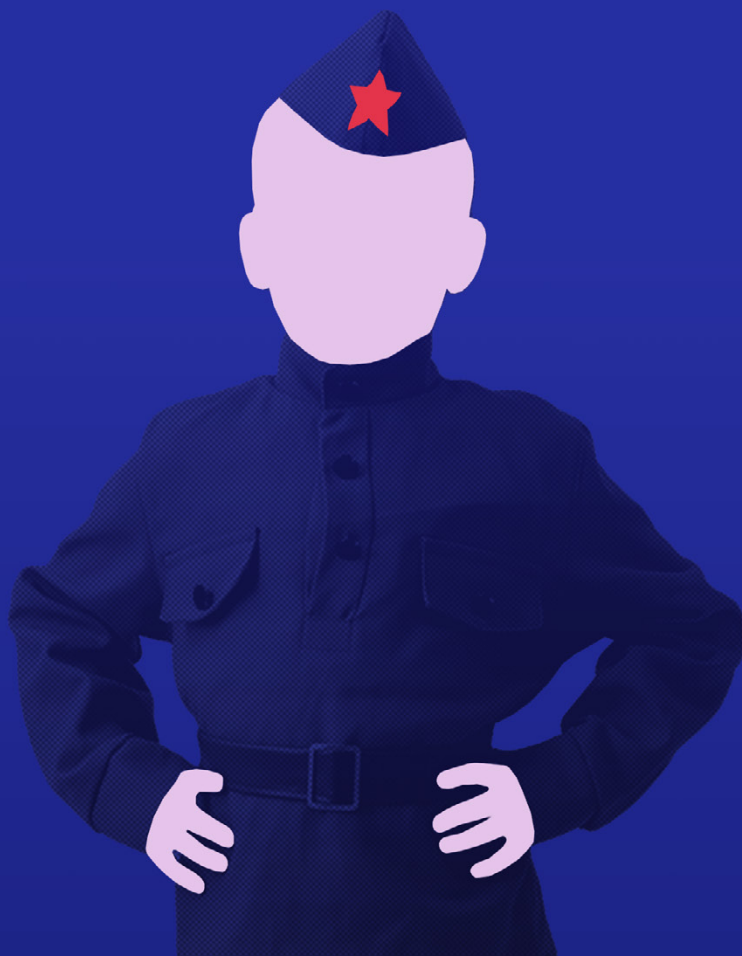


Monitoring report

"UNIVERSAL SOLDIER"

**or education as a weapon of Russia in the
occupied south of Ukraine"**



Kyiv, November 2022

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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.

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SUMMARY

The Russian Federation purposefully continues the policy of destroying the Ukrainian identity and militarizing the children who remained in the occupied territories of Ukraine. The actions of the Russian Federation are aimed at the complete assimilation of the population of the occupied territories and the formation of children's desire to support the armed forces of the Russian Federation, including voluntary entry into the Russian army upon reaching the appropriate age.

In November, in the occupied territories of the Russian Federation, it continued to hold classes «Lessons about important things», which are aimed at forming patriotic feelings towards the Russian Federation in Ukrainian children. In the same way, thematic events continue, during which children are taught the basics of military affairs. The occupation authorities organize meetings of children with the participants of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the main purpose of which is to form a heroic image of servicemen of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, memorial plaques dedicated to fallen servicemen are opened in schools.

Among the events that took place in November, it is worth noting the announcement of the introduction of the course of initial military training into the compulsory school curriculum, the holding of a thematic change in the «Selet-Ak Bars» youth center - the school of young commanders (date: from 31.10 to 4.11), the implementation of the project «Dialogue on Equals» in the framework of which children meet with participants in the Russian-Ukrainian war. In addition, in November, the Russian Federation opened regional branches of the Russian military-patriotic movement «Yunarmy» in the occupied Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions.

The actions of Russia recorded in this monitoring report 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 person 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 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which indicates that the children's education should be aimed at preparing him 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 persons from the indigenous population;
- Articles 38, 39 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which regulate the protection of children in conditions of war;
- Article 50 of the Convention Relative to 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.

METHODOLOGY

This monitoring report covers the period from November 1 to 30, 2022.

