

Analytical Report

Russia's Policy of Eradicating the Identity of Children in the TOT of Ukraine: Results for 2025



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Analytical Report “Russia’s Policy of Eradicating the Identity of Children in the TOT of Ukraine: Results for 2025” / T. Lychko, O. Shapoval, M. Sulialina. Kyiv: CCE “Almenda”, 2026. - 28 pp.

This analytical report was prepared by the NGO Centre for Civic Education “Almenda” with the support of the Askold and Dir Foundation, administered by ISAR Ednannia as part of the project “Strong Civil Society of Ukraine as a Driver of Reforms and Democracy”, funded by Norway and Sweden. The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of the NGO Centre for Civic Education “Almenda” and does not necessarily reflect the views of the governments of Norway, Sweden or ISAR Ednannia.



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Introduction

As of the end of 2025, the Russian Federation, as the occupying power, has established in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine a comprehensive normative and institutional system of influence over children and youth. This system exhibits clear elements of forced assimilation, political indoctrination and militarisation. It is being implemented in the context of an ongoing international armed conflict and applies to persons who, under international humanitarian law, qualify as protected persons.

The system operates through the adoption and compulsory enforcement of federal laws and governmental decrees of the Russian Federation in the fields of education and youth policy,¹² as well as through state strategies and programmes,³ including the Comprehensive Plan for Military Patriotic and Spiritual Moral Education,⁴ and specific normative acts issued by the occupation administrations.⁵ A central element of this framework is the Comprehensive Plan for Military Patriotic and Spiritual Moral Education, which combines educational, ideological and military components and functions as a mechanism for transforming the identity of children in the occupied territories.

In 2025, this system acquired a completed and institutionally entrenched character. In particular, the involvement of participants in combat operations against Ukraine in the upbringing of children and youth was formalised through normative acts, cadet and Young Arme education was institutionalised,⁶ the integration of the war against Ukraine into educational and upbringing programmes was intensified, and the application of anti-extremism legislation was expanded to suppress disloyalty and Ukrainian identity.⁷

Taken together, education and youth policy are being used as instruments of long-term control over the population and for the formation of a mobilisation reserve to meet the needs of the armed forces of the Russian Federation.

Methodology

Period of research: 2025.

Geographical scope: temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Areas of research: Militarisation of children in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, political indoctrination and the erasure of their Ukrainian identity, the involvement of minors in activities supporting the armed aggression of the RF against Ukraine, the promotion of service in the armed forces of the occupying state, and the destruction of the Ukrainian education system.

1 <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202506240058>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/oZs0e>

2 https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_140174/, archive: <https://archive.ph/t0l6t>; <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202412280045?index=1>, archive: <https://archive.ph/MikWO>

3 <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202506240058>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/oZs0e>

4 <http://government.ru/docs/all/161566/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/ebRdG>

5 <https://ivo.garant.ru/#/document/412428940/paragraph/1:0>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/keOt0>; <https://mon.zo.gov.ru/docs/show/78>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/3SH3v>; <https://gov.khogov.ru/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2025/09/118-pp-25.pdf>, archive: <https://archive.ph/oXpsV>; <https://rk.gov.ru/documents/66324703-0b19-4536-84b9-232a48f9ddb>, archive: <https://archive.ph/PK56c>

6 <https://surl.li/zcbpry>, archive: <https://archive.ph/oWFXp>

7 <https://akademija.znanierussia.ru/course/profilaktika-ideologii-neonacizma-sredi-detej-i-molodezhi/?ysclid=m43y90etz554769849>, archive: <https://archive.ph/iUV40>

Sources of Information

This report is based on the analysis of information from open sources published on official websites and social media platforms, including:

- official communications of state authorities of Ukraine;
- reports and publications of human rights and civil society organisations;
- normative legal acts of the RF and occupation administrations in the fields of education, youth policy, countering extremism and patriotic education;
- communications of state authorities of the RF and occupation administrations in the TOT;
- publications of educational and youth structures controlled by the RF;
- materials from Russian media outlets.

Limitations

The Report was prepared in conditions of no direct access to the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. The authors relied exclusively on sources available to them and the following limitations should therefore be taken into account:

- the use primarily of data published by the occupation authorities and bodies of the RF, which may contain elements of propaganda or the overstatement or understatement of figures;
- the inability to independently verify certain statistical data;
- the use of information from the Russian social network “VKontakte”, materials from Russian media and resources from the temporarily occupied territories, due to these being in practice the only available sources following the full scale invasion by the RF;
- information and reports that could not be verified as of the date of publication were not included in the Report.

