

Monitoring report

«UNIVERSAL SOLDIER»
or Education as the Weapon of Russia
In the Occupied South of Ukraine



July - September 2024

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In preparing its monitoring reports, the CCE ‘Almenda’ is guided by the principles of objectivity, reliability and timeliness.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- AR of Crimea** — Autonomous Republic of Crimea
- TOT** — temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine
- RF** — Russian Federation
- SMO** — ‘special military operation’, a term used in Russia to describe a fullscale invasion of Ukraine.
- DOSAAF** — Voluntary Society for the Support of the Army, Aviation and Navy, broadly used as the transliteration of the Russian abbreviation ДОСААФ
- UAVs** — unmanned aerial vehicles
- DPR** — the so-called Donetsk People’s Republic, i.e. the territory of the Donetsk region temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation
- LPR** — the so-called Luhansk People’s Republic, i.e. the territory of the Luhansk region temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation
- Rosgvardia** — Federal Service of the National Guard Troops of the Russian Federation



INTRODUCTION

The propaganda influence of the occupation authorities on children in the TOT is ongoing throughout the year. Even during the summer holidays, active work on the militarisation of children continues. To achieve this goal, Russia uses both tried and tested and new instruments of influence: from organizing summer camps to holding the 'Holidays with the Rosgvardia' campaign, which includes open military training for children and youth from the TOT, aimed at forming a positive attitude towards Russian military personnel and encouraging them to join the armed forces of the RF. The occupation authorities use similar methods of influence on all the TOTs in the South of Ukraine. Militaristic and propaganda activities are often held under the pretext of Russian holidays, memorial days and events. In the period from July to September 2024, the involvement of Ukrainian children and youth from the TOT in militaristic and propaganda events dedicated to the 'Day of the Russian Navy', 'Day of the Russian Airborne Forces', 'Family Day' and 'Flag Day', as well as those dated to the beginning of the school year and others was recorded.

The actions recorded during the monitoring period, which the RF is committing in the TOT directly or through the occupation authorities under its control, constitute the violations:

- Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Education shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups;
- Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which also addresses the issue of education;
- Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which states that any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law;
- Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that the education of the child shall be directed to the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin
- Articles 38 and 39 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which regulate the protection of children in time of war;



- Article 50 of the Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention), which prohibits the Occupying Power, inter alia, from enlisting children in formations or organizations subordinate to it;
- Article 51 of the Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention), which provides that the Occupying Power may not compel protected persons to serve in its armed or auxiliary forces. No pressure or propaganda which aims at securing voluntary enlistment is permitted.

METHODOLOGY

This monitoring report covers the period from 1 July to 30 September 2024.

Areas of research: destruction of Ukrainian identity, militarisation of children in the occupied territories, involvement of children in actions aimed at supporting Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine, assimilation of the population of the occupied territories, destruction of the Ukrainian education system.

Geography: temporarily occupied territories of the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

The monitoring report is based on information gained from

- state authorities of Ukraine;
- reports of civil society organisations;
- open sources of the temporarily occupied territories, namely:
 - information posted on the official websites and official pages in social networks (including VKontakte) of the so-called 'Ministries/departments/divisions of education' of the temporarily occupied territories;
 - official statistical data of the Russian Federation;
 - information posted on the websites of secondary schools in the temporarily occupied territories;
 - publications of local media in the temporarily occupied parts of the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol;
 - information published in social media.



LIMITATIONS

The monitoring report does not cover the territory of the occupied Luhansk and Donetsk regions.

For this report, the authors used only sources available to them. Work with sources and analysis of information lasted until 30 September 2024. Information and messages that could not be verified as of the date of publication of this monitoring report were not included in it.

To prepare this monitoring report, the authors used data found on the social network VKontakte. This is due to the fact that after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, most of the information from the occupation authorities was published on this social network. Thus, it is now virtually the only possible source to obtain the necessary information. The use of Russian sources and sources from the temporarily occupied territories is based on the same considerations.

