

TRANSITION

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Analytical Report

**DESTROYED
CHILDHOOD:
SEVEN MONTHS
OF WAR
THROUGH
THE LENS OF
CHILDREN'S
RIGHTS**



General editorship: Valentyna Potapova

Design: Maxym Afanasyev

Analytical Report “Destroyed Childhood: Seven Months of War through the Lens of Children’s Rights” / V. Potapova, S. Movchan, M. Sulialina, A. Klymenko, O. Okhredko – Kyiv: CGP “Almenda” 2022. – 39 p.

The monitoring was prepared by the Center 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.

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The Centre of Civic Education “Almenda” (CCE “Almenda”) is a non-governmental 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”:

<http://almenda.org>

Contacts for comments and suggestions

Email: almenda.ngo@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Almost eight months have passed since the beginning of the new stage of the eight-year Russian-Ukrainian war. A full-scale invasion of the forces of the Russian Federation into Ukraine at 5 o'clock in the morning on the 24th of February 2022 did not leave a single town, which would have not suffered the consequences of the armed aggression. But the most vulnerable group was 5.7 million children of the country. Every day, more and more Ukrainian children suffer from the horrors of war: die, maimed, lose access to humanitarian needs, become internally relocated persons and refugees in other countries, come under fires, become the hostages of the Russian military and the victims of kidnapping, get deep trauma from violence, including sexual one.

As a result of attacks using blast weapons, in the populated centres of Ukraine orphanages, schools, hospitals, water supply systems, power plants, shelters for the civilians were damaged or ruined. The war in Ukraine is a crisis in protection of children and children's rights.

In this report, the information about grave violations against children in the situation of the military conflict

**from 24 February to 24 September 2022
was collected and analysed.**

When collecting the information, the authors relied on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, Protocols Additional to Geneva Conventions, Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and UN Security Council Resolutions.

Methodology of an analytical report is based on collection, examination and recording of digital information available to the public and media materials, as well as analysis of statistics and data from the official governmental sources of the General Prosecutor's Office, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, Ministry of Reintegration of Occupied Territories of Ukraine, Ombudsman of Verkhovna Rada, regional military administrations.

The report uses materials of monthly reviews "Countdown Timer: Children and the War" and monitoring reports "Universal Soldier" or Education as a Russian Weapon in the Occupied South of Ukraine" prepared by the experts of the Centre of Civil Education "Almenda".

The purpose of this report is to draw attention of the international community and society to violation of the rights of the child in conditions of Russian-Ukrainian war and to the constant practice of RF's neglect of its international obligations.

The collected facts and established tendencies of violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law against Ukrainian children during the military conflict have to facilitate bringing of the guilty of crimes to responsibility.

section 1.

RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS, STANDARDS AND PRINCIPLES CONCERNING PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN MILITARY CONFLICTS

1.1. Governing Standards and Principles in Examination of Matters of Protection of Children during Military Conflicts

The first most definitive document in the area of protection of children's rights is probably the Universal Declaration of Human Rights dated 1948, which stipulates that enjoying fundamental human rights does not depend on age; it emphasizes the necessity of special protection of motherhood and childhood (Art. 25), as well as, for the first time, formulates the main requirements of receiving education (Art. 26)¹.

The basic international law instruments in the area of human rights adopted by the UN and considered to have set up a new stage in the development of the rights of the child also include: The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948); the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966); the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966); Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979) and a number of other ones².

In 1959 the Declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted³, which contains 10 principles that can be phrased as follows:

- The child shall enjoy all the rights set forth in this Declaration without any form of discrimination.
- The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities to enable them to develop in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity.

1
<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

2
Linnyk N. V. Historical Prerequisites for Rights and Freedoms of the Child at All Stages of Development of the Society [Electronic source]. University Scientific Notes. 2006. No. 2 (18). P. 41–45. URL: www.univer.km.ua

3
<https://cpd.org.rs/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/1959-Declaration-of-the-Rights-of-the-Child.pdf>

- The child shall be entitled from their birth to a name and a nationality
- The child shall enjoy the benefits of social security, including adequate pre-natal and post-natal care for them or their mother. The child shall have the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services.
- The child who is physically, mentally or socially handicapped shall be given the special treatment, education and care.
- The child shall, wherever possible, grow up in the care and under the responsibility of their parents, and in an atmosphere of affection and of moral and material security. The child of tender years shall not, save in exceptional circumstances, be separated from the mother. Society and the public authorities shall have the duty to extend particular care to children without a family and to those without adequate means of support.
- The child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages. The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation.
- The child shall in all circumstances be among the first to receive protection and relief.
- The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation. The child shall not be admitted to employment before an appropriate minimum age.
- The child shall be protected from racial, religious and any other form of discrimination. The child shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood.

On 20 November 1989, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child⁴. In contrast to the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which only declared certain principles, the Convention established minimum standards in the area of law and morals. These standards are mandatory for all countries that ratified the Convention. The Convention had become the first international instrument, where the rights of children were enunciated in the most comprehensive manner. We should take note of Article 29 of the Convention, which states that education should be directed to preparation of the child to responsible life in a free society in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of men and women and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups, as well as native population. It is also appropriate to mention Articles 38, 39 of the Convention directed to protection of children in conditions of war.

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<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

1.2. International Humanitarian Law

The Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (1949) provides general protection to children as civilian persons. Articles 14, 17, 23–26, 38, 49–51, 68, 76, 81, 82, 89, 94, 132 of this Convention are dedicated to special protection of children. Let us note that this protection concerns civilian children living both on unoccupied and occupied territories⁵. Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions dated 12 August 1949 relating to the protection of victims of non-international armed conflicts (Protocol I), special treatment of children is provided for in Articles 8, 70, 74, 75, 77, 78⁶.

When analysing the provisions of international humanitarian law, one may see that the parties of the conflict must ensure that children under the age of 15 which became orphans or were separated with their families as a result of an armed conflict shall not be left to the mercy of fate. Besides, it is important to ensure, under any circumstances, care, carrying out of ceremonies related to their religion, and education. If possible, their education must be entrusted to persons with the same cultural traditions. The parties must take the necessary measures to ensure that the identity of all children under the age of 12 is possible to establish using special lockets or otherwise.

The parties of the conflict must take all necessary measures to protect children under 15 from direct participation in military actions, in particular, not engage them in their military forces. During recruiting of soldiers among persons over 15, who have not attained 18, the parties of the conflict must consider the oldest teenagers as the first-priority candidates. If children fall under power of an opposite party after direct participation in military actions, they shall remain under special protection given to children, irrespective of whether they are prisoners of war. Children, whose freedom is limited, must be kept in the premises separated from the adults' premises, except where families are placed together in a separate premise⁷.

Besides, the occupant state shall be responsible: for operation of public institutions and services in favour of the citizens within an occupied territory; for providing the citizens with food products and medical materials, in particular, for delivery of necessary food products, medical materials and other supplies, if the resources of the occupied territory turn out to be insufficient; for operation of healthcare establishments; for facilitating proper education and child care. It must allow provision of spiritual support and humanitarian aid in an occupied territory.

5

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/geneva-convention-relative-protection-civilian-persons-time-war>

6

https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/other/icrc_002_0321.pdf

7

Studying International Humanitarian Law: Study Guide. Second edition / O. Voytenko, M. Eligulashvili, O. Kozorog, T. Korotkyi, V. Potapova, O. Stokoz, N. Khendel; under gen. editorship of presidential advisor from the Ukrainian Red Cross Society on matters international humanitarian law, Cand.Sc. (Law) T. Korotkyi. UGSPL; Odesa: Feniks, 2021. 268p.

Protection of the rights of children affected by an armed conflict is also the focus of standards 55, 93, 105, 118, 120, 129, 131, 135–137 of Customary Rules of International Humanitarian Law applied during both international and non-international armed conflicts⁸.

An important document, which determines a list of international crimes and specifies them is Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, violations concerning children are described in Articles 7 i 8⁹.

8

Henckaerts J.-M., Doswald-Beck L. Customary International Humanitarian Law. Standards [Electronic source]. International Committee of the Red Cross. URL: <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/other/customary-international-humanitarian-law-i-icrc-eng.pdf>

9

<https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/RS-Eng.pdf>

10

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/278324?ln=en>

1.3. Security Council Resolutions

One cannot but mention that there is a number of UN Security Council Resolutions, among which there are Resolutions 1261 (1999), 1314 (2000), 1460 (2003), 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009), 1998 (2011) and 2225 (2015), which examine the matter of protection of children during an armed conflict.

In its Resolution № 1261, UN Security Council encourages all parties of armed conflicts to ensure full, safe and free access of humanitarian personnel to all children affected by armed conflicts and provision of humanitarian aid, and take actual measures for minimization of damage done to children¹⁰.

These were the Resolutions that defined brutal violations against children: murders and mutilation; sexual abuse; kidnapping and forced relocation; recruiting and using children in an armed conflict; attacks on facilities protected by the international law; attacks on schools, hospitals and other facilities, where children are hiding.

section 2.

STATUS OF OBSERVATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD DURING THE ARMED CONFLICT (24.02.-24.09.2022)

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, Russia has been brutally violated all international regulations aimed at protection of the rights of the child.

[Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20 November 1989 founded a very important regulation concerning protection of children, namely: **Art. 3 “In all actions concerning children... the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration”**.

