

Monitoring report

«UNIVERSAL SOLDIER»
or
**Education as Russia's tool in the
occupied south of Ukraine**



Kyiv, 2022

Authors: Valentyna Potapova, Mariia Sulialina, Oleh Okhredko,
Serhii Movchan

Literary edition: Budzar Maryna

Layout and design: Maxym Afanasiev

Monitoring report «Universal Soldier» or Education as Russia's tool in the occupied south of Ukraine «/ V. Potapova, M. Sulialina, O. Okhredko, S. Movchan. - Kyiv: CCE "Almenda" 2022. - 33 p.

The monitoring was prepared by the CCE "Almenda" within the framework of the Chronicles of Destroyed Childhood project. The project is implemented with the financial support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic under the Transition Promotion Program.

The views expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

TRANSITION
Transition Promotion Program



Centre of civic education "Almenda" (CCE "Almenda") is a non-governmental organization registered in Yalta in 2011. Until 2014, the organization's priority was education in the field of human rights. In 2014, due to the occupation of Crimea, the organization was forced to move to Kyiv. Today, the organization's priorities are to ensure the systematic collection of accurate, timely, verified data on brutal violations committed against children in situations of armed conflict.

CCE "Almenda" is guided by the principles of objectivity, reliability and timeliness in the preparation of monitoring reports.

More about the CCE "Almenda": <http://almenda.org>

Contacts for comments and suggestions

Email: almenda.ngo@gmail.com

CONTENTS

Introduction	4
The temporarily occupied territories of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol	7
- The situation after the start of a full-scale invasion	9
- The use of education to manipulate historical events, justify Russia's full-scale invasion and the formation of the image of Ukraine as an enemy	11
- Actions in support of Russia's full-scale invasion	13
- May 9 events	18
- Teaching children the basics of military service	20
- All-Russian movement of children and youth «Big Change»	25
Situation in the territories of the south of Ukraine occupied in 2022 (Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions)	26
Recommendations	31

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, the Russian Federation has been using education (both formal and non-formal) to militarize the population of the occupied territories and destroy Ukrainian identity.

Among the areas of militarization implemented by the Russian Federation in the occupied territories, we distinguish the following:

- intimidation by external threats, systematic formation of the image of Ukraine as an enemy, which must be opposed with weapons in hand, and fostering a sense of responsibility for the fate of the Russians;
- promoting the cult of violence, weapons and war;
- teaching the basics of military affairs, handling weapons;
- nurturing support and respect for the power structures and Armed Forces of the Russian Federation;
- creating motivation to volunteer for service in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

Such actions of Russia are violations of:

- Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that the task of education is the comprehensive development of the individual and the increase of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Education should promote mutual understanding, tolerance and friendship among all peoples, racial or religious groups¹;
- Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which also raises the issue of education²;
- Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which stipulates that any propaganda for war must be prohibited by law³;
- Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that the education of the child should be aimed at preparing the individual for a conscious life in a free society based on mutual understanding, peace, tolerance, equality between men and women and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups, as well as with indigenous peoples⁴;

1 [source](#)

2 [source](#)

3 [source](#)

4 [source](#)

- Articles 38 and 39 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child aimed at protecting children in wartime⁵;
- Article 50 of the Convention for the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention), which prohibits the occupying State from including children in the lists of its formations or organizations; and Article 51, which prohibits the promotion of military service in the occupying army⁶.

5 [source](#)

6 [source](#)

Since February 24, 2022, the Russian Federation and the occupying authorities in Crimea have been persistently using the education system to form a loyal attitude of the population to the military actions that Russia is conducting on the territory of Ukraine. This includes the involvement of preschool and school-age children in actions in support of the so-called «special operation in Ukraine», as well as conducting thematic events of propagandistic nature, aimed at forming a distorted understanding of historical and contemporary events in Ukraine and other measures. In the newly occupied territories, education has also become the focus of attention of the Russian authorities: the translation of education into Russian, applications for the replacement of textbooks, preparation for re-certification of teaching staff and more.

The situation with the use of education for militarization, destruction of Ukrainian identity and formation of loyalty to military actions and war crimes committed by the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine is the subject of this monitoring report.

This monitoring report covers the period from February 24 to May 31, 2022.

Areas of research: militarization of children in the occupied territories, involvement of children in actions aimed at supporting the so-called «special operation» in Ukraine, the destruction of Ukrainian identity.

Geography: temporarily occupied territories of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the cities of Sevastopol, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia regions.

Monitoring is based on information obtained from:

- state authorities of Ukraine;
- reports of public organizations;
- open sources from the temporarily occupied territories, namely:

- information posted on official websites and official pages on social networks (including the VKontakte network) of the so-called Ministry of Education of the temporarily occupied territory;
- official statistical data of the Russian Federation; information posted on the websites of secondary schools of the temporarily occupied territories;
- local media publications of the temporarily occupied parts of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol;
- information published on social networks.

Limitations of the methodology:

In this study, the authors used only the sources available for them. Work with sources and analysis of information continued until May 31, 2022.

The data found on the Vkontakte social network were used to write the report. This is due to the fact that after the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine, most of the information from the occupying authorities was published on this social network, so it is now the only possible source of access to obtain the necessary information. The information presented in the report is considered in order to record the crimes of the Russian Federation and combat its disinformation spread.

