communities and local businesses, which does not include physical assistance. British scholars S. Dolničar and S. McCabe define solidarity tourism as tourism-related actions taken by governments, tourism businesses, and tourists to assist people suffering during and after crises, based on compassion for others, a sense of unity and a shared understanding of societal standards and obligations²⁰.

Solidarity tourism in Ukraine during the war is a crucial element of economic support and moral recovery, particularly in frontline communities.

¹⁸ Simpson J.J., Schuler Scott A. Enemy of my enemy is my friend: War volunteer tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 2023. V. 101. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2023.103612>

¹⁹ Пацюк В., Щука Г., & Василенко А. Волонтерський туризм: Теоретичний дискурс. *Географічний часопис Волинського національного університету імені Лесі Українки*, 2024. №4(4). С. 102-112. <https://doi.org/10.32782/geochasvnu.2024.4.11>

²⁰ Dolnicar S., McCabe S. Solidarity tourism-How can tourism help the Ukraine and other war-torn countries? URL: https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/4vcpz_

This type of tourism involves supporting local communities and regions, where tourists contribute to economic development by spending on accommodation, food, and other services, while also maximising consideration of social and environmental aspects. In Ukraine during the war, this direction has acquired special significance due to numerous humanitarian challenges, population displacement and the need to support affected territories.

The main objectives of solidarity tourism are: protection of cultural heritage; informing the international community about the catastrophic consequences of the Russian invasion; promoting financial support for the local budgets of de-occupied territories; assisting local enterprises facing economic difficulties; providing an opportunity to express support and solidarity; and creating demand for future travel across Ukraine and its regions²¹.

Memorial Tourism. In many studies, memorial tourism is considered a component of dark or gloomy tourism²², but in our opinion, these tourism directions should not be fully equated, as they have different goals, visitor motivations, and ethical contexts. While dark tourism may aim to gain intense impressions or a shock effect, memorial tourism primarily has an educational and moral-ethical mission.

As for the direct interpretation of the concept of “memorial tourism”, M. Kazmyrchuk, referring to the publication by Kharkiv researchers A. Anishchenko and M. Yarika note that memorial tourism is one of the universal tools for constructing the historical consciousness of the people and is essentially a means of dialogue between the descendants of witnesses of tragic events and the present²³. L. Bozhko and K. Kisliuk understand memorial tourism as new forms of memorial activity that should be emphasised once again: the creation of a “place of memory” of committed crimes (museumification of tragedy sites, opening of separate monuments, memorial complexes, museums, exhibitions dedicated to tragic events, creation of organised burial sites, etc.)²⁴.

The war is not over, but the issues of forming a culture of visiting places of memory about Russia’s crimes in Ukraine are already relevant. In doing so, it is necessary to consider both the best world experience and the public opinion of the population. In this context, the State Agency for Tourism Development

²¹ Прилузький А.М., Стойка В.О. Солідарний та волонтерський туризм як перспективні види внутрішнього туризму в Україні в сучасних умовах. *Успіхи і досягнення у науці*. 2024. № 9 (9). С. 1263-1275. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.52058/3041-1254-2024-9\(9\)-1263-1275](https://doi.org/10.52058/3041-1254-2024-9(9)-1263-1275)

²² Ashworth G.J., Isaac R.K. Have we illuminated the dark? Shifting perspectives on «dark» tourism. *Tourism Recreation Research*. 2015. Vol. 40. Iss. 3. P. 316–325

²³ Казмирчук М. Меморіальний і ностальгійний туризм у вітчизняних і зарубіжних дослідженнях. *Вісник Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка. Серія Історія*. 2016. №4 (131). С. 20-31. DOI <https://doi.org/10.17721/1728-2640.2016.131.4.05>