Despite these limitations, the collected data make it possible to identify consistent trends and to demonstrate the systematic and large scale nature of the militarisation and political indoctrination of children and youth in the TOT. The information presented in this Report is intended to document crimes committed by the Russian Federation and to counter the disinformation it disseminates.

Abbreviations and Terms

AR of Crimea — Autonomous Republic of Crimea

FSB — Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation

HEI — Higher Education Institution

RF — Russian Federation

so called "DPR" — so called "Donetsk People's Republic", meaning the territory of Donetsk Region temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation

so called "LPR" — so called "Luhansk People's Republic", meaning the territory of Luhansk Region temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation

so called "SMO" — "special military operation", the term used in Russia to refer to the full scale invasion of Ukraine

TOT — temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine under the control of the Russian Federation

UAV — Unmanned Aerial Vehicle

1. Number of Pupils, Schools and Provision of Textbooks

According to data from the occupation authorities, in the 2025-2026 academic year more than **582,600 children are enrolled in 1,980 schools** in the TOT that have been transferred to Russian standards:⁸

TOT	Number of pupils	Number of General Secondary Education Institutions
AR of Crimea	226,800 ⁹	537 ¹⁰
City of Sevastopol	more than 51 000 ¹¹	69 ¹²
Donets Region	141,765 ¹³	582, of which operating offline 530 ¹⁴
Luhansk Region	more than 102,000 ¹⁵	511 ¹⁶
Zaporizhzhia Region	40 115 ¹⁷	175 ¹⁸
Kherson Region	20,932 ¹⁹	106 ²⁰
Total	582 612	1980

According to the Ministry of Education of the RF, between 2022 and 2025 more than **11 million textbooks** were delivered to schools in the TOT of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson Regions.²¹ These deliveries were carried out under the so called “integration of re-united subjects into the educational space of the Russian Federation”, indicating the centralised and planned nature of these measures.

In 2025 alone, **1,040,175 textbooks** aligned with the Russian federal state educational standard were supplied to these territories. As of 1 December 2025, the average level of provision of schools with Russian textbooks stood at 56%, representing an increase of 8% compared to 2024.

8 Due to restricted access to the TOT, the statistics are based on open sources of the RF.

9 <https://monm.rk.gov.ru/structure/3748b454-d262-48b3-b605-85cf93fadbbc>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/7ceMR>

10 <https://monm.rk.gov.ru/structure/3748b454-d262-48b3-b605-85cf93fadbbc>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/7ceMR>; <https://crimea.ria.ru/20250825/uchebnyy-god-v-krymu-cto-novogo-zhdai-v-detsadakh-shkolakh-i-vuzakh-1148970811.html>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/BOpkT>

11 <https://t.me/maksimkrivonos/2999>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/rregH>

12 https://vk.com/wall-177557250_32042, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/LelUx>

13 <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/8000202512260037>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/UwBQe>

14 <https://dzen.ru/a/aLXCJgYcBIB4opl?ysclid=mgklt9w8wp342888747>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/1Fryp>; <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/8000202512260037>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/UwBQe>

15 <https://t.me/minobrlnr/18096>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/gbnN>

16 <https://edu.lpr-reg.ru/uchrejdeniya-obshego-obrazovaniya.html>, archive: <https://archive.ph/ODFOX>

17 <https://zo.gov.ru/docs/show/2261>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/fBc9N>

18 <https://zo.gov.ru/docs/show/2261>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/fBc9N>

19 <https://gov.khogov.ru/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2025/12/186-pp-25.pdf>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/eHJlq>

20 <https://gov.khogov.ru/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2025/12/186-pp-25.pdf>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/eHJlq>

21 <https://edu.gov.ru/press/10928/za-tri-goda-v-vossoedinennye-regiony-postavleno-svyshe-11-mln-uchebnikov/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/O3Flk>

Given that educational institutions in the TOT have been transferred to Russian educational standards,²² the relatively low level of full provision with Russian textbooks at 56% indicates that some classes or schools have not yet received a complete set of federal textbooks. As a result, a proportion of pupils did not have access to textbooks, thereby limiting their right to education. At the same time, priority was given to history textbooks, indicating the intention of the occupation authorities to introduce distorted historical narratives and ideological components into the educational process as a matter of priority. This underscores the deliberate nature of the political indoctrination of children through the education system.