THE TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED TERRITORIES OF THE AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC OF CRIMEA AND THE CITY OF SEVASTOPOL



7	source
8	source
9	source
10	source
11	source
12	source

As of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, the militarization of children and youth in occupied Crimea was already part of the deliberate policy of colonizing the peninsula, changing the national identity of Ukrainian children, promoting a cult of violence, weapons and war, and motivating them to serve in the Russian Armed Forces.

Substitution of identity - the destruction of Ukrainian and the formation of Russian - in the children of the occupied Crimea has become one of the main activities of the Russian Federation since the first days of occupation. One aspect of this process is the lack of opportunities to study in Ukrainian. There is only one school in Crimea that simulates teaching in Ukrainian (de facto such teaching does not take place), and only in grades 1-9, where approximately 200 children study.¹³

13 [source](#)

In the field of the general education system, militarization occurs through patriotic education. Back in December 2014, the «Concept of patriotic and spiritual and moral education of the population in the Republic of Crimea»¹⁴ and a number of documents for its implementation (plans, activities, programs) appeared. At the end of May 2015, the implementation of the «Strategy for the Development of Education in Russia for the period up to 2025»¹⁵ was launched in the Crimea. In particular, Part 2 of Section III of this strategy states that «patriotic upbringing and formation of Russian identity involves... formation of patriotism in children, pride in their homeland, readiness to defend the interests of the Fatherland, responsibility for Russia's future through patriotic education programs children, in particular, military-patriotic education».

14 [source](#)
[archive](#)

15 [source](#)
[archive](#)

It is worth noting that the propaganda of the war became part of the informational legalization of the occupation, which is implemented through school programs, textbooks, educational activities and tools for the formation of historical memory.

The direct transformation of school education into militarized education in the occupied Crimea took place through the mechanisms of so-called «cadet education». Cadet classes were opened in schools, which recruited pupils from the first grade. Cadet classes are opened or patronized by various institutions - from the Ministry of Defense to the Ministry of Emergencies. The police, the FSB, the Investigative Committee and other institutions have their own classes. For example, in the Simferopol school № 28 there is a cadet class under the patronage of the occupying «Ministry of Internal Affairs in Crimea»¹⁶, and on the basis of the school-lyceum № 3 there is a cadet class of the Investigative Committee of Russia.¹⁷

16 [source](#)
[archive](#)

17 [source](#)
[archive](#)

In addition to the cadet classes, the occupying power in the Crimea also opened Cossack classes. For example, in September 2016, the first Cossack class on the annexed peninsula was opened on the basis of the Simferopol school-gymnasium №10, where 36 «Cossack men and women studied».^{18,19}

18 [source](#)
[archive](#)

19 [source](#)
[archive](#)

An important role in the militarization of children's consciousness is played by the children's and youth military-patriotic movement «Unarmy»²⁰ that was actively launched in Crimea since 2016. Detachments of the Unarmy movement were created on the basis of schools, children were taught how to handle weapons, military-patriotic competitions were held, in which children aged 8 to 18 took part, and other types of events were organized by Unarmy students. Unarmy also includes a Mentoring program,²¹ through which orphans and caregivers join the ranks of this movement. By the end of 2024, it is planned to recruit every tenth student in the Crimea to the ranks of the «Unarmy».²² In addition to the Unarmy, CrimeaPatriotCenter is actively involved in militarization of Crimea.²³

[20 source](#)[21 source](#)[archive](#)[22 source](#)[archive](#)[23 source](#)

THE SITUATION AFTER THE START OF A FULL-SCALE INVASION

After the beginning of the full-scale invasion, the occupying authorities continued to use education for propaganda purposes, in particular to form a loyal attitude to the military actions conducted by the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine.

On February 24, the official website of the occupying Ministry of Education of Crimea published information about the suspension of studies in 9 municipal units (Dzhankoi, Krasnoperekopsk, Armyansk, Kerch, Dzhankoi, Krasnoperekopsk, Rozdolne, Black Sea and Lenin districts) until Monday 28.²⁴ And already on February 27 there was information about the introduction of vacations in schools of Armyansk, Krasnoperekopsk, Dzhankoi, as well as Krasnoperekopsk and Dzhankoi districts from February 28 to March 6.²⁵ Such actions were undoubtedly due to military necessity: namely, the use of the territory of Crimea as a springboard for invasion of Ukraine in the south.

[24 source](#)[archive](#)[25 source](#)[archive](#)

In the rhetoric of the occupying and Russian governments, the thesis of the artificiality of the Ukrainian nation and «Ukrainians as part of the Russian nation» intensified. This idea is persistently spread in the public space by high-ranking officials of the Russian Federation and the occupying power of Crimea. It is worth quoting the words of the chairman of the occupying State Council of Crimea Volodymyr Konstantynov:

“ Ukrainians have a big problem, which can be described as under-identification or lack of identity.

They do not exist as a people, as a single ethnic group. There is the Ukrainian nation as a community of citizens of Ukraine. But without a solid ethnic foundation, it begins to spread in any political crisis. This was the case in 2004, 2014, and this is what is happening now. If we reject the false husk of Ukrainian propaganda, it turns out that those whom it calls «Ukrainians» have always been considered and almost always considered themselves part of the Russian people. Undoubtedly, Ukraine is an important component of the Russian world, an integral part of it.