The information presented in this report is intended to document the crimes of the Russian Federation and to combat the disinformation it spreads.



1. MILITARY-PATRIOTIC GAMES AND TRAINING CAMPS

Games are one of the most common tools used by the RF to influence children in order to militarize them. The children's psyche positively perceives all information through the game, children are motivated by competition and the desire to win, and are also encouraged by promised gifts. Conducting compulsory games for children with the actual purpose of their military education does not comply with the spirit of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular Article 31.¹

The following events were recorded during the monitoring period.

TOT of the AR of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol

- From 29 July to 3 August, a 6-day military-patriotic training camp for children took place in the Krasnoperekopsk district of the TOT of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, which was held on the basis of the so-called Cossack Centre for Support of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation 'Bulat'. The training was held near equipped defensive structures - dugouts, trenches, anti-tank ditches - **where children were brought to conduct tactical exercises on a Model 80 armoured personnel carrier**. During the training, **the children were introduced to the military service charter and taught, among other things, combat tactics, automatic weapons, evacuation of the wounded, taking trenching and dugouts, and how to counter heavy armoured vehicles**. The camp was organised by the Crimea Patriot Centre under the leadership of Serhiy Gavrilchuk, with Karina Murtazaeva as the curator and instructors teaching the children: A. Azizulina, V. Pikiner and D. Pikiner.²



1 https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/7/7/542751_0.pdf

2 https://vk.com/wall-217363296_2973, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/Ewom2>



- Another military-patriotic training camp, 'The Youth Army Frontier - Avangard', organised by the Crimea Patriot Centre, was held for children in the village of Aromatne, Belogorsk district of the TOT of AR of Crimea in early August. During the training, instructors dressed in Russian military uniforms - V. Osetrov, D. Pikiner and N. Vostryukhina - conducted classes on 'anti-terrorism', told the children about the design of armoured personnel carriers, and taught tactical training: **children learned to storm building**.^{3,4,5}



3 https://vk.com/wall-217363296_2981, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/DCC9Y>

4 https://vk.com/wall-217363296_2982, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/bjjsv>

5 https://vk.com/wall-217363296_2991, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/KhCC1>



- Even as part of the one-day military-patriotic training camp, 'Avangard - Yevpatoria' there was conducted a rich programme of military training: the children practised the correct actions during rocket and bomb attacks, participated in defeating a simulated enemy with air weapons, set up a tent, and learned how the parts and mechanisms of the Kalashnikov rifle work.⁶





- The reason for the transfer of children to the territory of the Moscow region of Russia was the finals of the military sports game 'Pobeda' ('Victory'), which is implemented by the militarist movement 'Youth Army' with the support of the Ministry of Defence of the RF, the Ministry of Education of the RF and the 'Movement of the First'. The aim of the game is to provide military training for children and to popularise the Russian security and armed forces.^{7,8}



TOT of Kherson region

- Employees of the so-called Rosgvardia Department in Kherson region, as part of the departmental action 'Holidays with the Rosgvardia', held sports and intellectual competitions for children, which began with the performance of the Russian national anthem. **The purpose of the competition was to promote military service in Russia, 'prevention of destructive subcultures and interethnic unions'** (note: these terms are used by the occupation authorities to refer to commitment to Ukraine and pro-Ukrainian views).⁹

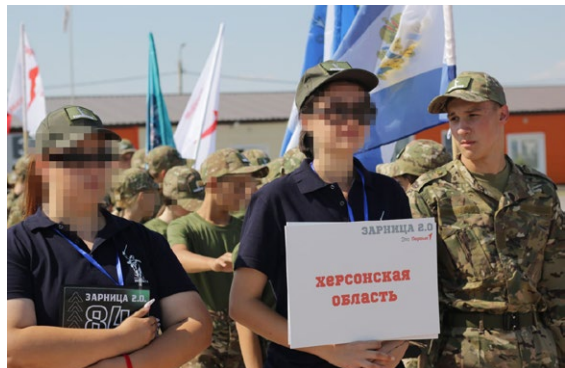
7 https://vk.com/wall-217363296_2939, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/bCnk1>