On the basis of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, guidance and principles for consideration of matters of children's protection during armed conflicts were formed¹¹, namely:

- According to Article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child¹², all children, in any circumstances, are equally entitled to all rights they have. Any child, whether a boy or a girl, must not be subjected to a discrimination based on sex, age, ethnicity, race, religion, physical abilities or any other status of a child, their parent or tutor-at-law.
- According to Articles 38 and 39 of the Convention, it is necessary to respect the rules of international humanitarian law applicable to children and take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of of armed conflicts. Also, Art. 38 contains a standard, according to which “...States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict”.
- In all actions and decisions made for protection of children, one must follow the “do no harm” principle. One must make efforts to minimize possible negative consequences and maximize increased benefits for children to ensure satisfaction of their needs and provide a child, according to the age and maturity, possibility to express their views, as provided for in Article 12 of the Convention.

11

[Practical guidance for mediators to protect children in situations of armed conflict <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Practical-guidance-for-mediators-to-protect-children-in-situations-of-armed-conflict.pdf>](https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Practical-guidance-for-mediators-to-protect-children-in-situations-of-armed-conflict.pdf)

12

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

- There must be compliance with the contents and nature of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflicts, Security Council Resolutions on children and armed conflicts, as well as relevant resolutions concerning a particular country, which is an aggressor.
- United Nations do not support amnesty for significant international law crimes, and persons guilty of brutal violations against children may not be released from liability.

Over seven months from the full-scale invasion, the authors of the analytical report collected numerous facts concerning the situation with the rights of the child in conditions of the armed conflict.

As of the morning of 25 September, number of children injured as a result of [the full-scale armed aggression by Russia](#) grew up to

771

Number of
deceased
children

391

General number of
deceased and maimed
children grew up to

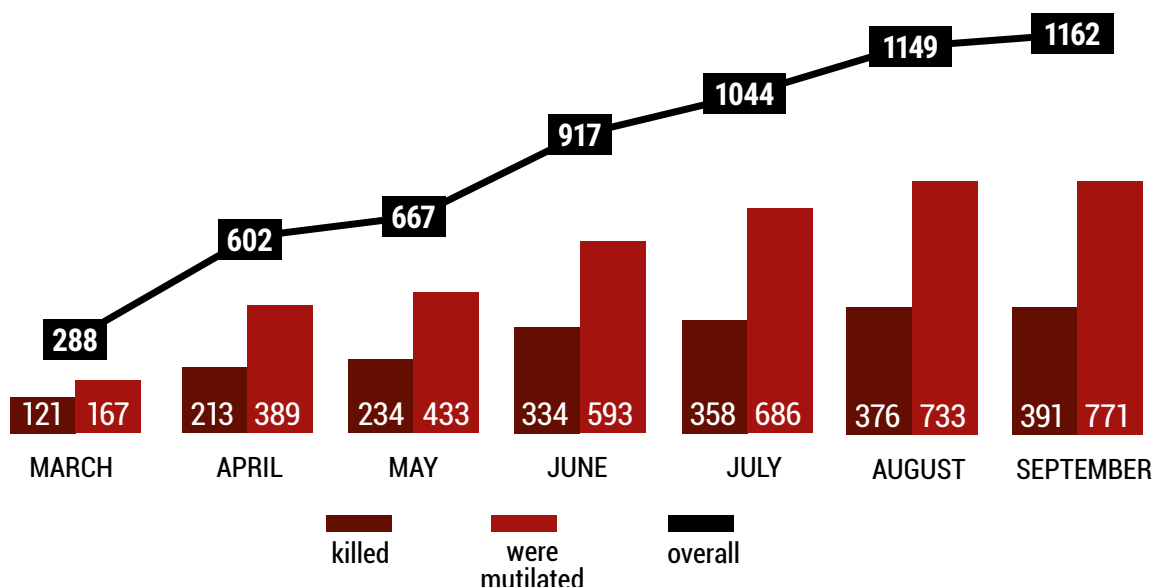
1162

These numbers are not final, as work continues on establishment of certain facts in the places of active actions, in occupied and liberated territories.

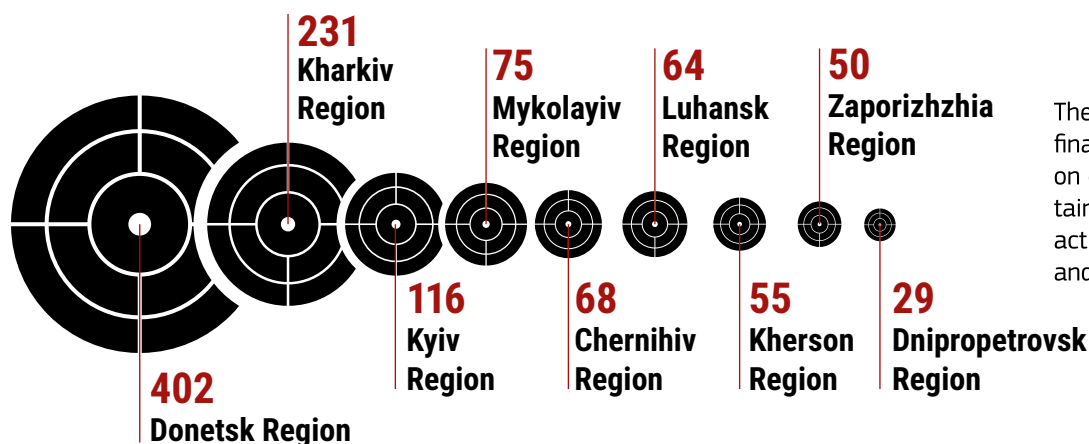
the General Prosecutor's Office reported.

Killing and maiming of children as of 25.09.2022

Table 1



The greatest number of affected children is in



These numbers are not final, as work continues on establishment of certain facts in the places of active actions, in occupied and liberated territories.

ARTICLE 38 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

1. States Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for rules of international humanitarian law applicable to them in armed conflicts which are relevant to the child.

Upon analysing the causes of deaths and mutilations of children during seven months of war, we may state almost all episodes were brutal violations of international humanitarian law. The units of the armed forces of the RF carry out attacks¹³, through which Ukrainian children have been harmed and continue to be harmed. Such attacks:

- are not directed to military facilities;
- are carried out using methods and means of war that may not be directed against a particular military facility, or their consequences may not be limited as required by CRC;
- shelling using any methods or means, during which a number of clearly detached military facilities located in a city, town, village or other place with a tight concentration of civilians or civilian buildings is considered as a single military facility;
- shelling that leads to accidental losses among civilians, injuries to civilians, damaging civilian facilities, or all of the above, which are excessive to the expected particular and direct military advantage.

13

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/321185556861196/>



The most heinous cases: shelling in Mariupol of a dramatic theatre, near which there was an inscription with large letter that read "CHILDREN", where 1300 people (elderly, women, children) were hiding from the shelling by the armed forces of the RF. Under the ruins of Mariupol dramatic theatre that was bombed on 16 March [300 bodies of women and children were found](#).

On 8 April, the Russian military hit railway station of Kramatorsk with Tochka-U missile. During the missile strike thousands of people were at the railway station. The inscription on the missile that hit the station read "For children". *Of 98 injured taken to the healthcare institutions, there were 16 children, 46 women and 36 men. Twelve of them died at the hospital. 38 people died instantly at the station*¹⁴.

Mass shelling on 25 May in Balakleya, Kharkiv Region, lead to injuring a large number of civilians, among which there were children. This was reported by Maksym Khaustov, Director of the Department of Healthcare of Kharkiv Regional Military Administration. According to him, they managed to take only a 9-year-old girl from Balakleya to Kharkiv – she was in a critical condition.¹⁵

On 29 May 2022, the Russian military carried out a shell attack of Myroliubivka, Kherson Region. A 9-year-old girl and an elderly woman died of hostile fire. According to preliminary data of Kherson Regional Prosecutor's Office, at least three people got injuries of different stages and severity. One of them was a 7-months baby and a 5-year-old girl¹⁶.

From the beginning of the full-scale invasion, the Russian troops continue to shell populated centres of Ukraine, which are not military targets and where most of the affected are civilian adults and children.

Murders and mutilations of children are massively done by military men of the armed forces of Russia in the entire territory of Ukraine, not only due to random bombing and shelling, but also as direct shooting of families with children during their attempts to evacuate, or right in the yards and streets.

After liberation of the territories of Ukraine that were temporarily controlled by the RF, horrible things were discovered regarding the war crimes against the civilians. In Borodianka and Havronschyna in Kyiv Region the law enforcement found 11 citizens killed by the invaders at the mass grave site¹⁷. *"On 20 April in Borodianka, bodies of two 35-year-old men and a 15-year-old girl brutally shot by the occupants were found in the territory of a local hospital. At the other grave site, bodies of six people – 4 men and 2 women – were discovered. The Russian military ran over a person's head on armoured vehicle"*¹⁸.

14

<https://www.facebook.com/pavlokyrylenko.donoda/posts/pfbid02JcBH8dLaj17A1EUEhYuMnwz9zhtiXLEoP7hFiZbiaEZuiwEniwwMYcgw1ymbV2gUl>

15

<https://socportal.info/ua/news/okupanti-znovu-obstrilyali-kharkivshchinu-e-zagibli-ta-poraneni/>

16

<https://www.facebook.com/pho.gov.ua/posts/377790861049648>

17

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpkStkyQtsg&t=16s>

18

<https://www.facebook.com/pol.kyivregion/posts/353949406769382>

On 24 February, a family of 56-year-old Anna and Oleg Fedkiv, their daughter-in-law Iryna Fedko and two grandchildren, Sofia and Ivan, tried to evacuate from a village called Vesele, Kherson Region, occupied by the units of the armed forces of the RF, to Nova Kakhovka¹⁹. Just outside Vesele a civilian car with the family was shot by the units of the armed forces of the RF with small arms. The entire family, including a six-year-old girl and an eighteen-months boy, died.