The founders of Ukrainianness had neither their own history nor a culture different from the all-Russian one. Mykhailo Hrushevsky invented the story for them with Austro-Hungarian money. They invented and canonized Shevchenko with the help of the Soviet government. His statues have appeared in almost every village. With him, Franko, Lesia Ukrainka, Marko Vovchok and other rascals entered the Ukrainian pantheon, which became the basis of previously unseen Ukrainian culture. At the same time, they managed to translate almost all education and all office work into the artificially constructed Ukrainian language in Lviv».²⁶

26

[source](#)[archive](#)

It is this interpretation of the history and perception of Ukraine as an artificial state, and Ukrainians as a fictional ethnic group, which «must return to their own roots» that is openly instilled by the Russian and occupation authorities to children through the education system.

THE USE OF EDUCATION TO MANIPULATE HISTORICAL EVENTS, JUSTIFY RUSSIA'S FULL-SCALE INVASION AND THE FORMATION OF THE IMAGE OF UKRAINE AS AN ENEMY

From the first days of March, the system of formal education in Crimea began to be actively used to justify the beginning of a full-scale war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

For example, on March 1-2, all schools are required to conduct lessons in history and social studies «My Country» (Russian: «Моя страна») according to the developed guidelines.²⁷ Classes were to be organized for students in grades 7-11. The purpose stated in the recommendations:

27 [source](#)
[archive](#)

“... Based on reliable facts and documents, to form in young people an adequate position on the implementation by the Russian Armed Forces a special peacekeeping operation to protect the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics».

Separate methodological recommendations were also developed for students of grades 7-8 on the topic «Events in Ukraine» and for students of grades 9-11, college students and teachers of higher education on the topic «Talk about important».²⁸

28 [source](#)
[archive](#)

In the process of implementing the order on March 1, the Simferopol Academic Gymnasium hosted a history lesson for cadets and soldiers, conducted by the so-called «Deputy Chairman of the State Council of the Republic of Crimea» Volodymyr Bobkov. During the speech, he said:

“It is important to check the information under the current conditions. Trust only official sources. It is not a war with Ukraine, but a special peacekeeping operation aimed at deterring nationalists who oppress the Russian-speaking population.»²⁹

29 [source](#)
[archive](#)

All-Russian online lesson «Defender of Peace» took place on March 3³⁰. The main emphasis of the lesson was placed on proving that Ukraine has been waging war against its own civilian population since 2014. During

30 [source](#)
[archive](#)

the lesson, the leaders justified Russia's invasion of Ukraine, called Russia's military action in Ukraine «forced peace,» and accused NATO of waging and supporting the war. In total, more than 5,000,000 students watched the broadcast of the open lesson, among them were students of the Crimea, in particular students of the Simferopol gymnasium №1 them. I.V. Kurchatova.³¹

31 [source](#)
[archive](#)

The return to the narratives of the Cold War and the creation of a bipolar world («Russian World» - «West») occurs in almost all academic disciplines of the socio-humanitarian cycle. At the end of May, the so-called «Chairman of the State Council of the Republic of Crimea» V. Konstantynov on his page in Vkontakte said:

“*We live in a unique time. Russia's relations with the West have not just strained. The West has decided to completely «abolish» Russia. And if so - and we are more aware than ever of the need to distance ourselves from the West, to stop walking in the fairway of Western civilization...*

The problems of teaching in schools are only part of the big problem of raising children. Properly organizing it based on our traditions is very important for our mentality. Any Western systems have not taken root in us, because we are completely different people.

*Russia is a separate world. Let's start from this - then everything will go well for us. For example, why everyone should study English to such an extent? Let those who see their own perspective in the field of communication in English specialize in its study...».*³²

32 [source](#)
[archive](#)

*In order to form a false historical narrative and manipulate the minds of children, the exhibition «Ordinary Nazism» was opened on April 19. According to the description, it contains «more than 200 exhibits about the atrocities of Ukrainian nationalists during World War II, materials from the state archives and funds of museums in Russia and Donetsk, and the main part of the exhibition is about mass crimes and terror of modern neo-Nazis against the people of Ukraine in 2014-2022. Here are Ukrainian textbooks, with the help of which children in Ukraine have long been instilled blasphemous nationalist ideas».*³³ On the same day, the opening of the first All-Russian Historical School Forum «Power in Truth» occurred.³⁴

33 [source](#)
[archive](#)

34 [source](#)
[archive](#)

There were also cases of pressure on those teachers (with their subsequent dismissal) who demonstrated a position different from the

all-Russian narrative. For example, a geography teacher from Dzhankoi was forced to write a letter of resignation after she told students during a break that there were no fascists or Nazis in Ukraine. After her release, she was summoned to law enforcement for an «interview.»³⁵

35 [source](#)
[archive](#)

Undoubtedly, the main purpose of these actions is based on the so-called «historical facts», to form students' perception of Ukrainian statehood as an artificial phenomenon, to incite hostility towards Ukrainians, comparing them with Nazis, neo-fascists and more.

