

Monitoring report

"UNIVERSAL SOLDIER"



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RESUME

The militarization and destruction of Ukrainian identity among children in the occupied territories do not stop even in summer.

The Russian and occupation authorities have no influence on the children's minds through formal education during the holiday period. Thus, they use summer camps and other extracurricular activities to do so.

Thus, summer camps are used to destroy Ukrainian identity, create a misrepresentation of views on historical events, promote voluntary service in the armed forces of the occupying power, and create support for a full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine. In July, children from Crimea and the occupied territories of Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, Luhansk, and Donetsk regions and children of soldiers who are fighting in Ukraine were resting in camps in Crimea.

Some of the camps have a thematic focus aimed at forming Russian identity, patriotic education, and popularizing of military and "power professions".

At the same time, a number of camps are aimed at training soldiers from children. This includes the military-patriotic program "Mountain Shooter", the "Yunarmiets" camp, the thematic shift "Let's grow as patriots" in the "Laspi" camp, the thematic Cossack shift in the "Dolphin" camp, military field meetings on the territory of the Belyaus Spit. The programs of these camps are similar to each other. They include military training, physical training, defense against weapons of mass destruction, shooting with an air rifle, throwing a training grenade, the basics of first aid, disassembling and assembling an AK (Kalashnikov rifle), and equipping the magazine with training cartridges. Moreover, games-simulations of military situations are organized in camps.

In addition to the camps, thematic events aimed at the heroization of the Russian and Soviet military and the militarization of Crimean children took place in Crimea in July. Soldiers, participants in the war in Ukraine, who are presented to children as heroes who "liberate Ukraine from Nazism", are invited to such events.

In total, all these actions of the occupation authorities are directed at the destruction of the Ukrainian nation in the occupied territories in general and creating motivation in children from the occupied territories to serve in the armed forces of the Russian Federation voluntarily.

Such actions of Russia violate the following:

- **Article 26** of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which establishes that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Education shall promote mutual understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups;
- **Article 13** of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which also raises the issue of education;
- **Article 20** of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which stipulates that any propaganda for war must be prohibited by law;
- **Article 29** of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which indicates that the education of the child shall be directed to the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;
- **Articles 38 and 39** of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which are aimed at protecting children in wartime;
- **Article 50** of the Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention), which prohibits the occupying power, in particular, from enlisting children in formations or organizations subordinate to it, as well as Article 51, which prohibits the propaganda of service in the army of the country which occupied the territory.

METHODOLOGY

This monitoring report covers the period from 1 to 31 July 2022.

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

of the population of the occupied territories, destruction of the Ukrainian education system.

Geography: temporarily occupied territories of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

Monitoring is based on the information from the following sources:

- state authorities of Ukraine;
- reports of public organizations;
- open sources of temporarily occupied territories, namely:
 - information posted on official websites and official pages in social networks (including the VKontakte network) of the so-called Ministry of Education of the temporarily occupied territories;
 - official statistical data of the Russian Federation;
 - information posted on the websites of secondary schools in the temporarily occupied territories;
 - local mass media publications of the temporarily occupied parts of the Kherson, Zaporizhzhia regions, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol;
 - information published in social networks.

LIMITATIONS OF THE METHODOLOGY:

In this study, the authors used only the sources available to them. The work with sources and information analysis continued until 30 June 2022.

Information and reports that could not be verified as of the date of publication of the report were not included in this monitoring review.

While preparing the report, the authors used data found in Vkontakte social network. This is due to the fact that after the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine, most of the information of the representatives of the occupation authorities was published in this social network, and thus, the search there is actually the only possible source of access to it.

The information is presented in the report to record the crimes of the Russian Federation and combat disinformation spread by it.

SUMMER CAMPS AS A TOOL TO CREATE A "RUSSIAN CITIZEN" AND A "UNIVERSAL SOLDIER"

The Russian Federation continues to destroy the Ukrainian identity of children and youth in the occupied territories and militarize the consciousness of Ukrainian children. In the summer, children and youth camps are the main tool for this.

In July, children from the occupied Kherson, Zaporizhzhya, Luhansk, and Donetsk regions¹ "had rest" in camps in Crimea, as well as children of military personnel^{2,3} participating in the war on the territory of Ukraine. Participation in the same camp of children from the occupied territories and children of soldiers fighting on the territory of Ukraine is traumatic for Ukrainian children.

Such actions can be considered from the point of view of Part 1 of Art. 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which the Russian Federation ratified on 23 August 1993 and which states that the education of the child shall be directed to the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups. The stay of children who suffered from the war and children of perpetrators of international crimes in the territory of Ukraine can directly affect the training of children.

The Russian authorities paid a lot of attention to the participation and invitation of children from the newly occupied territories of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions, as well as the so-called Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics, to summer camps in Crimea⁴ and even on the territory of the Russian Federation.^{5,6,7} The high level of interest is indicated by the fact that the camp vouchers for children from Melitopol were personally handed by the Minister of Education of the Russian Federation Sergey Kravtsov.⁸ Such interest shows the importance for the occupying power of

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using camps as a tool to destroy Ukrainian identity and militarize children from the occupied territories.