8 https://vk.com/wall-217363296_2931, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/hiEJz>

9 <https://vk.com/@-221973574-kanikuly-s-rosqvardiei>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/>



- 20 children participating in the 'Movement of the First' from the TOT of Kherson region, including students of the so-called Kherson region's state budgetary educational institution 'Hryhoriyivka School of Chaplynka Municipal District', were taken to the Russian city of Volgograd to participate in the local stage of the All-Russian military-patriotic game 'Zarnitsa 2. 0' ('Summer Lightning') in the Southern Federal District (*note: the game includes drill training, 'ready for work and defence' standards, an obstacle course, and is aimed at preparing young people for military service*). The children were dressed in military uniforms, attempted the obstacle courses, and competed in military training.^{10,11}



- Another game for which children were taken to the territory of the Moscow region of Russia was the seven-day military sports game 'Pobeda' (Victory). Among the participants was Rodion Malchenko, a student of the state budgetary educational institution 'Hryhoriyivka School of Chaplynka Municipal District', accompanied by his history teacher Igor Krivtsov. The programme included the quest 'Battle pages of the history of the Fatherland' (i.e. Russia), drill 'Fit in formation - strong in battle', the competition 'Shooting range', a paramilitary relay race, as well as **meetings with Russian servicemen who took part in the war against Ukraine** (they are presented to children as 'heroes of the 'special military operation', which is aimed at glorifying them and creating a positive attitude towards Russian aggression against Ukraine).¹²

10 <https://t.me/depobrherson/8475>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/Qwkel>

11 <https://t.me/mypervie84/1731>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/KP2Qd>

12 https://vk.com/wall-215245628_1958, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/Syilag>



TOT of Zaporizhzhia region

- In early July, the regional stage of the military-patriotic game 'Zarnitsa' ('Summer Lightning') took place in the TOT of Zaporizhzhia region, with seven teams of schoolchildren participating. During the competition, children wore military uniforms and fired weapons.¹³



- At the next district stage of the Zarnitsa 2.0 game, the children were taken to Volgograd, Russia, to participate in the Zarnitsa 2.0 military-patriotic game. The game included a festive line-up where children raised the flag and sang the Russian national anthem, as well as 'reported' to their commanders in a military-style manner.¹⁴ Among other things, **the children competed in controlling and countering UAVs, shooting, knowledge of the basics of statehood, military history, and general military knowledge.**¹⁵

13 https://vk.com/wall-217630752_3066, archive: <https://archive.is/wip/OASHU>

14 <https://t.me/yunarmeetzzo/2005>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/HoZbV>

15 <https://t.me/obrzp/24253>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wdNDG>





2. SUMMER 'RECREATION' CAMPS

In addition to multi-day military training and games, Russia has introduced full 21-day military-patriotic shifts in summer camps. Russia is actively using the camps as a platform for imposing its narratives, Russifying children and militarising them: children are left without parental supervision around the clock, often with limited communication with their families, and under the full influence of authoritative adults - camp staff and guests. Such camps are located both in the TOT and in the RF, where children are taken in an organised manner.

The following were organized during the monitoring period.

