

«SIX+»

**GRAVE VIOLATIONS COMMITTED
AGAINST CHILDREN:**

**CHALLENGES AND CONSEQUENCES OF 9 MONTHS
OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR IN 2022**



Analytical review of **"Six+" grave violations committed against children: challenges and consequences of nine months of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022** / V. Potapova, - Kyiv: CCE "Almenda" 2022 - 74 p.

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The Centre for Civic Education "Almenda" (CCE "Almenda") – is a public organization, which was registered in Yalta in 2011. Before 2014, the priority direction of the organization's activity was educating in the field of human rights. In 2014., due to the occupation of Crimea, the organization was forced to move to Kyiv. Today, the priority directions of the organization's activity are providing the systematic collection of accurate, timely, verified data regarding the brutal violations, committed against children in situations of the military conflict.

While preparing the informational-analytical materials, the CCE "Almenda" is guided by the principles of objectivity, accuracy and timeliness.

More detailed about the Centre for Civic Education "Almenda": <http://almenda.org>

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¹ <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/six-grave-violations/>

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INTRODUCTION



On November 24, 274 days have passed since the beginning of the third stage of the Russian-Ukrainian war waged by Russia in 2014, participation in which Russia attempted to deny. On February 24, 2022, at around four o'clock in the morning the president of the Russian federation V. Putin announced the “special military operation” with the ostensible purpose of “demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine”. In just a few minutes, missile strikes across Ukraine led to the destruction of the lives of millions of Ukrainian children. They will become “children of war”, and their childhood will forever remain in memories as “childhood ruined by war”.

With the purpose of preserving the historical truth and in order to provide the guarantees of non-repetition, the authors of this report systematized the information from open sources regarding six grave violations committed against children during the armed conflicts during nine months since the beginning of the full-scale aggression of the Russian Federation, and also tried to determine the impact of the violations on the realization of children's rights and their lives.

Methodology

In this overview we collected and analyzed the information about the grave violations, committed against children in the situation of the armed conflict during the period from February-24 to November-24, 2022.

The analytical report is based on:

- 482 episodes of potential war crimes, documented by the organization;
- 20 interviews, given by children, children's parents and their teachers;
- Statistical data and information from the official governmental resources – Office of the Prosecutor General, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, Ministry of Reintegration of Tempo-

rarily Occupied Territories, Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, regional military administrations etc.;

- Reports of the international organizations and public organizations;
- Reports of the Office of Education Ombudsman;
- Publications of Ukrainian and international media outlets;
- Information, disclosed in social media;
- Information, posted on the official websites and official social network pages (including the social network VKontakte) of the so-called “Ministry of Education” of the temporarily occupied territories;
- Official statistical data of the Russian Federation;
- Information, posted on the websites of comprehensive schools on the temporarily occupied territories;
- Publications of the local mass media of the temporarily occupied parts of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions, Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

For gathering information, the authors focused on the following resolutions of the UN Security Council: [1261](#)² (1999), [1882](#)³ (2009), [1998](#)⁴ (2011) and [2225](#)⁵ (2015), which cumulatively identified [six grave violations](#)⁶ committed against children during the armed conflicts, which are the subject of the [Annual report](#) of the Secretary-General of the UN “Children and Armed Conflict” and the [Annual report](#) of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict to the General Assembly. In particular:

- Child recruitment and use by armed groups;
- Killing and maiming of children;
- Rape and other forms of sexual abuse against children;
- Attacks against schools, hospitals and protected persons, associated with them;
- Abduction of children;
- Denial in access to humanitarian aid.

² <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/1261>

³ <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/1882>

⁴ <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/1983>

⁵ <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/2225>

⁶ <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/six-grave-violations/>

During detection and fixing of violations against children under conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war, authors of the analytical review were guided by the international acts, standards and principles, related to the protection of children in armed conflicts:

- The four Geneva conventions related to the protection of victims of the international armed conflicts (1949), particularly [IV Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war \(Aug-12, 1949\)](#), which provides general protection to children as civilians. The articles 14, 17, 23–26, 38, 49–51, 68, 76, 81, 82, 89, 94, 132 of this Convention are devoted to the special protection of children. This protection is applied to children as civilians who live in both – occupied and unoccupied territories.
- [Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions \(1977\)](#).
- [Provisions of the Customary International Humanitarian Law](#).
- Convention on the rights of the child (1989) and its Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2000).
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).
- Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (195).
- UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966).
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966).
- Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict (1974).
- The Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984).
- Regional documents on the rights of children, including African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990).
- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998).
- The Paris Principles and Commitments on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (2007).

- Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use During Armed Conflict (2014).
- The Safe Schools Declaration (201).
- The Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers (2017).

For this analytical study, the authors separately systematized the facts related to the destruction of the Ukrainian identity among children, who remained on the temporarily occupied territories.

THE ANALYSIS OF SIX GRAVE VIOLATIONS⁷

**IN THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR
IN PERIOD FROM FEB-24 TO
NOV-24, 2022**

⁷ In the analytical report the illustrations to the violations from the website of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/about/> are used



KILLING AND MAIMING OF CHILDREN⁸

⁸ <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/six-grave-violations/killing-and-maiming/>

Killing: any action during the armed conflict, that results in death of a child.

Maiming: any action which results in permanent significant injuries, that lead to incapacitation, leave scars or disfigure an appearance of a child.

This violation implies **killing and maiming of children**, resulted by the direct or indirect actions, particularly such as crossfire, use of landmines, cluster munitions, improvised explosive devices or other indiscriminate explosives. Killing or maiming of children can take place in situations of armed conflicts, house demolitions, search and arrest campaigns or the suicide bombers attacks. Tortures can also be included into this category⁹.

The right of the civilian persons to not be subjected to arbitrary deprivation of life and the prohibition of killing or maiming of the civilians are the principles, which are adamantly enshrined in the international humanitarian law, the international human rights law and the international judicial practice. The prohibition of violence against the civilian persons, especially children, such as killing, maiming, inhuman or degrading treatment and tortures is the principle of the customary international law, which is universally applied to all situations of the armed conflict.

⁹ <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Practical-guidance-for-mediators-to-protect-children-in-situations-of-armed-conflict.pdf>

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)¹⁰ recorded 17 023 civilian casualties during the period from February 24, 2022, when the armed attack of the Russian Federation on Ukraine began, to November 27, 2022: 6 655 people were killed and 10 368 people were wounded. In particular:

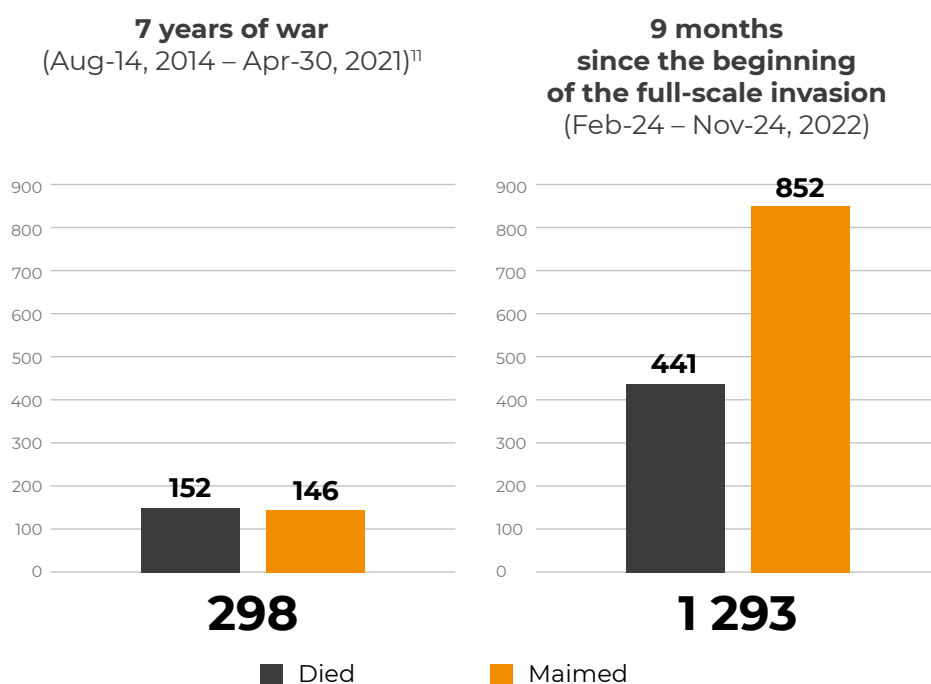
- 173 girls and 209 boys died, as well as 37 children, whose gender is still unknown.
- 215 girls and 304 boys were wounded, as well as 250 children, whose gender is still unknown.

According to the official data of the juvenal prosecutors, 1 293 children were injured as a result of the armed invasion of the Russian Federation, among them:

- **441 children died,**
- **852 children were injured.**

These numbers are not final, because the work on detecting them in places of active combat actions, on the temporarily occupied and liberated territories, is still in progress.

The number of children, who were killed or maimed after the beginning of the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation increased more than 4 times (in just 9 months) compared to the statistics since the beginning of the Russian aggression in 2014.



¹⁰ Ukraine: civilian casualty update, 28 November 2022 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2022/11/ukraine-civilian-casualty-update-28-november-2022>

¹¹ as informs the Office of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, referring to the data of the United Nations Monitoring Mission on human rights in Ukraine.



Highest number of children were affected in the following regions: Donetsk – 424, Kharkiv – 266, Kyiv – 117, Mykolaiv – 77, Zaporizhzhia – 76, Kherson – 70, Chernihiv – 68, Luhansk – 64, Dnipropetrovsk – 33.

The cause of most of the recorded cases of deaths of wounding of civilian persons was the use of explosive weapons with a wide-impact area, particularly in the form of shelling with heavy artillery and multiple launch rocket systems, as well as missile and air strikes¹².

Analyzing the reasons of death and maiming of children during the seventh month of war, it is possible to ascertain that, just as before, the Russian Federation neglects the international humanitarian law and commits attacks, which are prohibited by the “law of war”. Such attacks¹³:

- Are not directed against military objects;
- Are carried out with the use of methods and means of warfare, which cannot be directed against specific military object, or their impact cannot be limited, as required by the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949;
- Take the form of bombardment by any methods or means, during which a number of clearly separated and distinct military objectives located in a city, town, village or other area, containing a similar concentration of civilians or civilian objects, is treated as a single military objective;
- Take place in form of bombardments that result in incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated;
- Are arbitrary executions;
- Use mines and explosive remnants of war.

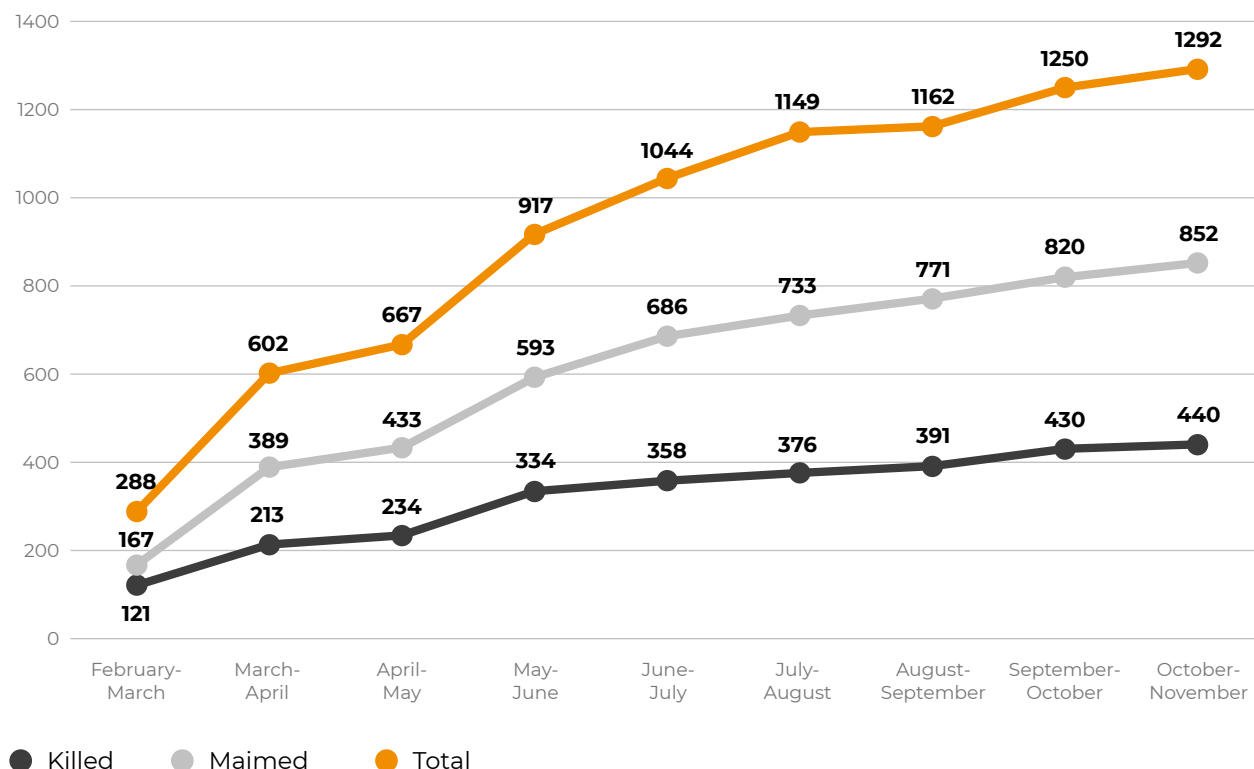
According to the official reports of the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, as of December 1st, 2022, 49 002 war crimes have been documented under the article of violation of the law and customs of war.

¹² <https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2022/09/ukraine-civilian-casualty-update-19-september-2022>

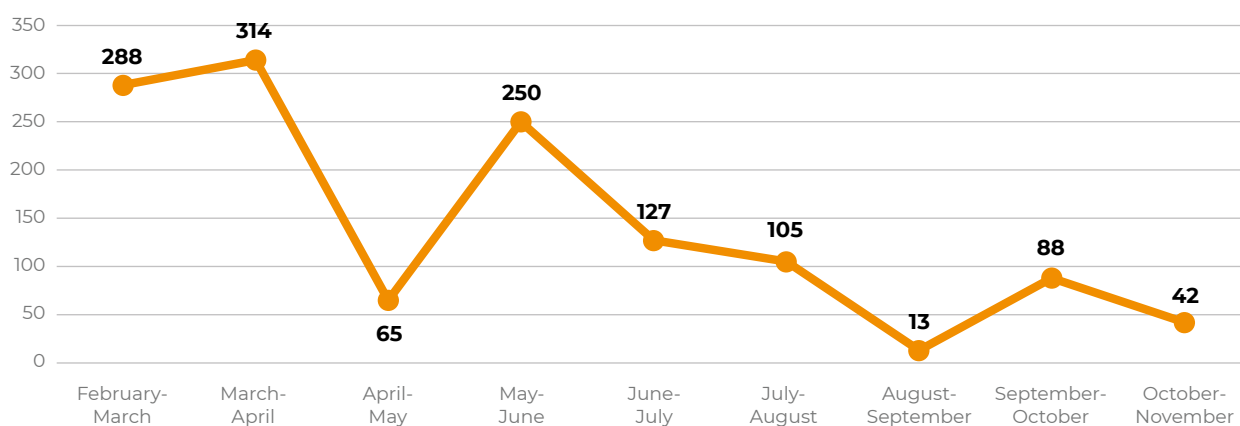
¹³ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/321185556861196/>

Reviewing the dynamics of death and maiming of children during the 9 months of the Russian-Ukrainian war, it is possible to trace the impact of the main events of war on the civil population, particularly on children.

Month from 24 to 24



Monthly dynamics



Highest number of children were affected in the first months of war (from February to April), when civil population had not yet been evacuated from the dangerous territories, and the Russian military interfered with the operation of the humanitarian corridors.



Among the documented facts of violations against children there are many cases, which attest deaths and maiming during the attempts of evacuation from Kyiv and Chernihiv regions, Mariupol etc. Russian soldiers were opening fire on the cars, marked with white flags or with markings on the windshields which indicated that they were transporting children. In all documented cases no attempts to adhere the principle of distinction or obligation to take all possible preventive measures for avoiding civilian casualties were found.

For example, three members of one family – a man, a woman and a child – were killed in civilian convoy during the evacuation from Makariv village. On March 12, the car of the family in a convoy of six cars set off to the Kyiv-Zhytomyr highway. A relative of the victims tied a white cloth, which functionally replaced the white flag, to the family's car and attached the sign "CHILDREN" to the windshield. Four members of her family were in that car: her 60-year-old husband, 35-year-old daughter-in-law and her two grandchildren aged 11 and 6. Then the civilian column headed to Lypivka, where Russian servicemen let the column pass and gave order to the drivers to follow other vehicles due to the danger of landmines. While driving in Korolivka direction, a relative of the victims saw a Russian armored personnel carrier in a field on the right-hand side. The APC opened fire on the convoy and as a result her husband, daughter-in-law and 11-year-old grandson died. She and her surviving grandson managed to crawl out of the car, and they saw other civilians, who were trying to crawl to the nearest hideout in a field. Since

she had her head wounded and her grandson was wounded in the legs and stomach, they were unable to go far and lay on the ground until the arrival of Ukrainian servicemen, who helped them evacuate to the hospital in Brusyliv, Zhytomyr region.

