

TRANSITION

Transition Promotion Program



Information review

COUNTDOWN TIMER: CHILDREN AND WAR

25.06-24.07

: 1 5 1 :

DAYS

: 3 6 2 4 :

HOURS

: 2 1 7 4 4 0 :

SECONDS

Information review

Countdown Timer: Children and War 25.06-24.07

Authors: Valentyna Potapova, Mariia Sulialina, Anna Klymenko

Layout and design: Maxym Afanasiev

Information review «Countdown Timer: Children and War» (25.06-24.07)

/ V. Potapova, M. Sulialina, A. Klymenko – Kyiv: CCE”Almenda” 2022. – 27 p

The information review “Countdown Timer: Children and War (25.06-24.07)” was prepared by the centre of civic education “Almenda” within the framework of the project “Chronicles of the Ruined Childhood”. The project is implemented with the financial support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic as part of the Transition Promotion Program.

The views expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not 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 preparing information and analytical materials.

More about the Centre of civic education “Almenda”: <http://almenda.org>

Contacts for comments and suggestions

Email: almenda.ngo@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

This information review continues the series of materials on documenting [six grave violations](#)¹ against children in armed conflict, which are the subject of the [annual report](#) of the UN Secretary-General titled “Children and Armed Conflict” and the [annual report](#) of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. Namely:

1 [source](#)

- Recruitment or use of children as soldiers
- Killing and maiming
- Rape and other forms of sexual violence
- Attacks against schools or hospitals
- Abduction
- Denial of humanitarian access.

Information review “Countdown timer: children and war (25.06-24.07)” aims to systematize the available information about gross violations committed against children since the beginning of the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine. To prepare the review, the available information was collected and recorded. Statistics and data from official state sources of the Office of the Prosecutor General, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the Ministry of Reintegration of the Occupied Territories of Ukraine, the Verkhovna Rada Commissioner for Human Rights and regional military administrations were analyzed.

The main international legal acts by which the authors of the review were guided during the determination of violations and which are the basis of the protection of children in situation of armed conflict were:

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child regarding the participation of children in armed conflicts
- Geneva Conventions for the Protection of War Victims
- Additional protocols to the Geneva Conventions
- International Labor Organization Convention No. 182 on the prohibition and immediate measures to eliminate the worst forms of child labor

- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and a number of UN Security Council Resolutions, including 1261 (1999), 1314 (2000), 1460 (2003), 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009), 1998 (2011) and 2225 (2015)
- UNICEF school safety declarations

In this information review we offer a brief description of the events which happened in the fifth month since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, which are connected with six serious violations against children in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict.



KILLING AND MAIMING OF CHILDREN

International humanitarian law aims to protect civilians as much as possible. Hence, the prohibition of violence against civilians, including children, is a basic principle of customary law with universal application to all situations of armed conflict.

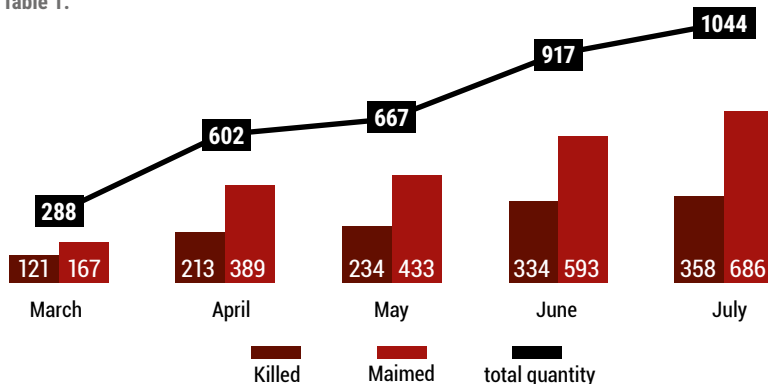
IHL is also based on certain principles: distinction and proportionality. These principles are aimed to protect civilians from the consequences of hostilities and provide prevention of unnecessary “collateral damages” as a result of hostilities. They prohibit indiscriminate and disproportionate military attacks, as well as direct attacks against civilians.

Analyzing the causes of the death and maiming of children during the fifth month of the war, we can state that almost all episodes represent gross violations of international humanitarian law.

For almost five months ignoring international law, the Russian Federation continues to kill and maim the civilian population, including children. As of 24 July 2022, the number of killed and maimed children continues to rise (Table1²)

Killing and maiming of children as of 24.07.2022

Table 1.