Fields of research are the following: the militarization of children in the occupied territories, involvement of children in actions aimed at supporting the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against 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 information from the following sources:

- governmental bodies of Ukraine;
- reports of non-governmental organizations;
- open sources of temporarily occupied territories, namely:

- information posted on official websites and official pages in social networks (including 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 part of the Kherson, Zaporizhzhia regions, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol;
- information published in social networks.

LIMITATIONS OF THE METHODOLOGY:

In this research, the authors used only the sources available to them. Work with sources and analysis of information continued until 15 December 2022.

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

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

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

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

DESTRUCTION OF UKRAINIAN IDENTITY

The system of formal and informal education continues to be the main tool for eradicating Ukrainian and forming Russian identity among children and youth living in occupied Crimea.

The approach of the Russian Federation can be clearly seen in the speeches of the head of the occupying State Council of Crimea, Volodymyr Konstantinov.

“There are no Ukrainian people as a separate ethnic group. By and large, all those we call «Ukrainians» are Russians, like the residents of Pskov or Kursk. Or, say, Siberians. Moreover, Ukrainians are not even a sub-ethnic group of the Russian people, since there are several Russian sub-ethnic groups on the territory of Ukraine, artificially united under the general banner «Ukrainians”,¹

Volodymyr Konstantinov said.

1 [source](#)

“Today, special attention should be paid to the patriotic upbringing of youth. The State Council deals with this issue. [.....]. For us, the main goal is to raise a harmonious personality, a person who will love his Motherland (ap. refers to the Russian Federation), will know its history,”²

Volodymyr Konstantinov said.

2 [source](#)

Denying the existence of Ukrainians as an ethnic group and paying attention to the education of patriots of the Russian Federation remains one of the main focuses of the work of the Russian Federation and the occupation administration in the field of education.

In particular, on November 17, a seminar on the topic «Development of cognitive activity of **preschool children within the framework of patriotic education**» for methodologists, specialists of municipal methodological services engaged in preschool education, heads of resource centers was held in Yevpatoria.³

3

[source](#)

Weekly classes «Conversations about important things» also have an important role in this context. They are introduced by the Russian Federation. In November, the common theme of these lessons was «unity». Thus, 4 classes were held in November:

- November 7 – the theme of the lesson was «Day of National Unity»
- November 14 - the theme of the lesson was «We are different, we are together»
- November 21 - the theme of the lesson was «Mother's Day»
- November 28 – the topic of the lesson was «Symbols of Russia»⁴

4

[source](#)

During the lessons, children are not only imposed a Russian identity, but also promote a narrative of support for the war that the Russian Federation waged against Ukraine in 2014.

*“Today, it is more important than ever that both children and parents feel like a consolidated society. That we are citizens of our country, we love our Motherland, we are proud, and we will certainly support our military personnel who today defend our Motherland, as once Minin and Pozharskyi gathered the people's militia in 1612. And that unity of the people made it possible to liberate our land from invaders. The historical parallels are absolutely obvious,”*⁵ Larysa Sulima, a representative of the occupation administration, so-called acting director of the Department of Education and Science of the Government of Sevastopol, said.

5

[source](#)

Priests of the Russian Orthodox Church are also involved in conducting classes.



Class «We are different, we are together», November 14, Sevastopol ⁶

6

[source](#)

The program «Zemsky Uchitel», in which teachers from the Russian Federation move to the territory of occupied Crimea to teach in Crimean schools, also continues its work. Thus, according to the information provided by Serhii Aksonov, in 2022, 31 teachers took part in the program for teaching in Crimean schools.⁷ In addition, this year the program was used not only by teachers from the Russian Federation, but also by teachers from the occupied territories of the Donetsk region.

7

[source](#)

The installation of Russian identity continues in non-formal education.

Thus, from November 3 to 23, the thematic change «Strength in truth» took place in the children's center «Orlenok». The Minister of Education of the Russian Federation, Serhii Kravtsov, noted that the task of the shift was *“to unite in one movement schoolchildren who are interested in the history of our country, to provide them with ample opportunities to participate in numerous educational projects, to implement new ideas and initiatives. All these are inquisitive, active children who love their Motherland, a real example for their peers.”*⁸

8

[source](#)

MILITARIZATION

In November, the news appeared that the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation had supported the idea of introducing a course of initial military training into the compulsory school curriculum. It is proposed to introduce the course from the next academic year in the senior classes of schools and allocate 140 hours for teaching the subject for two years. It is suggested to involve people with combat experience in teaching the course.