In Kharkiv Region [a Russian tank shot the car with a family with two children inside](#). People shouted that they were civilians, waved the white flag, but that was all in vain. The parents and a 9-year-old girl died, a 17-year-old boy suffered wounds²⁰

In Izum liberated on 10 September, the police of Kharkiv Region received information about mass grave sites with people, who became the victims of war crimes committed by the servicemen of the aggressor country and the occupation authorities created in the town.

Generally, according to the reports of the General Prosecutor's Office based on the results of exhumation (which continued from 16 to 23 September 2022), 447 bodies were found at the mass grave site: 425 civilians, including 5 children, and 22 servicemen of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU). In particular, entire families were found tortured and killed. *"Adults, men and women, and small children with bullets in their heads. Some parts of their bodies were missing"*, the President of Ukraine stated in his address²¹.

As a result of the shelling Toretsk, a town in Donetsk Region, a 12-year-old girl was wounded. https://t.me/pgov_ua/5937.

As a result of shelling Kupjansk, a town in Kharkiv Region, an 11-year-old boy was wounded. https://t.me/pgov_ua/5937.

On 25 September, the Russian military gunned at point-blank range a road train of seven civilian cars between Kurylivka and Pischane, settlements in Kupjanskyi District. This is a so-called "grey zone". Two cars burnt down, there were children and parents, who burnt alive. Generally, 13 children and one pregnant woman died [video](#)

"A brutal attack on civilians was carried out sabotage and reconnaissance group of occupants – with small arms they gunned at point-blank range six old cars and one truck GAZel". The enemy again proved that its purpose was to exterminate all Ukrainians, irrespective of age and sex. The occupants suffer a defeat on the battlefield and in despair respond with killing of the civilians. But the "ruscists" will not escape punishment – we will find each of them and make them pay for the committed villainies", acting Head of the SSU Maliuk stressed.

19

https://zaxid.net/rosiyani-rozstrilyali-pid-novoyu-kahovkoyu-rodinu-z-pyati-lyudey_n1536963

20

<https://news.obozrevatel.com/ukr/society/na-harkivschini-rosijskij-tank-rozstrilyav-avto-v-yakomu-bula-simya-z-dvoma-ditmi.htm>

21

<https://www.slovoidilo.ua/2022/09/25/novyna/bezpeka/izyumi-znajshly-shhe-dva-masovi-poxovannya-zelenskyj>

At the same time, military forces of the aggressor state, violating the Geneva Conventions, shell the civilians in the regions of Ukraine, where there is no warfare and no military targets at the time.

The example of such violation is bombardment with high-accuracy missile of Kalibr type of the centre of Vinnytsia on 14 July, where only civil facilities are located: office buildings, medical centre Neyromed, apartment buildings and private houses etc. As a result of a missile strike three children died – a 4-year-old girl and two boys of 7 and 8 – another 4 children suffered wounds of different degrees of severity.

Another cause of death and crippling of children in Ukraine are explosive items left deliberately for killing children.

A resident of Bucha, musician Marianna Hlieva told about one of such cases on its page on [Facebook](#). She posted a photo and told that the occupants hid an explosive in a girl's piano. There were awards and cups, prizes for musical contests, on the musical instrument. Occupants carefully took down all the awards, put in an explosive, and put everything back.

By now this situation has took on horrible and outrageous scale. According to [preliminary assessments](#) of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, 300 thousand square kilometres, which is almost a half of the territory of Ukraine, have been polluted with mines and ammunition from Russia.

Therefore, in the Russian-Ukrainian war the RF consciously violates the principles of the law of war:



**principle of
restrictions
concerning persons**

(civilian population and certain civilians are entitled to general protection of hazards that occur from military operations);



**principle of
restrictions
concerning facilities**

(the attacks must be strictly limited to military facilities);



**principle of
restrictions
concerning means
and methods of
conducting military
actions.**

**ARTICLE 38
of the Convention on
the Rights of the Child
(1989)**

4. In accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect the civilian population in armed conflicts, States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict.
-

Refusal to give humanitarian aid to the civilians, which found themselves in a trap or were relocated as a result of the conflict, was always a reality, but is increasingly frequently used as a war tactics. There are lots of examples of children trapped in the combat areas (Mariupol, Trostianets, Volnovakha, Bucha, Irpin etc.) or deprived of access to food, water and medical care, including vaccines.

The world has for several months observing a deliberate obstructing by the RF the creation of humanitarian corridors from Mariupol²². A health worker, who was in the territory of Mariupol plant “Azovstal” turned with a request to free all of the Ukrainian military and civilians, who were constantly shelled by Russian occupants. The doctor reported about that in a video address²³ to the Ukrainians and the world. He told about the cases of deaths among the minors, who stayed in the catacombs of the plant. “*Children are dying from bullets, from hunger*”, the health worker noted²⁴.

Citizens of Yahidne, a village in Chernihiv Region, Anna Ponomarenko and fellow villagers were under occupation, she looks back at those days in horror²⁵: “*The first encounter with the barbarians was one of the most terrible ones for me. While holding the baby in my arms, I dropped on my knees and asked them not to shoot my son. Then, they locked me with my son and my husband's parents in a cellar for two days. When I asked to bring a pot for the baby, the occupant (Tuviniian) agreed, but took out a grenade F-1 and said that, if he didn't like my moves during moving for a pot, he would throw the grenade down the cellar, where my son was. On the third day, at gunpoint, all of the residents of the village were driven together to the school basement, and then the attempts to survive started for all the captives*”. According to her, there were around 360 people, including children, the youngest of which were 1 - 1.5 months old. Everyone, except children and elderly, who were physically unable to seat, slept when seated. We had no lights, no ventilation, no toilet.

Hundreds of Ukrainian children are dying as a consequence of bombing and shelling. To survive, they have to live and grow up in bomb shelters²⁶. A citizen of Mariupol Yevhen Sosnovskiy published²⁷ a diary of a boy living in a blockade city. The boy's notes are called “The war”.

22

<https://minre.gov.ua/news/vereshchuk-vymagaye-v-okupantiv-ne-zryvaty-gumanitarnyy-korydor-do-mariupolya>

23

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_yiG2gjmbE

24

Read full text here: <https://glavcom.ua/country/incidents/diti-pomirayut-vid-golodu-medik-iz-azovstali-poprosiv-dopomogi-u-turechchini-video-843395.html>

25

<https://www.facebook.com/100004078122147/posts/2909065972572645/?d=n>

26

<https://novyny.live/kyiv/v-metro-teper-mozhno-kurit-i-dazhe-spokoino-zasnut-rasskaz-kyevlianki-o-zhizni-v-kyevskoi-podzemke-43441.html>

27

<https://www.facebook.com/evgeny.sosnovsky/posts/5107493516005560>

A girl from Mariupol called Olena was for two weeks keeping a video diary²⁸ about her life in the home city. *"02.03-16.03.2022. 2 weeks of hell in 7 minutes. P.S. I taped this specially for all those who want to see this Armageddon", the girl wrote.*

28

<https://t.me/miaticsd/78>

In Kharkiv, a little girl Veronica lived for 50 days under the ground, in a subway, where she, her mother and her grandmother went down after the occupants destroyed her house with bombs. The story of the child was told by a civil activist, the former Commissioner of the President of Ukraine for the Rights of the Child Mykola Kuleba²⁹. But the most horrible thing appeared to be Veronica's psychological trauma — she was hysterically afraid to even come close to the stairs leading from the subway to the surface.

29

<https://www.facebook.com/KulebaMykola/posts/584850576330125>

A boy named Sashko (a hypocoristic of Oleksandr) was hiding from shelling in a basement in his home village in Zaporizhzhia Region with his distant relatives for two months. They were unable to take him out, because the kid appeared in the epicentre of warfare³⁰. The boy's mother was in her last month of pregnancy, when the Russians started shelling Stepove. The father took his wife to a maternity hospital and sent Sashko away to the relatives. When he returned for him, all evacuation corridors had already been closed. The parents remained in the territory controlled by Ukraine and the child – in the occupied territory... There were no green corridors, but the parents did not relinquish attempts to take the child out. Only one team of gutsy volunteers stepped forward to help. Through the entire way from the occupied territory the boy was virtually passed from hand to hand. *"I saw a blaze near the cabin, they were shooting and everything was white. They said: go fast, because those were the outgoing, now there will be the incoming",* Sashko shares his memories.

30

<https://tsn.ua/ato/dva-misyaci-u-pidvali-bez-batkiv-volonteri-vryatuvali-iz-okupovanoyi-teritoriyi-9-richnogo-hlopchika-i-peredalimami-2056666.html>

For almost 3 weeks Natalia Pesotska, a teacher at Chernihiv Child Social and Psychological Rehabilitation Centre, and her 30 fosterlings, the youngest one being 3.5 years old and the oldest – 16, and two infants of Pesotska herself were hiding from bombings.

After five months of occupation, the situation with the "green" corridors remains difficult for the citizens of Kherson Region. The worst thing is that they would not let take even children out through the green corridors. This was told by the head of Kherson Regional Military Administration Hennadiy Laguta³¹. He emphasized that the authorities of Ukraine did everything possible to at least take out the children, but the occupants did not let them do that.