Evidence of killing, injuring, torturing and inhumane treatment were detected regarding children, who remained on the temporarily occupied territories.

For example, the armed forces of the Russian Federation illegally kept children in the inhuman conditions: 70 children were among the 365 civilians, whom the Russian military held in the basement of the school in Yahidne village of Chernihiv region, where the soldiers set up their base, for 28 days. Some children fell sick and had no access to medications. The youngest child was only one and a half months old¹⁴.

¹⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/100004078122147/posts/2909065972572645/?d=n>



The first meeting with the barbarians was one of the scariest for me. Holding the child in my arms, I fell to my knees and begged them to not shoot my son. After that me, my son and my husband's parents were locked in the cellar for two days. When I asked to bring a pot for my child, the occupier (Tuvan) agreed, but he took out the F-1 grenade and said that if he didn't like my movements during going for the pot, he would throw a grenade to the cellar, where my son was. On the third day, at gunpoint, all the villagers were driven into the school basement and there the survival for all the captives had begun.

*From the memories of Anna Ponomarenko,
the resident of Yahidne village*

In the report of OHCHR¹⁵ (as of October 31, 2022) the killing of 73 civilian persons (54 men, 16 women, 2 boys and 1 girl) in Bucha have been documented. Fifty seven of the 100 killings, stated in the report and the annex to it, were arbitrary executions (48 men, 7 women and 2 boys). Thirty of them took place in places of detention, and 27 victims were arbitrarily executed on the spot, shortly after they fell under control of the violators. OHCHR sound out that mostly men and boys were being executed – 88 percent of all victims of arbitrary executions.

¹⁵ <https://ukraine.un.org/uk/210727-vbyvstva-tsyvilnykh-osib-svavilni-straty-ta-napady-na-okremykh-tsyvilnykh-osib-u-kyivskiy>

After the de-occupation of the settlements in Kharkiv region in September, 472 bodies of dead and tortured Ukrainians were found. Among bodies exhumed from the place of mass burial in Izyum there were 202 women, 189 men and 5 children. 11 bodies were so mutilated, that it



The photo shows a “graveyard” of shells in the city of Kharkiv, which Russian Federation fired on Kharkiv on February 24¹⁶. Over 5 000 used ammunition, in particular, remnants of “Grad”, “Uragan”, “Smerch”, “Tornado-S”, “Kalibr” and “Iskander” formed the evidence base, that is planned to be used in court (BBC video¹⁷).

¹⁶ <https://uaposition.com/latest-news/shocking-sight-from-the-cemetery-of-russian-shells-fired-at-kharkiv/>

was impossible to determine their gender. Most of the bodies found have signs of violent death.

¹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYel32mroxQ>

The second wave of deaths and maiming of children, as can be seen from the chart, took place in June-July as a result of massive missile attacks by the Russian Federation on almost the entire territory of Ukraine. Almost every day, 2 children were killed or wounded.

The example of such violation is the shelling of Vinnytsya city center with high-precision missiles “Kalibr” on July 14, where only civilian objects were located: office buildings, medical center “Neuromed”, apartment buildings and private residential houses etc. As a result of a missile strike three children died – a 4-year-old girl and two boys aged 7 and 8, 4 children received injuries of varying degrees of severity. Liza, a 4-year-old girl, was with her mother on their way to the speech therapist for her session. At the moment of the attack one of the boys was being examined in the medical center. He died together with his mother.

On the morning of July 20 Russian occupiers **shelled** Kharkiv with “Uragan” rocket launchers. Three people died at a public transport stop, **among them** – a 13-year-old boy. His 15-year-old sister was in a very serious condition for a long time.

After analyzing the places and circumstances of the death and maiming of children in Ukraine, it becomes clear that now there are almost no safe cities in Ukraine, where you can hide from war. Particularly because the occupiers left and continue leaving dangerous “gifts” for Ukrainian children.

For instance, in the temporarily occupied by the Russian military city of Berdyansk in Zaporizhzhia region local residents found a mine on a children’s playground. The dangerous explosive object was found in a sandbox¹⁸.

A resident of Bucha, musician Mariana Hlieva, told about another such “gift” on her **Facebook** page. She posted a photo, reporting that occupiers hid the explosive device in the girl’s piano. There were awards and cups on the musical instrument – prizes for the music competitions, so, occupiers carefully removed all the awards, planted explosives inside the instrument and put everything back.

¹⁸ <https://war.obozrevatel.com/ukr/u-berdyansku-okupanti-zaminuvai-dityachu-pisochnitsyu-foto.htm>

THE IMPACT OF THE VIOLATION ON CHILDREN

A change in the demographic situation

During the period from February 27 to March 9, 1 649 088 people crossed the border of Ukraine to leave, every day more than 150 000 people left the country. On March 6, 210 526 people crossed the Ukrainian border which is the highest number for one day. In the first wave 1,4 million (18,8%) children left Ukraine.

According to the conclusions of the Experts of, out of 7,5 million Ukrainian children, 3 million have become internally displaced persons, and over 2,2 million children became refugees in the countries of Europe and World¹⁹.

¹⁹ https://razumkov.org.ua/uploads/article/2022_Gum.pdf

Thus, internal and external (abroad) displacement affected **TWO** out of **THREE** children.



*After all these forced relocations, **my son no longer understands what the war is**. Because everything was, so to say, stable in his hometown, his mother, father and sisters were always there. We recently watched the movie called “Transformers: Dark of the Moon”. And my son said to me: **“Decepticons fought against Autobots, that is same as Russia is fighting against Ukraine – they want to subjugate our people”**.*

*From the interview with a mother
of an 8-year-old child with autism*

Children’s psychotic and mental disorders

The war forced thousands of children to flee, uprooted them from their everyday life and in many cases – separated them from their parents, who either joined the fighting, or were unable to leave. Those who remained, faced explosions and air raid sirens, many people became witnesses to traumatic events, primarily killing or maiming of parents and loved ones. Parents, members of families and representatives of humanitarian organizations reported that all these factors had deep psychological impact on children. Some of them are afraid of loud sounds, afraid to stay alone, afraid of men, especially those who wear uniform.



The first time I saw the Russian occupiers near our house was when they were driving tanks down the boulevard. My emotions were very negative combined with fear. My child did not see them back then, and I was trying to protect him from it as much as possible, to not focus his attention on it, because he could have had a highly negative reaction. He saw them once, after that situation we tried to avoid walking around the city much – only to his classes. Because a child with autism always says what he thinks... And he has very bad attitude towards them. And when he saw them, he could immediately distinguish them, I don’t even understand how.

*From the interview with a mother
of an 8-year-old child with autism²⁰*

²⁰ <https://almenda.org/viy-na-rosiyi-ta-nadz-vychayni-dity-istoriya-persha/>

Parents also reported that their children had issues with sleeping and experienced nightmares. After the attack with the use of explosives in a residential district of Kharkiv, one of mothers described how this episode affected her daughter:



She was highly traumatized and now she sleeps only in the hallway. She also goes to the hallway each time she hears sirens throughout the day and starts trembling».

From the interview with a mother of a 7-year-old child

According to the survey, which was conducted by the research company “Gradus Research”²¹, 75 percent of parents pointed out that their children demonstrated some symptoms of psychological trauma. The most common symptom is the so-called “emotional swings”, when the mood, without external reasons, quickly fluctuates from very good to extremely bad and vice versa. In addition, one in five children has sleeping disorder, one in ten children has selective mutism, nightmares, memory impairment.

²¹ https://gradus.app/documents/211/Children_Report_Gradus_28042022.pdf

The increase in the number of pathologies during women’s pregnancy

Since the beginning of the armed conflict, the number of preterm labors in Ukraine has increased, doctors in Kharkiv and Lviv observe double, or triple increase compared to normal statistics.



In the areas of the armed conflict women spend a lot of time in the overcrowded infected basements. In addition, it is more difficult for women to wait for medical help, if they need it. At the NICU, 7 of 10 newborns are premature. The earliest delivery is 24 weeks, the tiniest baby weighs 630 g! The main problem with premature babies is that they are not able to retain their body temperature, they get cooled down easily and quickly, which poses a real danger to their lives!

*From the Facebook post of Dr Irina Kondratova,
Kharkiv Regional Perinatal Center Head*

The lack of access and dangerous travels make pregnant women be afraid of going to the hospital, which led to increase in the number of labors in inadequate conditions, just as giving birth in bomb shelters without medications and equipment. The risk for mothers and children will be increasing, because health care system continues to collapse.

The increase in the number of children with disabilities

There are no final government statistics regarding the number of children, who received the status of a child with disabilities as a result of the war in 2022. However, the increase of the number of people in this category is illustrated by the data, that is related to the facts of maiming of children during the military aggression of the Russian Federation.

According to the information of the Public Health structural subdivisions of the Kyiv regional and city military administrations, National Academy of Medical Science of Ukraine and NCSH "OHMATDYT", as of September 3, 670 Ukrainian children are or were being treated in health care institutions as a result of wounding, injury, road accident or other accidents which took place during the hostilities and/or evacuation. Statistics by age distribution: aged from 0 to 1 – 16 children, aged from 1 to 3 – 47 children, aged from 4 to 6 – 73 children, aged from 7 to 14 – 344 children, aged from 15 to 18 – 187 children, age unknown – 3 children. 619 children out of the total number (92%) received mine-explosive and gunshot wounds. These are mostly children with combined complex injuries, complicated poly-injuries that require further post-acute long-term rehabilitation. 22 cases of amputations of upper and lower extremities at different levels, which is 3% of total injured children's number. 16 children require prosthetics of upper and lower limbs in order to ensure their ability to live and develop normally. In particular, 4 children with amputation of the upper limbs, 11 children with amputation of lower limbs, 1 child with amputation of both – an upper and a lower limb.

At the same time, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, Ministry of Health of Ukraine, Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and "Dzherelo" Children's Rehabilitation Centre in Lviv launched a project of emergency response to the needs of children with developmental difficulties or disabilities. In particular it is about the internally displaced children and children, whose condition worsened as a result of the hostilities on the territory of Ukraine²².

²² <https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/en/press-releases/project-crisis-support-children-disabilities>



RECRUITMENT AND USE OF CHILDREN BY ARMED FORCES AND ARMED GROUPS²³

²³ <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/six-grave-violations/child-soldiers/>

Recruitment is defined as mandatory compulsory or voluntary enlistment, or recruitment of children into armed forces or armed groups before they reach the age stipulated by applicable international treaties. **Use of children** is defined as use of children by armed forces or armed groups with any purpose, in particular, as combatants, cooks, porters, couriers, spies and informants. This concerns not only the children, who participate or used to take direct part in military operations²⁴.

Recruitment and use of children is a reason for inclusion of the parties to the armed conflicts in the annexes to the annual report of the Secretary-General on Children and armed conflicts. Tens of thousands of children are being recruited and used as soldiers in armed conflicts around the world. There are many ways, in which children can be recruited into armed forces and paramilitary groups. Some children get abducted and forced to obey, others join military groups in order to avoid poverty, to protect their communities, because of the desire for vengeance or for other reasons.

²⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/c6aa6045-5c57-3299-bef5-cc7535344d89/FINAL-Practical-guidance-for-mediators-to-protect-children-in-situations-of-armed-conflict-003.pdf>

The international human rights law declares the age of 18 as the minimum age for recruitment and use of children in combat actions.

Recruiting and using children under the age of 15 as soldiers is prohibited by the international humanitarian law – treaties and customs, and International Criminal Court defines this as war crimes. Those parties to the conflict, which recruit and use children, are listed by the Secretary-General in the annexes to his annual report on children and armed conflicts.

Since the beginning of the armed conflict in 2022, no information has been recorded regarding the recruitment of underaged children into the armed forces of armed groups. However, on the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions an order was issued, according to which boys from the age of 16 can be recruited into the mobilization reserve.

The order was signed by the «temporary acting Minister of Internal Affairs» of the so-called «LPR». This has been reported by the Ukrainian special services²⁵.

According to the text of the order, by June 1st, the MIA should make lists of conscripts, who will later be sent to the combat zone.

As of the date of the report, the organization has no confirmation regarding the recruitment of the underaged children.

However, the violation involves the use of children by the parties to the conflict for performing auxiliary functions, their tasks can vary – from being combatants to cooking, spying, performing deliveries etc.

The cases of involving the underaged children as spies and correctors of shelling were recorded by Ukrainian law enforcement agencies.

For example, in Kharkiv occupiers established contact with an underaged boy through the messenger “Telegram”. They promised to pay him money for providing information about the positions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the city, on April 11 the Security Service of Ukraine reported about this²⁶.

According to the report of the Prosecutor General, Iryna Venediktova, as of April 21, 8 children were «drawn into the armed war».



Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Luhansk People's Republic on ensuring mobilization measures dated May 5, 2022.

According to this order, in the so-called LPR, it is envisaged that the units of the people's militia will be staffed at the expense of covert mobilization, to which it is planned to involve civilian residents who live on the territory of LPR. As per document it is ordered to prepage the lists of male citizens aged from 16 to 65 years (with the exception of disabled persons of the 1st group) and women from 30 to 50 years of age (except for single mothers and mothers of 3 and more children) and organize the distribution of summonses for military.

²⁵ <https://golosua.info/2022/05/16/zhinky-dity-liudy-z-invalidnistiu-v-ordlo-pidpysaly-dykyi-nakaz-pro-mobilizatsiiu/>

²⁶ <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/novyny/roziiski-okupanty-vykorystovuiut-nepovnotnikh-ukrainskykh-ditei-dlia-rozvidky-nashykh-viiskovykh-pozytsii-video>

In particular, in the Kharkiv region, a 12-year-old teenager was sending information via Internet about the location of military equipment, road-blocks and servicemen of the AFU, with the intention to receive money reward for that. A similar case happened in the Luhansk region as well. In the Chernihiv region, during the occupation of one of the villages, an underaged child also received a task from the occupiers to perform reconnaissance. In addition, to demonstrate his loyalty and support to the occupiers, he tied red bands on his arm and leg, and was walking round the village territory wearing them. Besides, a 16-year-old boy was «directing» enemies on households, owners of which are related to the law enforcement agencies or Ukrainian military units, and who own weapon.

In addition, in the Kharkiv region, a 17-year-old resident was distributing favorable videos in support to the aggressors' actions in Ukraine through his YouTube channel.

The Security Service of Ukraine exposed the use of mobile games by the special services of the Russian Federation for recruiting of Ukrainian children.

According to the report in the Telegram channel: *«In one of applications, participants need to search so-called “crates” with virtual prizes, which can be exchanged for e-money. During the route, children perform photo-fixing of terrain, objects of military and critical infrastructure on the territories of different settlements. At the same time, an IT company, controlled by the special services of the Russian Federation, which is registered in one of the European countries and is engaged in distribution of the interactive platforms, has access to administrate this application. In such way, enemy «blindly used» Ukrainian children (without their acknowledgement) to collect information about the location of the strategically important objects. In particular, in Kirovohrad region two teenagers were detained, who were taking photos of roadblocks, elevators and transport routes»²⁷.*

According to the report of the Office of the Prosecutor-General of Ukraine, an underaged resident of Bakhmut is suspected of illegal actions. According to the information of the investigation, in June-August 2022, a 16-year-old teenager was sending the enemy through via messenger graphic coordinates of the deployment locations and military positions of the artillery units of Armed Forces of Ukraine in the city of Bakhmut and the Bakhmut district. He is charged with unauthorized dissemination of the information about the movement and disposition of the Armed Forces of Ukraine with possibility to identify them in the area, conducted under martial law. (Part 2 of article 114-2 Criminal Code of Ukraine)²⁸.