In the words of Serhii Myronov, leader of the «A Just Russia - For the Truth» party: *“With the start of a special military operation, this issue became particularly acute. Even many volunteers do not have the necessary experience to participate in hostilities. **The introduction of such a subject in schools will allow systematic preparation of citizens for a possible confrontation with the enemy.**”*⁹

9

[source](#)

Serhiy Kravtsov, the Minister of Education of the Russian Federation, said that the preparation for the introduction of the course is already at the final stage: *“It will be in schools from the next school year. Now it is being prepared, we will prepare it by January 1, then it will be tested and schools can use it from next year.”*¹⁰

10

[source](#)

At the same time, the occupying authorities in Crimea decided not to wait for the next school year, and the *«plan of basic measures for the organization of training of citizens in the Republic of Crimea with basic knowledge in the field of defense and training in the basics of military service for the 2022/2023 academic year»* was already approved on November 10, by order of Serhii Aksonov, the so-called head of the Republic of Crimea.¹¹

11

[source](#)

According to the information in the document, there are constant work on the preparation of methodical materials, the creation of training centers, the training of teachers in this discipline, the conduct of military-patriotic work with schoolchildren and **campaigning work to attract young men to the country's military universities**, sports competitions, **the holding of «Conscript Days»**, educational excursions, etc. In addition, in the spring and summer period, it is planned to hold training sessions for students on the basis of military units with classes on fire, formation, tactical, physical training, radiation, chemical and biological protection, military medical training, and the basics of health preservation.

At the same time, measures aimed at the militarization of children continue to take place in schools and other educational institutions of Crimea. Thus, on November 11, military and sports competitions dedicated to the 103rd anniversary of the birth of Mykhailo Kalashnikov were held in the state budget educational institution School 29.¹²

12

[source](#)



Military and sports competitions dedicated to the 103rd anniversary of the birth of Mykhailo Kalashnikov, November 11, Sevastopol

On November 18, the Sevastopol Regional Department of the All-Russian Student Rescue Corps and school No. 61 named after Hero of the Soviet Union Alex Marinesko concluded an agreement on the creation of the «Marinesko» school rescue squad.

The creation of the school squad is part of the Federal Project «Patriotic Education of Citizens of the Russian Federation» and the All-Russian Competition «Childhood Navigators» with the support of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, the Russian Movement of Schoolchildren and the Federal State Budget Institution «Russian Children’s and Youth Center».¹³

13 [source](#)

In November, another «initiation» of children into the ranks of the «Yunarmy» and «Russian Movement of Schoolchildren» took place. Thus, on November 24, there was a solemn dedication of students of state budget educational institution Secondary School No. 45, 12, 54, 48, 14, 59, 43, 38, 50, 25, 27, 31, 9, 23, 4, 32, Gymnasium 1, state budget educational institution Kozacha Bay, Chornomorets, IRO in the Catherine Hall of the House of Fleet Officers, in Sevastopol. 228 people were accepted into the organization.¹⁴

14 [source](#)



Consecration to the ranks of «Yunarmy» and «Russian Movement of Schoolchildren», November 24, Sevastopol

And on November 28, students from professional educational institutions of the city were already initiated into the ranks of «Yunarmy». The ceremony took place in the city of Sevastopol, in the «Patriot» park. During the dedication ceremony, the children were greeted by Kostiantyn Gorbunov, a junior sergeant, a participant in the Russian-Ukrainian war, a serviceman of the 810th Separate Guards Order of the Zhukov Marine Brigade.¹⁵

15

[source](#)



Consecration of students of professional educational institutions to the ranks of «Yunarmy», November 28, Sevastopol

Militarization of children actively continues during extracurricular activities. In particular, from 31.10 to 4.11 in the youth center «Selet-Ak Bars» **school for young commanders** was held in the village Foros. Leaders

of cadet and junior army classes from all over Crimea participated in the «school». Classes at the «school» included:

- fire training;
- classes on rocky terrain;
- classes in mountainous and forested areas;
- engineering training;
- military training;
- medical training;
- radiation, chemical and biological protection.

