



Monitoring report **"UNIVERSAL SOLDIER"**



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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.





The Centre of Civic Education "Almenda" (CCE "Almenda") is a nongovernmental organization registered in Yalta in 2011. Until 2014, the organization's priority was an 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.

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

More information about the Center of Civic Education "Almenda": <u>http://almenda.org</u>

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SUMMARY

In August, the occupation administration focused on preparing educational institutions for the new school year.

A common trend for the occupied territories of Zaporizhzhya, Kherson, Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol was the lack of a sufficient number of teachers. In the occupied territories of Zaporizhzhya and Kherson regions, in order to solve the problem of staffing of educational institutions, the occupation authorities continued to resort to threats, intimidation and even kidnapping of educators who refuse to teach according to Russian standards, as well as involving teachers from the territory of the Russian Federation.

The destruction of Ukrainian identity continued through camps and other activities, for example, excursions for children from Energodar to Veliky Novgorod and the recording of the video «We are together, we are Russians» on August 12 in Sevastopol.

The school program in the occupied territories includes the weekly classes «Conversations about what is important», which take place every Monday in all schools. The classes are designed to promote the patriotic education of children and the de facto formation of Russian identity in Ukrainian children and the spread of Russian propaganda narratives.

Likewise, the militarization of children on the territory of the occupied Crimea and the involvement of children in activities to support Russia's war in Ukraine do not stop. In particular, during August, a number of military-patriotic trainings were held in Crimea, where children were taught the basics of military affairs and the handling of weapons.

Taken together, all these actions of the occupation authorities are aimed at destroying the Ukrainian nation in the occupied territories as such and creating motivation for children from the occupied territories to voluntarily join the armed forces of the Russian Federation. Such actions of Russia are violations of:

- Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which establishes that education should be aimed at the full development of the human and increasing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Education should promote mutual understanding, tolerance and friendship between all peoples, 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 a child should be aimed at preparing them for a conscious life in a free society in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of men and women and friendship between all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups, as well as individuals from the indigenous population;
- Articles 38 and 39 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which regulate the protection of children in wartime;
- Article 50 of the Convention for the Protection of the Civilian Population in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention), which prohibits the occupying power, in particular, from including children in the lists of formations or organizations under its control, as well as Article 51, which prohibits propaganda for service in the army of the occupying country territory

METHODOLOGY

This monitoring report covers the period from August 1 to 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, destruction of Ukrainian identity, assimilation of the population of the occupied territories, destruction of the Ukrainian education system.

Geography: temporarily occupied territories of Zaporizhzhia, Kherson regions, Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. Monitoring is based on the following information:

- 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 territory»;
 - 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.

METHODOLOGY LIMITATIONS:

In this study, the authors used only the sources available to them. Work with sources and analysis of information continued until September 15, 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.

To write the report, the authors used data found in the Vkontakte social network. This is due to the fact that after the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into the territory of Ukraine, most of the information of the representatives of the occupation authorities was published in this social network, so it is now actually the only possible source of access to obtain the necessary information.

The information presented in this report is aimed at recording the crimes of the Russian Federation and combating disinformation spread by it.

THE OCCUPIED TERRITORY OF THE AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC OF CRIMEA AND THE CITY OF SEVASTOPOL

PREPARATION FOR THE 2022-2023 ACADEMIC YEAR

In August, the occupation authorities of Crimea actively prepared educational institutions for the new school year. Special attention was paid to «anti-terrorist security of objects». According to the occupying «Deputy Minister of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea» Timur Asanov, 100% of public educational institutions in Crimea are equipped with a system of emergency buttons, and more than 50% are protected by employees of security organizations.¹

At the end of August, the occupying «Chairman of the Republic of Crimea» Serhii Aksonov announced that the names of the participants of the so-called «special operation» would be assigned to the schools of the republic.

«I support the initiatives of collectives to name schools after the participants of a special military operation, to open memorial plaques. Children should know the names of those who, in a difficult moment, fulfilled their military duty without hesitation,» said Aksonov.

Article 436-2 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine provides for responsibility for such actions, which are positioned as «glorification of persons who carried out the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which began in 2014, representatives of the armed forces of the Russian Federation, irregular illegal armed forces, armed gangs and groups of mercenaries created, subordinated, managed and financed by the Russian Federation, as well as representatives of the occupation administration of the Russian Federation, which consists of its state bodies and structures, functionally responsible for the management of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, and representatives of self-proclaimed bodies under the control of the Russian Federation, which usurped the performance of power functions in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine...».