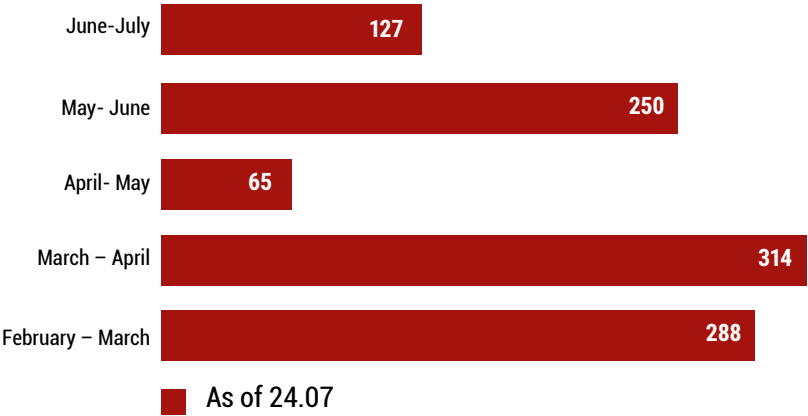
2

The data are taken from the website of the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine and are not final, as work is ongoing to fix them in places of active hostilities, in temporarily occupied and liberated territories

Regarding the monthly dynamic of violation, which concerns the killing and maiming of children, we can observe a decrease (Table 2)

Monthly dynamic of violation

Table 2.



According to the authors of the review, the decrease in dynamics is not caused by the fact that the armed forces of the Russian Federation began to adhere to the norms of international humanitarian law, but rather is a consequence of the localization of hostilities in the territories of Donetsk, Luhansk, Mykolaiv, Kherson and Kharkiv regions.

The highest figures for the death and maiming of children are in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Of 127 children who were injured during the five months of the war, 61 children were from Donbas.

On 27-2 June 2022, the armed forces of the Russian Federation and the illegal armed units controlled by them shelled Krasnohorivka, Maryinka, Avdiivka, the village of Pervomajiske, village Katerynivka, village Novoukrainka, Bakhmut, Soledar, Chasiv Yar, village Pavlivka of Volnovasky district, village Alexander-Kalynov. Two civilians were killed, and another eight were wounded, including a 5-year-old child.³

3 [source](#)

On 3 July, the occupiers shelled Dobropillya of the Donetsk region. At least two people were killed and three were wounded. Among the wounded are two children of 4 and 7 years, reported Pavlo Kyrylenko, the head of the Donetsk regional military administration.⁴

4 [source](#)

On 7-8 July 2022, the Russian army covered Siversk and Bakhmut with heavy fire. The occupiers' shells injured three people, including a 12-year-old boy.⁵

5 [source](#)

According to the investigation, on 9 July 2022, the occupying forces of the Russian Federation shelled the city of Kostyantynivka with rockets and artillery fire. A 12-year-old girl was injured as a result of the enemy attack.⁶

6 [source](#)

On 12 July, two boys aged 2 and 17 were wounded as a result of shelling in Siversk, the Donetsk region. A two-year-old child is in serious condition.⁷

7 [source](#)

On 15 July, the Bakhmut district of the Donetsk region was once again under fire from the occupiers. A 14-year-old girl was injured in the village Verkhnokamjanske, and in the village Svyato-Pokrovske - 16-year-old.⁸

8 [source](#)

2 children are killed or injured in the war zone almost every day.

At the same time, the armed forces of the aggressor's state, violating the Geneva Conventions, are shelling the civilian population of Ukraine regions where there are currently no military operations and where there are no military targets.

An example of such a violation is the shelling on 14 July with high-precision missiles of the "Calibre" type of the center of Vinnytsia, where only civilian objects were located: office buildings, the Neuromed medical center, apartment buildings, and private residential buildings, etc.



As a result of the rocket attack, three children were killed - a 4-year-old girl and two boys, 7 and 8 years old, and 4 received injuries of varying degrees of severity.