²⁴ Божко Л.Д., Кислюк, К.В. Меморіальний туризм як складова меморіальної культури. *Культура України*. 2022. №78, С. 7-17. <https://doi.org/10.31516/2410-5325.078.01>

of Ukraine (SATD) initiated a collective effort by the state and the public to develop a strategy for visiting places of memory related to Russia's military aggression in Ukraine. This announcement was made by Mariana Oleskiw, Head of the State Agency for Tourism Development of Ukraine, during a roundtable held on September 14, 2022. SATD employees are convinced that "the state must make significant efforts to immortalise the memory of Ukrainian heroes and victims of Russian atrocities, appropriately popularise the history of independent Ukraine, its state-building and resistance, and form a holistic historical worldview regarding the events of the war for freedom"²⁵.

In December 2023, SATD presented the concept for commemorating memorable places. Five territorial communities of the Kyiv region were included in the pilot project. The ultimate goal of the Concept is to create a map of locations that will become new strongholds of national memory, which many Ukrainians and foreigners will visit in the future²⁶. And already on February 5, 2025, the educational project "School for Guides. Routes of War Memory" was launched on the initiative of SATD. The purpose of this project is to provide tourism support specialists with texts verified by historians and military experts, which guides can use when conducting excursions to the memorial sites of the Russian-Ukrainian war in the Kyiv region.

All actions taken by SATD lay the foundation for the future active development of memorial tourism. However, it should be noted that similar pilot projects for memory routes and guide training for their implementation should be conducted in every affected frontline region, not just the capital region.

Rural Tourism. After the start of the full-scale Russian invasion, rural tourism in the frontline territories underwent significant changes. In many communities, it ceased to exist, and tourism workers changed their type of activity, engaging, for example, in volunteering. At the same time, the experience of other countries that have experienced military conflicts suggests the active development of tourism (including rural tourism) in the post-war period, which has become a significant economic basis for economic development, attracting investments, and increasing the real incomes of the population²⁷.

²⁵ ДАРТ об'єднує представників держави та громадськості, щоб розробити стратегію відвідування місць пам'яті війни. URL: <https://www.tourism.gov.ua/blog/dart-obiednuie-predstavnikiv-derzhavi-ta-gromadskosti-shchob-rozrobiti-strategiyu-vidviduvannya-misce-pamyati-viyini>

²⁶ ДАРТ представило Концепцію меморіалізації пам'ятних місць. Київщина стане пілотним регіоном. 2023. URL: <https://www.tourism.gov.ua/blog/dart-predstavilo-koncepciyu-memorializaciyi-pamyatnih-misce-kiyivshchina-stane-pilotnim-regionom>

²⁷ Hall D.R. Tourism as sustainable development? The Albanian experience of "transition". *International Journal of Tourism Research*. 2000. № 2 (1). P. 31–46. DOI: 10.1002/(SICI)1522-1970(200001/02)2:13.0.CO;2-W

Rural tourism is of great importance for the frontline territories of Ukraine, as it can contribute to their socio-economic development, support local communities, and preserve cultural heritage. Rural tourism provides opportunities for creating new jobs and generating additional income for small businesses, as farms, homesteads, guesthouses, producers of local eco-products, artisans and tour organisers are involved in servicing tourists.

Rural tourism can help prevent mass migration by creating opportunities for people to live and work in their local communities. People who returned and will return from the war can find themselves in agrotourism and crafts, and this can be considered in the context of supporting veterans and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The countryside, with its peaceful atmosphere and contact with nature, helps people overcome the stress associated with war.

Traditionally, it was in the countryside that the culture and traditions of the Ukrainian nation were preserved, and national customs and traditions were passed down from one generation to the next. The development of rural tourism will contribute to the further restoration and preservation of cultural heritage and its popularisation. A significant part of the frontline territories in Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Sumy, Kherson and Kharkiv Oblasts were once Cossack lands, and it is entirely appropriate to create thematic routes and events related to the history of the Cossacks, their culture, and legends here. Rural tourism in the frontline regions of Ukraine can become a driving force for recovery and economic development. It will contribute to the preservation of communities, attract investments, promote psychological recovery and revive cultural traditions. This is one of the key ways to achieve sustainable development in the affected territories²⁸.