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF RUSSIA'S FULL-SCALE INVASION

In addition to lessons, from the first days of March, children begin to be involved in various offline and online campaigns in support of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

For example, on March 1, a post appeared on the official website of the Ministry of Education of Crimea³⁶ in support of the so-called «special operation», which for the first time used the hashtags [#СвоихНеБросаем](#) [#Мыедины](#) [#Времяпомогать](#) [#КрымЗаПутинаZOZZ](#). And on March 9, the Crimea Patriot Center invites Crimeans to take part in an online action and demonstrate «support for Russian soldiers participating in a special operation in Ukraine.» During the publication of posts on social networks in the context of the action, its organizers called for the use of hashtags [ЗаРоссию](#), [ЗаНаших](#), [ЗаПутина](#), [СвоихНеБросаем](#) (transl. [ForRussia](#), [ForOurs](#), [ForPutin](#), [WeDoNotLeaveOurs](#)).³⁷

36 [source](#)
[archive](#)

Cadet classes and members of the Crimean Army began to take an active part in the action. For example, cadets of the Novoandriyivsky school from elementary to senior classes made photos with the hashtag [СвоихНеБросаем](#) ([WeDoNotLeaveOurs](#)).³⁸

37 [source](#)
[archive](#)

38 [source](#)
[archive](#)



The cadets of Novoandriyivska school, source of access:
<https://www.krympatriotcentr.ru/svoihnebrosaem.html>

Similar photos were taken by the Unarmy detachment and Volunteer Eco-Detachment «Battalion» of the Zhemchuzhynska School of the Nizhnyhirsky Region, as well as the creative association of the Center for Children and Youth Creativity of the Nizhnyhirsky Region «Battalion».³⁹

39 [source](#)
[archive](#)





Orphans were also involved in the action «We do not abandon ours». In particular, as part of the action, Rosguard officers held a lesson in courage for the members of the Loziv Special Boarding School, a competition of creative works and a flash mob «Za світ!» (transl. «Za World»). During the event, the children wrote letters of support to the Russian military, who are on a so-called «special operation», and handed them their drawings.⁴⁰

40

[source](#)
[archive](#)

ВСЕРОССИЙСКАЯ АКЦИЯ
«ПИСЬМО СОЛДАТУ»
1 МАРТА – 15 АПРЕЛЯ 2022 ГОДА

Электронные и бумажные письма от детей и взрослых участникам спецоперации

I ВАРИАНТ «БУМАЖНОЕ ПИСЬМО»

- 1 Написать письмо со словами поддержки участникам операции
- 2 Отправить письмо по адресу: 129090, г. Москва, Суворовская пл., д. 2, стр. 1 Центральный дом Российской Армии с пометкой на конверте «Письмо солдату»
- 3 Письма отправляются адресатам раз в три дня

II ВАРИАНТ «ЭЛЕКТРОННОЕ ПИСЬМО»

- 1 На сайте напишисолдату.рф формируется письмо: личное или коллективное (от отряда, класса)
- 2 Письмо отправляется в воинские части и публикуется на сайте

From March 1 to April 15, the All-Russian Children's and Youth Military-Patriotic Public Movement «UNARMY» held an All-Russian action «**Letter to a Soldier**».

Children from different cities of Crimea were involved in the action.



The soldiers of the Kuibyshev school named after N.T. Krysh-taleva of Bakhchisaray district take part in the All-Russian action «Soldier's letter».⁴¹

In late May, telegram channels reported that Russian soldiers involved in the war in Ukraine had received letters from children in Crimea.^{42,43,44,45,46}

Some letters stated that they were written by 1st graders. At the same time, the style of the letters raises doubts that they were actually written by first-graders..

41 [source](#)
[archive](#)

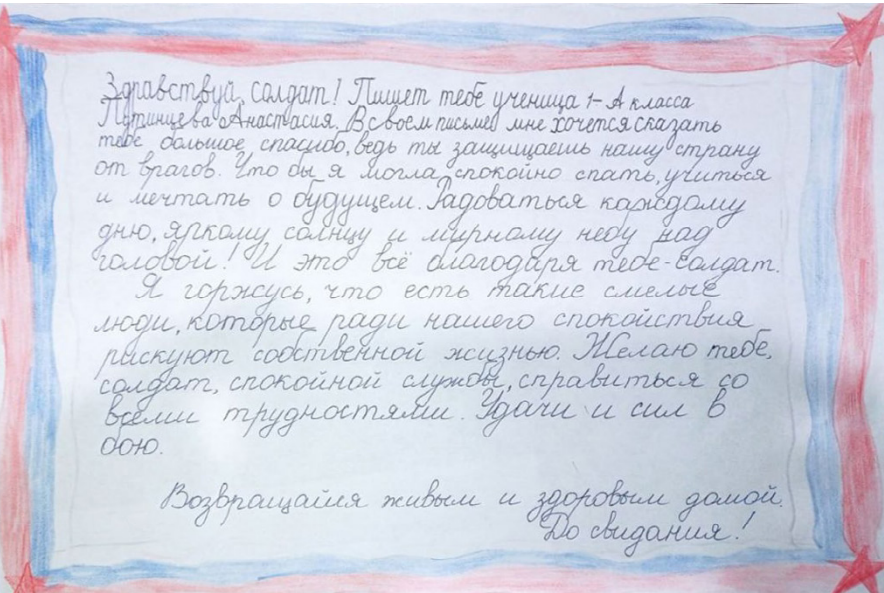
42 [source](#)
[archive](#)

43 [source](#)
[archive](#)

44 [source](#)
[archive](#)