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https://24tv.ua/okupanti-ne-dali-vivezti-zelenim-koridorom-zhodnoyi-ditini-hersonshhini_n1993283

The most urgent issue was taking out pupils of the foster homes. The head of the Regional Military Administration noted that there were children at the foster home in Oleshky, which needed special care. That is because the pupils of this educational establishment have disabilities. He added that

the attempts to take children out from Kherson, Nova Kakhovka and Kahovka foster homes also failed. Hennadiy Laguta does not know for sure whether they were forcibly taken out to Crimea, for instance.

The hardest situation in terms of leaving is observed in settlements of Kherson Region. Anatoliy Fomenko from Velyka Oleksandrivka was forced to swim across Ingulets River with his mother and a three-year old son and walk 25 km to escape occupation. Their story was told by a periodical called [Hraty](#)

A 9-year-old Yehor, whose diary shocked the entire world managed to leave Mariupol. The kid wrote about the death of his acquaintances and injuries of his relatives. All in all, he and his family spent over three months in the destroyed city – [video](#)

The bright example is the situation at the roadblocks of Vasylivka (Zaporizhzhia Region). Because of the difficult humanitarian situation and absence of safety in the temporarily occupied territories, there are mass requests from the citizens for leaving, but it is very difficult to get to the territory controlled by Ukraine.

According to the Mayor of Melitopol Ivan Fedorov in the telethon on 19 July³²: *“A great number of people are leaving, but the enemy keeps precluding them from doing that. As for today’s morning, in Vasylivka, which is a military clash line, 720 cars crowded together and were not let through by the occupants”*.

The Mayor of Melitopol noted that, on the roadblocks, the occupants search the residents to find and take money and valuables. *“Two days ago we had a case, when we were transferring medicines for children with cystic fibrosis, which is a rare orphan disease, and children would not be able to live without those medicines, from Zaporizhzhia to Melitopol. But at the roadblock the ruscists stole those medications”*, Fedorov said.

The Mayor of Melitopol believes that the occupants deliberately create a situation of creation of congestions of civilians in one place. *“They use them as a “human shield”. They deliberately gather them in Vasylivka, so that it would be more difficult for our armed forces to carry out counter-offensive”*, Fedorov emphasized.

Donetsk Region appeared on the verge of a humanitarian disaster on the seventh month of war; active warfare continues there, the infrastructure has been almost completely ruined, people are every second under the threat of coming under fires. According to the Vice Prime Minister Iryna Vereschuk, now there are 52 thousand children in Donetsk Region and *“one may not put them in deadly danger in winter period – without heating, without power, without a possibility to keep them warm”*³³.

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<https://www.unian.ua/war/okupanti-vikorisovuyut-cherhi-na-blokpostah-visilivki-yak-zhiviy-shchit-mer-melitopolya-novini-vtorgnennya-rosiji-v-ukrajinu-11910858.html>

33

<https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-regions/3540341-ukraina-zaprovadit-obovazkovu-evakuaciu-z-doneccini.html>

Also, according to the police data, over 470 multi-child families bringing up 1672 children remain in the populated centres near the line of fire. The biggest number is in Toretsk and Velyka Novosilka³⁴.

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<https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-regions/3539882-na-doneccini-policia-evakuuvatime-ditej-akso-cogo-hoce-hoca-b-odin-iz-batkiv.html>

**ARTICLE 38
of the Convention on
the Rights of the Child
(1989)**

2. States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age of fifteen years do not take a direct part in hostilities.
3. States Parties shall refrain from recruiting any person who has not attained the age of fifteen years into their armed forces. In recruiting among those persons who have attained the age of fifteen years but who have not attained the age of eighteen years, States Parties shall endeavour to give priority to those who are oldest.

In many conflicts children take a direct part in hostilities. However, their role is not limited to warfare. Many girls and boys are also engaged in performance of additional functions, their tasks may be different: from combatants to cooks, spies, couriers etc.

For instance, in Kharkiv the occupants established contact with a minor boy via Telegram. They promised to pay money for the information about the position of the Armed Forces of Ukraine within the city, this was reported by the Security Service of Ukraine on 11 April³⁵. According to the report of the Prosecutor General Iryna Venedyktova, as of 21 April 8 children were “dragged into the armed war”.

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<https://t.me/SBUkr/4096>

In Kharkiv Region, a 12-year-old teenager was sending over the Internet the information about location of military equipment, roadblocks and soldiers of the Armed Forces of Ukraine with an intent to receive monetary award for that. A similar fact took place also in Luhansk Region. Also, in Chernihiv Region, during the occupation of one of the villages a minor received a task from the occupants to make reconnaissance of the positions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Besides, to demonstrate the commitment to the occupants and their support, he placed red bands on his arm and leg and patrolled the village territory with them. Under this circumstances the 16-year-old boy directed the enemies to the houses owned by those related to the law enforcement or military units of Ukraine and having weapons.

The Security Service of Ukraine exposed the special services of the Russian Federation using smartphone games for recruiting Ukrainian chil-

dren. According to a message in a Telegram channel: *"In one of the apps the participants can look for the so-called "boxes" with virtual prizes that can be exchanged for electronic money. On the route children take photos of the site, facilities of military and critical infrastructure in the territory of different populated centres. At that, the access to administration of this app belongs to an IT-company controlled by special services of the RF registered in one of the European countries and engaged in distribution of interactive platforms. So, the enemy used Ukrainian children "in the dark", i.e. without them knowing, for collection of information about location of strategically important objects. In particular, two teenagers, who took pictures of roadblocks, elevators and transportation routes, were apprehended in Kirovohrad Region"*³⁶.

As for the direct participation of the minors in warfare, no such information was recorded. However, the Order appeared in the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk Regions, under which boys who attained 16 and more years can be included in the mobilisation reserve. The Order was signed by the "temporarily acting Minister of Internal Affairs of the so-called "LNR". This was reported by Ukrainian security agencies³⁷. According to the text of the Order, the Ministries of Internal Affairs must, by 1 June, make lists of persons subject to military service, who would soon be sent to the combat zone.

A part of the war crime of recruiting children is using education for the purpose of war propaganda and creation of a motivation to voluntarily enlist in the armed forces of the RF. As reported by the information agency "OstroV"³⁸, the "occupation authorities of LNR" started to militarise Ukrainian children in the districts of Luhansk Region occupied in 2022. This stems from the "decree" of the fake government of the "republic" about creation of "Cossack cadet corps".

It is noted that "Cossack cadet corps" will appear in the liberated (occupied – "OstroV") Starobilsk and Kreminnyi". One of them will bear the name of a Soviet commander Vasyl Margelov, and the decision was made to name the other one after a Soviet writer Mikhail Sholokhov. The main objective of this corps is "implementation of general education programmes of general and general secondary education integrated with additional general development programmes aimed at preparation of students to military or other public service"³⁹.

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<https://t.me/SBUkr/4326>

37

<https://golosua.info/2022/05/16/zhinky-dity-liudy-z-invalidnistiu-v-ordlo-pidpysaly-dykyi-nakaz-pro-mobilizatsiiu/>

38

<https://www.ostro.org/lugansk/society/news/637718/>

39

<https://lug-info.com/news/kazach-i-kadetskie-korpusa-poyavyatsya-v-starobel-ske-i-kremennoj-pravitel-stvo>

**ARTICLE 37
of the Convention on
the Rights of the Child
(1989)**

- States Parties shall ensure that:
- (a) No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age;
 - (c) Every child deprived of liberty shall be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, and in a manner which takes into account the needs of persons of his or her age. In particular, every child deprived of liberty shall be separated from adults unless it is considered in the child's best interest not to do so and shall have the right to maintain contact with his or her family through correspondence and visits, save in exceptional circumstances.
-

The Russian military use the tactics, when the situation in a city is brought into a critical state and the enemy offers a conventional corridor to the RF, supposedly for rescue. At the same time, filtration camps and corridors are being created for people.

25 April, after the warfare stopped, 474 people, including 69 children were deported to a filtration camp from Mariupol to Bezimenne⁴⁰.

A 17-year-old resident of Mariupol told what was happening in the filtration corridors.⁴¹ Together with her family, she underwent the "filtration", whereupon managed to get to a territory controlled by Kyiv. *"A filtration camp is a settlement. There was a line of hundreds of cars. It was not allowed to step out even to use a toilet. Legs swell, all the body hurts. We stood there for two whole days and two nights. They said that filtration starts after the age of 14. I was left in the first operation booth. They took the documents, scanned them, took fingerprints. At the same time they were checking the cell phone. There were five soldiers with weapons in the room and I was alone. It was very scary. They tried to trip me, when a soldier, who was lying on a mattress, said: 'Do you not like her? There are more women ahead. We'll find something'. They just did not like me and pushed me out. They did not let me wait for my father there"*⁴².

40
<https://t.me/andriyshTime/503>

41
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=586472129129042>

42
<https://inshe.tv/society/2022-04-30/676159/?fbclid=IwAR3B89l7blZfuaXo3uEbSCyvlpXavhcjDoMesA4PCYLMdXEUZXdiQbL2aKw>

A 16-year-old son of the Head of Zaporizhzhia District Administration Oleh Buriak, who was kidnapped by the Russians as early as 8 April, was in prison for 90 days. The parent did not know his location for almost 50 days. According to Oleh Buriak, his son was held as an “exchange reserve” and required a particular person, who was in Ukraine at the time⁴³.

Also, in June-July messages were coming from the occupied territories about threats to parent about forced extraction of children in case of refusal from the “Russian education”. This was reported by the Mayor of Melitopol Ivan Fedorov: “...For the past two weeks the ruscists have been clearly declaring their intentions: children and parents, who do not send their children to school, which the ruscists are trying to **arrange**, those parents will be deprived of parental rights. I cannot imagine how this will take place in real life”⁴⁴.