Before the start of the academic year, information appeared about the shortage of teachers in schools. For example, on August 3, Tetiana Sukhi-

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na, deputy head of the «occupational administration of education in Simferopol» said on the air of radio «Sputnik Krymu» that there is a shortage of primary school, Russian language and mathematics teachers in the city's schools.² According to the information of our monitors, the teachers who refused to support the military actions of the Russian Federation and to tell children about *«the peacekeeping role of the Russian army in liberating the territory of Ukraine from the Nazis"* were forced to resign. The shortage of teachers was planned to be closed at the expense of Crimean and Russian universities graduates, as well as teachers from the occupied mainland territory of Ukraine.

At the same time, in 2022, the number of schoolchildren who started studying in schools increased. If in the 2021-2022 academic year the number of pupils was 222,000³, then at the beginning of 2022-2023 there were more than 230,000 of them⁴. In addition, according to the information provided by the so-called «Minister of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea» Valentyna Lavryk, educational institutions in Crimea in 2022 accepted children from the occupied territories of Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions to study.

PROPAGANDA ACTIVITIES IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

The occupying power continues to pay primary attention to the content of school education.

Before September 1, an order was issued for Crimean schools to hold classes on the following topics: «Heroes of special operations» for students of grades 1-4; for 5th-7th grade students - «Friends and enemies of the Russian Federation», for 8th-9th grade students - «LPR, DPR, Crimea, Kherson - this is Russia», for 10th-11th grade students - «There is such a profession - to defend the Motherland! Advantages of contract service in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation».

The subject of such classes is not only an element of propagandistic support for the military actions of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine and the setting up of Ukrainian children against Ukraine, but it also contains signs of recruitment into the armed forces of the occupying state. If this develops into further recruitment in the future, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court makes it a war crime to recruit children under the age of 15 into national armed forces or use them to actively participate in hostilities.

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РЕСПУБЛИКА КРЫМ МИНИСТЕРСТВО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ, НАУКИ И МОЛОДЕЖИ (МИНОБРАЗОВАНИЯ КРЫМА)

приказ

«<u>д5</u>» 08 2022 г.

Nº 1252

г.Симферополь

Об организации патриотического воспитания в учреждениях общего среднего образования

В соответствии с распоряжением Правительства РФ от 29.05.2015г. N 996-р «Об утверждении Стратегии развития воспитания в Российской Федерации на период до 2025 года», а также в связи с принятым решением Президента РФ о проведении специальной военной операции на территории ДНР и ЛНР

ПРИКАЗЫВАЮ:

В обязательном порядке провести классные часы по следующим темам:

С учениками начальной школы (1-4 классов) - «Герои спецоперации»;

С учениками 5-7 классов - «Друзья и враги Российской Федерации»;

С учениками 8-9 классов - «ЛНР, ДНР, Крым, Херсон - это Россия»

С учениками 10-11 классов - «Есть такая профессия - Родину защищать! Достоинства контрактной службы в ВС РФ».

2. Для более качественного усвоения информации, пригласить на классные часы ветеранов спецоперации на Украине, военнослужащих местных воинских частей и представителей военкоматов.

3. К 02.09.2022 года отправить видеоотчет проведенной работы (формат MP4; продолжительностью до 3 минут) на электронный адрес: kense2020@edu.gov.

On August 17, CRIPPE recommendations on teaching history in general education institutions of Crimea in 2022-2023 were released. According to the recommendations for the 6th grade, it is necessary to reduce the number of hours (4 hours) for studying the «World History» course and add these hours to the «History of Russia» course.⁵

According to the updated federal state standards of general secondary education, the educational organization must provide up to 10 weekly classes of extracurricular activities. Within these 10 hours, **the recommended portion** should include:

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- 1 hour: «Conversations on important matters» (Monday, first les-
- e son).

1 hour: «Classes on functional (in particular, financial) literacy.».

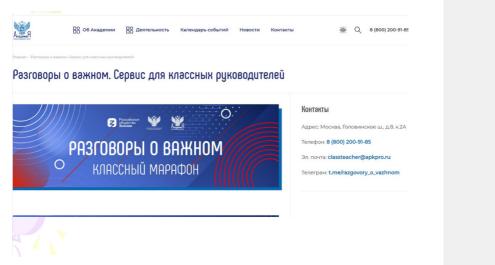
1 hour: «Career guidance work».

The variable part must contain:

- 3 hours: «Additional study of academic subjects» (to accompany the study of individual academic subjects at an advanced level, project-research activity, historical education).
- 2 hours: «Personality development and self-realization of students» (classes in school theaters and museums, participation in sports
- events).