TOT of the AR of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol

- A specialised Cossack shift, the 'School of Young Atamans', was held for 500 children from Crimea at the Dolphin Sports Centre of the TOT in Pishchanoye village, Bakhchisaray district, from 17 July to 6 August. The children competed in the military stages of the All-Russian Spartakiad, the military sports game 'Cossack Alert' and passed the 'ready for work and defence' standards.^{16,17}



16 <https://kazachestvo.ru/20240816/1225052.html>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/eLiZA>

17 https://vk.com/wall-193303062_11094, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/Fx0Ka>



TOT of Kherson region

- Children from the TOT of Kherson region in the children's health recreation camp 'Forest Fairy Tale' in the Republic of Kalmykia of the RF spent two weeks in the military sports shift 'Time of Young Heroes'. The children were taught by 'experienced instructors' how to fly a UAVs, provide first aid and evacuate a 'wounded' person, tactical training, how to organize communications and other military and patriotic skills. They also played the game 'Zarnitsa 2.0' as a test of their skills.¹⁸
- A group of 61 children from the TOT of Kherson region were spending a shift at the summer camp 'Avangard' in Volgograd region of the RF. This camp runs an educational programme that combines active recreation with 'patriotic' education. Training sessions are held, among other things, in dome tents. There is a tactical field with engineered barriers on the camp's territory, which brings children into the atmosphere of military exercises.¹⁹

TOT of Zaporizhzhia region

- In the children's camp 'Chervona Hvozdyka' ('Red Carnation'), which is a branch of the camp 'Artek' and is located in the TOT of Berdiansk, Zaporizhzhia region, a game 'Zarnitsa' was held for children during their recreational shift: participants disassembled and reassembled Kalashnikov rifles, demonstrated their knowledge of Russian history, passed an obstacle course and provided first aid. It is noteworthy that one of the organisers of this children's 'recreation' was the BARS-32²⁰ military unit 'Sudoplatov Battalion' (a paramilitary unit consisting of volunteers fighting against Ukraine in the Russian Armed Forces).²¹ In total, about 1,000 children from the TOT of Ukraine aged 8 to 17 years old had such 'paramilitary recreation' in this camp in the summer of 2024.²²



18 https://vk.com/wall-221973574_238, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/XgVRH>

19 https://vk.com/wall-215245628_1957, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/t6wze>

20 BARS is a transliteration of a Russian abbreviation which stands for the 'combat army reserve of the country' (Russian: БАРС)

21 <https://t.me/yunarmeetzzo/1944>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/DYLks>

22 <https://t.me/depobrherson/8492>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/L2oIz>



3. EVENTS DEDICATED TO THE HOLIDAYS

Representatives of the occupation authorities are trying to use any excuse to involve children and youth from the TOT in propaganda activities. In particular, they use Russian public holidays. During the monitoring period, the largest actions and events were dedicated to the 'Day of the Russian Navy', 'Day of the Russian Airborne Forces', 'Family Day' and 'Flag Day'.

TOT of the AR of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol

- On 28 July, on the occasion of the Day of the Navy, a tournament was held at the military-patriotic sports club 'Bogatyr' ('Strongman') of the Russian DOSAAF (note: one of the main tasks of the club is to form interest in serving Russia and readiness to 'defend' it, to increase the level of preparedness of young people for service in the armed forces of the Russian Federation).²³ Among the tournament's activities, in particular, were: all-around competitions, the military sports game 'Laser Tag', air rifle shooting, and sport knife throwing.²⁴
- On the occasion of the Flag Day, the TOT of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea held an action 'One Flag - One Country', during which children handed out ribbons symbolizing the Russian flag to passers-by, told them about the meaning of the colours and the history of the Russian national symbol.²⁵



23 <https://крым.гранты.рф/public/application/item?id=3ff2d511-0d4a-4786-9631-a2b6f5a8c63a>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/TufuT>

24 https://vk.com/wall-193303062_11058, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/qUY7m>

25 https://vk.com/wall-153744445_33605, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/kFMSN>



TOT of Kherson region

- Children from preschool age were involved in propaganda activities dedicated to the Russian Navy Day. They learned about the profession of a naval officer in a playful way, and through competitions, they were introduced to Russian traditions. According to the organisers, the children learnt a lot about the Russian Navy, nautical terms and heard the Navy's ceremonial marches. The events were aimed at expanding children's knowledge of Russian military holidays and fostering a sense of 'patriotism' (for Russia).²⁶