Russian soldiers, who, in particular, are currently participating in the war against Ukraine, were also invited to the children as part of the «Dialogues on equals» activity. Thus, there were Dmytro Polkovnikov, the hero of the Russian Federation, Volodymyr Nedobezhkin, the hero of the Russian Federation, and participants in a «special military operation» in Ukraine whose names have not been publicly disclosed.¹⁶

16

[source](#)



«School of young commanders», 31.10-4.11.2022, village Foros

Military-patriotic games, contests, competitions, and relays do not stop. In particular, the «Defenders of Tavrida» relay race took place on November 9¹⁷. The teams of colleges and technical schools of the Crimean Federal University took part in the relay. The relay consisted of 4 types of competitions:

- Throwing training grenades;
- Incomplete disassembly and assembly of AK 74;
- Provision of first aid and transportation of the victim;
- Laser tag.



«Defenders of Tavrida» relay race, November 9, Simferopol

INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN IN SUPPORTING THE ARMED AGGRESSION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AGAINST UKRAINE

The Russian Federation continues to pay considerable attention to the heroization of the war and the soldiers fighting in the modern Russian-Ukrainian war.

This is reflected in:

- ▶ **Opening of memorial plaques in schools dedicated to soldiers of the armed forces of the Russian Federation who died after the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into the territory of Ukraine.**

Thus, in November, memorial plaques dedicated to Maksym Starovoitov were unveiled at school 23 in Simferopol¹⁸ та dedicated to Pavel Nazarov in the school of Kukushkino, Razdolnytskyi district¹⁹.

18 [source](#)

19 [source](#)

It is important to note that Article 436-2 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine provides the 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 formations of the Russian Federation, irregular illegal armed formations, 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...*”.

- ▶ **Conducting educational events or special projects aimed at forming a heroic image of the military armed forces of the Russian Federation.**

Among the examples of similar events that were held in November, it is worth noting the ten-hour marathon «Knowledge about Heroes», which took place on November 3 and included graphic novels about the heroes of the so-called «special operation». The marathon itself physically took place in Moscow and Saratov with an online broadcast. Children were actively invited to watch the marathon on the pages of educational institutions in the occupied Crimea.²⁰

20 [source](#)

In November, meetings with military personnel of the Russian Armed Forces and leaders of paramilitary children's organizations within the framework of the «Dialogue on Equals» project were held in Crimea. These meetings are also aimed at forming a heroic image of servicemen of the Russian Armed Forces, participants in the Russian-Ukrainian war. In particular, on November 18, there was a meeting of the students of the city of Yevpatoria with the head of the regional headquarters of the Republic of Crimea of the «Yunarmy», Serhii Havrylchuk. During the meeting Gavrylchuk told schoolchildren about his combat experience, about spiritual and moral education, about patriotism, about the so-called «feats and heroism» of soldiers of the Russian Armed Forces in Ukraine. In addition, the attention was paid to clarifying the tasks and goals of the so-called «special military operation» during the meeting.²¹

21 [source](#)

Similar meetings were held in other settlements:

- on November 21, Volodymyr Nedobyzhkin, the hero of the Russian Federation, was at the meeting in the village Chornomorsk;²²
- on November 22, Dmytro Polkovnikov, the hero of the Russian Federation, was at the meeting in the village Soviet;²³
- on November 22, Dmytro Polkovnikov, the hero of the Russian Federation, was at the meeting in the village Guardiyske.²⁴

22 [source](#)

23 [source](#)

24 [source](#)

It is important to note that during these meetings special attention is paid to the role of youth and their preparation *“to serve the Motherland”*²⁵ (in this context, the Motherland means the Russian Federation).

25 [source](#)

CONDUCTING ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF SERVICEMEN OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION.

The «Letters to a soldier» action continues²⁶. Also in November, residents of the city of Sevastopol, including children, were invited to participate in the recording of video appeals with words of support to the servicemen of the armed forces of the Russian Federation who are fighting in Ukraine.²⁷

26 [source](#)

27 [source](#)

HOLDING THEMATIC EVENTS.