45 [source](#)
[archive](#)

46 [source](#)
[archive](#)



Another action launched in Crimea is «**Children of Crimea - Children of Donbass**». As part of the action, school-age children from the Crimea collected humanitarian aid for children of the so-called «LDNR» and wrote them letters of support.⁴⁷



During all events, children are encouraged to actively use the symbols of Z. In 2022, these symbols were used during events dedicated to the anniversary of the occupation of the peninsula.⁴⁸

48

[source](#)[archive](#)

Throughout the spring, the children were persistently persuaded of the «liberation» nature of the so-called «special operation» of the Russian Federation and the «heroism» of Russian soldiers involved in the war in Ukraine. At the end of the school year, on May 27, at a meeting of the Crimean League of Activists of the Council of High School Students and Members of the Youth Government of the Republic of Crimea with the so-called Prime Minister of Crimea Serhiy Aksenov, the initiative to hold meetings of schoolchildren with participants of the «special military operation» and in general with the Crimean people, who were awarded the title of Hero of Russia and Hero of the Soviet Union was supported.⁴⁹ This decision proves that the use of education as a tool to build support for Russia's actions against Ukraine will not only continue, but will gain resonance.

49

[source](#)[archive](#)

MAY 9 EVENTS

Since the end of April, the main focus of events has been on the events of World War II (in the version of the «Great Patriotic War», relevant in modern Russia).

This includes such actions as «The red rose»⁵⁰, «St. George's ribbon»⁵¹, «Immortal regiment»⁵², «Old songs on the most important»⁵³, «The windows of victory»^{54,55}, a competition «We are the descendants of a great victory»⁵⁶, and various events at the school level, for example, in the school №15 in Sevastopol there were exhibitions «Heroes of the Russian Land», «Little Heroes of the Great War», an exhibition of historical photo-reconstructions «Connection of times. 77 years of Great Victory».⁵⁷

Although all events are supposed to commemorate the events of World War II, they use symbols Z and V and draw parallels between the victory over the Nazis in World War II and the struggle against the Nazis in modern Ukraine.⁵⁸

In May, the thematic 5th shift «Descendants of Victory» took place at the Artek Children's Center. The participants of the change took part in the actions dedicated to May 9, including the «Immortal Regiment» march.⁵⁹

On May 9, children (from junior schoolchildren) are traditionally dressed in military uniforms and involved in parades.⁶⁰



Students of 1-B class, Simferopol Academic Gymnasium

50 [source](#)
[archive](#)

51 [source](#)
[archive](#)

52 [source](#)
[archive](#)

53 [source](#)
[archive](#)

54 [source](#)
[archive](#)

55 [source](#)
[archive](#)

56 [source](#)
[archive](#)

57 [source](#)
[archive](#)

As an example, the video «FORMOTHERLAND» of the Creative Unarmy Youth Union of the Hero City of Sevastopol under the leadership of Daria Shparuk.

58 [source](#)
[archive](#)

59 [source](#)
[archive](#)

60 [source](#)
[archive](#)

TEACHING CHILDREN THE BASICS OF MILITARY SERVICE

All this time, training in the basics of military service and support for the motivation of service in the armed forces of the occupying country has not stopped.

On April 5, the so-called «Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea» held a meeting on the organization of educational meetings with students of secondary schools and professional educational organizations of the Republic of Crimea in 2022. The main focus was on learning the basics of military service.

“*Today it is desirable to develop a model of interaction that would be most useful for students in the process of learning basic knowledge in the field of defense and their training in the basics of military service*», Valentyna Lavryk, so-called Minister of Education of the Republic of Crimea.

The replenishment of the ranks of the Unarmy with new members does not stop. For example, on March 26 in Simferopol 250 more Crimean schoolchildren were admitted to the ranks of the Union Army,⁶¹ and in Sevastopol in 2022 1199 schoolchildren joined the Unarmy.⁶² Members of the Unarmy are involved in various events, including the Victory Day march on May 9⁶³ and a march in honor of Pioneer Day on May 19.⁶⁴



March 26, admission of new members to the ranks of the Unarmy in Simferopol. Source of access: <https://www.krympatriotcentr.ru/юнармия-мы-дету-крымской-весны.html>

61 [source](#)

[archive](#)

62 [source](#)

[archive](#)

63 [source](#)

[archive](#)

64 [source](#)

[archive](#)

Special projects are being implemented to glorify and promote military service. Among them is «Watch of Generations' Memory - Post №1». Within the framework of the project, pupils of military-patriotic clubs and cadet classes «carry the Honor Guard» near the cultural heritage sites.^{65,66,67}

65 [source](#)[archive](#)66 [source](#)[archive](#)67 [source](#)[archive](#)

«Honor Guard» in the Yuri Gagarin park, Simferopol. Source of access:

<https://www.krympatriotcentr.ru/цветы-к-мемориалу-вечный-огонь-и-отк.html>

There are various competitions, such as «Review of the system and songs», which involve students from 1 to 11 classes. Such a competition took place on May 11 in DBOU RK «Kerch boarding school with intensive physical training».⁶⁸

68 [source](#)[archive](#)

The competition «Review of the system and songs» in DBOU RK «Kerch boarding school with intensive physical training».