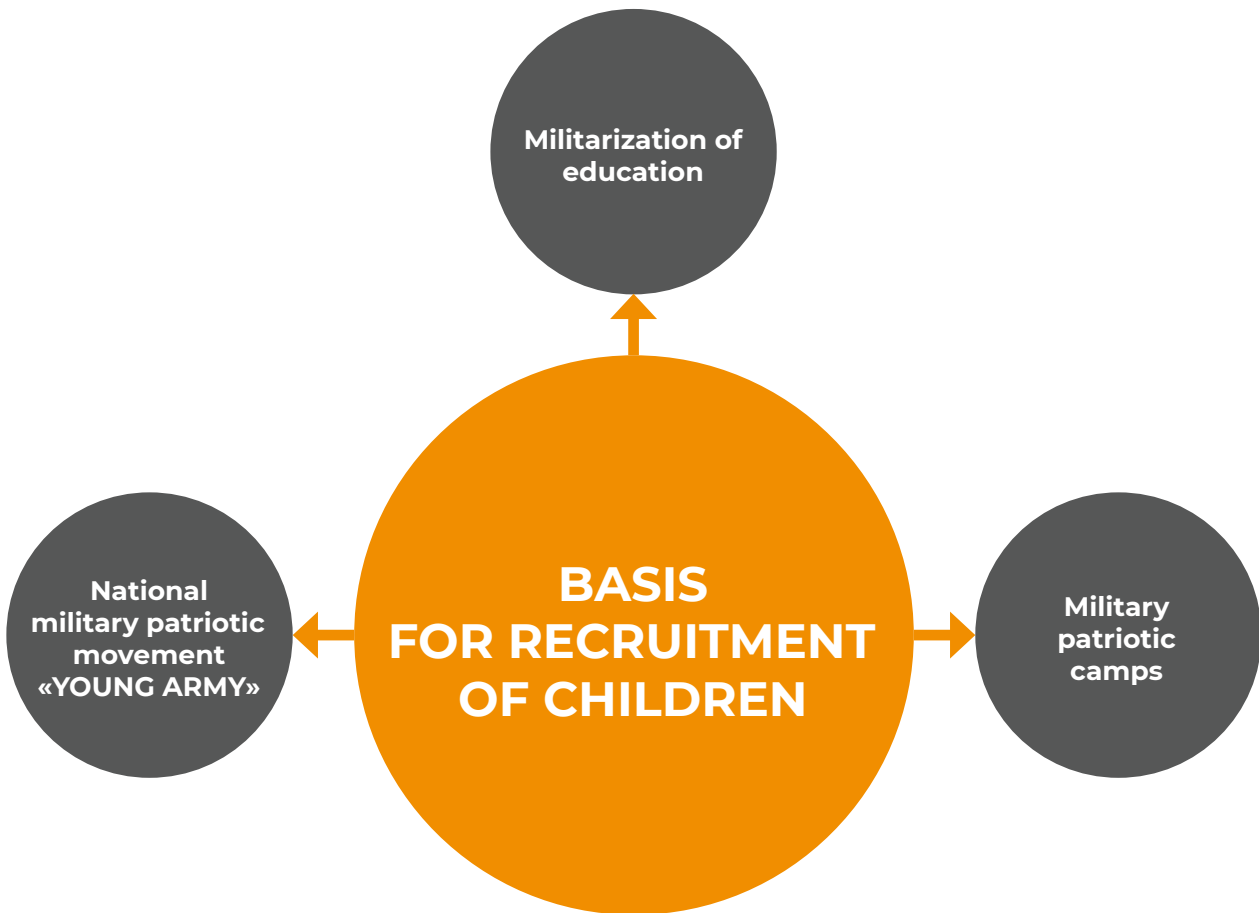
²⁷ <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/novyny/sbu-vykryla-spetssluzhby-rf-na-vykorystanni-smart-fonihor-dlia-verbuvannia-ukrainskykh-ditei-video>

²⁸ https://t.me/pgogov_ua/5370

Creating a basis for recruiting children

At the same time, the practice of creating a basis for further recruiting of children to the armed forces of the Russian federation on the occupied territories through the education system is becoming dangerously widespread.

Primary directions



Militarization of education

Militarization that takes place in a formal and informal education is a violation of Article 50 of the Geneva Convention relative to Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, which, in particular, prohibits the occupier state from including children in the lists of formations and organizations controlled by it. And Article 51 of this same convention prohibits propaganda of service in the army of the occupier state on the occupied territory. According to this document, under no circumstances can residents of TOT waive, partially or fully, the rights granted them by the Convention.

In addition, Art. 38 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which was also ratified by Russia in 1993, obliges the occupier state to respect the standards of the IHL and ensure their compliance. Performing militarization, Russia also violates Art. 29 of this same Convention, which refers to the need of raising respect to the cultural identity, language and national values, and preparing a child for the conscious life in a free society with a spirit of understanding, peace and tolerance.

The human rights community, which has been researching this matter for 8 years, distinguishes several **directions of militarization in the educational institutions:**

01

Intimidation with extremal threats, systematic presentation of Ukraine as the image of an enemy, who needs to be confronted with weapons in hands, raising sense of the fate of Russians;

02

Creation of motivation to voluntarily serve in the armed forces of the Russian Federation;

03

Raising of love and respect to security forces and armed forces of the Russian Federation;

04

Justification of armed aggression, informational legalization of occupation;

05

Teaching basics of military and weapons handling;

06

Promotion of the cult of violence, weapons and war.

After February 24, 2022, measures aimed at forming loyal attitude to the Russian-Ukrainian war are being implemented in Crimea through the formal education, not only they justify military aggression but also contribute to motivation to the service in the armed forces of the Russian Federation.

Among the most common measures there are:

- Conducting educational activities/lessons “Events in Ukraine” for students of 7-11 grades in all schools after March 11, as recommended by the Ministry of Education of the Russian federation. Based on this recommendation, lesson notes for students of 5-8 and 9-11 grades were developed. The content of the methodological recommendations, provided by the Ministry of Education of the Russian federation, not only justifies the full-scale war against Ukraine, but also distorts the history of the Ukrainian people, which creates informational field for the further start of genocide against Ukrainian citizens. We have already seen the examples of such genocide in Chernihiv, Mariupol, Kharkiv, Kyiv region etc.
- Forming the loyal and empathetic attitude towards war crimes and criminals through conducting flash mobs and rallies, such as “Letter to a soldier”, meetings with military personnel, who take part in the war against Ukraine.
- Conducting special events for students and their parents to hide or distort the information regarding the events in Ukraine and world after the beginning of the full-scale military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

During the events, teachers and lecturers have to convince students of 9-11 grades, college and pedagogical universities students in fact that in this world there are such forces which “organically hate Russia” and “currently do all possible to start a war”.

On March 3, the Ministry of the Russian federation conducted the all-Russian open lesson “Defenders of the world” for students.

From the materials of the lesson:

«The state of Ukraine did not exist on the world map until the XX century. It appeared in 1917 after the resolution in Russia and soon became a part of the Soviet Union. After that, Novorossiia (Donetsk and Luhansk) joined it, and after the Great Patriotic War – western regions joined as well.

And on 1954 Crimea became part of Ukraine. And only in 1991 Ukraine became an independent country.

... it became clear what would happen, if a huge, strengthened Ukrainian army - befuddled and tuned extremely hostile against Russia – “befall” on our country. Ukraine saw no other goal other than delaying and pre-

paring to the future war. In three, maximum four years Russia would be facing not just a war, but a war of extermination and enslavement... with the use of nuclear weapons.

The thing that is happening in Ukraine right now is called in the international practice coercion for peace».

Propaganda activities in school education

The occupation government keeps paying special attention to the semantic content of the school education.

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

Not only the subject of such classes is a propaganda of support of the actions of the Russian Federation on the Ukrainian territory and setting Ukrainian children against Ukraine, but it also contains signs of recruitment into the armed forced of the occupier state.

According to the updated federal standards of the secondary education, the educational organization must conduct up to 10 weekly classes for extracurricular activities. Among these 10 hours per week, the **recommended part** should include:

- 1 hour – «Conversations about the important» (Monday, first lesson);
- 1 hour – «Classes on functional literacy » (in particular, financial literacy);
- 1 hour – «Vocational guidance work».

The variative part should include:

- 3 hours – «Additional study of academic subjects» (as a follow-up for studying of individual academic subjects at an advanced level, project-research activity, historical education).

- 2 hours – «Personality development and self-realization of students» (classes in school theaters, school museums, participation in sports events).
- 2 hours – «A complex of activities for satisfaction of social interests and needs» (as a part of the Russian student's movement, "Young Army", realization of the project «Russia – the country of opportunities»).

The weekly classes «Conversations about the important, in fact, are the return to the Soviet traditions of conducting the hours of political informing and in the same way they are clearly propagandistic by their content. Methodical materials for the organization of the cycle of weekly classes, which contain scenario of the class, methodical recommendations regarding its conduction, interactive visual content, are developed on the federal level. A separate Internet page has been created to prepare teachers to these classes.

²⁹ <https://www.trtworld.com/asia/russia-to-introduce-basic-military-training-course-in-high-schools-62424>

Implementation of mandatory educational programs for initial military training

On November 9, 2022, the Minister of Education of the Russian Federation, Sergey Kravtsov, informed²⁹, that starting 2023, course of the initial military training would be introduced in Russian schools. Currently, its development is in process and should be finished on January 1, 2023, then the approbation of the courses will be held, after which it will be fully implemented into the educational process starting from 2023-2024 academic year. This involves the creation of the similar course in schools on the Russia-occupied territories of Ukraine. In addition, it is reported that starting 2022-2023 academic year, in schools of the Russian federation (including the territories of Ukraine, occupied by it) the mandatory ceremony of raising the state flag and singing the state anthem is held; this initiative was approved by the president of the Russian Federation Volodymyr Putin.

Earlier, the initiative of reinstating the initial military training in schools was supported by the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, who called it "justified" and recommended that 140 hours will be assigned to these classes during the last two years of studying in schools and institutions of secondary professional education. Previously, Borys Chernyshov, the Vice-Speaker of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, and parliamentarians Yana Lantranova and Volodymyr Pavlov, made a proposal to implement the corresponding course in schools: they substantiated their offer with the fact that high school students should

«know the most elementary things within the framework of educational system», which is «specifically important in modern conditions»³⁰.

³⁰ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/11/8/7375417/>

On November 10, 2022, the «Head of the Republic of Crimea» Serhii Aksyonov approved the procedure for organizing the initial military training in schools on the territory of the occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea. The corresponding order was published on the website of the «State Council of the Republic of Crimea», access to which is blocked on the territory controlled by the Ukrainian government. In the text of this «document» it is recommended to approve the attached plan of main activities on the organization of teaching citizens basic knowledge in the field of defense and training in the basics of military service in 2022-2023 academic year in the «Republic of Crimea». This «document» regulated the procedure of interaction between the «authorities of the republic», occupation military enlistment offices and military units for preparation and conduction of classes on initial military training in schools and institutions of secondary vocational education: organizing of interactions is assigned to «officials» of the Crimean «Ministry of Education», representatives of the «municipal administrations» and educational institutions in cooperation with the occupation military enlistment offices and military units. The activities already started in 2022. In April-July 2023, it is planned to organize camps, based in occupation military units, training shootings, classes on combat, physical, military medical training and CBRN. In the current and the next year, the «Zarnitsa», «Zarnichka» and «Orlyonok» competitions will be conducted. Preparation of methodological materials and creation of training centers will be performed on a regular basis. During the academic year, teachers of this course will be trained and retrained, the educational process itself will be inspected. Among other things, plan also included propaganda campaigns³¹.

³¹ <https://rk.gov.ru/document/show/37037>

The Government of the Great Britain, referring to the intelligence service of the country, explain the decision of the political and military leadership of the Russian Federation on reinstating military training in schools by their desire to improve the quality of conscripts and mobilized, and also increase the level of patriotism, since quality of training of the mobilized remains poor, they are not sufficiently prepared and have low morale. It is emphasized that military training, which was introduced to the Russian schools, repeats the program of Soviet times, according to which students had mandatory military training, which was excluded from the educational program in 1993: in particular, students were taught how to act in conditions of the chemical and nuclear attack, how to provide first aid and how to handle firearms. «These trainings, presumably, are aimed at teaching schoolchildren military skills, as they approach conscription age, and also increase their participation in mobilization and conscription. This initiative will also become a part

of a larger project on inculcation the ideology of patriotism and trust in governmental institutions for the into the Russian people», – the British Intelligence office concluded, adding that an attempt of realization of such an initiative took place in 2014 after the occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation³².

³² <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/russian-invasion-of-ukraine-uk-government-response>

Summer camps as a tool for forming a “universal soldier”

The program of the camps is similar and mostly aimed at forming of the motivation for service in the armed forces of the occupier country and skills of handling weapons.

- In July in “Hirskiy” camp a profile shift “Let’s grow as patriots” took place. During this shift, there were march past and songs, militarized relay race “Winner’s Path”, sports competition «Ready for labor and defense», fire training. Trainees of the “Young Army” were the instructors of the squads there.
- During the whole summer there were shifts of the “Yunarmiyets” camp, in which children from the occupied territories as well as Russian children took place, which aimed to speed up the assimilation of the Ukrainian children. In addition, the military-historical camp “State of heroes” worked. During the shifts, children are taught the rules of handling weapons, games which simulate military situations take place, great attention is paid to educating children as “true patriots of Russia”, who are ready to defend the Russian Federation with weapons in their hands.
- On July 7, in “Yantarnyi” camp of the International Children’s Center “Artek” the law quest “300 years on the guard of the law” and historical reconstruction of the Nurnberg Process took place. These events were dedicated to the 300th anniversary of the creation of the Prosecutor’s office of the Russian Federation. The quest was organized and conducted by representatives of the Prosecutor general’s Office of the Russian federation. During the reconstruction of the Nurnberg process, main attention was drawn to the condemnation of the Nazi ideology. For understanding the context, it is important to note that Russian propaganda calls Ukrainians “Nazis” and all events, currently taking place in Russian and on the territories occupied by it, are aimed at condemnation of the Nazi ideology, forming and strengthening hostile attitude of children and youth in this area towards the residents of the territories controlled by the Ukrainian government.

- On July 19, in the “Laspi” camp the thematic shift “Let’s grow as patriots” opened. The duration of the shift, in which 650 children took part, 50 of which are from the occupied territory of the Luhansk region, - was 21 days. According to the program of the shift, first aid trainings, initial military training courses, touristic and local history activities were organized for children. Every day at the camp began with performing of the anthem of the Russian Federation. The organizers of the camp announced that during realization of the educational program, the Regional Branch of the DOSAAF of Russian and the city of Sevastopol would organize shooting trainings for children on a regular basis.
- On July 22, in a children’s camp “Dolphin”, a thematical Cossacks shift was opened, in which 363 children from cadet Cossacks classes and military-patriotic education clubs took place. During the shift children learned about Cossacks culture and traditions, Cossacks applied disciplines, attended lessons on Orthodoxy and practiced military marching.
- In the period from July 3 18 to August 1 field trainings were held on the territory of Beljaus split in Chornomors'ky districts. Students of cadet classes and cadets from the so-called “Donetsk People’s Republic” took part in these trainings. The children were acquiring skills in firing, tactical, military-medic, tourist training, and carried out military service. In addition, participants of the trainings watched military patriotic movies every day. Watching such movies strongly affects the minds of children in a context of romanticization of the war.
- On July 23, young soldiers of the Nyzhnohirskyi, Bakhchysarai and Simferopol districts took part in the event, which was organized on the occasion of “Berkut” detachment return to the places of the permanent dislocation of the soldiers of National Guard of Russia. It was not specified, where those soldiers came back from.
- On September 20, in Sevastopol, the final of the military-patriotic game “Rubizh” started. For 3 days, the teams from 20 educational institutions of the city competed in the final of the competition to get the title of the best unit of the young army. From February to May, the municipal stages of the game were taking place – over 4 000 students from 59 educational institutions of the city became participants. Teams were competing in marchpast and singing, assembled and disassembled a Kalashnikov assault rifle, took part in military historical test.

In terms of the programs’ content, by their nature such activities are closer to the military training than to recreation camps. Such actions

ignore the requirements of the UN Security Council resolution (Res. No. 2250 (2015), adopted by Security Council on December 9, 2015), on the importance of elimination of terms and factors, which lead to escalation of radicalization into violence and militant extremism among young people, and also create basis for further recruitment of children to the armed forces of the aggressor country.

The military shifts of the military-patriotic program “Mountain Shooter” took place on the base of the “Hirskyi” camp. In year 2022 the dates of the shifts were: June 22 – July 12, July 15 – August 4, August 7 – August 28. Children of age 8-17 became the participants of the program. The program was completely militarized and aimed at turning children into soldiers. The program consisted of 3 expeditions:

- During the first expedition, children participated in sword and bow combat lessons, mastered individual tactics and interaction in the formation, took part in reconstruction of “small historical battles”, got acquainted with Suvorov’s “The Science of Victory” and “The Honor Code of a Russian Officer” etc.
- The second stage of the expedition was the series of one-day-long field (mountain, forest) hikes with a full set of wilderness survival skills (lighting a fire, searching fuel, setting up a tent camp, defending the approaches and perimeter etc.); searching for water, suitable for drinking, its purification.
- The third stage of the expedition was a tactical game, where children were forming several groups of scouts, learned to inconspicuously conduct reconnaissance behind the hypothetical enemy lines, solve the “combat” tasks assigned to them, avoid the persecutors, using experience of the Soviet soldiers in the period of the World War II on the territory of the Crimean Peninsula.

Also, during the program there were “assault” campaigns to Eski-Kermen, Bakhchysarai, Mangup-Kale, in addition children were taught provide first aid.