- A Russification programme aimed at shaping children's perception of Russia as their homeland and imposing Russian culture was held for children on the Family Day²⁷ as well as the Flag Day. Teachers held discussions with children, read books about Russian symbols, and learnt poems about the 'Fatherland' (i.e. Russia) and the Russian flag. According to the organisers, such events help to foster children's feelings of belonging to their 'native country' (i.e. Russia).²⁸

26 <https://t.me/depobrherson/8345>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/la8sx>

27 https://vk.com/wall-215245628_1943, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/lRW0d>

28 <https://t.me/depobrherson/8666>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/5x0Uo>



Мы дети большой семьи - Россия





TOT of Zaporizhzhia region

- On the occasion of the Airborne Forces Day, the camp 'Chervona Hvozdyka' ('Red Carnation') held an 'open dialogue' meeting for children with a veteran of the so-called SMO, Oleksandr Ostapenko, and a member of the regional legislative assembly, head of the regional headquarters of the movement #WEARETOGETHER (Russian: #МыВМЕСТЕ), Kristina Paraskan. The children were told about the history of the paratroopers' holiday, about the 'exploits of the soldiers and the courage of the special operation volunteers'. According to the organisers, 'the speakers motivate the audience to do heroic deeds and self-development'.²⁹





- On the occasion of the Day of the Russian Flag, students of Konstantinovskaya school No. 3 of the TOT of Melitopol, who are members of the 'Movement of the First' and 'Eaglets', recorded a video in which they proclaimed the unity of Russia and the meaning of the colours of the flag, pronouncing Russian slogans to the sound of the Russian anthem and with the symbols of the Russian flag.³⁰



Russian holidays are also used by the occupation authorities as a public pretext for the forced passportisation of children in the TOT. Contrary to international law, forced passportisation is used by Russia as an instrument of control and pressure on the population of the occupied territories. Without receiving a Russian document, children are deprived of many fundamental rights and freedoms: freedom of movement within the territory, education, etc.

The following violations were recorded during the monitoring period.

TOT of the AR of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol

- Ten children, members of the 'Movement of the First', received their passports in a solemn ceremony on the TOT of the AR of Crimea on the Day of the Russian Flag. The passports were handed over by the so-called senior officer of the Department of Internal Affairs of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs in the Leninsky district Evgenia Kiselyova, the so-called chief specialist in organising the work of the Movement in the Leninsky district of the Republic of Crimea Karina Daginginskaya, who called on the children to confidently say: 'We



are citizens of Russia'.³¹ Russian servicemen are also involved in handing over passports to children, in particular, the so-called 'hero of Russia and participant of the special military operation' Roman Kulakov handed over passports to Sevastopol schoolchildren.³²



- Even in summer camps, children are forced to receive Russian passports. On the eve of the National Flag Day of the Russian Federation, children who turned 14 years old during the shift in the camp 'Artek' received their first passports. The ceremony began with the national anthem of the Russian Federation.³³

TOT of Kherson region

- In the TOT of Genichesk, Kherson region, the so-called head of the department for work with Russian citizens of the Migration Department of the Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia in Kherson region, Aleksandr Nochvin, together with the so-called head of the migration department of the Genichesk department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, Olga Tsintsadze, handed over Russian passports to six schoolchildren who had reached the age of 14.³⁴

31 https://vk.com/wall-153744445_33597, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/D8rIQ>

32 https://vk.com/wall-30716644_35977, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/N2yyF>

33 https://artek.org/news/medianews_2024_08_22_5, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/ET1iL>

34 https://vk.com/wall-215497576_4449, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/o0Bsp>



4. THE START OF A NEW ACADEMIC YEAR

In the occupied territories, Russia, ignoring the norms of international law, is deliberately and systematically changing the educational process in TOT educational institutions to Russian standards. The academic year 2024/2025 is the next stage for Russia to achieve its goal. Preparations for the new propaganda school year have been underway since the summer. Russia imports books and other printed materials to spread its narratives among children and youth.