Among the thematic events, it is possible to note the visit by schoolchildren to places of «military glory», which the occupying administration of Crimea pays great attention to.²⁸ Traditional cultural events, such as the Ball of «Yunarmy», also have an impact on children. Thus, on November 26, Sevastopol hosted the Ball of «Yunarmy», which was dedicated to the defenders of the Motherland. The ball was attended by cadets of the Black Sea Higher Naval School named after Nakhimov, cadets of the Investigative Committee and the Ministry of Emergency Situations, students of the Sevastopol Presidential Cadet School. During the event, the representative of the occupation administration, Senator of the Russian Federation Serhii Kolbin presented the medal «For Courage» to Volodymyr Shelest, a participant in the defense of the airport in Donetsk.²⁹

28 [source](#)

29 [source](#)



The ball of «Yunarmy», November 26, Sevastopol

MILITARIZATION OF CHILDREN IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES OF ZAPORIZHZHIA AND KHERSON REGIONS

In November, a significant event took place – the liberation of part of the Kherson region, including Kherson. At the same time, part of the territory of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions continues to be under occupation. And despite the fact that the Russian Federation is suffering losses on this part of the front and is forced to retreat, the destruction of Ukrainian identity and the militarization of children is only intensifying in the occupied territories.

Thus, in November, regional branches of the Russian military-patriotic movement «Unarmia» were opened in the occupied Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions. According to Viktor Kaurov, the first deputy head of the main staff of «Yunarmy»:

“All events will be filled with a special meaning of respect for one’s history, respect for the feat of ancestors and modern history, which is written by the names, surnames and patronymics of specific people.”³⁰

30

[source](#)

Not departing from the Soviet traditions of tying events to anniversaries or holidays, the opening of regional branches took place on the eve of the Russian national holiday of National Unity Day. In the Zaporizhzhia region, a branch was opened in Melitopol, in the Kherson region it was opened in Henichesk.

During the opening of the regional office in Henichesk, Serafim Ivanov, appointed head of the Kherson regional headquarters of the «Yunarmy», noted:

“Here in Henichesk, we held the founding conference of the Kherson regional branch of the military-patriotic movement «Yunarmy». We met with the leadership of the «Yunarmy», federal delegates, as well as guys from the Donetsk People’s Republic. We will engage in military-patriotic training of children of the Kherson region [...]. Our key task is to prepare youth and children for adulthood.”³¹

31

[source](#)

It is important to remind that in the rhetoric of the leaders of the «Yunarmy», the main enemy is Nazis and fascists, and by these the Russian Federation means Ukrainians. In particular, during the opening of the regional branch in the Kherson region, Viktor Kaurov, the first deputy chief of the Main Staff of the «Yunarmy» said:

“The historical fact happened on the eve of the National Unity Day. The people of Russia celebrate a general victory – the liberation of Moscow from the Polish interventionists. It will be the same this time too – together we will defeat neo-fascism. Today, the new regions of the Russian Federation, with which we were friends, and the «Young Guard – Youth Army» are gaining a new breath, in unity with great Russia, with the friendly family of the movement of the «Yunarmy».”



Event of the Kherson regional branch of «Yunarmy»

Currently, the authors of the study do not have confirmed information on how many children the occupation authorities managed to attract to participate in the «Yunarmy». Nevertheless, the fact of the opening of regional branches in occupied Zaporizhia and Kherson shows the serious intentions of the Russian Federation to militarize Ukrainian children and destroy their Ukrainian identity.

In addition, the involvement of children in activities aimed at forming a heroic image and supporting servicemen of the Russian Armed Forces continues.

Thus, children in the occupied territories of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions are involved in the «Letter to a Soldier» campaign and other similar campaigns, in which they have to write or draw letters with words of support to servicemen of the Russian Armed Forces. In particular, similar events took place on November 4 in Melitopol³² and November 21 at school No. 1, Skadovsk.³³

32 [source](#)

33 [source](#)



November 4,
Melitopol
November 21,
school No. 1,
Skadovsk



In general, educational institutions continue to be used as the main tool of propaganda. Thus, in November, in Melitopol, the open championship of the karate school took place in the Youth School No. 3, timed to a significant event - awarding the city of Melitopol the title «City of Military Glory».³⁴ The event was held under the patronage of the United Russia party.

34 [source](#)



open championship of the karate school, Children's and Youth Sports School No. 3, Melitopol

And the «Lesson of Courage» was held in Genichesk.³⁵ According to information from the occupation administration, the local school was visited by representatives of «Yunarmy» and «Grom-2» special forces. During the event, military personnel demonstrated their weapons and talked about their military experience.

35 [source](#)



«Lesson of Courage», Henichesk