THE IMPACT OF THE VIOLATION ON CHILDREN

The systematicity of conduction of the events indicates the dangerous tendency of de-facto turning children on the occupied territories into soldiers, who are knowledgeable in the basics of the military service and can handle weapons.



Such actions once again testify to the increasing page of training children for participation in the real combat actions, which is considered war crime according to the provisions of the international law.

Also, the militarization of children's consciousness will become a big obstacle in the integration process after the de-occupation of the Ukrainian lands.

The militarized consciousness is the most "black and white", not only by to the formula "friend or foe". The militarized consciousness implies obedience to the order, obedience to the "senior ranking" as basic action model, which weakens resistance to propaganda, minimizes the importance of discussing different points of view, dialogue, finding common solutions, taking on public responsibility, deprives the ability of making moral choices independently, - thus, negates everything that constitutes the foundations of the democratic society. The value of human life (one of the natural human rights) has been completely negated³³.

From the interview with candidate of psychological science, conflict expert Iryna Eihelson

³³ <https://voicecrimea.com.ua/main/articles/militarizaciya-teritori%D1%97-ta-svidomosti.html>







RAPE AND OTHER FORMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE³⁴

³⁴ <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/six-grave-violations/sexual-violence/>

This violation means an act of sexual violence, committed against a child, which includes rape, sexual violence of other forms, involvement into sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced marriage, pregnancy, abortion or forced sterilization.

Rape: is an act of sexual intercourse that occurs without consent, which can consist of penetration of any part of a body with a genital organ or penetration of genital or anal opening with any object or part of a body. Any of such penetration is considered rape. Actions with intention to commit rape, which do not lead to penetration are considered attempted rape.

Sexual abuse: this refers to any sexual act, attempt to commit sexual act or trafficking children for sexual purposes. Sexual violence takes different forms, in particular – rape, involvement into sexual slavery and human trafficking, forced pregnancy, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse, and also forced abortions³⁵.

Sexual violence is increasingly becoming a distinctive feature of the Russian-Ukrainian war and often occurs against girls and boys in the absence of legality during the occupation of territories. In some cases, sexual violence was used as military tactics, aimed at humiliation of people or to force displacement.

The first reports about sexual violence began to come after the liberation of the Ukrainian territories, particularly in Bucha and Irpin law enforcement officers recorded incidents of children's rape by the Russian

³⁵ <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/c6aa6045-5c57-3299-bef5-cc7535344d89/FINAL-Practical-guidance-for-mediators-to-protect-children-in-situations-of-armed-conflict-003.pdf>

military during their stay there. All cases, related to the rape of children, are sensitive and traumatic, extremely difficult to document. Moreover, this war crime acquired political overtones. One of the reasons for the dismissal of Lyudmyla Denisova from the post of the human rights commissioner on May 31, was the fact that Lyudmyla Denisova shared the details of the sexual crimes against children, which were being committed by Russians on the territory of Ukraine, with civil society, without considering ethical standards of provision of information, justifiability and advisability of disclosure of certain details³⁶. Not long before her dismissal, on May 25, almost fifty Ukrainian female media professionals signed an open appeal³⁷ to the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for human rights, Lyudmyla Denisova, with a call to change the rhetoric about the sexual crimes, in particular, sexual crimes against children, in the reports shared on the official social media pages of the Ombudsman.

As a result of this, a special department was created in the Department of the Prosecutor General's Office, which provides pre-trial investigation and procedural activities specifically for crimes of sexual nature, committed in the armed conflict.

At the same time, the Prosecutor General Andriy Kostin confirmed the fact of sexual violence against children and reported about the initiation of criminal proceedings (five children in age of 4-16 were identified as victims of this category of war crimes).

«I would like to note that there are cases of sexual violence against children, recorded in the criminal proceedings. Five children between the ages of 4 and 16 have been identified as victims of this category of war crimes. But we all understand that there are many more such crimes than I have already mentioned... This is a difficult job. We work with children using a system called a "green room" – with the direct participation of a psychologist who is out of visual observation of the child, but who helps. It is difficult. But in some cases, there are testimonies that can be used as evidence in these criminal proceedings».

Episodes of sexual and gender-based violence against children were also confirmed by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine in their report³⁹.

In particular,

- In Kyiv region, in March 2022, two servicemen of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation entered a house, raped a 22-year-old woman several times, committed acts of sexual violence against her husband and forced the couple to have sexual intercourse in their presence. After that one of the servicemen forced their 4-year-old daughter to have oral sex with him, which

³⁶ <https://mythdetector.ge/en/why-did-the-verkhovna-rada-of-ukraine-dismiss-the-ukrainian-ombudsman-in-a-no-confidence-vote/>

³⁷ Media professionals ask Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights Denisova to change the rhetoric of reports on sexual violence | ZMINA | Human Rights Center <https://zmina.ua/en/statements-en/media-workers-ask-ukrainian-parliament-commissioner-for-human-rights-denisova-to-change-the-rhetoric-of-reports-on-sexual-violence/>

³⁸ <https://www.promoteukraine.org/prosecutor-general-of-ukraine-work-on-return-of-ukrainians-from-russian-captivity-very-difficult/>

³⁹ <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/f4d0e149-eda9-4d6e-8057-c7996d-f52a1a/EN.pdf>

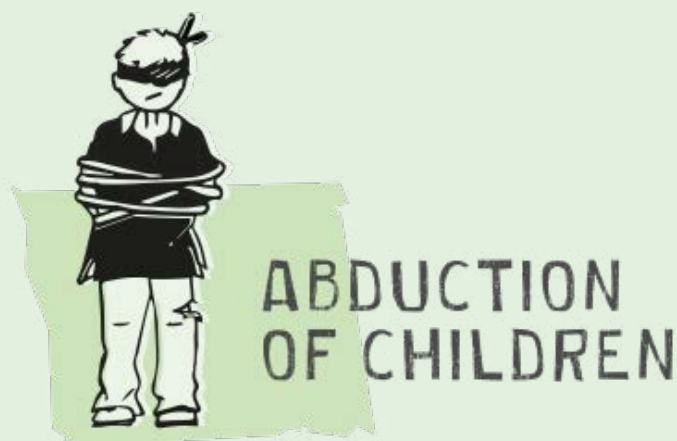
is classified as rape. The commission is currently investigating three other credible reports about rape of women and teenager girls, committed by the armed forces of the Russian Federation in the same village.

- Also, in Chernihiv region, in March 2022, the armed forces of the Russian federation occupied one of the houses for more than a week. During this time, the unit commander repeatedly committed violent sexual acts against 16-year-old girl and threatened to kill other members of her family, who tried to protect her. Thereafter, two of these servicemen of the armed forces of the Russian Federation were identified.
- The Commission also discovered a case in Chernihiv region in March 2022, when a serviceman of the armed forces of the Russian Federation broke into a house, threatened the inhabitants with weapons and attempted to rape a woman in front of her 3-year-old son.
- In Kharkiv region the Commission investigates two cases of repeated rapes. For more than three months a soldier of the armed forces of the Russian Federation allegedly raped a teenage girl.
- The Commission confirmed the cases of sexual violence, when Russian servicemen raped girls after breaking into civilian homes or staying there. In addition, a 4-year-old girl heard her mother's screams, as she was being raped in the next room. Such actions are also equated with tortures.

However, according to the Prosecutor General «...any crimes of sexual nature are characterized by a very high level of latency, I apologize for this word, it is a legal term. Thus, they are committed much more often than we know, only because many people do not want to communicate for various reasons». That is why, unfortunately, the true number of cases of this crime against children will not be established.

THE IMPACT OF THE VIOLATION ON CHILDREN

Children, who have experienced sexual violence, suffer from the long-term psychological trauma, health consequences, in particular, including sexually transmitted infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, early pregnancy. Their reintegration is even a more complicated task, as society very often stigmatizes the victims.



ABDUCTION OF CHILDREN⁴⁰

⁴⁰ <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/six-grave-violations/abduction-of-children/>

Illicit transfer, capture, retention, detention, possession or enforced disappearance of a child, temporarily or permanently, for the purpose of exploiting a child in any form. These include, in particular, recruiting to the armed forces or armed groups, involving to participation in combat actions, sexual exploitation or sexual abuse, forced labor, hostage-taking and indoctrination.

In some cases, abducted children are arbitrarily detained by governments or armed groups. Parties to the conflict also abduct children during the systematic campaigns of violence and repressions against the civil population⁴¹.

Abduction of children during the conflict is one of six grave violations, identified and condemned by the UN Security Council. Child abduction is a reason for engagement of the parties to the armed conflict, as noted in the annexes to the Annual report of the Secretary General on children and armed conflicts.

The **Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction** is aimed protection of children against the illicit transfers. The Convention creates the procedure for ensuring the return of children, who are being illegally transferred or detained, to the country of their permanent residence.

This Convention is the most widespread international instrument in this field, because 81 countries of the world joined it for cooperation within its framework and use of its effective mechanism.

⁴¹ <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Practical-guidance-for-mediators-to-protect-children-in-situations-of-armed-conflict.pdf>

The Convention uses the terms “right of custody” and “right of access”, the interpretation of which is limited to the purposes of the Convention. That is, the “right of custody” covers the rights related to the care of the person of the child and, in particular, the right to determine the child’s place of residence, as for the “right of access” – it implies the right of communication with a child, in particular, the right to transfer a child in a place different from its place of permanent residence for a limited time. Thus, transfer is considered illicit, when the child is taken abroad or not returned from the abroad, if the rights of custody of a child, who belongs to any person, institution or other authority, are violated.

Therefore, the Convention has the task of restoring the status quo through the immediate return of illicitly transferred children, since only the authorities at the permanent places of child’s residence have jurisdiction to resolve any disputes regarding the place of residence and custody of a child.

Illicit transfer

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion the situation with illicit transferring of Ukrainian children from the occupied territories to the Russian Federation developed a threatening scale.

On August 1, Ukraine has launched the government child tracking portal – [information platform «Children of war»](#), which will help law enforcement agencies collect data on young Ukrainians, who became victims of war, particularly, those who went missing or were transferred to the temporarily occupied territories and deported to the Russian Federation. Daria Herasymchuk, Advisor and Commissioner of the President of Ukraine for Children’s Rights, informed about this [during the briefing](#)⁴².

⁴² <https://www.president.gov.ua/news/v-ukrayini-zapracyuvav-portal-diti-vijni-platforma-dlya-rozs-76809>

The portal performs two main functions:

- Information («Children of war» is the only platform, that provides up-to-date aggregated data on children, who suffered as a result of war of Russia against Ukraine, died, were injured, went missing or were deported, and those, who were successfully traced and rescued. Law enforcement agencies and the National Information Bureau update quantitative indicators of data on the platform on daily basis).
- Assistance in tracing children (the platform allows to contact law enforcement agencies, in particular, with the National Police of Ukraine, Office of the Prosecutor General as well as with the National Information Bureau).

As of December 1, 2022, data on the missing and deported children are as follows⁴³:



At the same time, it is very difficult to establish the exact number of transferred children due to the active combat actions and the temporary occupation of part of the Ukrainian territory. According to data from open sources, announced by Russia, there are much more deported children – 685 000. By various estimates, including the estimated of the government of Russian Federation, Russian authorities have already interrogated, detained and forcibly deported from 900 000 to 1,6 million Ukrainian citizens to Russia, often to the remote regions of the Far East.

Thousands of children were sent to filtration, moreover, part of them were separated from their families or taken from orphanages and given for adoption in Russia. According to data provided by the United States, only during July more than 1 800 children were transferred to the Russian Federation from the occupied regions of Ukraine.

⁴³ https://rayon.in.ua/upload/news/20/2022-12/01-ap6ooUnq/F6A7F216-0CD3-494D-A650-12FDD29FDC57_63884bbe1c652.jpg

Despite the fact that the total number of Ukrainian civilians transferred to Russia – voluntarily or forcibly – remains uncertain, many of them were transferred to Russia in organized mass transportations, even if they hoped to get to the Ukraine-controlled territory in a way and under conditions that make their transfer illegal. Russian and Russia-linked authorities organized free evacuation busses to Russia and told some civilians that they have no choice other than staying on the Russia-occupied territories or going to Russia, and they should “forget” about possibility to go to the Ukraine-controlled territory. People who managed to return to Ukraine said that the military or other persons at the checkpoints gave orders to the Ukrainian citizens who fled the hostilities to go to Russia or “DPR”. Servicemen who abducted civilians on the occupied territories told them the same, although in some cases they allowed people to go to the Ukraine-controlled territory.



Of course, we would take the opportunity to go to Ukraine, if we could. But we had no choice, there was no opportunity to go there.

From personal conversation with a resident of Mariupol

As Kateryna Rashevskaya, the lawyer of the Regional Center for Human Rights (RCHR) reports:

«Russian Federation deported Ukrainian children to 57 regions, including regions of the Far North, which are not only several thousand kilometers away from the places of permanent residence of under-aged, but also significantly differ in terms of climatic conditions. The aggressor state also institutionalized and accelerated the process of transferring Ukrainian children to Russian families for fostering. The mentioned actions have signs of genocide of the Ukrainian nation and are encouraged directly by V. Putin, by the pro-governmental party “United Russia” and also by Maria Lvova-Belova, Russia’s Presidential Commissioner for Children’s Rights. The “appropriation” of Ukrainian children is stimulated through spreading Russian propaganda as well as financially – through the expenditures from the local budgets for the families who took “orphans of Donbass” for fostering. At the same time, it is important to emphasize that under-aged were deported not only from Donetsk and Luhansk regions, but also from 9 temporarily occupied regions of Ukraine. Moreover, 95% of pupils of total institutions have biological parents, thus are not orphans. However, as of the end of June 2022, at least 127 Ukrainian children were placed under care of Russian families»⁴⁴.

According to the Regional Center for Human Rights (RCHR)⁴⁵ at least 2389 transferred Ukrainian children are orphans, children deprived of

⁴⁴ <https://blog.liga.net/user/krashevskaya/article/46181>

⁴⁵ <https://blog.liga.net/user/krashevskaya/article/povernennya-vikradenih-rosiyei-ditei-conditio-sine-qua-non>

parental care and children who, as of February 24, 2022, lived in total institutions due to chronic diseases. Among the under-aged, who have been deported, there were children whose parents were killed by Russian servicemen or did not pass the so-called “filtration camps”.

Filtration

Russian and Russian-linked authorities have also subjected thousands of Ukrainian citizens to the process, which Russia calls “filtration”, – it’s a form of a mandatory security check, when occupiers and people under their control usually collected biometric data of civilians, in particular, fingerprints and photos, full-face and profile, conducted individual searches, inspected personal belongings and phones, asked people questions about their political views. Ukrainian civilians were de facto interned, as they needed to wait to go through this process and many of them reported that they were being held in overcrowded facilities in pitiable conditions for periods ranging from several hours and up to nearly a month. The forcible transfers and the process of filtration represent separate acts of overt abuse of civilians, which a priori involve mockery of people, and many Ukrainian civilians have experienced both.



A filtration camp is a settlement. There was just a convoy of hundreds of cars. No one was even allowed to go to the toilet. The legs swell, whole body hurts. We spent two days and two nights there. They said that process of filtration begins at the age of 14. My sister is 12. She stayed in the car... I will never forget the conversation between two soldiers:

– What did you do to the people who did not pass the filtration?

– I shot ten of them, after that I did not count – wasn’t interested ...

I was left in the first operating booth. They took my documents, scanned them, took my fingerprints. At the same time my mobile phone was being inspected. There were five armed soldiers in the room and me alone. It was very scary. My legs began to buckle, as the soldier who was lying on the mattress said to me: “You don’t like it? There will be other women after you. We’ll find something”. They didn’t like me, so they just pushed me out. I was not allowed to wait for my father inside»⁴⁶.

From the memories of a 17-year-old resident of Mariupol

⁴⁶ <https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-russia-filtration-violence-threats/31829588.html>



I believe that filtration itself is a big crime. They completely deprived us of any rights, collected all information about us, scanned all fingerprints, got our photos, inspected phones, recorded all this data⁴⁷.

From the interview with a 16-year-old resident of Mariupol

Illegal adoption

On May 30, 2022, Volodymyr Putin signed a decree, which simplified the procedure for granting citizenship of Russia Ukrainian orphans or persons who were left without parental care.

As of the end of November (since the beginning of the full-scale invasion), at least 386 Ukrainian children who lived on the occupied territories were illegally adopted by Russians. Such number was announced on December 2 by Kateryna Rashevskaya, the lawyer of the Regional Center for Human Rights, during the conference “Genocide as a weapon in the fight against the Ukrainian nation in the 20th-21st centuries: interdisciplinary approaches”.