Russian literature

- In the TOT of Zaporizhzhia, 172 schools received graphic novels 'Knowledge. Heroes', created by the Russian Society 'Knowledge'. They contain stories about the military personnel of the Armed Forces of the RF participating in the war against Ukraine, where they are regarded as heroes, while there is a substitution of concepts of the aggressor country and the country affected by aggression.³⁵





- The so called patron region Krasnodar Territory of the Russian Federation has provided about 18,000 textbooks to schools in the TOT of Kherson region. The textbooks were handed over during a meeting between the so-called Minister of Education of the Kherson region, Lyudmyla Kovtun, and the Deputy Head of the General Education Department of the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth Policy of the Krasnodar Territory, Vitaliy Pavlenko. In the near future, the textbooks will be handed over to the general education institutions of the TOT of Genicheskiy, Novotroitskiy and Ivanovo districts.³⁶ The Kaliningrad region of Russia also donated more than 6,000 textbooks for schoolchildren of the TOT of Oleshkiy district of Kherson region.³⁷
- More than a thousand more books for the schools of the TOT of Kherson region were transferred from the Ryazan region of the RF as part of the patronage assistance. They will be distributed among the institutions on the eve of the new school year. According to a representative of the Ryazan Regional Duma, additional books for extracurricular reading, encyclopedias in Russian, Russian classics and works by contemporary authors, and books for younger children are also needed.³⁸



- Representatives of the South-Western Branch of Federal Autonomous Institution 'Main Department of State handed over copies of Russian fiction to educational organisations in the TOT city of Melitopol, Zaporizhzhya region. The books were sent to school No. 5 named after the pioneer-hero of the Great Patriotic War Volodya Dubinin, secondary school No. 19, kindergarten No. 41 'Vasilyok' ('Cornflower'), and kindergarten No. 78 'Ogonyok' ('Flame'). The purpose of teaching Russian literature is to help children to perceive Russian culture as their own, as well as to interpret historical events based on Russian narratives.³⁹

36 <https://t.me/depobrherson/8447>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/MIQOM>

37 <https://t.me/depobrherson/8991>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/izL8B>

38 https://vk.com/wall-145460148_180533, archive: <https://archive.is/wip/Bxs6V>

39 <https://t.me/obrzp/25030>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/Hlx8P>



Promoting the admission to Russian universities

- Graduates of the schools in the TOT of Kuibyshev district of Zaporizhzhia region will be admitted to Volga State Technological University under special admission conditions, i.e. based on the results of an interview without exams. Representatives of this university are conducting career guidance work among schoolchildren of the TOT in Zaporizhzhia region and accepting documents from them for admission to the university in 2024.⁴⁰
- For schoolchildren of the TOT of Kherson region, the studying in the National Research University Higher School of Economics (Moscow, the RF) is advertised. Specifically, the University invites children to study six unique disciplines on military economics and strategy at the Faculty of World Economy and World Politics.⁴¹

Cooperation between educational institutions and security forces

- The so-called rector of the Kherson Technical University, Galina Raiko, signed a cooperation agreement with the Kherson regional branch of the All-Russian public organisation 'Russian Organisation for Assistance to Special Services and Law Enforcement Agencies'. The university and the Kherson branch of the organisation will implement joint projects in the field of so-called patriotic education of students, which is actually aimed at militarising young people and recruiting them to serve in the Russian armed forces.⁴²⁻



- The occupation Ministry of Education and Science of Zaporizhzhia region has signed an agreement with the Rosgvardia to create specialised classes in educational institutions of the TOT of Berdiansk. Representatives of the Rosgvardia

40 https://vk.com/wall-217630752_3091, archive: <https://archive.is/wip/GtmPh>

41 <https://t.me/depobrherson/8543>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/T4yqB>