Source of access: https://vk.com/monmrk?w=wall-148027165_3431



The competition «Review of the system and songs» in DBOU RK «Kerch boarding school with intensive physical training». Source of access: https://vk.com/monmrk?w=wall-148027165_3431

Military-patriotic games, such as «Victory», remain a special area of teaching children the basics of military service^{69,70}, «Zarnitsa», military-patriotic tournament «In memory of the heroes of the Fatherland»⁷¹, military-sports game «51st Army Cup»⁷² and others⁷³. The content of the games is similar. For example, according to the program of the municipal stage of the all-Russian military-sports game «Victory», which took place in late May on the basis of the Black Sea Secondary School №1 name after N. Kudri, the participants competed in 4 stages: in the quest «War pages of the history of the Fatherland» (half-hour test of knowledge of the history of Russia); in the competitions «Business Card» (creative presentation on «What does it mean to be a patriot of your country?») and «Put in uniform, strong in battle» (competition determined the best teams performing military techniques), the competition «Military Relay», where the participants competed in speed, endurance, self-confidence, courage and determination). The organizers of the game «Victory» are the Ministry of Defense of Russia, the Ministry of Education of Russia, GDP «Unarmy» and the Russian school movement⁷⁴.

69 [source](#)[archive](#)70 [source](#)[archive](#)71 [source](#)[archive](#)72 [source](#)[archive](#)73 [source](#)[archive](#)74 [source](#)[archive](#)



Municipal stage of the All-Russian military sports game «Victory», May 2022, Black Sea Secondary School №1 name after N. Kudri. Source of access: <https://crimea-news.com/society/2022/05/22/925460.html>

According to the program of the tournament «In Memory of the Heroes of the Fatherland», which took place in mid-May among students of secondary schools in Simferopol, the participants had to show their skills and abilities in tourism, physical and shooting training, assembly and disassembly of Kalashnikov rifle, Michael Kalashnikov biography, and also had to prepare a «Battle Leaflet» and present their team in the nomination «Greeting».⁷⁵

75 [source](#)
[archive](#)

During the military-sports game «Army 51 Cup», which took place in the second half of May in the Red Guard district, the participants competed in the following categories: air rifle shooting, military training, military-sports relay, military ranks.⁷⁶

76 [source](#)
[archive](#)



The fourth open military-sports games for the «51st Army Cup», Krasnogvardiysky district. Source of access: <https://www.krympatriotcentr.ru/ky60k-51-ў-apyuu.html>



The fourth open military-sports games for the «51st Army Cup», Krasnogvardiysky district. Source of access: <https://www.krympatriotcentr.ru/кубок-51-й-армии.html>

Thematic militaristic shifts are taking place. On May 13, a Unarmy shift took place in the Children's Health Camp «Alyye Parusa», in which 276 Unarmy members took part.⁷⁷ For 21 days, participants worked in specialized groups on military affairs, history of the Fatherland, tourism training, **tactics and strategies of military action on the examples of operations of the Great Patriotic War and modern conflicts**. The Army mastered the intricacies of the design of modern small arms and acquired safety skills.⁷⁸

77 [source](#)
[archive](#)

78 [source](#)
[archive](#)



The opening of the Unarmy shift in the Children's Health Camp «Alyye Parusa». Source of access: <https://www.krympatriotcentr.ru/открытие-юнармейской-смены-в-дол-алы.html>

ALL-RUSSIAN MOVEMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH «BIG CHANGE» (RUS. «БОЛЬШАЯ ПЕРЕМЕНА»)

A significant step towards even greater militarization and unification of children's identity under the «All-Russian» was the initiative to launch the All-Russian movement of children and youth «Big Change». The new structure will be created on the basis of the existing Russian movement of schoolchildren, the project «Big Change», «Unarmy» and a number of regional organizations.⁷⁹

79 [source](#)
[archive](#)

It is symbolic that the bill on the creation of the movement was submitted to the State Duma on May 19 - the day of the 100th anniversary of the All-Union Pioneer Organization named after Lenin. The movement was created *«for the comprehensive development and self-realization of children and youth; preparing children and youth for a full life in society, including the formation of their worldview based on traditional Russian spiritual and moral values, traditions of the peoples of the Russian Federation, achievements of Russian and world culture, and development of socially significant and creative activity, high moral qualities, love and respect for the Motherland, diligence, legal culture, caring for nature and the environment, a sense of personal responsibility for their fate and the fate of the Motherland to present and future generations»*.⁸⁰

80 [source](#)
[archive](#)

Children **from the age of 6** can become members of the movement. The creation of the movement, in fact, aims to restore the Soviet movement of pioneers. The head of the Russian-occupied Republic of Crimea Serhiy Aksenov also stated about «heredity» in his speech:

“«We do not abandon our traditions and celebrate May 19, the Day of Children's Public Associations»⁸¹

81 [source](#)
[archive](#)

According to media reports, the bill is planned to be adopted in the first reading on June 7.⁸²

82 [source](#)
[archive](#)

SITUATION IN THE TERRITORIES OF THE SOUTH OF UKRAINE OCCUPIED IN 2022 (KHERSON AND ZAPORIZHZHIA REGIONS)

From the beginning of the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation, the geography of the occupied territories expanded significantly. In the south of the country, as of the end of May 2022, some parts of Mykolayiv, Odesa (Zmiiny Island), as well as large areas of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions are under occupation.^{83,84}

83 [source](#)

In the 2021-2022 academic year, there were 170,381 students in the Zaporizhzhia region and 496 educational institutions, while in the Kherson region there were 113,562 students and 384 educational institutions, respectively.