Military Tourism. The importance of military tourism for Ukraine became clear even before the full-scale invasion began. Scholars actively engaged in terminological discourse, highlighted the directions of military tourism, and analysed resources. Military tourism involves visiting memorable military sites of the past and present, engaging tourists with elements of contemporary military life, and participating in safe military events.

With the start of the full-scale invasion, the number of practical studies on this issue increased. In particular, in July 2022, Kyiv geographers conducted a study using the case of the Kyiv region regarding the desire of Ukrainian residents to provide tourist services in cities related to the

²⁸ Пацюк В.С., Корнус О.Г., Корнус А.О., Казаков В.Л. Теоретико-географічні засади і прогноз розвитку туристичних дестинацій прифронтових територій України. *Слобожанський науковий вісник. Серія: Природничі науки*. 2025. № 1. С. 97-104. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32782/naturalspu/2025.1.14>

full-scale invasion. The results indicate that it is suitable to develop a recreational and tourist program with military themes, utilising the available resources²⁹.

The prospects for military tourism in frontline communities after the end of military operations were directly studied during the sociological survey conducted as part of the Estonian-Ukrainian project “Development of Ukrainian Frontline Communities and Tourism Business in the Conditions of War and Future Strategies”³⁰. According to the study results, respondents' opinions were divided, as more than a third of respondents want the studied oblasts to retain the acquired image of destinations with cultural and cognitive, festival and event, and sports and active tourism products in the future, rather than with the “legacy of war and tragedy”. At the same time, a significant share of respondents emphasises the need to restore and create new tourist locations and hold events related to military themes. Tourism specialists are aware that the new heritage of the frontline territories is the heritage of war, and tourism and excursion activities will need to be largely reformatted, emphasising the role of the war in the centre of Europe.

Military tourism is not only promising but also significant for Ukraine's frontline territories, as it serves as an important tool not only for economic recovery but also for preserving historical memory. Military routes play a significant role in raising awareness of war events, fostering patriotism, and instilling respect for the defenders of Ukraine. However, the implementation of tours along these routes must be approved by the local communities where the military events took place. This will help avoid psychological trauma to affected residents. A more complete presentation of military locations is also possible with the involvement of military personnel or direct witnesses of the events as guides.

Dark Tourism. As already noted, dark tourism has much in common with memorial tourism, but its specificity lies in organising trips that satisfy visitors' curiosity or allow them to gain intense feelings. M. Kazmyrчук, referring to D. Dalton's opinion, notes that dark tourism is the visitation by tourists of places associated with death or natural disasters that have outraged public consciousness, whereby places of death, horror, atrocities,

²⁹ Уліганець С., Мельник Л., Шинкаренко У. Розвиток військового туризму як одного з напрямів туристичної діяльності у поствоєнний період в Україні (на прикладі Київської області). *Вісник Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка. Військово-спеціальні науки*. 2023. № 54(2), С. 63–71. <https://doi.org/10.17721/1728-2217.2023.54.63-71>

³⁰ Пацюк В.С., Корнус О.Г., Венгерська Н.С. Аналіз перспектив військового туризму в прифронтових громадах України. *Восьмі Сумські наукові географічні читання* : збірник матеріалів Всеукраїнської наукової конференції, (Суми, 13–14 жовтня 2023 р.) / СумДПУ імені А. С. Макаренка ; Сумський відділ Українського географічного товариства ; [упорядник А. О. Корнус]. Елект. текст. дані. Суми, 2023. С. 142–147.

or immorality become relevant and interesting for perception through the visitors' experience³¹.

In the structure of dark tourism, a group of researchers led by Z. Shilnikova distinguishes several directions: disaster and natural calamity tourism; death tourism; terror tourism; sites of past military clashes and fierce historical battles; maximum security prisons; cemetery tourism; sites of torture, death, executions; sites of current (active) military clashes; mystical tourism; and slum/ghetto tourism³².