2 hours: «Complex of measures to meet social interests and needs» (within the Russian movement of schoolchildren, Yunarmy, implementation of the project «Russia – the country of opportunities»)⁶.

The weekly lessons on «Conversations on important aatters» are, in fact, a return to the Soviet traditions of conducting political information and also have a purely propagandistic meaning. Methodical materials for organizing a cycle of weekly classes, containing a class scenario, methodical recommendations for its conduct, interactive visual content, are developed at the federal level. A special page has been created for teachers to prepare for these lessons.⁷



As part of these lessons, according to Serhii Aksonov, children are scheduled to meet with Russian soldiers who participated in the war in Ukraine. *«The lessons within the framework of the program «Conversations on important matters» will also touch upon the topics of patriotism, the development of the state and our republic, and the education of a citizen.»*⁸

And already on August 28, the news appeared that on September 12, all schools of the Russian Federation will hold lessons for middle and high school students dedicated to the so-called «special operation of the Russian Federation» on the territory of Ukraine. The lessons are included in the series «Conversations on important matters».⁹

Serhii Aksonov also said that schools will strengthen work on «patriotic education of children» – the school week will begin with the raising of the Russian flag and the singing of the Russian national anthem.¹⁰ In this way, the occupation authorities continue to destroy the Ukrainian identity of children in the occupied Crimea and impose a Russian identity on Ukrainian children.

MEASURES AIMED AT DESTROYING UKRAINIAN IDENTITY

The destruction of Ukrainian identity is the overarching goal of all the activities of the Russian Federation in the occupied territories. In addition to formal education, the occupation authorities continue to actively use extracurricular activities and camps. For example, on August 12 in Sevastopol, on the Day of Indigenous Peoples, a flash mob and the recording of the video «We are together, we are Russians» took place.¹¹

An important trend this summer in Crimea was the use of summer camps to destroy the Ukrainian identity of children from the territories of Kherson and Zaporizhia regions occupied in 2022, as well as from the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Among the camps that took place in August, we can mention the change in the Horizon camp within the framework of the «University Changes» project. Its participants were children aged 14-17 from the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, Melitopol and Kherson. The Sevastopol State University held a comprehensive educational program «Historical Heritage of the Russian Federation: Hero City of Sevastopol» for the participants of the shift.¹² Also, in August, the shift «We are your 10

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children, Russia» took place in the «Smaragd» camp. 122 children from Melitopol and Energodar took part in the shift.¹³

In addition to these two, a number of summer camp shifts took place in August, the program of which was aimed at destroying Ukrainian identity in children. A typical camp program was described in more detail in the previous edition of *the monitoring report «Universal Soldier"*.

INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN IN ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT RUSSIA'S WAR IN UKRAINE

In August, actions in support of the Russian Federation military in Ukraine continued. The occupation Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of Crimea has published information about the launch of the project «Everything for victory!" The aim of the project: «*Support of the sol-diers* and residents of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics". As part of the project, things necessary for military units are collected¹⁴.

On August 12, in Yevpatoria, on the territory of the «Red Mountain» memorial, students of the Crimean Patriot Center held an action in support of the military actions of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine. **The action was attended by participants of hostilities on the territory of the Donetsk region** and other wars from 10 regions of Ukraine, as well as yunarmy soldiers from Yevpatoria military-industrial complex of Yevpatoria, representatives of the Crimean Patriot Center and the «Cossacks» of Yevpatoria.¹⁵



In August, the «Children to Children» campaign continued, as part of which Crimean children collected «correct books» for children from the occupied Donetsk and Luhansk regions.¹⁶

In addition, in the occupied Crimea, pressure is growing on those who express disagreement with the war waged by the Russian Federation in Ukraine. For example, the students of MBEI "Private school 1 named after N. Kudry», who on August 24 posted a video on social networks congratulating on the Independence Day of Ukraine and condemning the so-called «military special operation» of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine, were forced to apologize for the video. The headmistress of the school where the students studied was initially dismissed¹⁷, but she was later reinstated¹⁸.

MILITARIZATION OF CHILDREN

In August, thematic military changes in the camps, military-field meetings and other activities on militarization and training of child soldiers continued.