2. Changes in the Educational Process

In the 2025- 2026 academic year, significant changes were introduced to the content of the educational process in the TOT. From 1 September, the transition began to unified textbooks on World History and the History of Russia for grades 5 to 9, which promote the concept of the “distinctiveness of Russian civilisation” and the “rejection of Eurocentrism”.²³



The photo shows new Russian state textbooks on World History and the History of Russia. Source: <https://crimea.ria.ru/20250819/v-sevastopol-postupili-edinye-dlya-rossii-uchebniki-po-istorii-1148832694.html>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/xjytU>

22 <https://xn--90aivcdt6dxbc.xn--p1ai/articles/news/rosobrnadzor-novye-regiony-pereshli-na-rossiyskie-obrazovatelnye-standarty/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/jHD09>

23 <https://t.me/minobrn/18254>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/aRt3p>

Formally, the transition is planned over two years: 2025/2026 for grades 5 to 7 and 2026/2027 for grades 8 to 9.²⁴ However, the inclusion of these textbooks in the Russian federal list **permits regions to accelerate their implementation.**

In the temporarily occupied city of Sevastopol, the transition was carried out immediately through the procurement of more than 59,000 copies of the new series for grades 5 to 9.²⁵ According to statements by the occupation government, from 1 September 2025 all pupils of the relevant age group are to study using the new unified textbooks.²⁶

According to the Ministry of Education of the RF, schools in the TOT of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson Regions **are also fully provided with Russian state history textbooks** for grades 5 to 11,²⁷ confirming the comprehensive nature of the implemented changes.

Regarding the TOT of the AR of Crimea, the so called “Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea” procured 122,838 copies for grades 5 to 7,²⁸ which were delivered to all schools in the region from September 2025.²⁹

It should be emphasised separately that unified history textbooks for grades 10 to 11 have been in use since 2023. It was in these textbooks that narratives about the so called “Crimean Spring” and the “special military operation” were first systematically embedded, and the occupied Ukrainian territories were presented as part of the Russian Federation.

A continuation of these changes was **the adjustment of curricula from the 2025-2026 academic year**, in particular:

- the number of history lessons for grades 5 to 7 was increased from two to three per week, thereby intensifying exposure to ideological content based on a distorted and politicised interpretation of history;³⁰
- the introduction of a module entitled “History of the Region” for grades 5 to 7, in which the past of the occupied regions is presented as an “integral part of Russian history”, while their historical connection with Ukraine is systematically downplayed;³¹
- the pilot introduction of the subject “Spiritual and Moral Culture of Russia” in the temporarily occupied territories, including the AR of Crimea and Sevastopol. The introduction of this subject further strengthens the ideological component of education, as it shapes children’s worldview on the basis of so called “traditional values”, which in the Russian interpretation prioritise ideological loyalty to the state over human rights.³² From the 2026-2027 academic year, this subject will become compulsory in all schools in Russia, including in the TOT.³³

24 <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/24854601?ysclid=mev59k9b3w43596905>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/l5xg2>

25 https://vk.com/wall-177557250_31845, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/zeBPI>

26 https://vk.com/wall-126326014_200282, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/iD2yt>

27 <https://edu.gov.ru/press/10928/za-tri-goda-v-vossoedinennye-regiony-postavleno-svyshe-11-mln-uchebnikov/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/O3Flk>

28 <https://t.me/minobrKrima/13123>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/2v40z>