According to information from the director of the education department of the State Administration of the Kherson Region, Tetyana Kuzmych, 60 children from the Kherson Region went to "Artek" and 61 children to the Nakhimov Naval School.⁹ Almost 200 children from the so-called DPR, LPR and 110 schoolchildren from the occupied territories of Zaporizhia and Kherson regions¹⁰ took part in the 8th shift "Artek gathers friends", which took place from 15 July to 5 August. In July, 300 children from the so-called LDPR¹¹ had rest in the "Luchysty" camp. On 10 July, a meeting of Sevastopol schoolchildren with children from the so-called Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics¹² took place in the "Gorizont" camp. The participation of children from the occupied territories of the mainland of Ukraine is noted in other camps held in Crimea.¹³

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The programs of the camps are similar and are mostly **aimed at the formation of Russian identity**.

Thus, in the "Gorny" camp, a thematic shift "Let's grow as patriots" took place. During this shift, there was **a review of uniform** and songs, **a paramilitary relay race "Winners' Road", a "Ready for Work and Defense" sports competition and weapons training**. The squad leaders were students of the Yunarmiya movement.¹⁴

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The "Media Laboratory of Innovative Patriotic Journalism"¹⁵ was organized and held in the all-Russian Children's Center "Orlyonok" with the support of the media group "Russia Today".¹⁶ 300 children and adults took part in this training. Among the events that took place, it is worth highlighting the master classes conducted by Oleg Dmitriev, the professor at the National Research University of the Higher School of Economics¹⁷ on the topics "How to tell a story based on historical facts" and "How to check information and recognize fakes." Considering the fact that Oleg Dmitriev is an adviser to the international news agency "Russia Today" and the agency spreads pro-government narratives, including the heroization of DPR combatants,¹⁸ it is reasonable to assume that the content of the master classes were of a propagandistic nature both in the context of covering historical facts and in the context of what is a fake. It is also important to note that the essence of the event is to encourage young people to join the spread of Russian narratives through the communication channels available to them.

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In addition, a landing boat arrived to the "Orlyonok" camp in July. A boat excursion was held for the children, and military sailors serving on the boat advertised among the children the military profession and the prestige of protecting the Russian Federation¹⁹. Such actions can be considered covert recruitment for service in the army of the Russian Federation.

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On 7 July, the legal quest "300 years of enforcing the law" and the historical reconstruction of the Nuremberg trials^{20,21} took place in the "Yantarny" camp in International children Center "Artek". The events were dedicated to the 300th anniversary of the creation of the Prosecutor's Office of the Russian Federation. The quest was organized and conducted by representatives of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.²² During the reconstruction of the Nuremberg trials, the main focus was on the condemnation of Nazi ideology. For context, it is essential to note that Russian propaganda calls Ukrainians Nazis. Thus, today all measures directed at condemning Nazi ideology in the Russian Federation and on the territories occupied by it are aimed at forming and strengthening the hostile attitude of the children and youth from these territories towards the population of the territories controlled by the Ukrainian government.

At the end of July, the game "The Birth of an Independent Prosecutor's Office in the Russian Empire" was held again in "Orlyonok" camp. According to the organizers, it is aimed at developing interest in the activities of the prosecutor's office and is part of the patriotic education of young people.²³

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SOME OF THE CAMPS, SHIFTS AND SEPARATE PROGRAMS ARE AIMED SPECIFICALLY AT TRAINING CHILD SOLDIERS

In terms of the programs' content, such events are closer in nature to military training schools than to recreation camps. Such actions ignore the requirements of the UN Security Council resolution (Resolution 2250 (2015), adopted by the UN on 9 December 2015) regarding the importance of addressing conditions and factors leading to the rise of radicalization to violence and violent extremism amongst youth. They also create the basis for further recruitment of these children to the armed forces of the aggressor country.

Thus, the thematic shifts of the military-patriotic program "Mountain Shooter" are taking place in the "Gorny" camp. In 2022, the dates of shift are 22.06 — 12.07, 15.07 — 04.08, 07.08 — 28.08.²⁴ Children of the age 8- 17 can participate in the program. The program is completely militarized and is aimed at making child soldiers. The program is divided into 3 expeditions:

- During the first expedition, children take lessons in sword and archery fight; individual tactics and interaction in formation; reconstruction of "small historical battles"; acquaintance with A. Suvorov's "Science of winning" and "Code of honor of a Russian officer", etc.
- The second stage of the expedition is a series of daily field (mountain, forest) sorties with a full set of survival skills in the natural environment (making a fire, finding fuel, setting up a tent camp, protecting the approaches and perimeter, etc.); search for water suitable for drinking, its purification.
- The third stage of the expedition is a tactical game in which children are divided into several groups of scouts, learn to reconnoitre unnoticeably in the camp of a conditional enemy, solve the "combat" tasks set for them, avoid a group of pursuers, using the experience of Soviet soldiers during the Second World War on the territory Crimean Peninsula.