42 <https://t.me/depobrherson/8612>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/Qmxa3>



will teach children the basics of security, anti-terrorist protection, self-defence and martial arts, and will also participate in the organisation and conduct of patriotic events. According to the so-called Minister of Education and Science of Zaporizhzhia region, Tatiana Dubinskaya, 'students of specialised classes can gain valuable experience that will be useful to them in the future if they decide to connect their lives with work in the Rosgvardia'.⁴³



- Pursuant to the aforementioned agreement, on 1 September, the first specialised Rosgvardia class was opened in the TOT of Berdiansk, with 18 students from the 8th grade of School No. 10 of the occupied town. At the solemn line-up, the children, who are already called '**young Rosgvardians**', were presented with distinctive insignia – chevrons of the new class with the symbols of the agency. The students will be taught the basics of security and anti-terrorism protection, self-defence and martial arts techniques, and will also take part in patriotic events. According to the occupation authorities, children in 12 specialised classes under the supervision of the Russian law enforcement agencies are studying under an additional militarisation programme in the TOT of Zaporizhzhia region.⁴⁴

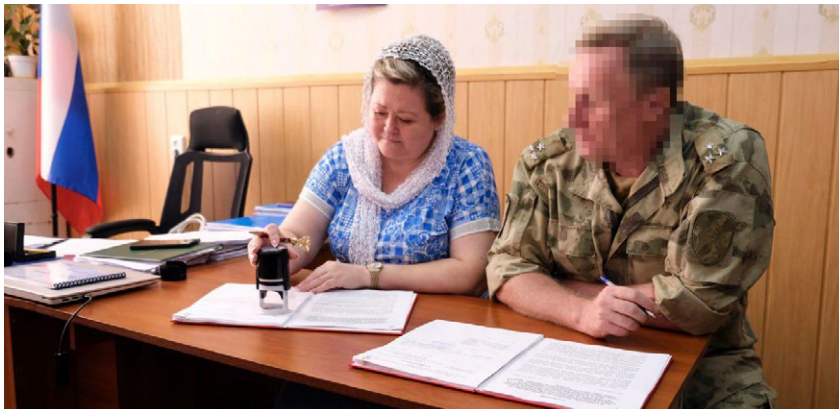


43 https://vk.com/wall-217630752_3065, archive: <https://archive.is/wip/hNo1k>

44 https://t.me/glava_brd/8115, archive: <https://archive.ph/lj0G2>



- Another class, where children will study an additional militaristic programme, was opened by the Russian Baltic Fleet Marine Corps in one of the village schools of the TOT in Berdiansk district of Zaporizhzhia region. The specialised class was opened in honour of the so-called Hero of Russia, Vladimir Nosov. In his speech, the Russian serviceman noted that it is very important for schoolchildren, as 'future patriots of the Fatherland' (i.e. Russia), to know the history of Russia, the history of the Russian army, as well as to cultivate strength of spirit and responsibility.⁴⁵
- The so-called Foundation for the Support of Combat Veterans of the Special Operations Directorate 'C' of the FSB's Central Intelligence Service opened a sports club based on army hand-to-hand combat at School No. 6 of the TOT of Berdiansk. According to the organisers, the project is aimed at fostering the moral and volitional qualities of the younger generation and love for the Fatherland (i.e. Russia).⁴⁶
- In the TOT of Kherson region, the so-called deputy head of the territorial body of the Rosgvardia, the so-called Minister of Education Lyudmila Kovtun and the so-called Minister of Youth Policy Igor Astranin signed a similar agreement on the establishment of military-patriotic classes of the Rosgvardia on the basis of schools in the occupied region. According to the agreement, during the school year, **servicemen and employees of the Rosgvardia department in Kherson region will conduct classes on general military disciplines, drill and firearms training, and introduce children to the basics of military service, history and traditions of the Rosgvardia.** Such activities are de facto preparing children for military service in the Russian Armed Forces.