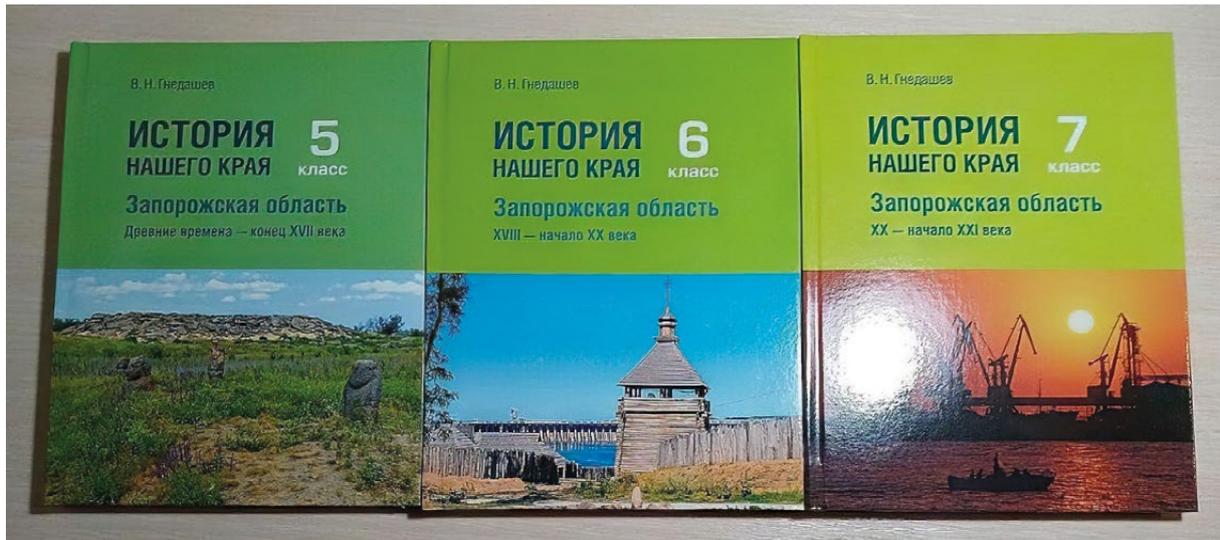
29 <https://crimea.ria.ru/20250513/v-shkoly-kryma-k-1-sentyabrya-postupyat-novye-uchebniki-po-istorii-1146403676.html>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/fvHYx>

30 <https://www.garant.ru/article/1843429?ysclid=mgie81qimm610124853>, archive: <https://archive.ph/2vbZn>

31 <https://t.me/malvovabelova/5643>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/nPOxW>; <https://www.garant.ru/article/1843429?ysclid=mgie81qimm610124853>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/2vbZn>

32 https://dzen.ru/a/aLWbdL7_WsWQGVg?ysclid=mf2ibaroy1101805092, archive: <https://archive.ph/Ovah6> ; https://vk.com/wall-177557250_31979, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/Wscdl>

33 <https://rg.ru/2025/07/22/rukopis-uchebnika-duhovno-nravstvennaia-kultura-rf-planiruiut-podgotovit-k-noiabriu.html>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/1TNkj>



The photo shows textbooks entitled “History of Our Region” used in the TOT of Zaporizhzhia Region. Source: <https://berdyansk-news.ru/other/2024/12/30/55920.html>, archive: <https://archive.ph/FeUJ8>

In this context, the active involvement of the Russian Orthodox Church in promoting this course is particularly indicative. Public statements by the Minister of Education of the RF, Sergey Kravtsov, confirm the institutional role of the ROC in shaping its content.³⁴

Further details on the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church on children residing in the TOT are provided in the article – “[Religion of War: Russian Orthodox Church as the Instrument for Militarization and Indoctrination in the Temporarily Occupied Territories](#)”.

Particular attention should be paid to the amendments introduced by Order No. 729 of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation dated 8 October 2025 “On Amendments to Certain Orders of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation Concerning Federal Educational Programmes of Primary General, Basic General and Secondary General Education”.³⁵ The updated federal programmes of primary, basic and secondary education **removed provisions relating to the study of the Ukrainian language**, including the repeal of the Federal Model Programme for the subject “Native Ukrainian Language”. These amendments **entered into force on 15 December 2025** and apply, inter alia, to the temporarily occupied territories. Thus, at the level of federal educational standards, **the Ukrainian language has been fully removed from the educational process. This creates conditions for the effective eradication of Ukrainian identity from the educational space of the occupied regions, constitutes a form of systematic restriction of children’s cultural and linguistic rights, and deprives them of the opportunity to exercise their right to study their native language and the Ukrainian studies component guaranteed under international humanitarian law and international law.**

Alongside formal subjects, a significant role in the educational process is played by the cultural component, which is integrated both within classroom teaching and through extracurricular activities. In 2025, there was a **noticeable increase in the use of patriotically oriented materials**, including music, literature and cinema, as instruments of political indoctrination of children. These materials promote Russian narratives and propagate a “heroic history” and

34 <https://t.me/minprosr/10592>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/Uira6>

35 <https://ivo.garant.ru/#/document/413198731/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/uoMh2>

“traditional moral values”.³⁶ In particular, cinema has been used by the Russian occupation authorities as an effective channel for shaping a desired political worldview capable of legitimising Russia's unlawful actions and framing the war against Ukraine as justified.³⁷

At the same time, **previously introduced ideological practices continue to be implemented on an ongoing basis**, in particular:

- the subject “Family Studies” is taught, promoting the concept of a “traditional family” in line with the official state ideology of Russia;³⁸
- the subjects “Fundamentals of Security and Defence of the Fatherland” and “Conversations about Important Matters” remain in place, aimed at fostering loyalty to the RF, militarising children and preparing them as a potential mobilisation reserve for the Russian army.³⁹

These approaches are reinforced materially. In 2025, schools in the TOT received new equipment for practical classes in “Fundamentals of Security and Defence of the Fatherland”, including mock ups of Kalashnikov assault rifles in the TOT of Donetsk Region,⁴⁰ as well as funding for the outfitting of specialised classrooms. In occupied Crimea, equipment for lessons in “Fundamentals of Security and Defence of the Fatherland” and “Technology” was procured for **480 schools, representing 89.4 % of the total number of schools in the TOT of the AR of Crimea**, with 50 million roubles allocated from the regional budget and 89 million roubles from the federal budget.⁴¹



The photo shows a classroom equipped for lessons in “Fundamentals of Security and Defence of the Fatherland” in a school in the TOT of Donetsk Region. Source: <https://t.me/minobrlnr/18981>, archive: <https://archive.ph/rMXrZ>

A demonstrative expression of the militarisation component was events such as the All-Russian School Olympiad in “Fundamentals of Security and Defence of the Fatherland” held in the TOT of Kherson Region, where pupils carried out practical tasks in navigation, first aid and other skills presented by representatives of the occupation authorities as necessary “in the current historical realities”.⁴²

36 <https://t.me/minprosr/14287>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/hnpKl>; <https://edu.gov.ru/press/10278/minprosvesheniya-rossii-podgotovilo-spisok-patrioticheskoy-literatury-dlya-vneklassnogo-chteniya/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/3EzKb>; <https://cub.iro.perm.ru/news/o-napraavlennii-metodicheskikh-rekomendaciy-po>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/mJcBr>

37 <https://almenda.org/kino-yak-instrument-politichnoi-indoktrinacii-ditej-na-timchasovo-okupovanix-teritoriyax-ukraini-2/>

38 <https://almenda.org/religiya-vijni-rosijska-pravoslavna-cerkva-yak-instrument-militarizacii-ta-indoktrinacii-na-timchasovo-okupovanix-teritoriyax/>

39 <https://t.me/OlegVTrofimov/8678>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/4bp7P>

40 <https://t.me/minobrlnr/18981>, archive: <https://archive.ph/rMXrZ>

41 https://vk.com/wall-148027165_9534, archive: <https://archive.ph/lzWsK>

42 <https://t.me/depobrherson/14961>, archive: <https://archive.ph/22w99>

3. Movements and Specialised Classes

Alongside the transformation of the formal educational process, in 2025 the Russian Federation **continued recruiting children into paramilitary children's and youth movements and further expanded militarisation through the operation of cadet classes** within formal education. These instruments complement one another, forming a continuous chain of ideological and military patriotic influence, from preschool age through to the preparation of a future personnel reserve for the security and law enforcement structures.

Participants in such movements and specialised classes were systematically involved in militarised games, training camps, competitions and events dedicated to the Year of the Defender of the Fatherland declared in the RF, as well as other military patriotic initiatives. In practice, this meant the incorporation of children into an integrated system of military patriotic education and ideological training aimed at fostering loyalty to the Russian Federation and preparing them for potential involvement in armed formations.

The systematic and large-scale nature of this policy is also confirmed by significant financial support from the RF. Between 2014 and 2021, the budget allocated to youth policy in the RF ranged from 0.7 billion roubles to 21 billion roubles. Since 2022, expenditure has nearly doubled, exceeding 42.5 billion roubles.⁴³ For 2025, **70.9 billion roubles⁴⁴ were allocated, equivalent to approximately 698 million US dollars.**⁴⁵ For 2026, Federal Law No. 426 FZ provides for a further increase in youth policy spending to **78.4 billion roubles,⁴⁶ equivalent to 1 billion US dollars.**⁴⁷

43 The data are drawn from the federal budgets of the RF for the period 2014 to 2024:

2014 - <https://ivo.garant.ru/#/document/70525334/paragraph/77971/doclist/5203/14/0/0/0%20федеральном%20бюджете%20на%202014%20год:0>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/bmmzC>

2015 - <https://ivo.garant.ru/#/document/70810756/paragraph/342179/doclist/6239/10/0/0/0%20федеральном%20бюджете%20на%202015%20год:15>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/Mae2f>