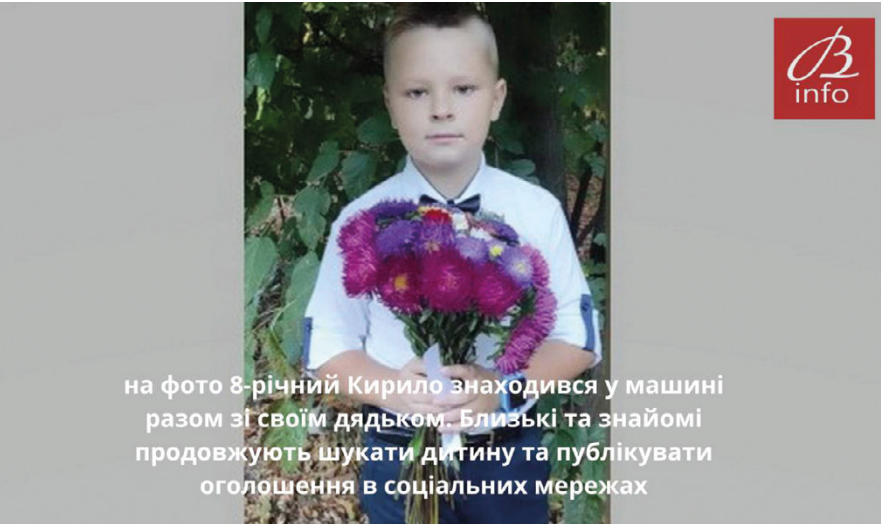
A 4-year-old girl Lisa went to a speech therapist with her mother.

Photo. Photo of the body of deceased Liza shared by the State Emergency Service after the rocket attack on Vinnytsia on 14 July⁹

9 [source](#)

One of the boys was being examined at the medical center at the time of the attack. He died together with his mother.

Another boy was waiting for his uncle in a parked car and fell into a fire trap. A relative of this boy was thrown away by the blast wave. Now he is in hospital.



The photo shows 8- year-old Kyrylo, who was in the car at the moment of the attack¹⁰

10 [source](#)



The photo shows 7-year-old Maksym together with his mother Victoria. They died during rocket attack. At that time, they were in "Neuromed" medical center.¹¹

11 [source](#)

"8-year-old Roman was sent to Lviv. His mother died... In Poland, they are looking for a hospital that deals with the treatment of burns of the type that Roma has," Serhiy Borzov, the head of the Vinnytsia regional military administration, announced this on 19 July.¹²

12 [source](#)

The principle of proportionality mentioned above prohibits military attacks if they cause civilians' deaths or injuries, or damage of civilian objects which are excessive compared to the expected direct military advantage of the attack.

It is difficult to imagine what military advantage the Russian Federation gained by killing 3 children and injuring 4 children in the center of Vinnytsia by direct fire with high-precision missiles of the "Calibre" type. Thus, in the Russian-Ukrainian war, the Russian Federation deliberately violates the principles related to the law of war:

- the principle of limitation by Individuals (civilian population and individual civilians use general protection from dangers arising in connection with military operations);
- principle of object limitation (attacks must be strictly limited by military objects);
- the principle of limitation on means and methods of conducting military operations (it is forbidden to use against anyone weapons or methods of conducting military operations, capable to cause excessive damage or excessive suffering)

On 28 June at five o'clock in the morning, 4 children were injured. A three-month-old infant is in a coma, a one-year-old child, and 13- and 16-year-olds.¹³

13 [source](#)

On 27 June, as a result of the shelling of Kharkiv and the region, 5 children were taken to the trauma department of the emergency hospital: 1 was in very serious condition, 2 were in serious condition, 2 were in an average condition.¹⁴

14 [source](#)

On 1 July, as a result of a night missile attack by Tu-22 strategic aircraft which flew in the direction of the Black Sea in the Belgorod-Dniester region, three X-22 missiles hit an apartment building and two recreation centers. 2 children died, 4 children and a pregnant woman were injured, 3 children were rescued from ruined houses.¹⁵

15 [source](#)

On 9 July, around 10:00 a.m., the Russian military shelled the central part of Kharkiv. According to preliminary reports, the strike was probably by an “Iskander” ballistic missile. As a result of the shelling, six people were injured, including a 12-year-old girl.¹⁶

16 [source](#)

On 11 July, according to Serhii Bolvinov, the head of the Police Investigation Department of the Kharkiv region, the occupiers shelled the Kyiv, Saltiv and Osnovyan districts of Kharkiv. According to his words, a shopping mall, residential buildings and personal cars of local residents came under fire.

“At the sites of shelling, fragments of projectiles MRL “Hurricane” were recovered. At the moment, it is known about 4 dead and 31 injured, including two children,” he said.

Bolvinov said that two of the dead were a father and a 17-year-old son who were in the car during the shelling. *“Direct hit. They were going to get a paper for a boy, for entering a university. There was almost nothing left of the car and the people,”* he told the details of the tragedy.



Photo of the remains of the car driven by 17-year-old boy who dreamed of becoming a student¹⁷

17 [source](#)

In the morning of 20 July, the Russian occupiers [shelled](#) Kharkiv from the “Hurricane”. Three people died near the traffic stop, [among them](#) a 13-year-old boy. His 15-year-old sister [is](#) in serious condition.