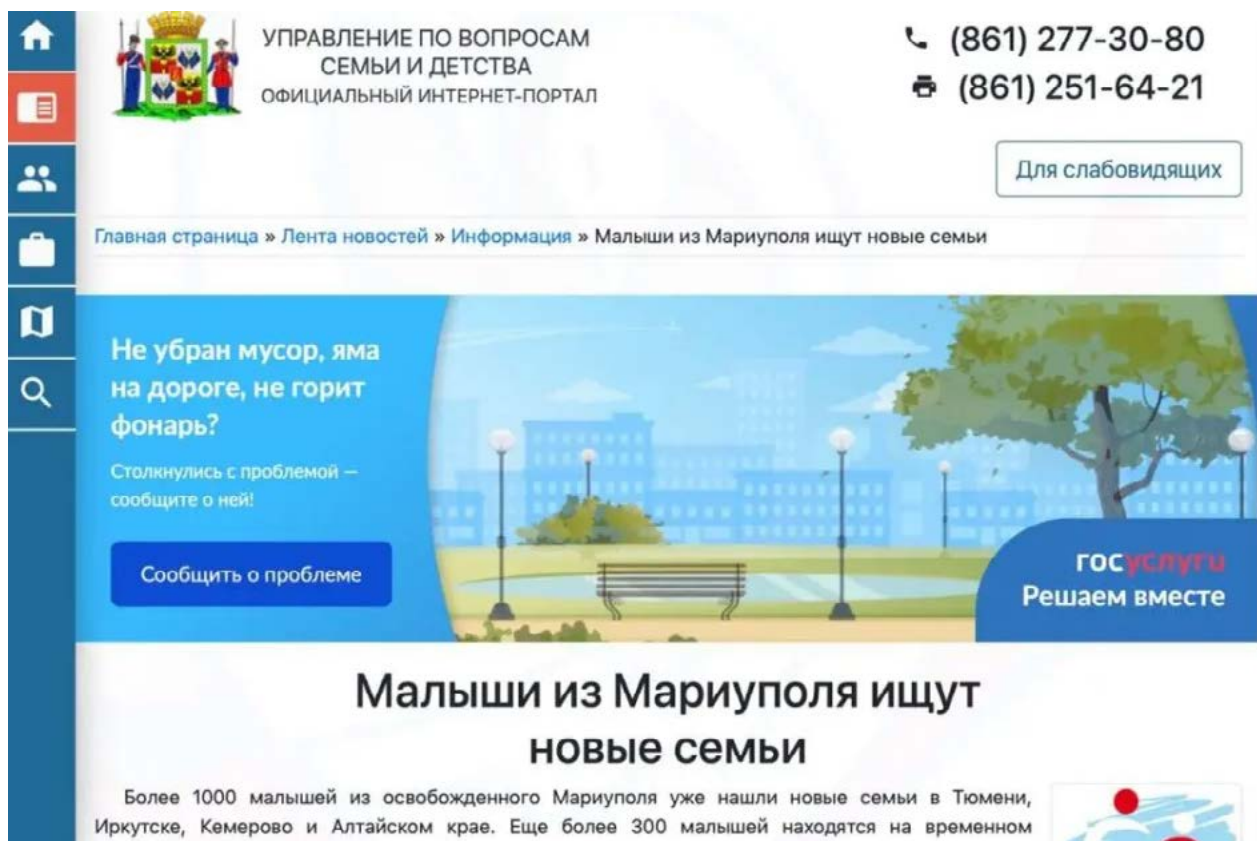
According to her words, Maria Lvova-Belova, the Children's Rights Commissioner for the President of Russia, who illegally adopted a 16-year-old Ukrainian boy from Mariupol herself, is at the head of illegal adoption, which is Russia's international crime.

At the same time, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, more than 1000 children from Mariupol have been given up for “adoption” to Russians from Tumen, Irkutsk, Kemerovo and Altai Krai. More than 300 more children are in specialized institutions of Krasnodar Krai. This is the information from the [statement](#) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

«Such actions of the Russian Federation are a flagrant violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War dated 1949, which imposes the obligation for the occupier state not to change the civil status of children, and also the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child dated 1989», – the statement says.

In addition, 30 underage Ukrainians from cities of Khartsyzsk, Ilova and Zuhres of the occupied Donetsk region were forcibly transferred to Nizhny Novgorod under the pretext of participation in youth educational programs, [as reported](#) by the Main Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine.

⁴⁷ <https://zmina.info/articles/fotografuvaly-yak-zlochyncziv-v-tyurmi-16-richna-meshkanka-mariupolya-rozkazala-pro-filtracziyu-ta-primusovij-vyyizd-v-rf/?fbclid=IwAR0a4eES-WZUJN7QZ18I6C5G-kzuKZ40Ig-4hy1DKF-gHW5zA83NK0Q-ErEbQ>



Screenshot from the official web-portal of Russian Department of Family and Childhood.
Article "Children from Mariupol are looking for new families".

This article aims to stimulate the interest of Russian families in adopting illegally transferred Ukrainian children.

Russians can even receive financial support from the state for adopting – nearly 20 000 rubles, and if a child has disabilities – 156 400 rubles.

Children, who are being deported to Russian under the supervision of Maria Lvova-Belova, are deprived of any objective opportunity to choose if they will or will not be abducted and later – adopted. Part of the children are unable to make a choice because of the age or mental peculiarities. In addition, during the forced adoption blackmailing, threats and manipulations are used.

Transferring under the pretext of “evacuation” and “rehabilitation” of children

Lately, the practice of “temporary” transferring of children without their parents under the pretext of rest and recovery has become widespread. Besides, parents voluntarily consent, thus saving children from shelling and horrors of war, but not getting any guarantees regarding the return of their children.

After the liberation of the territories of Kharkiv region, the facts of the illicit transfer of children to the Russian Federation under the pretext of “rest and recovery” were discovered. Taking advantage of the humanitarian situation in Izyum and Balakliya, particularly of, as the locals say: “Grocery stores were not working and the only way to get something to eat was getting humanitarian aid. Two loaves of bread once a week, cereals and oil – once in two months”, the occupation authorities offered to take children to Gelendzhik for having rest. Around 30 children were taken there for a week but were never brought back.



In August they offered another trip. There is no food here, absolutely no conditions, I just wanted my child to have at least a week of rest from this nightmare.

From the story of Iryna, mother of one of children⁴⁹

50 children in age from 10 to 15 were taken to Gelendzhik on a retreat. Shortly after the de-occupation of Kharkiv region parents united and started looking for the ways to bring children back home. The charity organization “Save Ukraine” helped them with organization of the trip, and currently children have already reunited from their parents. However, some children still remain in the Russian summer camps.



Only in this institution in Anapa, from which these children were evacuated, there are still around 60 children who remained. There were several hundred of them, but we are unable to say how many such children still remain on the territory of the Russian Federation. We know about many children from the occupied territories. This is the abduction of children, because according to the international law they should have returned them⁵⁰.

*From the interview with Mykola Kuleba, the founder of the organization “Save Ukraine”,
Commissioner of the President of Ukraine for Rights of Children (in 2014-2021)*

⁴⁹ <https://odessa.online/uk/izyum-pershi-dni-zhittya-bez-okupatsiyi-foto-video/>

⁵⁰ <https://www.5.ua/suspilstvo/my-zrozumily-shcho-nam-ikh-ne-povernut-prymusova-deportatsiia-ukrainskykh-ditei-na-rosiiu-shcho-vidomo-292114.html>

Authors of the report have recorded cases of transferring children from the South of Ukraine in [the monitoring reports "Universal soldier" or Education as Russian Weapon on the Occupied South of Ukraine](#).

Autumn holidays in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions was announced on different dates, depending on the intensity of the combat actions. For

example, in Kherson and in Bilozerkha, Beryslav, Kakhovka and Nova Kakhovka districts holidays were announced for the period from October 6 to October 21, 2022.

In Velyka Lepetykha, Genichesk, Kalanchak, Novotroitske, Skadovsk and Chaplyne districts – from October 12 to October 25. Later, the holidays were extended until November 7 (except for Kherson, Oleshky, Beryslav, Hola Prystan, Bilozerkha, Kakhovka, Nova Kakhovka, Velyka Lepetykha districts, where date of the beginning of the holidays was not announced).

In the occupied part of Zaporizhzhia region, the holidays were announced for the period from October 31 to November 14.

Wellness holiday shifts were held in children's camps in the occupied Crimea, in Krasnodar and Stavropol Krai, Rostov region, Kabardino-Balkaria. According to the statement of Volodymyr Saldo, the "temporary acting governor" of the Kherson region, each region was ready to accept up to 10 000 people (children and their parents).

Among the places of children's locations which were identified were: Kabardino-Balkaria: "Raduga" social rehabilitation center; Crimea: camps "Druzhba" (Evpatoria), "Luchistiy" (Evpatoria), "Zdravnitsa" (Evpatoria), "Yunost" (Zaozerniy), "Chayka" (Evpatoria), "Mechta" (Evpatoria), "Artek" (Gurzuf). In general, it was reported that 15 Crimean camps will accept children from Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions. According to various information, it was planned to accept from 4500 to 6000 children from Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions in Crimea.

On October 11, the information appeared that 2 000 children from Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions had already arrived in Crimea. On October 11 and 12 it became known that children were taken to the Anapa district of Krasnodar Krai. However, the number of children, transferred to the territory of the Russian Federation is not specified.

The occupation ministries of Kherson region, such as the "Ministry of Labor and Social Policies", the "Ministry of Tourism" and the "Ministry of Emergency Situations", the "government" of Crimea, as well as the deputies of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, particularly Igor Kastiukevich and the Head of Kabardino-Balkaria Kazbek Kokov, joined the organization of taking children on a so-called "retreat".

The occupation government and the Russian also stimulated the trips of parents with their children deep into the occupied territories and to the Russian territory, thus creating conditions for shifting the demographic composition on the occupied South of Ukraine and assimilation of the Ukrainian citizens into Russian society. In particular, in mid-October, vid-

eos with children, who were located in Crimea began to appear, in which they ask their parents to come to them for vacation in Crimea.

In addition to the wellness holiday shifts, in October transferring people under the pretext of evacuation continued. Transfer was organized across Crime and then to the territory on the Russian Federation. In Dzhankoi, Crimea, there was a temporary accommodation point. According to the information of Russian media, about 9000 people moved to Krasnodar Krai, there were children among them too. Transferred children began to attend Russian schools. Authorities organized transport from the temporary accommodation points for them.

Children from the orphanages of Kherson region were also transferred deeper into the occupied territories and to the territory of the Russian Federation. Among the transferred children there are the ones with disabilities⁵¹.

Abduction

Also, there have been cases of abduction/imprisonment of children by Russian military on the temporarily occupied territories. The purpose of such abductions can be different: intimidation, an attempt to impose the occupation regime, collecting intelligence data, pressure on victims' relatives for other reasons.

On august 28, occupiers abducted a 16-year-old teenager from his house in Vasylivka district of Zaporizhzhia region. On July 7, Vladyslav Buriak, who was held hostage by the Russian military for 90 days, was finally released. All this time, his father Oleh Buriak, the head of Zaporizhzhia District State Administration, held the public campaign on his rescue (interview with Vladyslav after he was released).

On September 15, border guards liberated five teenagers, who were held captive by the occupiers in a basement in Kharkiv region. As it turned out, four girls and one boy spent seven days in captivity in captivity. Russians conducted filtration measures with them and locked them up in a basement afterwards⁵².

In addition, parents from the temporarily occupied territories are being threatened with separation from their children and deprivation of parental rights, if their children do not begin to attend kindergartens or schools. In particular, on August 29, 2022, during the conduction of the evacuation measures, it became known about such actions of the pseudo-authorities on the occupied territory of the Kharkiv region⁵³.

⁵¹ After the liberation of a part of Kherson region and the city of Kherson, work on returning children to Ukraine began

⁵² <https://tsn.ua/en/ato/ukrainian-border-guards-in-kharkiv-region-saved-teenagers-kept-in-the-basement-by-the-invaders-2158477.html>

⁵³ In the occupied territory of Kharkiv region, the pseudo-authorities threaten parents to take away their children if they don't send them to schools
<https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/08/30/7365432/>

Similar measures of intimidation and pressure are used in the occupied Kherson region. (Photo of the document).

The practice of child abduction, in order to put pressure on parents for getting their agreement for collaboration, continues. For example, in the early August Russians abducted the son of Ivan Vereshchaka – a teacher from Kherson region, because this teacher refused to teach by the Russian program from September 1. ([video interview](#))

THE IMPACT OF THE VIOLATION ON CHILDREN

Such actions of the Russians are the obvious violation of the International Humanitarian Law and the International Human Rights Law and have signs of genocide of Ukrainians, in particular – a complex of scheduled consecutive steps, aimed at the extermination of nation.

The mass abduction of children and attempts to assimilate them into a foreign culture give grounds for considering such actions to be genocide, under the Article 2 Section E of the [Genocide Convention of 1948](#).

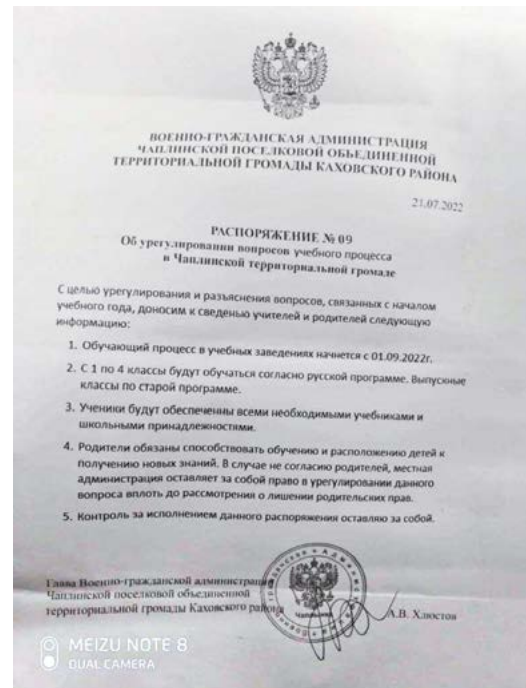


Photo of the document "Order on the settlement of issues of the educational process in the Chaplynka territorial community".

The document lists the requirements to announce about the beginning of the academic year, states that education process will be conducted in Russian language and mentions that parents should support children throughout the educational process, motivating them to accept changes.



ATTACKS AGAINST SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS⁵⁴

⁵⁴ <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/six-grave-violations/attacks-against-schools/>

Such attacks include the attacks against schools or medical institutions that lead to complete or partial destruction of these objects, as well as other encroachments on the normal functioning of these objects, such as their occupation, shelling or selecting as targets for propagandistic purpose, or any other actions, aimed at causing harm to schools or medical institutions and their personnel.

School: this term refers to a recognizable educational institution or a place of studying. Educational institutions and places of studying should have a recognized status and be known to local public as educational institutions, their borders should be visible.

Hospital: this term refers to the medical institutions, where sick and injured people are accommodated and where they get medical services⁵⁵.

Schools and hospitals should be zones of peace, where children are given protection even during the conflicts. Nevertheless, over the past 9 months, there has been menacing tendency of increase in the number of attacks against schools and hospitals, which has an adverse effect on children.

Besides the direct physical damage to schools and hospitals, the Russian-Ukrainian war resulted in forced closures or termination of these institutions. Children, teachers, doctors and nurses are also exposed to the threats from the side of the parties to the conflict, if they are suspected, for example, of supporting the other party to the conflict. In addition, the use of schools for military needs causes great concern.

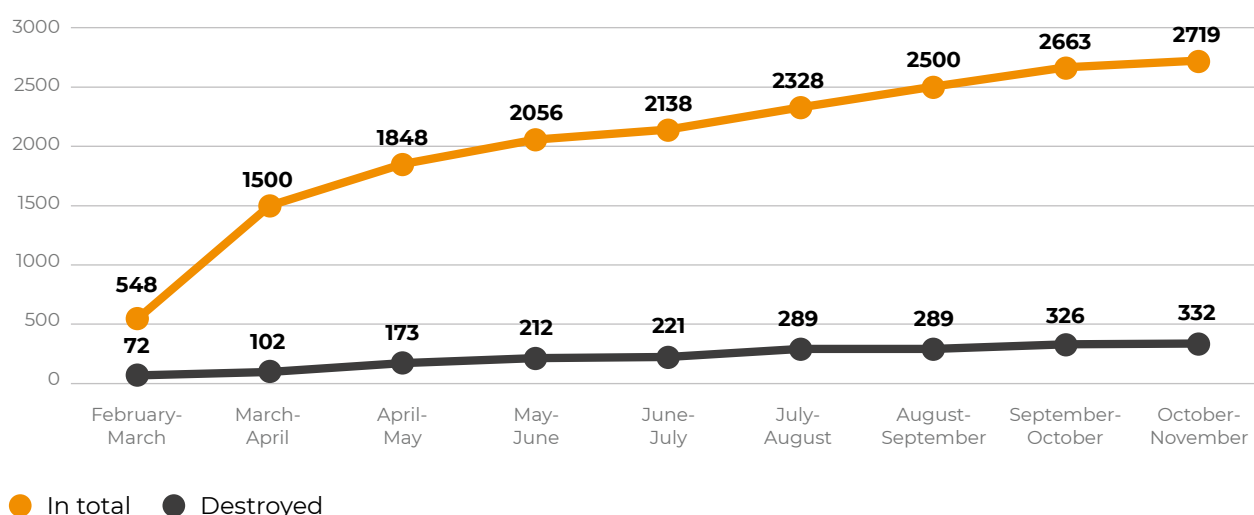
⁵⁵ <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Practical-guidance-for-mediators-to-protect-children-in-situations-of-armed-conflict.pdf>

According to the International humanitarian law, both – schools and hospitals are civilian objects, which are under protection, therefore they are subjects to the humanitarian principles of distinction and proportionality. The direct physical attacks against these institutions and their closure resulted by the direct threats have been added since 2011 as the grounds for inclusion of parties to the conflict in the list of the Secretary general, as those which commit grave violations against children in the armed conflict.