84 [source](#)

From the beginning of a new phase of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the educational process in Ukrainian schools was suspended.⁸⁵ Some schools began to be used as humanitarian centers, for example, in Berdyansk in early March, in all schools in the city humanitarian aid centers were established.⁸⁶

85 [source](#)

86 [source](#)
[archive](#)

Legalizing the occupying power in the occupied territories, the representatives of the Russian authorities acted according to the scenario worked out in the Crimea: to persuade employees of the education system to cooperate.⁸⁷ All methods are used for this, including intimidation and kidnapping⁸⁸. For example, on March 28 there was news about the abduction of the head of the education department of the Melitopol City Council Iryna Shcherbatiuk, due to the refusal of the city's educators to cooperate with the occupation authorities and resume the educational process under the Russian program.⁸⁹ And on March 31 in Melitopol the head of gymnasium №4 Anzhelina Kovalenko, the head of lyceum №9 Liudmyla Chuha, the head of gymnasium №11 Marharyta Ovsianyukova and the head of gymnasium №13 Olena Halatsan were kidnapped. After being kept in the garage for four days, the women were taken out 30 kilometers from the city. They got home on foot, and now they have left for different cities of Ukraine.⁹⁰

87 [source](#)

88 [source](#)

89 [source](#)

90 [source](#)

Also, in the end of March, there is information about the attempts from April 2022 to begin the educational process in institutions of general secondary education and in institutions of vocational (technical) education with the introduction of educational standards of the aggressor state.⁹¹

91 [source](#)

Already on April 4 there was information that in Melitopol education was resumed in Higher education establishments, colleges and vocational schools.⁹² Earlier, the media had already reported that the director of the Melitopol College of Industry and Economics, Olena Shapurova, was forcing her students to return to full-time classes in the occupied city. The young people were warned that in case of non-attendance they would be given an «n» («did not show up»), and then simply expelled.⁹³ *On April 11, some kindergartens and schools in Melitopol began to resume their work.*^{94,95,96,97,98,99} All this took place under the pressure of the newly appointed mayor of Melitopol Halyna Danylchenko and the head of the city education department Olena Sharupova.

92 [source](#)[archive](#)93 [source](#)[archive](#)94 [source](#)[archive](#)95 [source](#)[archive](#)

On April 22, the Zaporizhzhia Regional State Administration issued an order due to the temporary occupation of part of the Zaporizhzhia region: to officially end the school year in the occupied territories on May 2, 2022.

96 [source](#)[archive](#)97 [source](#)[archive](#)

According to the order of the Education Department of the Kherson City Council of April 26, 2022 № 46-T «On the organized end of the 2021/2022 school year in general secondary schools of the Kherson City Territorial Community» most schools completed the school year in late April. The situation was similar in other cities and towns of the region.^{100,101,102}

98 [source](#)[archive](#)99 [source](#)[archive](#)

As of the beginning of May, the school year is over in almost all educational institutions of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions. Teachers refused to cooperate with the occupiers.^{103 104}

100 [source](#)101 [source](#)

The educational process continued in occupied Melitopol. For example, on May 3, the educational process resumed in the secondary school №6 and gymnasium №11, kindergartens №41 «Barvinok», №48 «Vedmedyk», №99 «Zirochka».¹⁰⁵

102 [source](#)103 [source](#)104 [source](#)[archive](#)

In May, Melitopol educational institutions hosted events dedicated to the Second World War, which repeated the all-Russian narrative in the coverage of events.¹⁰⁶ Activities were held for children, starting with kindergarten. In particular, on May 5, an open lesson was held for the pupils of Melitopol Kindergarten №46 «Vinochok», where children were told about Melitopol heroes who fought on the fronts of the Great Patriotic

105 [source](#)[archive](#)106 [source](#)[archive](#)

War, children took part in a drawing contest dedicated to Victory Day and a thematic lesson «Songs of the war years».¹⁰⁷ Russian symbols were actively used during the events, including St. George's ribbon.

107 [source](#)
[archive](#)

Additionally, in April, there were applications for retraining of teachers from the occupied Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Kharkiv, Luhansk, Donetsk regions of Ukraine in the occupied Crimea according to Russian standards.¹⁰⁸ This was announced on his Vkontakte page by the chairman of the occupying State Council of Crimea Volodymyr Konstantynov:

108 [source](#)
[archive](#)

“ Without a radical cleansing of this rotten educational system, the denazification of the territory of the former Ukraine is simply impossible»

“ But textbooks are not enough. We need honest, ideologically positive teachers»

“ ...we are ready to retrain teachers and, if necessary, to form our landing of volunteer teachers. These people will be our companions, will restore what was destroyed not in houses and on the streets, but in people's souls»¹⁰⁹

109 [source](#)
[archive](#)

After gaining a foothold in the occupied territories, the occupying authorities set out to build a «new system of education.» To implement this task, in late May, principals, administration and teachers of schools in the occupied territories of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions were forcibly summoned to meetings and urged to prepare for training under the new program and go to the Crimea for «training».^{110,111} Those who disagree are threatened with dismissal.¹¹²

110 [source](#)
[archive](#)