13-year-old Dmytro was engaged in ballroom dancing, attended classes together with his older sister Ksenia (doctors are currently fighting for the life of the 15-year-old girl). Dmytro started dancing at the age of eight. The siblings were a dancing couple.

“At the beginning they danced separately, he danced with another girl. And then their parents decided, although the sister was two years older, to make them partner dances... Usually we pair children according to the same age. But the parents said that it would be convenient, in order trainings and competitions coincide and they would be always together. In their age category competitions, they won prizes and took first places in the city competitions,” said the children’s coach.



The photo shows a 13-year old brother and a 15-year old sister with their dance coach of the dance club “Lisabond” Olga Lisnyak.

The limited size of the information review does not allow providing information on all 127 recorded “cases”. But, every episode is a brutal violation of international law and international humanitarian law, behind which stands the destroyed fate of a particular child.



ATTACKS AGAINST SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS, AND PROTECTED PERSONS CONNECTED WITH THEM

Such attacks include those attacks on schools or medical facilities that lead to the total or partial destruction of these facilities, as well as other encroachments on the normal functioning of these facilities, such as their occupation, shelling or using for propaganda purposes or other actions aimed to harm schools or medical facilities or their personnel.

A “school” denotes a recognizable education facility or learning site. Education facilities and learning sites must be recognized and known by the community as a learning spaces and marked by visible boundaries.

Schools and hospitals should be zones of peace where children are protected even during the conflict time. Schools and universities whether operating or closed for the rest of the day or on holidays, vacated or abandoned are ordinary civilian facilities.

Everyone’s right for education is layed down in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The most important beneficiaries of this right are children and it is additionally fixed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which describes in detail the obligations placed on states, compliance with which is necessary for the proper realization of the right to education. But the right to education means little if students cannot go to school or university in peace.

The destruction of schools and universities with an aim of depriving opposing parties in armed conflicts of the opportunity to use them in the future is absolutely unacceptable.

Under international humanitarian law, both schools and hospitals are protected civilian facilities and are therefore subject to the humanitarian principles of distinction and proportionality.

The law of armed conflict (known as international humanitarian law) also recognizes the importance of children being able to study during armed conflict. It specifically stipulates the protection of children and that educational institutions are ordinary civilian objects that cannot be attacked unless they are converted into military objects.

However, there is a growing trend of attacks on schools and hospitals, which has a detrimental effect on children.

The aggressor claims that he is striking only the military facilities of our country. At the same time, the Office of the Prosecutor General and the Ministry of Education and Science collected numerous facts and arguments¹⁸ that refute this statement: Russian troops are destroying schools and universities, kindergartens and orphanages.

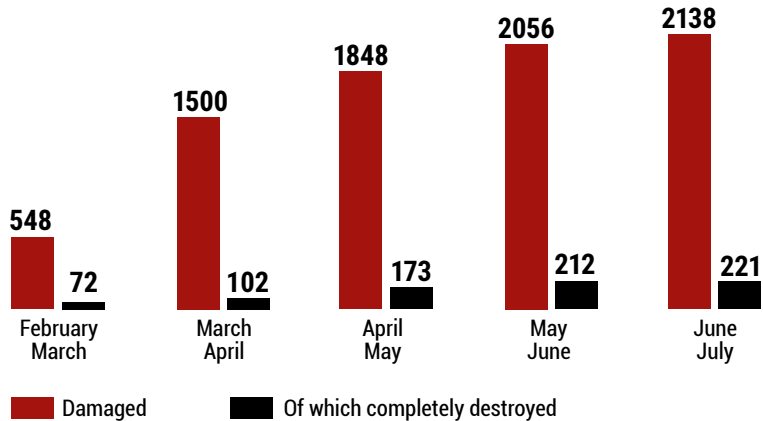
18 [source](#)

As of 24 July 2022, due to bombing and shelling by the armed forces of the Russian Federation, 2,138 out of 14,873 educational institutions were damaged, 221 of them were completely destroyed, which is about 15% of the total number.

Below is the dynamics of the destruction of educational institutions starting from the beginning of the full-scale invasion until 24 July 2022 (Table 3).