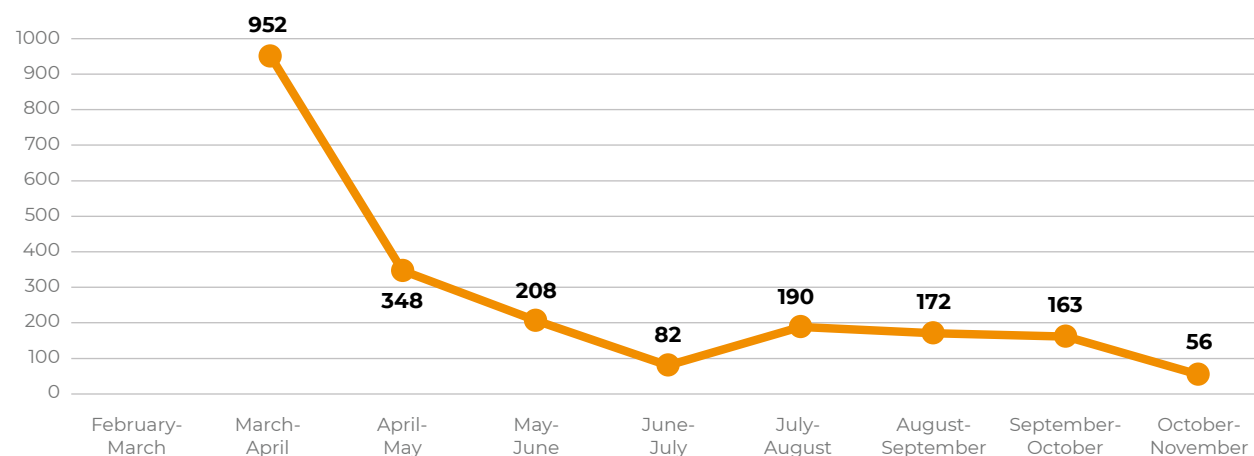
As of November 24, 2719 educational institutions were damaged due to bombardment and shelling by the armed forces of the Russian Federation, 332 of them were completely destroyed.

The overall picture of causing the devastating damage to the educational institutions, particularly schools is as follows:

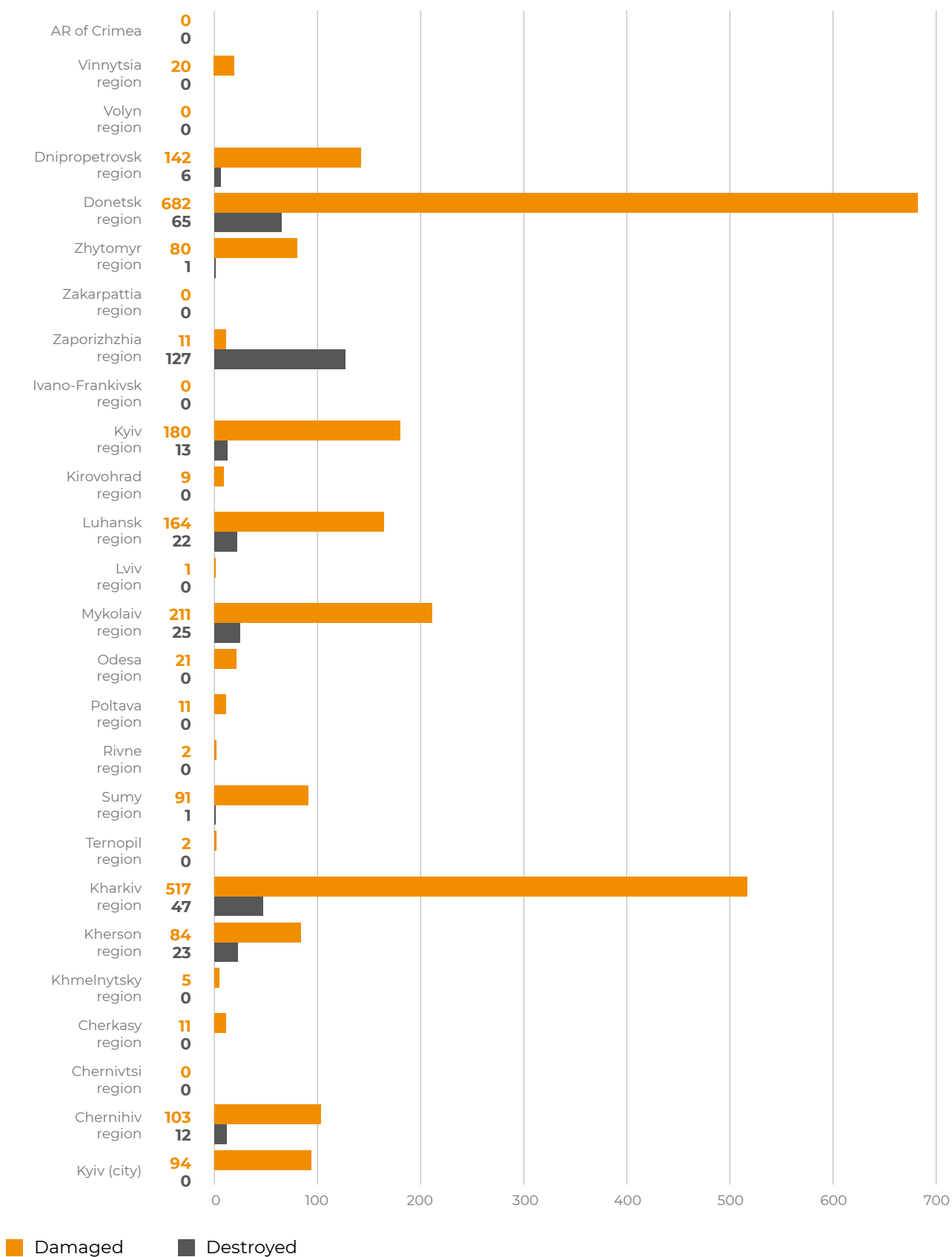
Month from 24 to 24



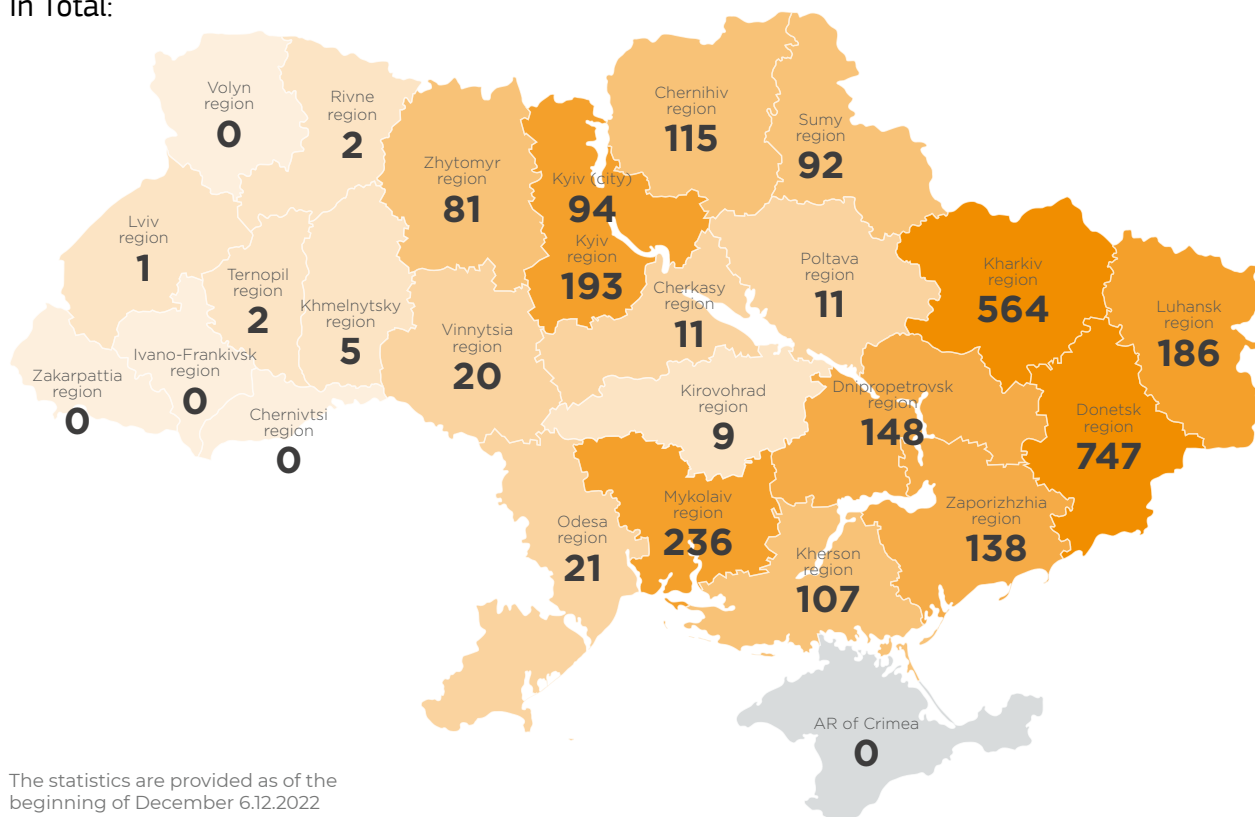
Monthly dynamics



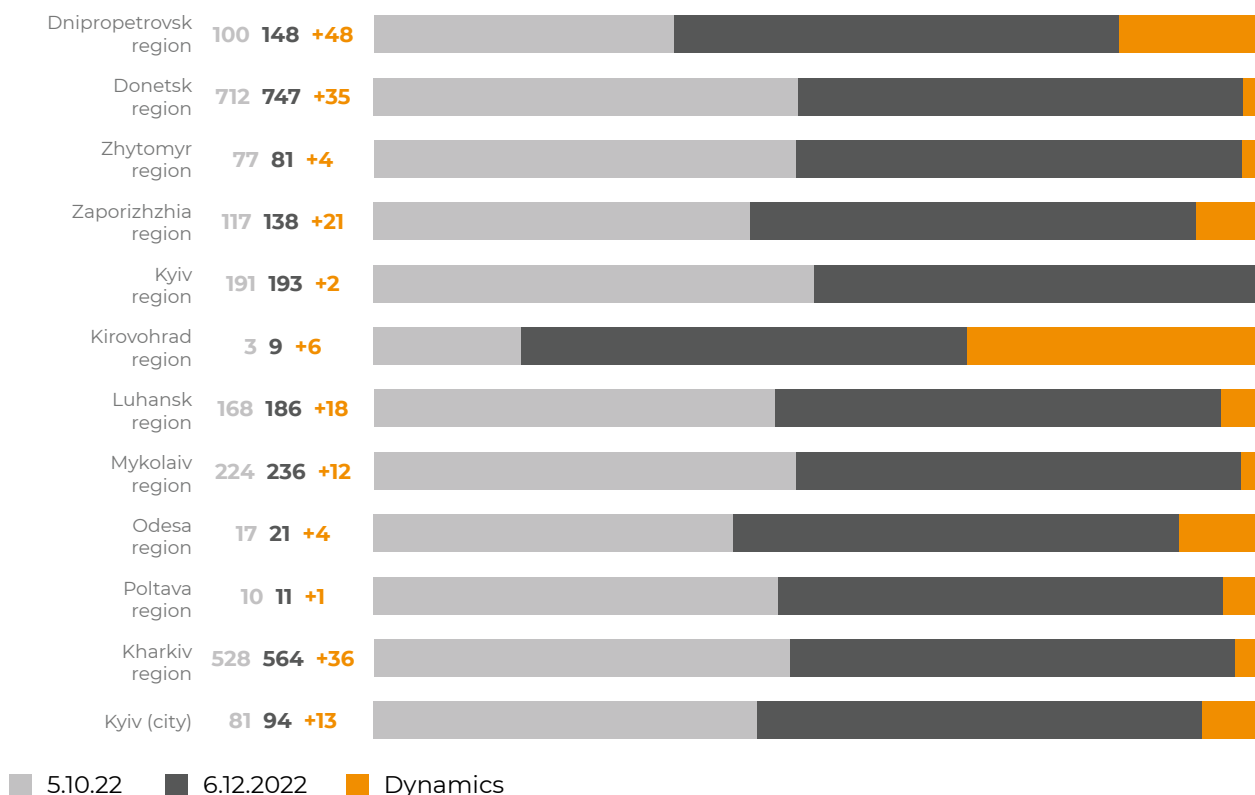
The number of damaged and destroyed schools in different regions of Ukraine ([according to Ministry of Education and Science](#))



In Total:



The most affected regions and those, where destruction of the educational institutions continues in October-November.



In addition, numerous facts of plundering the material and technical base of schools, loss of documents (personal cases, employment histories etc.) were recorded.



At first, the gym was damaged, a missile crashed there. After that, there was a hit in the roof, I even got photos of my office, in which there were no windows. The building is damaged, utilities – partially. And all the equipment was stolen from my office, new transforming desks and lockers were smashed. There are 20 schools in our city, there are some that are completely destroyed down to the basement floor, nothing is left there. There are some schools, like ours, where half of the building is destroyed. And no one organized the evacuation of equipment or personal work documents for us. I know that my colleagues had to walk there under the shelling to get the documents out. There were times when heavy shelling began suddenly, and nobody thought about that equipment or employment history records. And now some parents ask us about the documents, but they remained in schools if they didn't burn.

*From the interview with a primary school teacher
from Severodonetsk⁵⁶*

⁵⁶ <https://almenda.org/pravo-na-osvitu-istoriya-druha/>

THE IMPACT OF THE VIOLATION ON CHILDREN

The cumulative consequences of the damage and destruction of the educational institutions, mass transferring of students and teachers and the fact that a large number of schools do not meet the established school safety requirements, which include the presence of adequate bomb shelters, signify that since the beginning of the school year a lot of Ukrainian children were forced to attend classes online. Despite the fact that Ukrainian authorities have developed significant amount of content for distance education, many children, especially in rural areas, do not have access to the equipment, electricity, mobile network and Internet, which would allow them attend classes remotely and thus they right to education is jeopardized.

Among the students of general secondary education in conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war, several groups can be distinguished, identifying the specifics of influence (problems and challenges) for each of them.



Education seekers on the territory of Ukraine, where hostilities are not taking place

Education seekers of this group can be conditionally divided into two groups:

1. Did not change place of residence.
2. Persons, who were internally displaced after February 24, 2022.

According to the official [report](#) of Serhiy Shkarlet, the Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine, **as of November 14, 2022, educational process is carried out in 12 924 schools:**

- 7 764 schools operate in traditional and mixed formats;
- 5 160 schools operate in online mode, which is 1,000 less than it was at the beginning of November.

4 031 537 students study in general secondary education institutions:

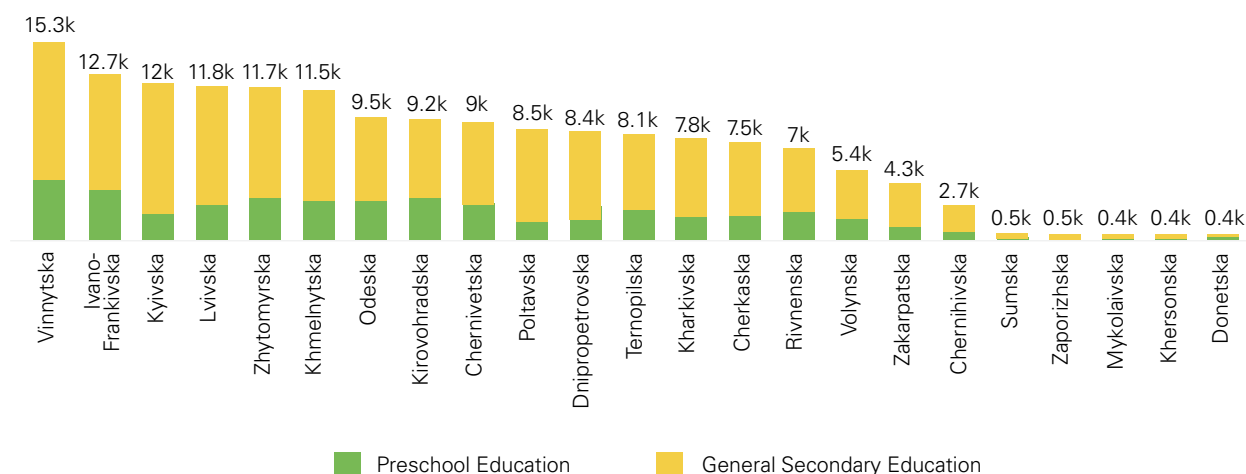
- Full-time – 1 013 951;
- Mixed – 1 124 695;
- Remotely – 1 892 891 (more than 1 million of them are students from Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Luhansk, Dnipropetrovsk, Sumy, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv and Kherson regions).