The process of integration of the occupied territories into the Russian educational field follows the situation that took place in the territories of the occupied Crimea and Donetsk and Luhansk regions in 2014. This includes a return to the 5-point grading system, and retraining of teachers, and the transition to the Russian language of instruction, and the replacement of Ukrainian textbooks with Russian.¹¹³ Already in May, newly appointed occupiers of the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions announced the transition of education in schools and higher education establishments to the Russian language with the possibility of forming

111 [source](#)
[archive](#)

112 [source](#)
[archive](#)

113 [source](#)
[archive](#)

Ukrainian classes at the request of parents.^{114,115} At the same time, the processes that took place in Crimea, where the possibility of studying in the Ukrainian language was also declared, give every reason to believe that de facto citizens of Ukraine who found themselves under occupation will not be able to study in their native language.

114 [source](#)
[archive](#)

115 [source](#)
[archive](#)

TEXTBOOKS

One of the first steps of the occupiers, as it was during the occupation of Crimea, was the removal of Ukrainian textbooks from schools. To justify its actions, the Russian Federation accused the Ukrainian authorities of using history textbooks to prepare young people for war with Russia.

At the press conference «Ukrainian textbooks as an element of hate propaganda»¹¹⁶, which took place on March 30, 2022¹¹⁷, Russian Education Minister Serhii Kravtsov said:

116 [source](#)
[archive](#)

“*We have analyzed more than 300 textbooks and manuals. The textbooks of primary school, primary school, high school, and saw that it is a purposeful work and building a chain that distorts history and historical truth. Children were targeted for hatred of Russia purposefully. We will never allow the facts of the Great Patriotic War, our friendship with Ukraine and other countries to be distorted in Russian textbooks on history and geography. Our country has always been open, always helped fraternal peoples, in particular Ukraine.*”¹¹⁸

117 [source](#)
[archive](#)

118 [source](#)
[archive](#)

At the same time, the United Russia party has stated its readiness to send Russian textbooks to the occupied territories, because, according to the party's general council secretary Andrii Turchak:

“*[In textbooks] that we found in Ukrainian schools - hair stands on end from what we saw: propaganda of both cruelty and anti-Russian ideas. Our common history, in particular the history of the Great Patriotic War, has been turned upside down.*”¹¹⁹

119 [source](#)
[archive](#)

And on April 18 on the Vkontakte page the chairman of occupying State council of the Crimea Volodymyr Konstantynov wrote:

“Ukraine has formed a generation that has no roots, which does not know its history. Against this background, the junta, which seized power in Kyiv as a result of a coup, tried to blind a new national mentality based on a ideology disgusting to humanity - Nazism. This horrific experiment has spawned zombie soldiers who are ready to ruthlessly kill their fellow citizens and die in the name of some false idols made of executioners and goblins.

*Crimea is ready to help. The State Council is already collecting literature for students of schools in the liberated territories».*¹²⁰

120

[source](#)[archive](#)

Thus, the occupying power is set to replace textbooks and start using education in the new school year to promote Russian narratives and destroy Ukrainian identity, as has been the case for eight years in the occupied Donetsk, Luhansk and Crimean territories.

In addition, history books have been confiscated from local libraries, which the occupiers say «spread the ideas of nationalism».¹²¹ Instead, it is planned to import «correct» literature from the Crimean libraries.¹²² An example of «correct» literature is the book «Who has glory in Ukraine or Bandera kaput» authored by the head of the Department of International Affairs of KFU Alexander Mashchenko and the Crimean journalist Oleh Markelov. The book was written on the initiative and edited by the so-called «Chairman of the State Council of the Republic of Crimea» Volodymyr Konstantynov.¹²³

121

[source](#)[archive](#)

122

[source](#)[archive](#)

123

[source](#)[archive](#)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 For international organizations and governments of democratic countries introduce personal sanctions against the leaders of «CrimeaPatriotCenter», DOSAAF Russia, «Unarmy and the All-Russian Movement for Children and Youth «Big Change», as well as education leaders who introduce militarization and destroy Ukrainian identity;
- 2 The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization should consider depriving the Russian Federation of its UNESCO status;
- 3 For the Secretary-General of the United Nations to include in the Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict and the Annual Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict the information of limitations on the right to education in the occupied territories of Ukraine;
- 4 To the Government of the Russian Federation pursuant to Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Articles 29, 38, 39 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: to eradicate the policy of militarization of education from school curricula of educational institutions located in the territories occupied by Russia;
- 5 To the Government of the Russian Federation pursuant to Article 50 of the Convention for the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention): to stop encouraging and involving Ukrainian children in the occupied territories to serve in the military of the Russian Federation;
- 6 The Office of the Attorney General to initiate pre-trial investigations into persons involved in the militarization of education in the temporarily occupied territories;
- 7 The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine to develop a mechanism for obtaining Ukrainian secondary education by children from the occupied regions of Ukraine. At the moment, this may be access to education through online platforms, and later - through the establishment of schools with the possibility of living in them;

- 8 The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the Ministry of Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories to develop and implement a number of measures aimed at relocating and supporting children from the occupied territories to study in Ukrainian Higher Education establishments;
- 9 The Ministry of Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories should introduce programs of socio-psychological adaptation of children from the temporarily occupied territories in institutions of complete general secondary education and institutions of higher education.