Attacks against educational institutions as of 24.07.2022

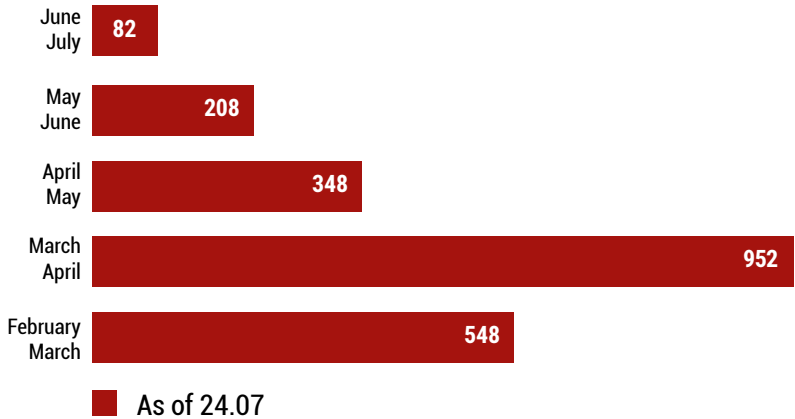
Table 3.



Every month, the authors of the review record the dynamic of violations (Table 4). According to this table, destruction and damage of educational institutions decreased, but purposeful destruction of educational institutions is observed.

Dynamics of violation

Table 4.



For example, the Kharkiv region ranks first in Ukraine in terms of the number of educational institutions damaged and destroyed as a result of shelling by the Russians.

Damages from destroyed educational institutions due to the war in the Kharkiv region count tens of billions of UAH. This was announced by the Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine, Serhiy Shkarlet, who arrived in Kharkiv on 13 July.

During the war, more than 500 educational institutions in the Kharkiv region came under fire from the Russian occupiers: primary and secondary schools, higher and after-school educational institutions. As noted by Serhiy Shkarlet, this makes up a fourth of the damaged or destroyed educational institutions of Ukraine. In terms of the number of such educational institutions, the Kharkiv region ranks first in Ukraine. In particular, among general secondary education institutions, 223 of 715 were damaged or completely destroyed.

We'd like to remind that [in Kharkiv, 21 educational institutions of 24 are damaged due to the war](#). Every kindergarten, school, vocational training

school and college came under attack. In particular, the occupiers fired at the buildings of the Kharkiv National University named after Karazin, National Technical University "Kharkiv Politechnical Institute", Pedagogical University, more than once – at the territory of the Kharkiv Zoo and Veterinary Academy (now – State Biotechnological University), the University of Agriculture. The Aerospace University was also badly damaged. Episodes of damage and destruction of educational institutions in the fifth month of the war by regions:

DONETSK AND LUGANSK REGIONS

- 29 June - in 24 hours the occupiers shelled seven settlements in the Donetsk region, destroyed 20 civilian objects, including residential buildings and a school.¹⁹
- 3 July - Kramatorsk was shelled twice from Smerch: the enemy hit a school, the territory of a kindergarten, and a polyclinic.²⁰
- 9 July - Druzhkivka was attacked four times. According to preliminary information, this was a missile attack. A hospital, a palace of culture, residential buildings and a playground were damaged.²¹
- 11 July - in Bakhmut, a Russian rocket damaged the sports complex, including the tribune, the tribune premises and the arena as well.²²
- 13 July - three missile strikes were carried out by the forces of the Russian Federation on Konstantynivka. A school, an industrial enterprise and private houses were destroyed on Partyzanska Street.²³
- 17 July - In Kostyantynivka, the Russians shelled the territory of the medical college. The damages are to be determined. No information about the victims has been received. In Soledar, as a result of shelling, a fire broke out in the local center for children and youth creativity.²⁴
- 21 July - the school № 23 was destroyed in Kramatorsk, as well as the school in Kostyantynivka.²⁵
- 21 July - the school was destroyed in Bakhmut. The [video](#)²⁶ shows the consequences of a bomb attack on the school.
- 22 July - as a result of the enemy shelling the roof was damaged and a fire broke out in two classrooms in Bakhmut Industrial College on an area of 100 square meters.²⁷
- 24 July - Russian occupiers destroyed two schools in Kostyantynivka and Bakhmut. In addition, in Novodmytrivka a kindergarten was damaged by Russians fire.²⁸

19 [source](#)

20 [source](#)

21 [source](#)

22 [source](#)

23 [source](#)

24 [source](#)

25 [source](#)

26 [source](#)

27 [source](#)

28 [source](#)

SUMY REGION

- 4 July - two rockets were fired from a helicopter at the Esman territorial community of the Sumy region, and the school building was destroyed³⁰

30 [source](#)