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the village of Pishchane, Bakhchisaray district. Over the course of several days, the participants of the «Cossack Games» competed in the «Cossack Obstacle Course», shot put, practiced cross country running, orienteering, athletics, training and fire drills, tug of war, actions in extreme conditions. The organizers of the game were the «Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea», the Crimean Patriot Center, the Crimean District Cossack Society.¹⁹





On August 2, the Orlyatko Children's Center celebrated the Day of the Airborne Forces of the Russian Federation. Children from the thematic detachment «Airborne Garrison», who were taught by paratroopers throughout the shift, prepared stations for other children of the camp.²⁰ 19 source

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On August 8-14, the military-patriotic gathering «Yunarmy Breakthrough» was held.²¹ At the meeting, the yunarmy soldiers and cadets trained in practical shooting courses, the basics of tactics and camouflage, the basics of mine engineering, psychological aspects of compatibility and coordination and orientation to the terrain. At the end of the meeting, the training units had to pass the «Reconnaissance Lane», they had to cross a mountain river in a ford, overcome a mined section of a mountainous and forested area. practice shooting skills, capture infrastructure objects - «change the state of objects», overcome affected areas with the wounded²².

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On August 15-17, the «Mountain Rifleman» seminar was held for young soldiers. Classes for children were conducted by teachers of the «Crimea Tactics» RCTS (Regional Center of Territorial Subsystem) organization in Simferopol^{23,24}.

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On August 18-23, a six-day military-patriotic meeting «Young Defender of the Fatherland» was held at the base of the «Zavodske» airfield. The participants of the meetings are pupils of the military-patriotic clubs of the Republic of Crimea, cadets and young soldiers.





«Approximately 60 participants will join the basics of military service, will undergo a course of military, general physical, tourist and fire training,» Serhii Havrylchuk, head of the Regional Headquarters of the All-Russian Military-Patriotic Public Movement «UNARMY» noted.²⁵

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This is only part of the military-patriotic events that took place in Crimea in August. The systematicity of the events demonstrates the dangerous trends of de facto training of Ukrainian children in Crimea as soldiers who are familiar with the basics of military service and capable of wielding weapons. **Such actions once again illustrate the trends of training children to participate in real hostilities, which is a war crime according to the norms of international law**.

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OCCUPIED TERRITORIES OF ZAPORIZHZHIA AND KHERSON REGIONS

PREPARATION FOR THE 2022-2023 ACADEMIC YEAR

In the occupied territories of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions, preparation for the school year involved providing educational institutions with Russian textbooks, retraining teachers according to Russian programs, organizing the recruitment of children to schools, determining the pedagogical staff suitable to continue or start work in schools.

On August 12, the Minister of Education of the Russian Federation Serhii Kravtsov announced that the issue of textbooks in the occupied territories has been completely resolved.²⁶ Throughout August, the occupation authorities reported receiving Russian textbooks. On August 26, news was released that textbooks from Russia were delivered to Kamianko-Dniprovska²⁷ and more than 600,000 textbooks were delivered to the Kherson region²⁸, on August 27, a video news appeared that more than 66 thousand books were brought to Melitopol for the beginning of the school year²⁹, and on August 29, the occupiers reported the arrival of textbooks to Skadovsk³⁰. That is, the educational program in the occupied territories is fully integrated into the educational program of the Russian Federation.

The Convention for the Protection of Civilian Population in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention) states that the education of children should be carried out by persons of their nationality, language and religion.

In addition to school textbooks, «correct» children's literature for kindergartens was also brought to the occupied territories.³¹

Also, Russian symbols were sent to schools in the occupied territories, «so that in educational institutions they could hold solemn processions with the raising or carrying of the Russian flag, as well as hold a cycle of classes «Conversations on important matters»»³²

At the same time, the number of teachers who agreed to undergo re-

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training according to Russian programs turned out to be insignificant. According to information from the occupying «Minister of the Republic of Crimea» Valentina Lavryk dated August 17, the number of teachers from the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions who underwent retraining in Crimea amounted to more than 500 people.³³ «Advanced training» courses for teachers from the occupied Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions took place in Yevpatoria and were organized by the Academy of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation.³⁴

The lack of teachers willing to start working on Russian programs became one of the major challenges for the occupiers. Information about the search for teachers appeared in various local groups throughout August, even in the last days of the month.^{35,36} On August 31, the occupying «head of education of the Kherson region» Mykhail Rodikov announced that 80% of the teaching staff of the schools was provided and on the condition that *«if there are not enough teachers»*, they would be requested from Russia.³⁷ The information about teachers from Russia who came to teach in the occupied territories of the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions began to appear more and more often in various sources.^{38,39} Such teachers are mouthpieces of the propaganda machine of the Russian Federation, their main goal is not education, but the destruction of Ukrainian identity in children.