There are also 25 285 inclusive classes, where almost 40 000 students with special needs (SEN) receive education.

More than 167 000 students among the internally displaced children and almost 95 000 students from the temporarily occupied territories receiver educational services in the operating general secondary education institutions.

Thus, according to the provided data, almost 70% of students study remotely or in a mixed form of education. And this number continues to increase as result of mass attacks by the Russian Federation on the critical infrastructure of Ukraine, which led to power lack of power, heating, water, access to high-speed Internet and mobile service.

Distribution of IDP learners by oblast (after February 24, 2022)



Screenshot from the final report "UKRAINE EDUCATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY (May 6 – June 24, 2022)"⁵⁷

The results of the survey "Problems regarding the education of children who live in Ukraine", held in August 2022 by the Educational Ombudsman Service, showed⁵⁸:

- 5478 (21,71%) of the surveyed parents said that their children may have poor Internet access or no Internet access at all for distance learning in the new academic year, that will affect the quality of child's education.
- 2022 (8%) of the surveyed parents said that their children have no gadgets, required for studying or they are not enough, that will also affect the quality of education.
- 1939 (7,68%) of the surveyed parents believe that distance learning will be organized poorly, and 803 (3,2%) of the respondents say that distance learning will not be available.
- A significant part of the surveyed parents – 5713 (22,6%) – are generally convinced that distance learning provides education of poor quality.

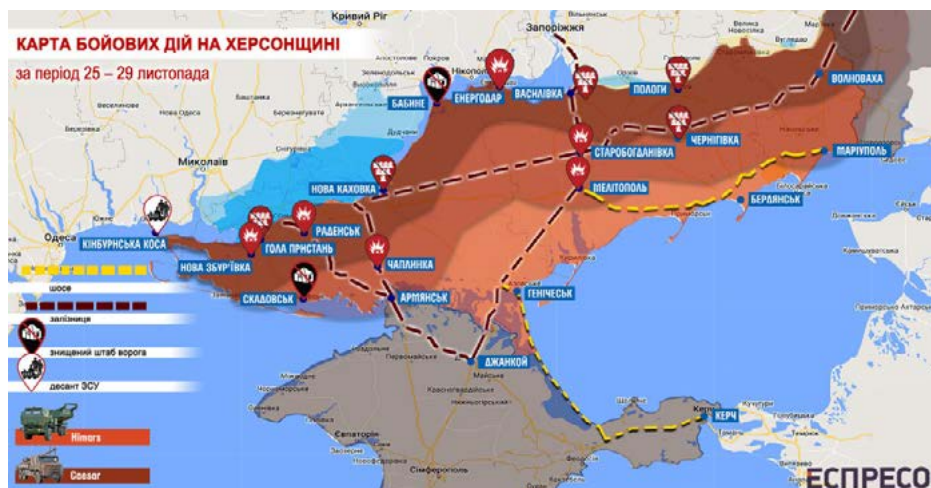
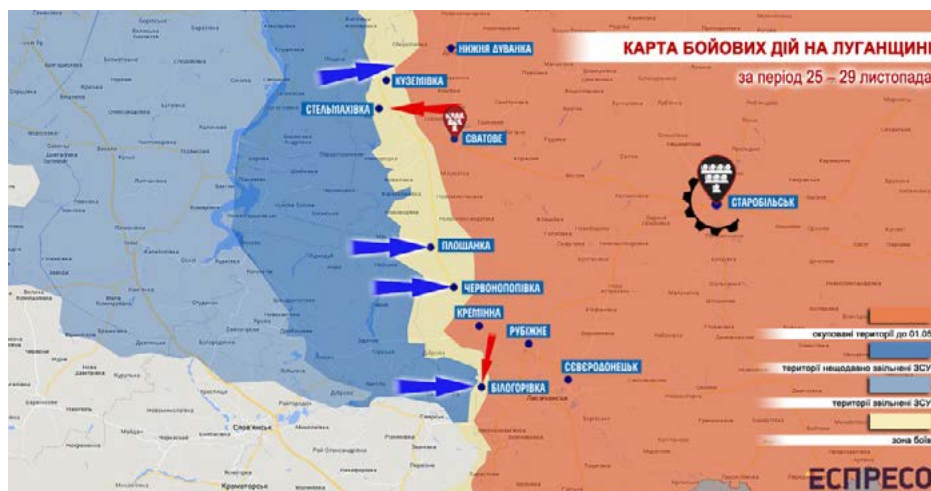
Such problems in organization of the distance learning (online), as instability of the safety situation on the regions and lack of digital skills among the participants of the educational process, also remain relevant.

⁵⁷ <https://mon.gov.ua/storage/app/media/news/2022/07/07/Pids.zvit.Otsin.potreb.Ukr.u.sferi.osvity-EN-6.05-24.06.22.pdf>

⁵⁸ <https://eo.gov.ua/problemy-shchodo-navchannia-ditey-iaki-perebuvaiut-v-ukraini/2022/08/16/>

Education seekers on the territory of Ukraine, where hostilities are taking place

As of the end of 2022, the active combat actions continue in Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions.



There is no separate statistics regarding the number of students, who live in safe areas and haven't changed places of residence. There is also no information on how many students would have graduated in 2021–2022 and how many children would have started school on September 1, 2022 (in the 2022–2023 academic year), if there was no full-scale Russian invasion. Therefore, it is currently hard to say how many children stay in places of their permanent residence far from the zone of combat.

At the same time, on the website of the Institute of Educational Analysis, the authors found data regarding the amount of full-time general secondary education institutions and the number of students in them before the full-scale invasion (as of 2020–2021 academic year):

- Donetsk region – 507 schools – 169 081 students;
- Luhansk region – 283 schools – 55 482 students;
- Kherson region – 392 schools – 113 071 students;
- Zaporizhzhia region – 532 school – 171 201 students.

The lack of statistical information on the number of children, who are currently in the zone of active combat and are deprived of ability to learn, does not allow to assess the scale of the problem and effectively respond to the challenges.

Statements of the Ministry of Education and Science, that education on these territories is carried out using distance learning, raise more questions than answers:

- Do students stay in a safe place while learning?
- Is there access to high-speed Internet and mobile service?
- Are there gadgets for distance learning?
- Are there pedagogical specialists to provide the educational service?
- Other.

It is obvious that educational process on these territories depends on the safety situation and must be determined by the decisions of the regional military administrations. At the same time, it is clear that learning in full-time or mixed forms is impossible on these territories.

Education seekers who moved to the territories of foreign countries

At the moment there generalized information on the number of children of school age, who stay on the territory of foreign countries as refugees as of December 2022⁵⁹ was unable to be found. According to the official data of the Ministry of Education and Science, **as of September 12, 2022, there were 488 045 children abroad**, and according to the report of the First Deputy Minister Andriy Vitrenko, **as of October 14, 2022 - 505 000**. Currently it is hard to say, if 17 000 increase in one month is a certain tendency of an ongoing migration, or it is just a statistical error.

At the same time, according to the data of the [Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission](#), as of November 8, 2022, **679 298 Ukrainian children have been integrated in the school systems of the European Union countries**. It should be noted that these statistics does not contain data on the number of Ukrainian students in Great Britain, USA, Canada and other countries.

Therefore, the lack of the official statistics indicates that the monitoring of the educational needs of this group, carried out by the Ministry of Education and Science, was insufficient. Even in the final report “Ukraine Education Needs Assessment (May 6 – June 24, 2022)” the needs of the group are not mentioned.

Before the start of 2022-2023 academic year, the Service of Education Ombudsman of Ukraine held survey for the parents of education seekers, who are staying abroad. Among the questions posed to the parents there were:

- Which problems did education seekers and their parents, who stay abroad, face during learning;
- Whether education seekers who stay abroad keep in touch with Ukraine.

The main problems, with which education seekers and their parents face, according to the survey:

- 69,1% (5476) of the surveyed parents noted the language barrier;
- 34,8% (2756) of the surveyed parents informed that study hours in foreign and Ukrainian education institutions do not match;

⁵⁹ [According to UN data](#), According to UN, as of November 8, 2022, 7 824 440 Ukrainian refugees were registered, 4 699 333 were registered for temporary protection or similar national protection schemes in Europe as of November 8. In the countries that are not a part of the European Union, the following number of Ukrainian refugees was registered for temporary protection: Turkey – 145 000 (as of May 19, 2022), Great Britain – 143 100 (as of November 8, 2022), Switzerland – 68 620 (as of November 8, 2022), Norway – 31 798 (as of November 8, 2022), Greece – 19 997 (as of November 8, 2022). According to media outlets, there are more than 100 000 Ukrainian refugees [in the USA](#) (as of July 2022), [in Canada](#) – 32 000 (as of June 2022).

- 34,5% (2731) of the surveyed parents noted the difference between education programs in Ukrainian and foreign schools;
- 27% (2140) of the respondents noted that their children received **double load** because of studying in both Ukrainian and foreign education institutions;
- 17,8% (1412) of the respondents indicated the difficulty of socialization and communication with children of same age;
- 16,5% (1308) of the surveyed parents noted the impossibility to enter the relevant level of education in the foreign education institution;
- 8,4% (663) of the respondents called identified mixed-age classes in Ukrainian schools abroad or in foreign education institutions as problem.

Also, among the disadvantages of education abroad parents mentioned:

- **Inability to study Ukrainian language, history and culture;**
- 12-13- year-long, and in some countries – 15-year-long schooling;
- Paid textbooks.



*«Regarding this matter, it is also important to say about the **moral condition of my students, who are currently abroad**. It happened that their parents contacted me for help, because their children did not want to go to study in a foreign school. In general, it is a common problem when authorities of the foreign country, in which our children stay, insist that they attend the local school. But after these schools they all join my lessons, because it is easier for them this way. It is very difficult for them in foreign schools, they feel isolated there. As I was being told by kids, who are currently in Netherlands, Czech Republic and Germany, they sit alone at the back desks with tablets, trying to learn foreign languages with help of the games, and hardly communicate with any of their peers. However, in Poland, the situation is completely different.»*

*From the interview with the elementary school teacher
from Severodonetsk⁶⁰*

⁶⁰ <https://almenda.org/pravo-na-osvitu-istoriya-druha/>

Education seekers on the occupied territories

Education seekers from this group should be divided into two groups by their place of residence:

GROUP 1

Territories, which have been temporarily occupied since 2014
(the so-called LDPR and Crimea)

Since 2014, the education institutions have completely switched to the educational standards of the occupied territories or to the Russian educational standards with corresponding educational materials provision.

As of the beginning of 2021-2022 academic year, there is no teaching of Ukrainian studies subjects' cycle.

There is no access to studying Ukrainian language at all or it is only for less than 0,01 % of total number of students.

GROUP 2

Territories, which have been temporarily occupied in 2022

While establishing the occupation regime on the seized territories, representatives of the Russian authorities began to act according to the **scenario, practiced in Crimea:**

- Transition to the Russian standards of education;
- Termination or banning of such educational subjects as Ukrainian language and literature, history of Ukraine;
- De-Ukrainization and militarization of the educational process.

The assessment of the problems and challenges related to the first group was made in the materials of the [Analytical report "Assessment of the Implementation of the State Policy on the Realization of the Right to Education for Children from Temporarily Occupied Crimea"](#) and the [Executive Summary of the report "The Situation in the Educational Sphere in the Temporarily Occupied Territory of Ukraine \(2014-2019\)"](#).

During conducting monitoring in 2021, in particular, quality of remote and external forms of education for Crimeans, procedures and content of entry exams and potential of Crimeans to prepare for the, possibilities of studying Ukrainian language in Crimea, peculiarities of preliminary courses implemented by government for the applicants from the occupied territories, and institutions of higher education to which applicants from the occupied territories are able to enter by simplified procedure, were studied. Unfortunately, conclusions of the authors of these studies were disappointing.

The analysis of the educational situation in the territorial communities of Zaporizhzhia, Kherson and Mykolaiv regions, are currently temporarily occupied or blocked in 2022, shows that 885 schools out of 1453 are under occupation, and the rest are located in dangerous areas. Each of the temporarily occupied settlements has its own peculiarities. Children, who remain on the temporarily occupied territories, can study by Ukrainian program remotely, by family form of education or on externship basis.

ZAPORIZHZHIA REGION

Total number of territorial communities	67
Territorial communities, which are located in areas of combat actions (warzones) or are under temporary occupation, surrounding (blockade)	50
Total number of schools in the region	546
Schools in communities, located in particularly dangerous areas	244
Number of schools in communities, which are occupied	223

KHERSON REGION

Total number of territorial communities	49
Territorial communities, which are located in areas of combat actions (warzones) or are under temporary occupation, surrounding (blockade)	49/28
Total number of schools in the region	424
Schools in communities, located in particularly dangerous areas	424
Number of schools in communities, which are occupied	224

MYKOLAIV REGION

Total number of territorial communities	52
Territorial communities, which are located in areas of combat actions (warzones) or are under temporary occupation, surrounding (blockade)	24
Total number of schools in the region	483
Schools in communities, located in particularly dangerous areas	238

According to the latest data from the Ministry of Education and Science, as of November 14, 2022, almost 95 000 students from the TOT receive educational services in the operating institutions of general secondary education. The lack of qualitative educational analytics of the MES makes it impossible to determine what percentage of students (out of the pre-war number) have access to the Ukrainian education, because there is no information regarding the number of children, who remain on the temporarily occupied territories, regarding the number of schools opened by occupiers, number of children, whose parents gave their consent for their children to study by the Russian educational programs.

After the liberation of Kharkiv region and part of Kherson region, facts, that children (especially in rural areas) had practically no access to education for 6 months, became known.

At the same time on some territories children have to study by the Russian programs and secretly continue their Ukrainian studies. In addition, receiving education remotely in local education institutions or institutions, located on the Ukraine-controlled territory, is not possible everywhere. Because there is no Internet connection on some territories or there is only Russian Internet, which is severely controlled by the occupiers' secret services: FSS, Russian military Intelligence, self-appointed collaborationist "authorities". Besides, it is known that on some territories, where until recently children were able to study remotely, there is currently neither electricity, nor service, and thus, distance education is not possible, connection with students has been lost and it is unknown what happened to these children. Also, occupiers use part of the schools as their bases.

In conclusion, it should be noted that as of today almost all of the mentioned groups of education seekers do not completely fulfill their right to education, as stated in Article 3, The Right to Education of the Law of Ukraine "On Education", because the guarantee of ensuring the right to education is **the education quality**. If quality of educational services is not ensured, compliance with all other principles of education does not guarantee the proper realization of the right to education. While other education principles are quite formal, the principle of the quality of education directly affects its content, and **state educational standards appear as instruments of ensuring the high quality of education**.

It is quite clear that in conditions of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war it is impossible to ensure the quality of education at the level of the state standards.



DENIAL OF HUMANITARIAN ACCESS⁶¹

⁶¹ <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/six-grave-violations/denial-of-humanitarian-access/>

This violation refers to the intentional blocking of the humanitarian aid delivery, which is needed for survival of children, or to the obstruction of deliveries, in particular – the deliberate creation of obstacles for transfers of the emergency aid, as provided in the Geneva Conventions, and in getting access to injured children for the humanitarian or any other relevant organizations, which aim to provide them help in situations of the armed conflict.

Denial in access should be evaluated from the point of children's access to aid and also the ability of humanitarian institutions to get access to vulnerable groups of people, in particular – to children.⁶²

The military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine caused a sharp increase in humanitarian needs and the humanitarian crisis, the consequences of which are devastation for the Ukrainian population.

The situation was specifically difficult in the first months of the war, when as a result of the full-scale offensive the Russian aggressors hindered the organization of the humanitarian ("green") corridors: they shot cars with the signs "CHILDREN", did not approve or broke the agreements regarding the evacuation of civilians, forcibly transferred people to Belarus or to the so-called "LDPR", or to the Russian federation, did not provide the opportunity to receive aid – food, water, medicine etc.