KHARKIV REGION

- 6 July - as a result of shelling, the building of the educational institution of the Skovoroda National Pedagogical University suffered significant destruction.³¹
- 7 July - Russian occupiers launched two rockets at a school for visually impaired children in Kharkiv.³²
- 10 July - as a result of a night airstrike in Kharkiv, an educational institution was destroyed, and 1 person was injured - Kharkiv Regional Prosecutor's Office.³³
- 11 July - the school No. 78 in the Slobodsky District of Kharkiv was destroyed.³⁴
- 23 July - Russian military shelled the village Dovzhyk of the Zolochivska united territorial community of the Bogoduhiv district. As a result of the shelling by the occupiers, the only educational institution of the village was destroyed.³⁵

31 [source](#)

32 [source](#)

33 [source](#)

34 [source](#)

35 [source](#)

DNIPROPETROVSK REGION

- 9 July - in Kryvyi Rih, enemies attacked the center of the residential building of the Ingulets microdistrict with a whole cluster missile from "URAGAN" ("Hurricane") multiple rocket launcher. As a result, a school was damaged.³⁶
- 16 July - a school and a vocational school in Nikopol were damaged by strikes from "GRAD" ("Hail") multiple rocket launcher.³⁷
- 18 July - in Synelnikovsky district, Dnipropetrovsk region, the facade and roof of the local lyceum were destroyed and 50 windows were broken.³⁸
- 22 July - in Apostolovo, Russian rockets destroyed 3 schools of the town

36 [source](#)

37 [source](#)

38 [source](#)

MYKOLAIV REGION

- 2 July - as a result of the strike and the hitting of ammunition and its debris, a fire broke out at the sports base of the House of Culture in Pervomajske village of town type in the Mykolaiv region.³⁹

39 [source](#)

- 15 July - as a result of the rocket attack, the Mykolaiv National University named after V. O. Sukhomlynskyi was damaged.⁴⁰
- 23 July - two city educational institutions in Mykolaiv were damaged by the blast wave and debris⁴¹

40

[source](#)

41

[source](#)

ODESA REGION

- 19 July - as a result of the rocket attack on the village Dachne, the Odesa region, the territory of the school and cultural center was damaged.⁴²

42

[source](#)

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, attacks and threats of attacks on educational institutions have caused a threatening situation in Ukraine regarding the realization of the right to education of Ukrainian students. Education stops being accessible; educational institutions can no longer function; education workers and students do not come there, fearing for safety. Destruction of educational institutions in small towns and villages generally deprives children of the right to education as, in most cases, these are the only educational institutions. And the lack of Internet does not provide the possibility of distance learning.

Photo of the secondary school № 23, town of Kramatorsk



Photo of the school after the shelling in Donetsk region,
24 July



Photo of the school in the urban-type
village Esman



Photo of the school № 134, Kharkiv

Photo of the school of Dachne village,
the Odesa region

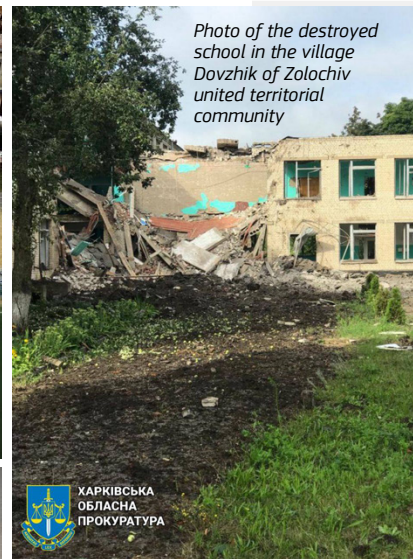


Photo of the destroyed
school in the village
Dovzhik of Zolochiv
united territorial
community



Fire in sports base of the House of
Culture in Pervomaiske village of
town type in the Mykolaiv region



*Photo of the school № 23,
town of Kramatorsk*



*Photo of the Mykolaiv National University named after V.O.
Sukhumlynsky*



ABDUCTION AND ILLEGAL TRANSFER OF CHILDREN

The situation with the abduction and illegal transfer of Ukrainian children in the fifth month of the war remains critical and uncertain.

According to **Daria Gerasymchuk**, the authorized adviser of the President of Ukraine on children's rights, *"Now, in open sources, the Russian authorities announce the number of 350,000 children who were allegedly 'evacuated' to the Russian Federation".*⁴³ She also noted that at the moment it is not possible to say exactly how many children, accompanied or unaccompanied, were forcibly transferred by the Russian aggressor either to the territory of the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson regions and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea temporarily occupied by Russia, or deported to the Russian Federation.

