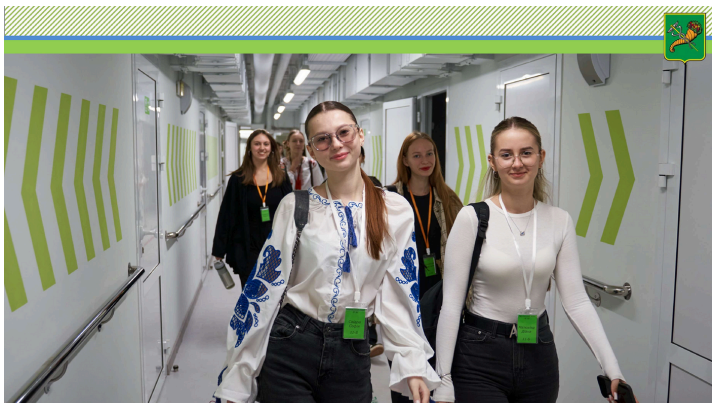
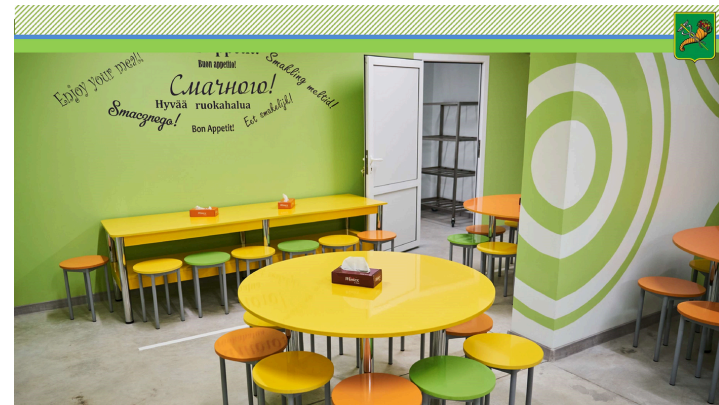


# Underground Life in Kharkiv, Ukraine

## A Testament to Resilience

In May 2024, Kharkiv opened its first underground schools, the first of its kind in Ukraine, providing a safe haven for students against Russian missiles and drones. Located just 24.8 miles (40 km) from the Russian border, the city is consistently under the threat of aerial attacks. Under a new initiative of the Mayor of Kharkiv, Ihor Terekhov, "Underground Schools," allows for more cultural and educational events, non standard teaching techniques and social integration.



Despite the war's devastating impact, Kharkiv continues to thrive, with many cultural events held in the metro stations, showcasing its resilience and vibrancy. Its more than survival, the city is showing they are stronger and their resistance ensures life prevails over any intent to destroy it. Ukrainian cities remain truly unbroken.



# **“Kharkiv is More Than Just a City”**

**IHOR TEREKHOV**

*Mayor of Kharkiv*

Kharkiv, the second-largest city in Ukraine, serves as the administrative center of the Kharkiv region. Its origins trace back to 1654, when Ukrainian Cossacks established the first settlement in the area. A significant historical milestone for the city was the founding of Ukraine's first university in 1805, V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, which has been home to three Nobel laureates: biologist Ilya Mechnikov, economist Simon Kuznets, and physicist Lev Landau. Over the years, Kharkiv has evolved into a modern and progressive metropolis, celebrated as a hub for students and a center for science and industry in Ukraine.

## **A Hub of Education and Innovation**

Recognized as a city of students and a scientific center, Kharkiv boasts numerous higher educational institutions and research centers. It is also home to the largest regional center of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. The city has a thriving IT sector, with many IT companies attracting young talent from local universities to create innovative solutions and products.

## **Quality of Life and Cultural Heritage**

Kharkiv is known as the most comfortable city to live in across Ukraine, featuring a wealth of parks, playgrounds, and recreational areas. Popular spots among residents and visitors include Taras Shevchenko Garden, the Central Park of Culture and Recreation, and the Kharkiv embankment. The city is rich in cultural offerings, with many theaters, museums, and galleries. Noteworthy cultural heritage sites like the Kharkiv Academic Ukrainian Drama Theater named after Taras Shevchenko, Pokrovska Church, Uspensky Cathedral, and Derzhprom (State Industry Building) are not only iconic symbols of Kharkiv but also recognized in the International List of Cultural Property under Enhanced Protection by UNESCO.

## **Industrial Powerhouse**

Kharkiv stands as a significant industrial hub in Ukraine, home to numerous factories specializing in mechanical engineering, food production, and chemical industries, as well as publishing. Its manufacturing capabilities extend to electrical engineering, instrument engineering, radio electronics, and the aerospace sector. The city benefits from a robust transportation infrastructure, comprising air and rail connections alongside an extensive public transport network that includes metro, trolleybus, bus, and tram routes.

## **Resilience Amidst Conflict**

During the initial days of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Kharkiv faced artillery and air strikes, as well as attempts by Russian troops to seize the city. These efforts were thwarted by the heroic resistance of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, the coordinated actions of local authorities, and the unwavering commitment of Kharkiv residents to their home. On March 6, 2022, Kharkiv was honored with the title **“Hero City of Ukraine”** by the Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 111/2022.

## **Recovery and Support**

Kharkiv endured extensive damage, more than any other major city in Ukraine. Civilian infrastructure and residential buildings, particularly in Northern Saltivka, which housed over 300,000 residents before the conflict, suffered significant destruction. Currently, the population is approximately 1.3 million, including over 210,000 internally displaced persons who relocated from occupied and de-occupied territories. To assist residents during wartime, the city implemented free public transport, provided free meals, and set up buvettes offering free drinking water throughout the city. Local taxes and fees for entrepreneurs continuing their businesses in Kharkiv were also waived, financed through the city's budget.

## **Innovative Educational Solutions**

Kharkiv became the first city in Ukraine to initiate a project for building underground schools and metro schools. Presently, seven underground schools are operational, with classrooms established at six separate metro stations. The city continues to develop these underground educational spaces, ensuring that children can learn and interact with their peers and teachers in a safe environment. Kharkiv also shares its insights from this project with other frontline cities in Ukraine.

## **A Testament to Resilience**

Despite the extensive destruction and ongoing shelling, Kharkiv exemplifies resilience and an indomitable spirit, serving as an inspiration to the world and other cities in Ukraine. The city continues to thrive, working alongside international partners to develop projects aimed at reconstructing Kharkiv across various essential sectors, including housing, transportation, heating, and water supply, all for the benefit of its residents.