In Kupjansk of Kharkiv Region Russian occupants held five teenagers in the basement for a week. Ukrainian border guards released them. This was [reported](#) by the press-office of the State Border Service. “The border guards found four girls and a boy in Kupjansk. The children spent there seven days”, the report says.

The teenagers told that the occupants carried out filtration measures with them, whereupon locked them up in a basement.

Such actions of the Russians represent an obvious violation of the international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

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<https://www.facebook.com/azovseanews/videos/422121473166840/>

44

<https://www.unian.ua/society/u-melitopoli-okupanti-pogrozhuut-vidbirati-u-batkiv-ditey-yaki-ne-hoditmut-do-rosiyskikh-shkil-novini-ukrajini-11889801.html>

**ARTICLE 28
of the Convention on
the Rights of the Child
(1989)**

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity

The right to education is a fundamental socio-cultural right, which ensures stable development of the young generation. The right to education is one of the human rights of the “second generation” (socio-economic and cultural rights, aspect of non-discrimination may be also considered as civil right of the “first generation”).

The right to education has generic features of all human rights, in particular, the right to education has: the general nature – it is an indispensable component of the constitutional status of any person; constant nature – it provides for the possibility to exercise it during the entire life; guaranteed nature – “it does not allow for illegal restrictions on its exercise...”.

The law of war (known as the international humanitarian law) also recognises the importance of the ability of children to study during armed

conflicts. It separately provides for the protection of children and defines the educational institutions as ordinary civilian property, which may not be attacked, unless turned into military facilities.

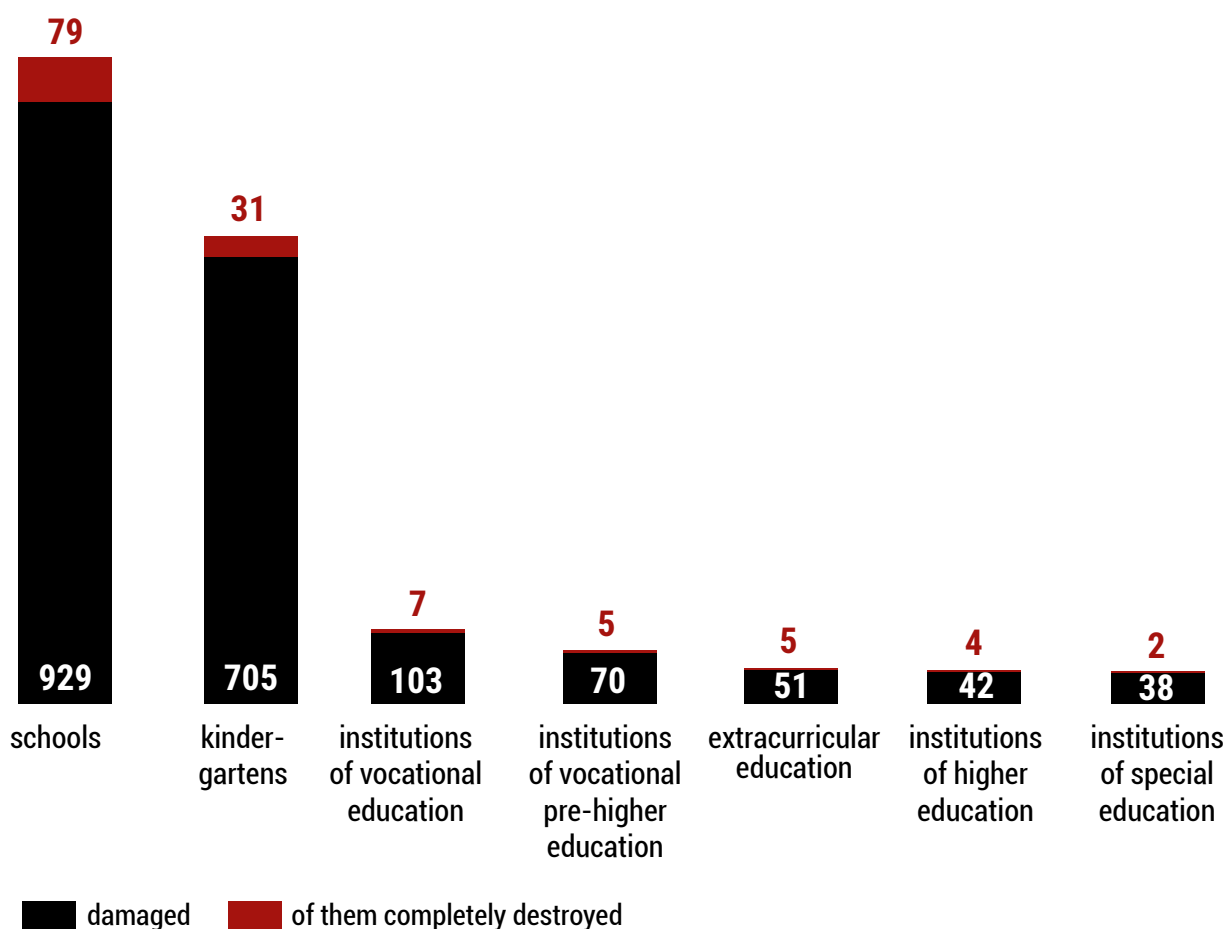
Nevertheless, there is a growing tendency to attacks on schools, which has a disastrous influence on children.

The aggressor states that it strikes only at the military facilities of our country. At the same time, the General Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Education and Science have collected numerous facts and points⁴⁵, which disproves the statement: Russian troops destroy schools and universities, pre-schools and orphanages.

As on 25.09.2022, as a result of bombing and shelling by the military units of the Russian Federation, the following facilities were damaged and ruined, in percentage according to the types of educational institutions⁴⁶

The number of damaged and destroyed educational institutions by type

Table 2



45

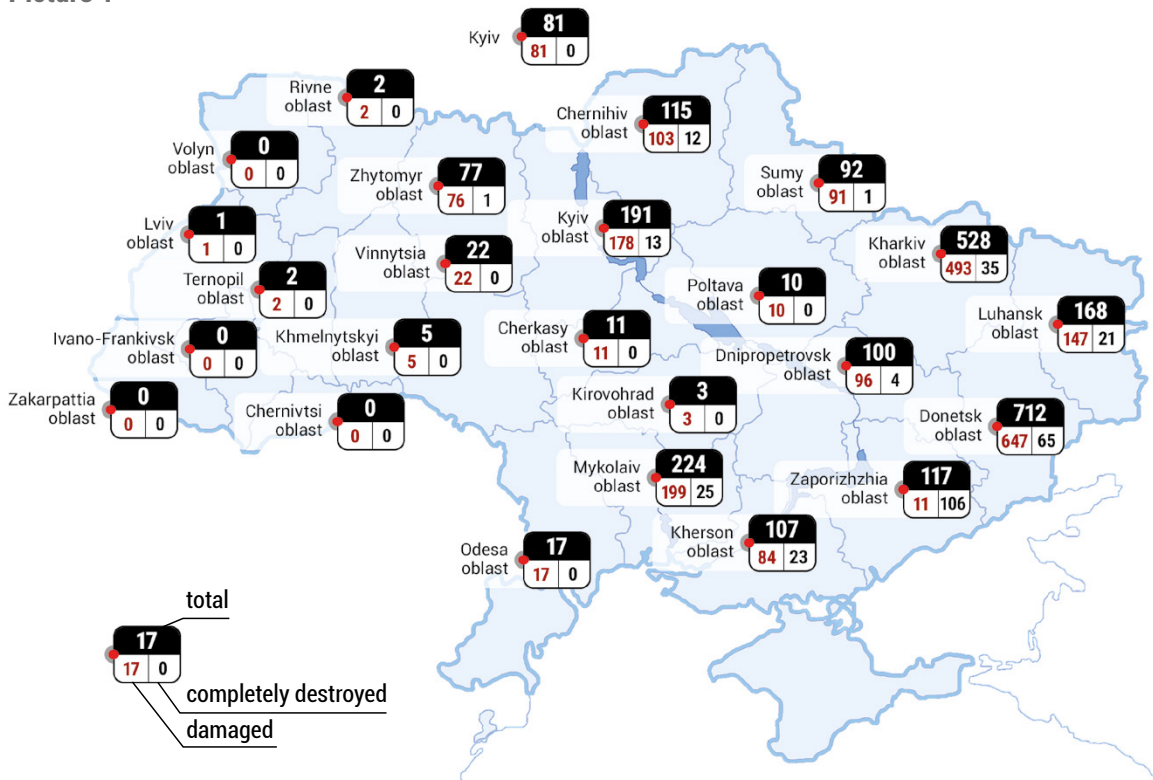
https://saveschools.in.ua/?fbclid=IwAR2EilAeeCmcg3PQ1Tl0w0n-E4uX-6Yl1eLoAjUHp6SbNwyxn2ql18_4Yr8

46

The table was taken from the report "Operational Evaluation of Lost Assets in the Sector of Education of Ukraine in Connection with the War"

In terms of the regions, number damaged and ruined schools, according to data of the Ministry of Education and Science, is distributed as follows:

Picture 1



Kharkiv Region is on the first place in Ukraine in terms of the number of educational institutions damaged and ruined as a result of shelling by Russians.

Damage from destruction of the educational institutions in Kharkiv Region because of the war reach dozens of billions hryvnias. This was reported by the Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine Serhiy Shkarlet, who came to Kharkiv on 13 July.