43

[source](#)

The National Information Bureau recorded the deportation of more than 5,600 children to Russia, but the real number is higher. Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Kateryna Pavlichenko announced this during the briefing at the Media Center Ukraine - Ukrinform. *"According to the data of the National Information Bureau, more than 5,600 children who were deported to the aggressor country have already been identified. However, we understand that the real number is actually higher,"* she said.⁴⁴

44

[source](#)

According to the NGO Regional Center for Human Rights (RCHR),⁴⁵ as of mid-July 2022, the Russian Federation deported 234,000 Ukrainian children to its territory. At least 2,389 of them are orphans, children deprived of parental care, as well as children who, as of 24 February 2022, were living in 24-hour care facilities due to chronic diseases. Among the deported minors are those whose parents were killed by the Russian military or who did not pass the so-called filtration camps.

45

[source](#)

As Kateryna Rashevskaya, a lawyer at the Regional Center for Human Rights (RCHR), reports: *“The Russian Federation deported Ukrainian children to 57 regions, including the regions of the Far North, which are not only several thousand kilometers away from the place of permanent residence of minors, but also significantly different according to climatic conditions. The aggressor state also institutionalized and accelerated the transfer of Ukrainian children to Russian families for upbringing. The mentioned actions have signs of genocide of the Ukrainian nation and are encouraged directly by V. Putin, the pro-ruling “United Russia” party, as well as Maria Lvova-Bilova, the Commissioner of the President of the Russian Federation for Children’s Rights. The “appropriation” of Ukrainian children is stimulated both through the spread of Russian propaganda and financially through expenditures from local budgets to families who have adopted “orphans from the Donbas”. At the same time, it should be emphasized that minors were deported not only from Donetsk and Luhansk regions but from 9 temporarily occupied regions of Ukraine. Moreover, among the pupils of 24-hour care institutions, 95% have biological parents, and, therefore, they are not orphans. Nevertheless, as of the end of June 2022, at least 127 Ukrainian children were placed under the care of Russian families.”*⁴⁶

46

[source](#)

Despite the fact that the illegal transfer of children from Ukraine has been going on for 9 years, there is no single mechanism for returning children.

Darya Gerasimchuk informed that the issue of returning and searching for children deported by the Russian Federation from Ukraine is being discussed through mediators, since the Ukrainian side does not have access either to the temporarily occupied territories or to the territory of the Russian Federation. Search operations are carried out by international organizations that have a mandate for this type of activity. According to Darya Gerasimchuk, Ukraine cooperates with the International Red Cross, UNICEF and other organizations involved in this process in one way or another in search for children. In order to coordinate efforts at the national and international level, a working group on the life and safety of children in war and post-war times was created at the Office of the President of Ukraine.

“On 1 August, a single information platform “Children of the War” will appear on which all information and statistics regarding children during the war in Ukraine will be collected and updated daily. And there will be many opportunities for citizens and a lot of concise information for foreign and Ukrainian journalists...” Gerasimchuk said.⁴⁷

47

[source](#)

During the fifth month, the number of children who weren't returned after having been illegally deported and transferred by the Russian Federation increased **to 46 children**. But compared to the number of those currently staying in the Russian Federation it is catastrophically unbalanced.

At the same time, the practice of illegal adoption of children from Donbas by Russian families does not stop. On 14 July, the governor of the Moscow region, Vorobyov, announced the completion of the procedure of "transferring 9 children from the DPR to families from the Moscow region."⁴⁸

48 [source](#)

On 7 July, Vladyslav Buryak, who was held hostage by the Russian military for 90 days, was finally released. All this time his father Oleg Buryak, head of the Zaporizhzhia District State Administration, was holding a public saving campaign. ([interview following the liberation](#))



The photo shows the first minutes of the meeting of Oleg Butyak and his son Vladyslav following the liberation⁴⁹

49 [source](#)

Also, in June – July from the occupied territories, there were reports of threatening parents with the forced withdrawal of children in case parents refuse the "Russian education". The mayor of Melitopol, Ivan Fedorov, reports: *"...for the last two weeks, the Russians have clearly declared their intentions:... parents who do not send their children to the school that the Russians are trying to organize will be deprived of parental rights. I can't imagine how it will happen in real life."*⁵⁰

50 [source](#)

After all, such actions of the Russians are an obvious violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and have signs of the genocide of Ukrainians, namely planned, successive steps aimed at exterminating the nation.