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Also, during the program, there are "assault" sorties to Eske Kermen, Bakhchisarai and Mangup-Kale where children are taught to provide first aid.²⁵

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In July, the shifts continued in "Yunarmeyets"²⁶ camp, in which both children from the occupied Ukrainian territories and Russian children participated. This aims to speed up the assimilation of Ukrainian children. Moreover, the military-historical camp "Country of Heroes" was held. During shifts, children are taught **handling weapons, play simulation military games, great attention is paid to raising children as "true patriots of Russia", ready to defend the Russian Federation with weapons in hands.**

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Video shows how the "Country of Heroes" camp was taking place.²⁷

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On 19 July, the thematic shift "Let's grow as patriots" was opened in the camp in "Laspi". The duration of the shift was 21 days, in which 650 children took part, 50 of whom were from the occupied territories of the Luhansk region.²⁸ As part of the shift, first aid training, an initial military training course, and a tourist and local history course were organized for children. The morning began with the performance of the national anthem of the Russian Federation. **The most active participants of the shift would be enrolled in the Yunarmiya movement.**²⁹

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In addition, during the shift in the "Laspi" camp, the **"School of Future Commanders"** was prepared by the Yunarmiya movement.³⁰ The children attended specialized classes on drill, physical training, protection against weapons of mass destruction, shooting with an air rifle, throwing a training grenade, the basic knowledge of first aid, disassembling and assembling of AK (Kalashnikov rifle), and equipping the magazine with training cartridges.

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The camp organizers announced that during the educational program, the Regional Branch of Volunteer Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation, and Navy of Sevastopol **would organize shooting training for children on an ongoing basis**³¹.

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On 22 July, the “Dolphin” children’s camp launched a thematic Cossack shift, attended by 363 children from cadet Cossack classes and clubs for military and patriotic education. During the shift, the children got acquainted with Cossack culture and traditions, applied Cossack disciplines, attended Orthodox lessons and were engaged in military training.³²



From 1 till 18 August, a military field meeting was held on the Belaus spit in the Black Sea region. Students of cadet classes and cadets from the so-called Donetsk People's Republic took part in the meeting. The children were trained in weapons, tactical, military-medical, and tourist training and were on guard duty. In addition, the participants watched military-patriotic films³³ every day. Watching such films strongly influences children's consciousness in the context of the romanticization of war.

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THEMATIC EVENTS AIMED AT THE HEROIZATION OF THE RUSSIAN AND SOVIET MILITARIES AND THE MILITARIZATION OF CHILDREN IN CRIMEA CONTINUE TO TAKE PLACE

On 1 July, on the occasion of the Day of Combat Veterans and the birthday of the Minister of Defense of the USSR S. Sokolov, an oak sapling was planted in Yevpatoria. Cossacks, cadets, participants of the Yunarmiya movement of the town took part in the event. **Military personnel who took part in hostilities in Ukraine after 24 February 2022 also joined the event.**³⁴

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At the beginning of July, the participants of the Yunarmiya movement of the Saky town were involved in the event on the occasion of the opening of the monument to the Worrier-Liberator.³⁵

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On 13 July, in Yalta were held joint classes for the cadets of the Yunarmiya movement of the Association of the Armed Forces of the DTSAAF (Volunteer Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation and Navy) of Russia in the city of Yalta and participants of the "World of Skills" project.³⁶

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On 15 July, the State budgetary educational institution of additional education "Center for Military-Patriotic Education of Pupils" in Sevastopol, together with the territorial commissions for the affairs of minors and the protection of their rights, held a quest game "The City of Courage and Glory" for children being under the patronage of these commissions. 30 children³⁷ took part in the game. The quest game had the following route: the stairs on Matrosky Boulevard, the monument to Captain A.I. Kazarsky, a map-monument dedicated to the feat of the brig crew "Mercury", the "Boy with a Ship" fountain, a monument marking the centenary of the invention of radio by A.S. Popov, the command bridge, a wall with the names of the Heroes of the Soviet Union, a memorial wall in honor of the heroes of 1941-1942.

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On 11 July, Sevastopol held the event "Yungs of the fleet - HELLO!" during which the children unfurled a 16-meter flag. The event was held within the framework of the military-patriotic naval project "Our flag is our pride",³⁸ dedicated to the 28th anniversary of the National Flag Day. According to information from the organizers, **the main goal of the project is to demonstrate the collective work of all organizations and authorities of the participating cities and towns to instill in young people respect and pride for the country and its heroes, to form the basis of patriotism and to understand the importance of protecting and supporting the interests of Russia in the modern world.**³⁹

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The colors of the St. George's ribbon and the Z symbol are used on the poster of the event.





At the end of July, in the town of Stary Krym a military-tactical game "Lasertag" was held for the participants of the Yunarmia movement of the Kirov district.⁴⁰

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On 23 July, participants of the Yunarmia movement of the Nizhnyohirsk, Bakhchisaray and Simferopol districts took part in an event organized on the occasion of return of the Russian Guard soldiers from "Berkut" detachment to the permanent location. It is not clear from where exactly the fighters returned from.⁴¹

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