In view of the proposed structure, we can state that there are resources in the frontline communities of Ukraine for the development of death tourism and sites of contemporary military clashes, and in the occupied territories, also sites of torture, death and executions. Of course, extreme tourists from various countries around the world already practice this tourism direction and periodically visit various locations close to the front in Ukraine. However, the implementation of this tourism direction in the post-war period for a wider range of tourists will require taking into account all ethical components and creating absolutely safe routes.

3. Recommendations for Improving Tourism Development Strategies in Frontline Regions

Different approaches to studying post-conflict tourism are presented in the scientific literature, including the concepts of military, dark, memorial and volunteer tourism. The experience of restoring tourist destinations in countries that have survived military conflicts suggests the potential for transforming former combat zones into touristically attractive territories, provided effective reconstruction and marketing strategies are implemented. Tourism development strategies in frontline regions must comprise several key elements and tasks.

1. Safety as the Foundation of Tourism During War. Any development of tourism begins with safety, both actual and psychological. What to do: create official verified "safe routes" with assessment by the State Emergency Service (SES) and local authorities; provide information centers with up-to-date recommendations on shelters and safe movement; implement "Safe Destination" standards for businesses (hotels, guides, transport); develop a system of shelters in areas close to tourist locations (no more than 5 minutes on foot or by bus travel) and rapid notification.

³¹ Казьмирчук М. Меморіальний і ностальгійний туризм у вітчизняних і зарубіжних дослідженнях. *Вісник Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка. Серія Історія*. 2016. №4 (131). С. 20-31. DOI <https://doi.org/10.17721/1728-2640.2016.131.4.05>

³² Шильнікова З.М., Дульцева І.І., Магушкіна М.В. Тенденції розвитку «темного» туризму та його мотиваційні аспекти. *Економіка та управління підприємствами*. 2018. Випуск 22. С. 586-591.

2. Focus on Domestic Tourism. In the frontline regions during the war, tourism is primarily domestic and local (excursions for city residents), oriented towards its own citizens. Due to insufficient security conditions, international tourism is almost nonexistent, but after the end of the war, the share of inbound tourists is expected to grow, driven by the desire to witness the war's consequences and visit the sites of hostilities firsthand. Forms that can stimulate the revival of domestic tourism in the post-war period include the organisation of internal festivals, marathons, cultural events, and various other events; the creation of state or local programs for compensation/discounts for travel; and the development of collaboration with tour operators specialising in domestic tourism.

3. Working with the Tourism Narrative. Developing slogans to attract the attention of tourists to the region during wartime. Regions near the front require special information management. The most important messages should be slogans that highlight the importance and safety of travelling to the frontline oblast. Examples of such tourism messages should be: safety is controlled and transparent; many tourist locations are undamaged and accessible; our excursions are safe; visiting is a contribution to the region's recovery; tourism is a form of resilience and community support; it must also be understood that tourism to the frontline oblasts will not be mass tourism.

4. Rebranding the Frontline Region. Even frontline regions can successfully form a positive image. The most recommended case studies indicate the need for the following strategies: creating a new brand (rebranding) of the region as safe, interesting and accessible for tourists; targeting – searching for a new and specialized tourist (primarily from similar frontline territories who perceive the dangers of war more calmly due to their adaptation to it); active SMM promotion without “alarming” rhetoric; storytelling about successful cases of tourism product implementation.

5. Infrastructure Development and Support for Local Businesses. Building or supporting the infrastructure segment of tourism involves repairing or maintaining roads to key locations in good condition. Reorienting tourists' demand towards safe zones should lead to a shift in tourism from urban to suburban areas, which requires creating campsites, hostels, glamping sites, tourist bases with small houses and green homesteads in natural settings. In suburban areas, the planning and marking of cycling and hiking routes are necessary. There is also some sense in investing in digital infrastructure.