DENIAL OF HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

This violation implies the intentional deprivation of or impediment to the passage of humanitarian assistance indispensable to children's survival, by the parties to the conflict, including wilfully impeding relief supplies as provided for under the Geneva Conventions; and significant impediments to the ability of humanitarian or other relevant actors to access and assist affected children, in situations of armed conflict.

The denial should be considered in terms of children's access to assistance as well as humanitarian agencies' ability to access vulnerable populations, including children.

In the fifth month of the war, this violation acquired a new meaning, namely the occupiers forbid the civilians, including children, from leaving the occupied territories.

A striking example is the situation at the checkpoints in Vasylivka (Zaporizhia region). Due to the difficult humanitarian situation and the lack of security in the temporarily occupied territories, there is a mass request among the population to leave, but it is very difficult to get to the government-controlled territory of Ukraine.

According to the mayor of Melitopol, Ivan Fedorov, during the telemarathon on 19 July⁵¹: *"People are leaving in mass, but the enemy is constantly preventing this. As of this morning, in town of Vasylivka, it is a battle line, 720 cars have gathered and were not allowed to pass, because the occupiers did not let them through."*

The mayor of Melitopol noted that the occupiers are searching the residents at the checkpoints in order to find and take away money and valuables.

"Two days ago, we had a case. With the help of volunteers from Zaporizhzhia we transferred medicine to the city of Melitopol for children with cystic fibrosis. It is a rare orphan disease and children cannot live without these medicines. However, the robbers at the checkpoint stole these medicines," said Fedorov.

He added that the occupiers also use roadblocks as an opportunity to forge additional funds, so they demand bribes.

"Today, passing through the roadblock on Vasylivka costs from 100 to 500 dollars without waiting in a queue. This is a fact, a confirmed fact, today one can pass this way," said Fedorov.

The mayor of Melitopol believes that the occupiers are deliberately creating a situation with the accumulation of civilians in one place.

"They are using them as a 'human shield'. They are deliberately accumulating them in Vasylivka, so that it will be more difficult for our armed forces to launch a counteroffensive," emphasized Fedorov.

A difficult situation arose in July with the establishment of a cease-fire and the organization of a humanitarian corridor to Sviatohirska Lavra, located on the banks of the Siverskyi Donetsk River in the Donetsk region. Since June, the Sviatohorsk Lavra is subjected to constant artillery shelling by the Russian military.

According to the information of the Main Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine,⁵² as of 14 July, up to 600 civilians, including more than 50 children, along with infants, are on the territory of the Lavra. About 70% of them are pilgrims and local residents who tried to find shelter from shelling. A significant part of the pilgrims arrived for the pilgrimage even before the start of active hostilities. *"Subsequently, due to active hostilities, civilians were unable to evacuate to a safe place and requested the organization of a safe corridor,"* the message states.

On 16 July, a group of civilians was evacuated from the territory of Sviatohirska Lavra by the efforts of the Main Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, with the participation of people's deputies of Ukraine. This is a family that was hiding behind the walls of the Lavra from constant artillery shelling by the occupiers: father, mother and three children. At the same time, the youngest child was born on the territory of the Lavra a few days ago.⁵³

52 [source](#)

53 [source](#)

In the fifth month of the war, the Donetsk region was on the verge of a humanitarian disaster. Active hostilities continued there, the infrastructure was almost completely destroyed and people were at risk of coming under fire every second. According to the Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk, there are currently 52,000 children in the Donetsk region, and “one cannot expose them to mortal danger in the winter, without heat, without light, without possibility of warming up.”⁵⁴

54 [source](#)

Also, according to the police, more than 470 large families with 1,672 children remain in the settlements directly near the fire line. Most of them are in Toretsk and Velyka Novosilka.⁵⁵

55 [source](#)

The government plans to introduce mandatory evacuation in accordance with [Article 33 of the Civil Protection Code](#). 131 families with 477 children have already expressed their desire to evacuate.



RAPE AND OTHER FORMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

On 23 July, at the initiative of the First Lady of Ukraine, Olena Zelenska, the second Summit of First Ladies and Gentlemen took place.

During the Summit, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflicts, Pramila Patten confirmed the facts of rapes committed by the Russian military in Ukraine. According to her, *“since 24 February, the UN has received more than 150 allegations of sexual violence committed against women, children and men. This is rape under the threat of machine guns in presence of family members as a consequence of the attack on Ukraine by Russian troops.”* Patten noted that this number of reports is “only the top of the iceberg.”

Due to the sensitivity and dramatism of this violation, the authors of the review do not cite personal “cases” of the victims.