It is worth noting that such teachers committed a crime already when they set foot on Ukrainian soil, because they illegally crossed the border of Ukraine. In addition, their actions may contain other components of crimes, which will be classified only after a detailed investigation and procedural actions. However, each of these teachers is a criminal and should be punished accordingly.

At the same time, the pressure on teachers continued, in particular the kidnapping of school principals who refused to teach according to Russian programs. The occupation authorities even resort to kidnapping the children of teachers who do not agree to work according to the rules of the invaders. This was reported by Ivan Vereshchak, a teacher from the Kherson region. His son was kidnapped by the Russians at the beginning of August. After his son returned home, his family was urgently evacuated to the controlled territory.⁴⁰

Another urgent challenge for the occupation authorities was the reluctance of parents to send their children to schools that had switched to Russian programs. To recruit children to school, the occupation authorisource

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ties used both incentive measures and intimidation. For the purpose of stimulation, information on providing primary school children with hot meals was actively disseminated,⁴¹ while parents were offered financial «help». In the Kherson region, parents were promised aid in the amount of 4,000 rubles⁴² for each child, and in Zaporizhzhia region – 10,000 rubles⁴³ under the condition of full-time education of the child in an educational institution in the occupied territory. Also, stationery, notebooks, diaries, literature, backpacks, etc. were received for children from low-income families or from certain settlements. For example, under the program of humanitarian aid from the Ryazan region to Novaya Kakhovka, literature, stationery, diaries and notebooks were transferred to educational institutions, which were later distributed among the schoolchildren of Kakhovka and Chaplynka.⁴⁴

At the same time, parents who were not affected by the «stimulation measures» of the occupation authorities were intimidated. They were threatened with fines in the amount of 40,000 rubles and deprivation of parental rights if they refused to send their children to schools in the occupied territories.

In total, the occupation authorities managed to open 145 schools⁴⁵ in Zaporizhzhia region and 91 schools⁴⁶ in Kherson region. For comparison: before the full-scale invasion, 549 schools worked in Zaporizhzhia region,⁴⁷ and 424 in Kherson region.⁴⁸

An innovation in the organization of the educational process in the occupied territories was the protection of schools and kindergartens by employees of the Russian Guard, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and specially selected private entrepreneurs with a license.⁴⁹

From September 1, all schools are required to conduct teaching in the Russian language and according to the programs of the Russian Federation. According to the decision of the school, as well as at the request of parents and children, hours of the native language can be allocated to the study of the Ukrainian language, or it can be taught as a special course.⁵⁰ Such wording «by request of parents» was also used in Crimea. Parents were de facto intimidated, summoned to interviews with the FSS or their statements were simply ignored and the study of the Ukrainian language did not take place.



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DESTRUCTION OF UKRAINIAN IDENTITY

The occupation authorities continue to destroy the Ukrainian identity of children in the occupied territories. In particular, a number of events were held before the Day of the Russian Flag: in Melitopol - a regulated action event, in Henichesk - a children's quest. In addition, a video with children about «love for Russia» was recorded in the Zaporizhzhia region.⁵¹ Children are involved in painting over Ukrainian symbols on the city streets and replacing them with Russian ones. Occupation channels position such actions as the «Clean Streets» campaign.⁵²

Along with that, summer camps and excursions to Russian cities remained the main instrument of identity destruction.

At least 1,233 children from Zaporizhzhia region and more than 1,500 children from Kherson region⁵³ were taken during the summer to the children's health camps of the Russian Federation. For example, in August, 400 children from the settlements of the Heniche district visited the «Lan» and «Girsky» camps in the Republic of Adygea.⁵⁴

Children from the occupied territories of southern Ukraine are also invited to camps on the territory of the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria in autumn. The age of children who can visit the camps is from 6 and a half to 15 years. Children are invited to Sanatorium «Mountain Dzherelo» LLC,⁵⁵ State public institution «Rainduga Basic Republican Children's Social Rehabilitation Center^{*56} and JSC "Kurort "Nalchik"".⁵⁷ Dates of shifts: 08/20/2022 – 09/09/2022, 09/12/2022 – 10/02/2022, 10/04/2022 – 10/24/2022, 10/26/2022 – 11/15/2022.

In the summer, there were also excursions for children from the occupied territories to Russian cities located thousands of kilometers from Ukraine. For example, children from Vasylkivsky District and Energodar went on an excursion to Veliky Novgorod.⁵⁸

The main goal of such excursions and trips to Russian camps is to evoke patriotic feelings for the Russian Federation in Ukrainian children.



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