Support for local entrepreneurs is a key element in the development of the modern tourism sector in the frontline regions. It is small business owners of homesteads, campsites, cafes, local workshops, rentals, and tour companies that create the unique tourist experience that large network players cannot provide.

To strengthen their role, the state and local governments can implement micro-grants and preferential programs for opening and modernising tourist facilities. It is also essential to develop training programs for future guides, tourism managers, and small business owners that encompass the fundamentals of service, marketing, digital tools and storytelling. Separate attention should be paid to attracting international donors, such as IMF, GIZ or UNDP, who can support communities with expert assistance, grant programs and investment projects.

6. Partnership with International Organisations. This is necessary for the preservation or restoration of cultural heritage sites that have been damaged as a result of military operations. It is a key element for the effective restoration of cultural heritage after conflicts. Drawing on the expertise of established organisations such as UNESCO, ICOMOS, or the Council of Europe allows for the application of established methodologies, standards, and recommendations that have been proven effective in practice across different countries worldwide.

International institutions possess the expertise to preserve both tangible and intangible heritage, as well as support the development of new cultural routes that can serve as a powerful driver of local and national growth. Their participation helps adapt local projects to global standards, making them competitive, attractive to tourists and sustainable in the long term. Furthermore, such partnerships often open doors to international grant programs and investments.

A separate area of cooperation is educational initiatives. International organisations can conduct training for local business representatives, tourism managers, guides, restorers, and municipal specialists. This helps to raise the level of professional training, form modern competencies, and strengthen local capacity in cultural management. As a result, communities receive not only financial and expert support but also tools for self-development and preservation of their cultural identity.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the conducted research indicate the presence of significant opportunities and strategic foundations for developing tourism in the frontline regions of Ukraine. Particular interest is drawn by directions such as volunteer, solidarity, memorial, military, rural and dark tourism.

The analysis of the main influencing factors enabled the identification of both positive prerequisites for the development of the tourism sector and several challenges, including security issues, an insufficient number of tourism products and developed routes, underdeveloped tourism infrastructure and a negative image of the regions.

To adapt the frontline territories to the needs of the tourism industry, a set of measures aimed at ensuring the safe and effective development of tourism activity has been substantiated. The analysis demonstrates that various forms of tourism can coexist even in regions where the war is ongoing or has recently concluded. The key issue is not the absence of full-fledged tourism activity, but its correct transformation.

The key directions of transformation include creating and marking safe tourist routes, strategic promotion of the regions in the tourism sector, attracting funding through international grant programs and developing specialised educational initiatives for training local guides.

Further scientific research should focus on the economic analysis of the prospects for developing the tourism sector in frontline regions, studying international experiences in the reintegration of post-conflict territories into the tourism sector and examining the potential of digital technologies for promoting tourist destinations.

A comprehensive approach to forming the tourist environment in the frontline territories will contribute to their socio-economic stabilisation, the preservation of historical and cultural heritage and the improvement of the region's image.

SUMMARY

The article examines the transformation of tourism policy and strategic approaches to tourism development in the frontline regions of Ukraine under the conditions of ongoing armed aggression. The study analyses how different types of tourism – particularly volunteer, solidarity, memorial, rural, military and dark tourism – can adapt to wartime realities and contribute to the resilience of local communities. The analysis demonstrates that an appropriate combination of these tourism types can form an adaptive development model that meets security requirements and supports territorial recovery. The article examines the significance of tourism activities in preserving the memory of war, fostering a culture of remembrance, and facilitating international dialogue about war crimes. Based on these findings, strategic directions and project-oriented solutions are proposed to create more resilient and safe models of tourism management. It is demonstrated that integrating tourism into recovery policies can promote economic diversification and create new narratives of territorial identity. The proposed recommendations may be used by public authorities and tourism organisations in shaping post-war reconstruction policies and managing tourist flows in frontline regions.

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