During the war over 500 educational institutions in Kharkiv Region came under occupant fires: elementary, secondary, higher, out-of-school institutions. As Serhiy Shkarlet noted, this is the quarter of damaged or ruined educational institutions of Ukraine. In terms of such educational institutions, Kharkiv Region is the first in Ukraine. In particular, 223 out of 715 general secondary education institutions were damaged or totally ruined.

21 out of 24 higher educational institutions were damaged in Kharkiv. Every kindergarten, school, technical vocational school and college came under fires. In particular, the occupants fired at the buildings of Karazin KNU, NTU "KPI", Pedagogical University, multiple times — the territory of Kharkiv Zoological and Veterinary Academy (now — DBTU), University of Agriculture, Airspace University sustained great damage.

Donetsk Region appeared on the verge of a humanitarian disaster on the seventh month of war; active warfare continues there, the infrastructure has been almost completely ruined, people are every second under the threat of coming under fires.

As in the beginning of the academic year 2022-2023, there were places in Ukraine, where the infrastructure was completely destroyed (Mariupol, Popasna, Rubizhne etc.), which makes the process of education impossible. For example, before February 2022, 81 general education institutions worked in Mariupol, including 67 general education schools (48 500 pupils studied there), 2 grammar schools, 3 lyceums, 4 evening schools, 3 boarding schools, 2 private schools. After occupation of Mariupol, the occupation authorities managed to open only one school and plan to open nine schools, for which only 53 teachers were found. This adds up to six teachers per school.

The situation is also critical in the villages and small towns, where there was only one educational institution, which today is ruined.

On the Children's Day, the community of Komyshevsk, Zaporizhzhia Region, lost a school with a hundred-year history, which the Russian troops turned into ruins in a matter of hours⁴⁷.

On 7 June, in Stepnohirs'k (Vasylkivskyi District of Zaporizhzhia Region) a kindergarten was bombed – a missile hit the yard, the fragments broke out around a hundred windows⁴⁸.

On 16 June, Russian shelling broke a unique establishment for children with hearing disorders to pieces. Kamjanka boarding school taught and rehabilitated children with special educational needs. Besides school classes, there were groups for children of pre-school age with hearing disorders and complicated developmental disorders (developmental delays of different kinds). Children, who studied at Kamjanka boarding school, were unable to study in the general educational institutions (schools, kindergartens) because of absence of professionals in those institutions, such as surdo pedagogues, speech and language therapists, special education teachers, and special conditions arranged. The history of the institution started in 1962. This was the first and, at the time, only school of sanatorium type in Zaporizhzhia Region. In 1991, the boarding school was reorganised into a specialised educational institution for hearing-impaired and late-onset deaf children. - [video](#)

In Kherson Region in Novovorontsovka, the occupants shelled a family-type children's home for three times. "The family-type children's home in Novovorontsovka was hit intentionally. For three times. It feels like they knew exactly where it was and someone was directing them. Because all of the houses nearby are intact. 22 children lived there, but they left in time", - volunteer Volodymyr Bahnenko wrote⁴⁹. - [video](#)

47

<https://sprotyv.info/photo/na-zaporizhzhii-rashisti-rozbombili-shkolu-iz-stolitnoyu-istori%d1%94yu-foto/>

48

<https://espreso.tv/okupanti-obstrilyali-zhitlovyy-rayon-stepnogirsk-na-zaporizhzhii-poraneno-lyudinuposhkodzheno-dityachiy-sadochok>

49

<https://www.facebook.com/vladimir.baghenko/posts/pfbid02WirE27mkiopAtqZU1LMdXNgL18pLUmD7XUKo2PoCfnkf6AbcPYjViPhdZHDrcMpl>

So, after the full-scale invasion on 24 February of the RF into Ukraine, the area of education, just as all area of social life, suffered strong changes. The intensity of hostilities, bombing of almost all of the cities of Ukraine in the first months of the war – all that rendered carrying out of a comprehensive process of education impossible.

**ARTICLE 29
of the Convention on
the Rights of the Child**

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:
 - a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
 - b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
 - c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;
 - d) 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.
-

The Russian Federation continues to use education in the occupied territories for destruction of Ukrainian identity, militarisation of the youth and justification of hostilities in the territory of Ukraine.

This is determined by the fact that the RF made the so-called “denazification” of the occupied territories of Ukraine one of its top priorities and choose education and culture as the tools for achievement of its objective.

“ *The Ukrainians have a big problem, which may be defined as under-identification or a lack of identification. They do not exist as people, as a single ethnic group. There is the Ukrainian nation as a community of citizens of Ukraine. But, without any ethnic foundation, it will shred in any political crisis. This was true in 2004, in*

2014, and this is happening now. If we throw away the lying husk of Ukrainian propaganda, it will appear that those called “Ukrainian” were considered and almost always consider themselves as a part of Russian people. There is no doubt that Ukraine is an important component of the Russian World, its inseparable part”

*From the speech of the “Head” of the occupation
“State Council of Crimea”
Volodymyr Konstantinov*

**THE MAIN DIRECTIONS
OF DESTRUCTION OF
UKRAINIAN IDENTITY
IN THE TEMPORARILY
OCCUPIED TERRITORIES
BECAME:**

- Cancellation of teaching of Ukrainian language and literature
- Militarisation of education
- Justification of the armed aggression through teaching “unified lessons”
- Integration into the Russian educational space
- Arrangement of “familiarisation” trips to the RF under the University Changes Programme
- Military and patriotic camps
- Replacement of textbooks
- Prohibition of teaching of disciplines included in the Ukrainian Studies cycle (in particular, history of Ukraine)

Taken together, these actions of the occupation authorities are aimed at destruction of Ukrainian nation as such in the occupied territories and creation of motivation of the citizens of the occupied territories to voluntarily join the armed forces of the RF.

Since the beginning of occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol, the Russian Federation has been using education (both formal and informal) for militarisation of citizens of the occupied territory and destruction of Ukrainian identity.

The following directions of militarisation introduced by the Russian Federation in the occupied territories can be distinguished:

- frightening with external threats, systematic formation of the image of Ukraine as an enemy, which must be countered with weapons, and training of the feeling of responsibility for the fate of Russians;
- propaganda of the cult of violence, weapons and war;

- training in military fundamentals, weapon handling;
- fostering love and respect to the law enforcement and armed forces of the RF;
- creation of motivation to voluntarily join the armed forces of the RF.

Occupation authorities of Crimea carries out theme campaigns, trainings, parades and other events involving children, participants in youth movements, such as Yunamriya, and students and cadet and other specialised classes.

For example, such campaigns as Red Rose, St.George Ribbon, Immortal Regiment, Old Songs about the Main, Windows of Victory, a contest called We are the Ancestors of the Great Victory, various events at schools, e.g. at school No. 15 in Simferopol exhibitions Heroes of Russian Land, Small Heroes of Great War, exhibition of historical photo reconstructions called Link of Times. 77 Years from the Great Victory took place.

Despite the fact that the events were supposedly dedicated to the events of the World War II, letters “Z” and “V” were used during them and the parallels between the victory over the Nazi in the World War II and the fight with the “Nazi” in contemporary Ukraine were drawn. In May, in Artek, a child centre, a themed 5th shift called Ancestors of the Victory took place. The participants of the shift were engaged in campaigns dedicated to the 9th of May, including the Immortal Regiment campaign.

During the holidays, Russian and occupation authorities use summer camps and other out-of-school forms of work to that end. Some camps have a themed focus aimed at formation of Russian identity, patriotic upbringing and promotion of military and law enforcement professions.

At the same time, a number of camps were designed to train children into soldiers. This is a military and patriotic programme Mountain Shooter, Young Army Man camp, themed shift in Laspi cap called Growing Patriots, themed Cossack shift in Delfin camp, war games in the territory of Beliaus Spit. The programmes of these camps are alike and include drill and physical training, protection from mass destruction weapons, air rifle shooting, training grenade throwing, first aid treatment basics, disassembly and assembly of Kalashnikov gun, loading of the store with dummy bullets. Besides, war situations simulation games take place in the camps.

Besides camps, themed events aimed at glorification of Russian and Soviet soldiers and militarisation of children took place in Crimea. The military, participants of the war in Ukraine are invited to such events and presented to children as heroes that “are freeing Ukraine from Nazism.

Also, summer camps are used for formation of a distorted idea about historical events, propaganda of voluntary service in the armed forces of the occupant country, and formation of support to the full-scale invasion of the RF in Ukraine. In July, children from Crimea, occupied territories of Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, Luhansk, Donetsk Regions and children of the military that were at war in the territory of Ukraine recreated in the camps of Crimea.

Enrolment of new members to Youth Army does not stop. On 25 March, in Simferopol another 250 Crimean schoolchildren joined Youth Army, and in Sevastopol 1199 schoolchildren came into Youth Army in 2022. Members of this paramilitary organisation are engaged in various events, including march dedicated to Victory Day, 9 May, and a passage dedicated to Pioneer Day, 19 May.

At the same time, over the seven months, a number of events aimed at formation of Russian identity of young people took place in Crimea, in particular, the Great Russian Word Festival and summer camp shifts for children. The Russian Federation continues to use school education for promotion of an idea of “the Russian World”. For instance, it is planned to include the topic “Recognition of DPR and LPR by Russia” to the programme of history discipline.

In September, special lessons “Conversations about the Important Things” started to take place in the educational institutions, which are compulsory. Introduction of weekly lessons “Conversations about the Important Things” was described in the monitoring report “[Universal Soldier](#)” for August 2022. Among other things, the purpose of these lessons is “*upbringing of a [Russian] citizen*”.