45 <https://zp-news.ru/incident/2024/09/01/376772.html>, archive: <https://archive.ph/0Ev1x>

46 <https://berdyansk-news.ru/society/2024/09/02/49982.html>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/lzsl6>

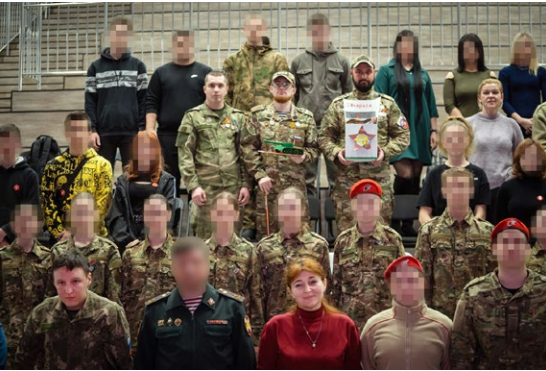


- Since September, a cadet class has been opened in Sivash school No. 2 in the TOT of Kherson region, where, according to representatives of the occupation authorities, the curriculum will include special military and patriotic training. Students will learn the basics of drill, the history of the Russian Armed Forces and participate in various patriotic events, and the class itself will 'become an important centre for the formation of the civic position of young people'.⁴⁷





- In the TOT of Zaporizhzhia region, Russian servicemen with combat experience in the area of the so-called special operation (in the war against Ukraine) are already involved in the 'military-patriotic education' of children and youth. In particular, 'Lessons of Courage' are held in schools with the participation of the military, regular meetings are held in the multimedia park 'Russia is my history', and in youth spaces. Moreover, **Putin instructed the preparation of the national project 'Youth and Children' to include the possibility of involving participants of the so-called SMO to work with children and youth in all regions of the country, including the TOT of Ukraine.** The purpose of such involvement is to militarise children, glorify Russian servicemen involved in the war against Ukraine, and promote service in the Russian army.⁴⁸





Russian propaganda

- On 24 August, a presentation of the propaganda collection ‘Dialogue on the Mission of the SMO: Defence, Freedom and Patriotism’ was held in the occupied Genichesk, Kherson region. The presentation was cynically timed to coincide with Ukraine’s Independence Day, and the organisers noted in their speeches ‘the contrast between the country’s real independence in 1991 and its current status, completely devoid of even a hint of political subjectivity’.⁴⁹



- In all the TOT, the first lesson of ‘Conversation About the Important Issues’ for children was conducted by Russian President Vladimir Putin personally via video conference. In his speech, he glorified the participants of the so-called special military operation in a manipulative manner, called for support for Russian soldiers involved in the war against Ukraine, and blamed Ukraine for the situation on the frontline and in the areas bordering Ukraine.⁵⁰ This presentation of information by high-ranking officials, who are perceived by children as authorities, contributes to the formation of a distorted perception of reality, including the events of the war against Ukraine waged by Russia.

49 <https://t.me/depobrherson/8736>, archive: <https://archive.ph/cnVfJ>

50 https://www.1tv.ru/news/2024-09-02/484925-vladimir_putin_provel_otkrytyy_urok_v_pervyy_den_uchebnogo_goda, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/OyEZT>



- In occupied Melitopol, Zaporizhzhia region, school No. 15 opened a 'Hero's Desk' dedicated to Major Ruslan Primov, a participant in the so-called special military operation. This Russian serviceman took part in the war against Ukraine, where he was killed. He was posthumously awarded the Order of Courage by a Russian presidential decree. In the school's lobby, students of the Rosgvardia specialised class took part in the opening of the desk. In fact, such events are aimed at glorifying Russian servicemen fighting against Ukraine, fostering a positive attitude towards the aggressor country and encouraging them to choose to serve in the Russian armed forces.⁵¹