⁶² <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Practical-guidance-for-mediators-to-protect-children-in-situations-of-armed-conflict.pdf>



On the photo: mass evacuation of people in March 2022 (Kharkiv)

“

They said: you should quickly pack, we will evacuate you, there are 2 school busses. Where, what – no one said a word. We jumped into those busses hastily – wearing what we had on, with some backpacks into which we threw some stuff. We had only our faith in God and prayed for his mercy. Because there were cases when two busses with children and teachers were shelled. We rode to Kyiv for 9 hours, through forests, fields and swamps. In these 9 hours our convoy stopped only once – for people to go to the toilet. Children began vomiting there. Because we were going up, then down through pits and potholes, then back up. And children in the bus were small. The convoy did not stop, the drivers were afraid to stop. The fields, through which we rode, were all covered with shells. There were burnt houses, field was burning and smoking. We rode between these smokes and fields. Thank God there was no single shot in these 9 hours while we were riding. In Kyiv we boarded the very first train, on which we could leave⁶³.

***From the story of Natalia Pesotska –
teacher of the Chernihiv Center for Social and
Psychological Rehabilitation of Children***

⁶³ <https://podtail.com/podcast/d263665f/--2022-03-23/>



On the fourth day of war me and my 4-year-old daughter crossed the Ukrainian border. Scared and lost. At that time, I did not have much understanding of what was going on. But I remember the sound of the missile fragments exploding in the district where I lived, how they were flying, how windows were shaking...

*From the social media:
memories of the Ukrainian refugee⁶⁴*

⁶⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/iryna.vyrtosu/posts/pfbid07Xb1cushg2zYeGkkRZHv1e5CyGU93ViTMbKQmo91n6vZPFL75ZxRLeeHbvc7ocpl>

During the nine months, the humanitarian situation in Ukraine has been rapidly deteriorating, reaching catastrophic proportions in some cities. The supply of basic necessities to a significant portion of the country's territory was suspended while the civilian population was forced to flee the warzone. The territorial scale of the conflict is substantial; the aggressor engages indiscriminate shelling and deliberate destruction of humanitarian infrastructure.



We moved on March 24, 2022. After staying at home for one month under continuous shelling. Because at first, we did not think of moving out of the city. At first, we thought that we would stay, because in 2014 our city was occupied quickly, without any serious hostilities, only two shots were fired. Therefore, we thought that there was enough food stocked, same as everything else...

At first electricity went out on March 8, then gas was cut off and shelling started on the outskirts of the city – after this it immediately became clear that situation rapidly worsened. It was no longer about education – remote or any other form. It was already a matter of surviving in those conditions...

On March 19, the student of 6th grade – our Misha, who just turned 12, received a shrapnel wound, while being inside a house. Starting from March 20, there was constant shelling, that did not subside day or night. Children even learned to distinguish what fires, where it fires from, whether it was sound of firing or a strike of a missile, types of bombs and missiles...

From the interview with the mother of a family-type orphanage in Rubizhne⁶⁵

⁶⁵ <https://almenda.org/pravo-na-osvitu-istoriya-persha/>

Currently, more than 12,8 million people on the territory of Ukraine need help and protection, including 6-7 million internally displaced persons. Ensuring safe access to the districts, where combat actions take place, remains the main problem, primarily for the international humanitarian organizations⁶⁶.

Particularly vulnerable groups of people in conditions of the armed conflict include elderly people, people with disabilities, who are unable to leave dangerous places or remain in the affected areas, as well as women and children.

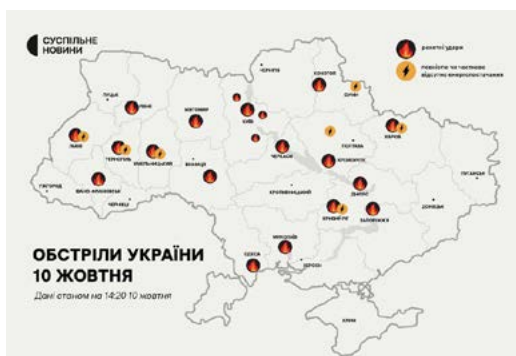
A **humanitarian crisis is artificially created** on the temporarily occupied territories. The delivery of humanitarian aid gets blocked, the chances of leaving to the Ukraine-controlled territory are minimal.

Attempts to **cause the humanitarian crisis and famine on the temporarily occupied territories and in areas**, where active hostilities are ongoing, do not stop.

After the success of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in Kharkiv and Kher-son regions in September-October 2022, Russian Federation began the “missile terror”.

A large number of civilian objects were damaged or destroyed in 8 regions, including dozens of residential buildings and vital civilian

⁶⁶ <https://razumkov.org.ua/en/articles/general-overview-of-the-humanitarian-situation-in-ukraine>



Infographics from open Internet sources

infrastructure, among which there are at least 12 energy facilities, which indicates that these strikes violated the principles of warfare listed in the International Humanitarian Law. The destruction of the key power plants and power lines on the eve of winter raises additional concerns regarding the protection of the civil population and, in particular, regarding the impact on the vulnerable sections of society.

THE IMPACT OF THE VIOLATION ON CHILDREN

Deterioration of children's mental health

Out of 7, 5 million Ukrainian children 3 million became internally displaced and over 2,2 million became refugees in the countries of Europe and world⁶⁷. Therefore 50% of respondents, who participated in the survey held by "Gradus Research", noted that the issue of children's mental health had worsened compared to the pre-war period.

⁶⁷ https://razumkov.org.ua/uploads/article/2022_Gum.pdf

Risks of saving children's lives and preserving their health

There are major risks for the life and health of children, who remain on the non-government controlled Ukrainian territories or are brought up in family-type children's houses, and to their adoptive parents, foster parents, guardians/caregivers, tutors who currently stay on the temporarily occupied or non-government controlled Ukrainian territories, in the so-called "LDPR" or in Crimea, where the legislation of Ukraine de-facto does not apply.

Limited access to clean water which is specifically important for small children and infants

1,4 million people in Eastern Ukraine have no access to the water supply, 4,6 million people throughout the territory of Ukraine have no access to it as well. The intensification of combat actions in the East and the widespread use of explosive weapons in populated areas is fraught with further destruction of water supply system. This specifically impacts children, because children who live in combat zones are 20 times more likely to die from diarrheal diseases caused with poor-quality water, than from direct military violence; children's body is unable to withstand large fluctuations in consuming food and water, and that is why children are exposed to a significant risk of dehydration. Poor supply in small volumes can also cause outbreaks of infectious diseases.

War increasingly impacts the accessibility of medical aid

Especially in the areas of active combat actions, where large number of medical institutions were damaged or destroyed and going to medical institutions is risky. The negative factors, such as congestion in places of stay located in combat areas, lack of hygienic supplies and difficulties with receiving sufficient amount of food, affect children of any age, although this specifically affects the youngest ones and those who have health issues. The lack of food is the main problem for those who remain in zone of hostilities and also for some groups of temporarily displaced persons (TDP) and refugees, whose children are exhausted, hungry and scared. Ensuring sufficient support for pregnant women and those with infants is another significant problem for all affected groups.

A quarter of children required medical aid after the beginning of the aggression. 40% of them were unable to receive this aid due to the absence of the needed doctor or hospital nearby. The lack of psychological support is also among the top needs voiced by Ukrainian parents.

The war increasingly determines the accessibility of the educational services

(see «Attacks against schools and hospitals»).

Transfer of a significant number of children to the territory of the Russian Federation

Russia's party calls such transfers "evacuation", which the international humanitarian law allows only in situations when children require medical aid as there is a threat to their lives and health and if there are compelling reasons of military nature. However, even under such circumstances, Russian Federation had to agree the transfer of children with Ukraine or transfer them to the territory of a country, which is not a party to the conflict. Russia is obliged to provide all the information about the transferred children to the International Committee of the Red Cross, and after the end of hostilities, liberation of the territories or the establishment of final control over them, children must be returned to Ukraine.

However, Russian Federation does not provide such information, therefore there is a great threat of forcible impositions of values, goals and ideologies (indoctrination) on children by the Russian government institutions, aimed at the influence on children's mentality as on "pliable material" and ensuring the loyalty of the Ukrainian youth⁶⁸ to the Russian government and to the collaborationists, their henchmen.

⁶⁸ <https://niss.gov.ua/doslidzhennya/mizhnarodni-vidnosyny/sproby-systematyzatsiyi-derzhavnoyi-ideolohiyi-v-rosiyi-ta>

«SIX+»: DESTRUCTION OF THE UKRAINIAN IDENTITY OF CHILDREN WHO REMAINED OR REMAIN ON THE TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Among the six grave violations, which can be committed against children during the armed conflict, defined in the Resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009), there is no such violation as “destruction of identity”. In the clarification to the “Abduction of children” violation the indoctrination⁶⁹ is listed as part of the violation, however at the time of writing the report, the authors did not find criteria for its definition or examples of criminal prosecution for it.

In the report authors’ opinion, the definition of this crime requires additional legal qualifications from the experts in the international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

The long-term occupation of the part of Ukraine (Donbass, Crimea) clearly demonstrated, that for 8 years the occupation authorities purposely nurtured the “Russian identity” among Ukrainian children. And as a result, after growing up, some of them now “deliberately” take part in the Russian-Ukrainian war on the side of the occupier state.

The policy of Russia on the underaged and youth on the temporarily occupied territories is aimed at the destruction of Ukrainian identity inheritance mechanism in order to make its reinstation impossible.

⁶⁹ 1) forced imposition of values, goals, ideologies on a person (group, nation) by certain entity or governmental institutions.

Among the main instruments, used by the authorities of the Russian Federation, we can name the following ones:

- Prohibition of teaching the History of Ukraine and distortion of the main historical events, that determine the national and cultural identity of the Ukrainian people.
- Actual elimination of access to the native language and indigenous language on the occupied territories
- Integration into the educational space of the Russian Federation through the implementation of the Russian educational standards and textbooks.
- Replacing Ukrainian teachers with the “proper Russian ones” or re-training those, who are ready to cooperate with the occupiers.
- Development and implementation of special programs of the “patriotic education”.
- Organization of trips to the Russian Federation, involving governmental and non-governmental institutions with the aim of “instilling love to Russia”.
- Propaganda of theses about denying of existence of the “Ukrainian nation” through the special weekly “ideological lessons”.



Ukrainians have big problem which can be called as under-identification or identity deficit. They do not exist as nationality, as the unified ethnos. There is Ukrainian nation – as the community of citizens of Ukraine. But without a unified ethnic foundation, it begins to fall apart during any political crisis. It happened in 2004, in 2014, it is happening now. If you put aside all the lies of Ukrainian propaganda, it turns out that those, who are called “Ukrainians” in it, have always been considered and almost always considered themselves as part of the Russian people. Undoubtedly, Ukraine is an important component of the Russian world, its essential part.

*From the speech of the “Head” of the occupational
“State Council of Crimea”*

The combination of these tools allows the occupier state to “transfer” children from one socio-cultural community to another, without transferring them physically.

Thus, relying on the concept of Raphael Lemkin, who defined cultural genocide the «*systematic destruction of traditions, values, language and other elements that distinguish one group of people from another*», the authors of the report recorded numerous facts of two phases of the **cultural genocide**⁷⁰:

- **First** – the destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed group;
- **Second** – the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor.

⁷⁰ See more information on the website of CCE «Almenda» <https://almenda.org/category/pub/monitoring/>

THE IMPACT OF THE VIOLATION

With such actions the occupying authorities change the consciousness of children and youth, who live under occupation and build loyalty of the local community. Unfortunately, the long-term occupation led to irreversible changes among the part of community, and they deliberately joined the armed forces of the Russian Federation in the Russian-Ukrainian war. Potentially, the generation, brought up in complete loyalty and readiness to serve in the armed forces of Russia, can become a powerful force of resistance to de-occupation and reinstation of the legitimate government in future.

CONCLUSIONS



Despite the numerous calls from Ukraine, international organizations and institutions to stop the violations against the civilian population, particularly – against children, the Russian Federation deliberately ignores them and continues terrorizing civilian population. During the period, covered in the report, 440 children died in Ukraine as a result of actions of the Russian Federation.

Long-term complex violations lead to destructive processes regarding the possibility of observance of children's rights, international humanitarian law and have negative impact on Ukrainian children, destroying their childhood.

During the 9 months of war, almost 70% of children were forced to leave their homes or become the internally displaced persons or refugees. The war uprooted thousands of children from their everyday lives and in many cases separated them from their parents, who either joined the warfare or could not leave. Those children, who remained in Ukraine, are exposed to explosions and air raid sirens, suffer from the destruction of the Ukrainian energy system caused by the aggressor's attacks, many of them witnessed traumatizing events, primarily - killing or maiming of their parents and relatives. All this leads to the psychical and mental disorders among children. One in five children has sleep disorders, one in ten children show reluctance to talk, nightmares and memory impairment.

The number of children with disabilities, caused as a result of explosive shrapnel injuries and gunshots is increasing 22 cases of amputation on different levels of the upper and lower limbs were recorded, which is 3% of the total number of the affected children. 16 children require prosthetics of the upper and lower limbs, which will make it possible for them to live and develop normally. In addition, currently there is information about 4 children with amputation of the upper limbs, 11 children with the amputation of the lower limbs, 1 child with amputation of the upper and the lower limbs.

Sexual violence is increasingly becoming a characteristic feature of the Russian-Ukrainian war and is often conducted against girls and boys in condition of lack of lawfulness during the seizure of the territories. In some cases, sexual violence was used as military tactics, aimed at humiliating the population, or to force the displacement or collaboration.

Children, who have been sexually abused, suffer from the long-term psychological trauma, health consequences, in particular, early pregnancy.

Regarding the recorded facts of recruitment and use of children by the armed forces and armed groups, currently they are single. However, there is a tendency to the intensification of actions of the Russian Federation authorities on creating the basis for recruiting children through the tools of the formal and informal education. The main directions of the policy of the Russian Federation on the temporarily occupied territories are: militarization of children through teaching them basics of military service and supporting their motivation to serve in the armed forces of the occupying country, as well as involving children to actions aimed at supporting the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. The systematicity of conduction of the events shows the dangerous tendency of de-facto turning Ukrainian children in the occupied territories into soldiers, who are familiar with the basics of military service and able to handle weapons.

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, the situation with abduction and illicit transfers of Ukrainian children from the occupied territories to the Russian Federation has acquired threatening proportions. The situation with children, whose parents died as a result of war, or with those, who were taken from orphanages and given to Russia for adoption, is particularly dangerous, as possibility to trace and return children is being lost. Mass abduction and transfer of children and attempts to assimilate them into a foreign culture give grounds to consider such actions genocide, according to Article 2 Section E of [1948 Genocide Convention](#).

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion not only about 20% of educational institutions have been destroyed, but the process of realization of the right to education has become much more complicated. Currently, education seekers in Ukraine are divided into three groups: education seekers on the Ukrainian territory where active combat actions are not taking place, education seekers who moved to the territories of the foreign countries and education seekers on the temporarily occupied territories. Today, almost all mentioned groups of education seekers to not completely fulfill their right to education, as stated in Article 3 of the Law of Ukraine “On Education”, because the guarantee of ensuring the right to education is **the education quality**. It is completely clear that in conditions of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war it is not possible to ensure the quality of education on the level of the [state standards](#).

During the 9 months of war the humanitarian situation in Ukraine has been rapidly deteriorating, reaching catastrophic proportions in some

cities. Out of 7, 5 million Ukrainian children, 3 million became internally displaced persons and over 2,2 million became refugees in the countries of Europe and world. There are high risks for saving lives and health of children, who remain on the non-government controlled Ukrainian territories: limited access to clean water and food, access to medical aid etc. In addition, Russian Federation continues to destroy critical infrastructure of Ukraine, which in winter conditions can lead to the humanitarian catastrophe, during which children will be the most vulnerable.

The destruction of the Ukrainian identity and forming the Russian identity, assimilation of the population of the occupied territories is a separate challenge in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

The occupational authorities change consciousness of children and youth, who live under the occupation, and form loyal attitude of the occupied community towards the actions of the aggressor state. Unfortunately, the long-term occupation caused the irreversible changes in the worldview of the part of the population, as a result of which some of the youth deliberately joined the armed forces of the Russian Federation in the Russian-Ukrainian war. Potentially, a generation, which was brought up to be completely loyal to the occupational government and is ready to serve in the armed forces of the Russian Federation, in future can become a powerful source of resistance against the de-occupation and reinstatement of the legitimate.

Taking into account the processed information, in addition to six grave violations, there are violations of the obligations from the following international agreements, to which the Russian Federation is a party and whose observance on the occupied territories should be guaranteed by the occupier state:

- **The Right to Education** – Article 26 of the General Declaration of Human Rights, Article 13 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- **The Prohibition of Propaganda for War** – Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- **Legal Protection of Children in Armed Conflict** – Articles 38, 39 of Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- **Prohibition for the occupier state to enlist children in formations or organizations subordinate to it** – Article 50 of the Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949).