Russian authorities try to implement the “Crimean scenario” of imposing Russian identity in the occupied territories of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia Regions. Ukrainian textbooks and books are extracted from schools and libraries and, instead, Russian books with the “politically correct” historical narrative come in. The administration and teachers of the educational institutions are forced to shift to Russian standards using different methods, including intimidation and threats. The occupation authorities appoints loyal persons to the managerial positions. School and higher educational institutions graduates receive Russian documents.

The “Crimean scenario” of influence on children’s minds through education in conditions of the full-scale invasion is strengthened by the fact that the parent have no “right” to choose home schooling. The proof of that is the fact that the occupation authorities in Zaporizhzhia Region threatens the persons, whose children will not attend schools in the occupied territories in the new academic year, with deprivation of parenting rights.

In the territories control by the armed forces of the RF (Zaporizhzhia and Kherson Regions, Kherson, Melitopol, Genichesk, Berdiansk), the occupation authorities is destroying the Ukrainian educational system: prohibits teaching in Ukrainian, extracts textbooks on Ukrainian history, kidnaps school directors and forces them to shift to the Russian teaching standards and, in case of a refusal, threatens with “pedagogic landing force” for “denazification of Ukrainians”, which in fact is for destruction of Ukrainian identity.

The Head of the State Council of the Republic of Crimea Volodymyr Konstantinov [stated](#) that “...literature for pupils of schools in the liberated territories is already being collected. Besides, we are ready to retrain teachers and, if necessary, to form our “landing force” of volunteer pedagogues. These people will be our associates, will restore what was ruined not in the buildings or streets, but in the souls of people”.

Besides, books on history that, in the occupants’ opinion, “promote the ideas nationalism”, started to be removed from libraries. Instead of them, the “correct” literature is delivered to libraries from Crimea. An example of the “correct” literature is a book “To Whom There’s Glory in Ukraine or Bandera Kaput” written by the Head of the Department of the International Activities of Crimean Federal University Oleksandr Maschenko and a Crimean journalist Oleg Markelov.

Through the contents of the programmes and teaching methods, educational measures and out-of-school education, the occupation authorities implements the policy of destruction of Ukrainian identity of children and creation of a “universal Russian citizen”.

To strengthen control over education and effectively use it as a tool of propaganda, the Russian Federation plans to introduce unified general education programmes at schools. The draft law on introduction of unified programmes was on 12 September supported by the Educational Committee of Gosduma.

Integration of education institutions in the Russian system of education is taking place in the occupied territories of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia Regions. Lessons “Conversations about the Important Things” are similarly introduced at schools, Russian flags are raised and Russian anthem is turned on, teaching is in Russian with Russian textbooks and methodological recommendations. The occupation authorities plan to send pre-school teachers for the so-called “retraining” for improvement of shift of all educational institutions to Russian standards.

To replace Ukrainian identity with Russian identity, children from the occupied territories of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia Regions continue to be tak-

en deep into the occupied territory (to Crimea) and the territory of Russia under the veil of recreation.

The common trend for the occupied territories of Zaporizhzhia Region, Kherson Region, AR of Crimea and Sevastopol is lack of teachers. To solve the staffing problem at educational institutions in the occupied territories of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson Regions, the occupation authorities continued resort to threats, intimidation and even kidnapping of educators, who refused to teach according to Russian standards, as well as to engage teachers from the territory of the RF.

Destruction of Ukrainian identity through camps and other events, such as tours for children from Energodar to Velykyi Novgorod and recording of a video "We are together, we are the Russians" on 12 August, continued.

At the same time, one of the main instruments for replacement of identity is still arrangement of "recreation" for children in the occupied Crimea and the territory of the RF. According to the statements of the occupation authorities, while on recreation, children receive socio-psychological and medical help. Also, special cultural events are arranged for children.

In September, 53 kids from Skadovsk went to rest to Kabardino-Balkaria. On 15 September, children, who were on recreation in Pskov returned to Kherson Region.

It is planned to send children, who are in the occupied front-line territories, for studying to children's recreation camps of Russia. It is impossible to establish the exact number of Ukrainian children, which are now in the recreation camps in the territory of Russia or occupied Crimea, as the reports of movement of children are available in different social media groups and are sometimes published only after the return of the children to the occupied territory.

**ARTICLE 11 of the
Convention on the
Rights of the Child
(1989)**

1. States Parties shall take measures to combat the illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad.
 2. To this end, States Parties shall promote the conclusion of bilateral or multilateral agreements or accession to existing agreements.
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**ARTICLE 22
of the Convention on
the Rights of the Child
(1989)**

1. States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures shall, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present Convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments to which the said States are Parties.
2. For this purpose, States Parties shall provide, as they consider appropriate, co-operation in any efforts by the United Nations and other competent intergovernmental organizations or non-governmental organizations co-operating with the United Nations to protect and assist such a child and to trace the parents or other members of the family of any refugee child in order to obtain information necessary for reunification with his or her family. In cases where no parents or other members of the family can be found, the child shall be accorded the same protection as any other child permanently or temporarily deprived of his or her family environment for any reason, as set forth in the present Convention.

Besides the mentioned Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the protection of children from illicit transfer is the aim of the *Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction*. The Convention creates the procedure for ensuring the return of children illicitly transferred or kept to the country of permanent residence.

The Convention is applied to any child under 16, who lived in the Party State immediately before the illicit transfer abroad.

Article 8 of the Convention grants any person, institution (or other body) claiming that a child has been removed or retained in breach of custody rights may apply for assistance in securing the return of the child.

The Convention uses notions of “right of custody” and “right of access”, interpretation of which is limited by the purposes of the Convention. “Rights of custody” includes rights relating to the care of the person of the child, in particular, the right to determine the child’s place of residence, and “rights of access” includes the right to communicate with a child, first of all, to take a child for a limited period of time to a place other than the child’s habitual residence. The removal or the retention of a child is to be considered wrongful where there is removal or retention of a child abroad, if there is a breach of rights of custody of a child attributed to a person, institution or any other body.

Therefore, the Convention has a purpose to restore *status quo* by immediate return of children illicitly removed, as only bodies at the child’s permanent residence have a jurisdiction to resolve any disputes regarding the residence and custody of a child.

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, the situation with the illicit removal of Ukrainian children from the occupied territories to the RF has gained menacing proportions.

According to data of the State Portal of Children Search “War Children”, by 3 October 2022: 239 persons are missing, 7894 – deported, 6252 – found, 59 – returned.

At the same time, according to the statement of the Advisor-Commissioner of the President of Ukraine for the Rights of the Child Darja Herasymchuk: *“From public sources we know that the aggressor country reports about at least 450 thousand of children removed and deported to the territory of Russia. Unfortunately, they do not intend to return them to us”.*

According to the Counsel of the Regional Centre of Human Rights (RCHR): *“The Russian Federation has deported Ukrainian children to 57 regions, including districts of High North, which are not only several thousand kilometres away from the place of permanent residents of the minors, but also are significantly different from it in term of the climate. The aggressor state also has institutionalized and speeded up the process of transfer of Ukrainian children into care to the Russian families. The mentioned data have the features of genocide of the Ukrainian nation and are encouraged by V. Putin himself, ruling party “Yedinaya Rossia”, as well as the Commissioner of the President of the RF for the rights of the child Maria Lvova-Bilova. “Appropriation” of Ukrainian children is stimulated by both spread of Russian*

propaganda and financially - through payments from local budgets to the families that have taken "orphans from Donbas" into their care. Here it is important to emphasize that the minors were deported not only from Donetsk and Luhansk Regions, but also from 9 temporarily occupied areas of Ukraine. Moreover, 95% of the schoomers of 24-hour care homes have biological parents, so they are not orphans. Nevertheless, by June 2022, at least 127 Ukrainian children were placed under guardianship to the Russian families"⁵⁰.

The facts of wrongful removal of children from Mariupol were repeatedly reported by the Head of Donetsk Regional Military Administration Pavlo Kyrylenko, in particular, about the fate Kira Obedinska. "On 17 March, her father Yevhen Obedynskyi, a multiple champion of Ukraine in water polo, ex-captain of the National Team, died in an air bombardment. After the death of her father, Kira became an orphan, as she had lost her mother as a baby. Now Kira is in Donetsk, she was deported there together with the people, she was in a shelter with. There is information that the Russians took the documents from everybody Kira was with. They promised to make new Russian documents in order to subsequently send them to the territory of the RF"⁵¹. But, due to publicity, her grandfather Olekdsandr Obedynskyi managed to return his granddaughter⁵².

The military of the RF forcibly transferred 12 children, who were under treatment in healthcare facility CNE Regional Child Osteoarticular Tuberculosis Centre of Mariupol. Nursery governess of the family-type children's home, together with 8 of her child schoolers, 3 own children and 3 adopted ones was forcibly removed from Mariupol, Donetsk Region, to Saransk in the Russian Federation.⁵³

Since May, the occupants have deported 149 people, including 22 children from Mariupol to Russia. Transfer of people slowed down because of enhancement of "filtration". This was reported Adviser of the Mayor of Mariupol Petro Andriuschenko in his Telegram channel⁵⁴.

According to the Mayor Vadym Boycheno, now it is known that the occupants **have forcible removed** around 40 thousand of Mariupol citizens to the occupied territories and Russia. He stated that our citizens were taken to the suburbs of Russia, give them certificates of displaced persons, use them in different jobs.

At the same time, according to data of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Russia continues to abduct Ukrainian children in the occupied territories. Over 1 000 children were transferred from Mariupol to the Russians living in Tumen, Irkutsk, Kemerovo and Altai Territory for "adoption". Over 300 another children are kept in the specialised establishments of Krasnodar Territory. This was reported in the **statement** of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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<https://blog.liga.net/user/krashevskia/article/46181>

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<https://nv.ua/ukr/ukraine/events/vtorgnennya-rosiji-v-ukrajinu-z-mariupolya-deportuyut-ditey-ta-porodil-novini-ukrajini-50229572.html>

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<https://suspilne.media/235129-sina-vbilo-pid-cas-obstrilu-onuku-vivezli-v-doneck-istoria-simi-z-mariupola-suspilne-ludi/>

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<https://gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-cerez-zbroinu-agresiyu-rf-v-ukrayini-zaginulo-167-ditei>

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<https://t.me/andriyshTime/635>

of Ukraine. *“Such actions of the RF represent a major breach of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949, which provides for an obligation of the occupant state not to change the civil status of children, as well as the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child of 1989”, the statement says.*

According to the statement of the Head of Luhansk Regional State Administration Serhiy Haidai, 76 orphan children were transferred to social and rehabilitation centres for the minors of the RF located in Moscow Region, another 104 children, who are under the supervision in the social establishments of the so-called “LPR”, are being prepared to transfer into custody of the Russian families⁵⁵.

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<https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/6109>

After liberation of the territories of Kharkiv Region, facts of illicit transfer of children to RF under the veil of the so-called “rest and recreation” were identified. They used the humanitarian situation in Izum and Balaklia, in particular, the fact that, according to the local residents, “the stores were closed and the only way to get something to eat was humanitarian aid. Two loaves of bread a week, cereals and oil once every two months, the occupation authorities offered to take children to a vacation to Gelendzyk. Around 30 children were taken every week and returned back. “In August they offered another trip. Here we have no food or conditions, I just wanted my child to rest from this nightmare for at least a week”, the mother of the child Maryna told the journalists⁵⁶.

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<https://odessa.online/uk/izyum-pershi-dni-zhittya-bez-okupatsiyi-foto-video/>

50 children from 10 to 15 years of age were taken to rest to Gelendzyk. Now they are still in the territory of the RF. The woman says that Russian citizenship is being formalized for the children and, when she made an attempt to return her child, she was told that the only chance to see her daughter was to move to Russia.

The Ombudsman of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine turned to the Child and Family Service of Kharkiv Regional Military Administration to identify the list of children taken from Izum and Balaklia to the Russian Federation in order to protect their right to be brought up in their families.

By violating the standards of Article 8 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which provides for the obligation of the states to respect a child's right to preservation of personality, citizenship, name and family ties without illegal intervention, the government of the occupant country does so-called “good deeds”.

However, based on the fact that Izum and Balaklia, Kharkiv Region, are now under control of the Ukrainian authorities, such actions of the RF violate the standards of Article 7 of the UN Convention on the Rights of

the Child, which defines the right of children to name and to obtain citizenship, as well as the right to know their parents, and the right to receive their care⁵⁷.

Upon complete closure of the evacuation way towards Zaporizhzhia, removal of Ukrainian citizens to the RF started spinning up⁵⁸. For instance, 55 children were removed in only one day, 22 May.

On 8 May it has transpired that, during the last evacuation from the territory of Azovstal, the occupants separated a woman and her daughter Alisa of 4. Only the child reached the destination in Zaporizhzhia, the mother was left in the filtration camp in the territory of the so-called "DPR". The mother's whereabouts are still unknown⁵⁹.

On 30 May the President of the RF V. Putin signed the Order, which significantly simplified the procedure of adoption of children abducted from Ukraine.

The process of illicit adoption of children from Donbas by Russian families continues. On 14 July, the Governor of Moscow Region Vorobjov announced the completion of the procedure of "transfer of 9 children from "DPR" into custody to the families from Moscow Region"⁶⁰.

On 27 April, Child Ombudsman Mykola Kuleba reported that FSS of Russia removed 58 orphaned children from Kherson in an unknown direction. Orphaned children from Kherson Regional Child House were hiding together with their teachers in a church⁶¹.

On 31 August, in Ukraine a state portal for search for children started to work – [information platform War Children](#), which will help law enforcement agencies to accumulate information about juvenile Ukrainians, who suffered in the time of war, in particular, about those missing or transferred to the temporarily occupied territories and those deported to the Russian Federation.

A number of returned children illegally deported and removed by the Russian Federation increased to 96. But this number is catastrophically incomparable to the number of children that are now in the RF.

Despite the fact that it is now the 9th year of illicit removal of children from Ukraine, there is no single mechanism to return the children.

Such actions of the Russian represent an obvious violation of the international humanitarian law and international human rights law and have the features of genocide against Ukrainians, i.e. planned, consistent steps, the consequence of which is eradication of the nation.

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https://ombudsman.gov.ua/news_details/upovnovazhenij-prosit-personifikuvati-ditej-vivezenih-iz-izyuma-ta-balakliyi-do-rf

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<https://www.unn.com.ua/uk/news/1977972-deportatsiya-z-mariupolya-nabiraye-obertiv-uchora-do-filtratsiynogo-taboru-bulo-vidpravleno-313-lyudey-zokrema-55-ditey>

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<https://t.me/polkazov/4470>

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<https://t.me/DIUkraine/918>

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<https://kavun.city/articles/208679/okupanti-znajshli-v-hersoni-58-ditej-sirit-pro-yakih-stalo-vidomozavdyaki-denisovij>

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the international institutions:

- 1 To the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization: consider the possibility of deprivation of the Russian Federation or a status of UNESCO member state;
- 2 To the United Nations Secretary-General: include the question of limitation of right to education, in particular, the matter of militarisation and intrusion in the study process (study materials etc.) in the occupied territories of Ukraine, into [Annual Report](#) Children and Armed Conflict and [Annual Report](#) of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflicts;
- 3 To the states and international justice institutions: systematically investigate attacks against education and fairly prosecute the guilty.
- 4 To the international organisations and governments of the democratic states: introduce personal sanctions against the heads of the organisations: KrymPatriotTsents, Voluntary Association for Assistance to Army, Air Force and Navy of Russian, Yunarmia (Youth Army) and All-Russian Movement of Children and Youth "Velyka Zmina", as well as against the heads in area of education, who introduce militarisation and destroy Ukrainian identity;
- 5 To the governments of the countries, which accepted Ukrainian refugees and to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine: facilitate preservation of identification of the forcibly removed orphaned children and children deprived of parental care abroad and securing their return to Ukraine after the end of the war, which involves preparation of appropriate international agreements, online schooling of children according to the Ukrainian school programme, consulting and psychological follow-up of children and their legal representatives, monitoring the status of stay of the children and securing their rights.

To the public institutions of Ukraine:

- 1** To the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine: improve the mechanisms of monitoring of children's safety and satisfaction of their needs during martial law by developing a new modern information and analytical software product for accounting of children of vulnerable categories and by ensuring its reconciliation with the relevant databases, public registers and information systems of the executive authorities and local bodies;
- 2** To the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine: develop a mechanism of returning children to Ukraine unescorted and a system of approval of decisions concerning unescorted children to the maximum benefit for a child.
- 3** To the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine: strengthen awareness campaigns for explanation of the exercising the right to education in conditions of war, especially in the occupied territories and abroad;
- 4** To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine: carry out a wide awareness campaign in Ukraine and Europe for informing the public about the risks of abduction and exploitation of children, trafficking of children for vulnerable children abroad;
- 5** To the Prosecutor General's Office: start prejudicial inquiries regarding the persons accessory to militarisation of education in the temporarily occupied territories;
- 6** To the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine: develop mechanisms for children from the occupied regions of Ukraine to receive Ukrainian secondary education . At this time, it may be access to education through online platforms and later - through creation of schools with a possibility to live in them;
- 7** To the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the Ministry of Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories: develop and implement a number of measures aimed at transfer and support of children from the occupied territories for studying in Ukrainian higher educational institutions;
- 8** To the Ministry of Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories: implement the programmes of socio-psychological adaptation of children from temporarily occupied territories in the institutions of complete secondary education and higher educational institutions;
- 9** To the Representative Office of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea: continue monitoring and document ion of the facts of violation of human rights, war crimes and crimes against humanity in occupied Crimea and publish them in the periodic reports on the situation with human rights in Ukraine;

- 10** To the Ombudsman of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine: facilitate inclusion of the information about the situation with education in the occupied territories of Ukraine to the annual report to UNESCO about education;
- 11** To the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine: strengthen cooperation with non-government and humanitarian organisation in the process of approval of the decisions concerning children and securing their rights at all levels.

To the Government of the Russian Federation:

- 1** in furtherance of Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Articles 29, 38, 39 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, to eradicate the policy of militarisation of education from the school programmes of educational institutions located in the territory occupied by Russia;
- 2** in furtherance of Article 50 of the Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention), stop encouraging Ukrainian children in the occupied territory to serve in the military units of the Russian Federation;
- 3** stop the practice of transferring Ukrainian children to the territory of the Russian Federation;
- 4** ensure that Ukrainian children have a possibility to receive Ukrainian education in the territories occupied by the Russian Federation.

To the armed forces and armed groups of the parties to the conflict, comply with the Safe Schools Declaration and avoid using schools and universities for military purposes, in particular, by implementation of Guidelines on Protection of Schools and Universities from Military Use in the Time of Armed Conflict.