2016 - <https://ivo.garant.ru/#/document/71279990/paragraph/70059/doclist/5515/10/0/0/0%20федеральном%20бюджете%20на%202016%20год:6>, archive: <https://archive.ph/UYvsS>

2017 - <https://ivo.garant.ru/#/document/71570266/paragraph/12/doclist/5675/9/0/0/0%20федеральном%20бюджете%20на%202017%20год:8>, archive: <https://archive.ph/Pstk3>

2018 - <https://ivo.garant.ru/#/document/71825896/paragraph/156426:13>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/HpUjR>

2019 - <https://ivo.garant.ru/#/document/72116686/paragraph/194157:13>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/RbxIT>

2020 - <https://ivo.garant.ru/#/document/73098374/paragraph/102587/doclist/6480/10/0/0/0%20федеральном%20бюджете%20на%202020%20год:15>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/Ontlj>

2021 - <https://ivo.garant.ru/#/document/75018021/paragraph/139023/doclist/6505/10/0/0/0%20федеральном%20бюджете%20на%202021%20год:17>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/vPzjQ>

2022 - <https://ivo.garant.ru/#/document/403171045/paragraph/84934/doclist/6649/6/0/0/0%20федеральном%20бюджете%20на%202022%20год:19>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/LYDSw>

2023 - <https://ivo.garant.ru/#/document/405874129/paragraph/83507/doclist/6699/1/0/0/0%20федеральном%20бюджете%20на%202023%20год:21>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/Mun1Q>

2024 - <https://ivo.garant.ru/#/document/408079281/paragraph/150657/doclist/6739/1/0/0/0%20федеральном%20бюджете%20на%202024%20год:23>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/aaSdr>

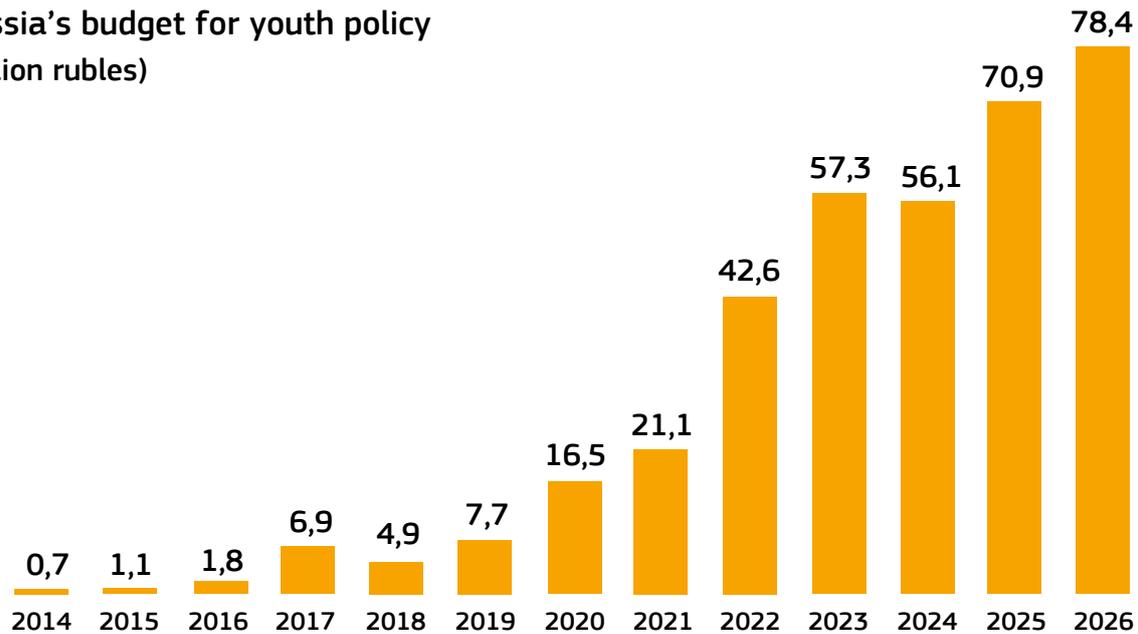
44 <https://ivo.garant.ru/#/document/411024352/paragraph/199783/doclist/3038/1/0/0/0%20федеральном%20бюджете%20на%202025:0>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/BgHpR>

45 Calculated on the basis of the official exchange rate of the Russian rouble to the US dollar as of 1 January 2025.

46 <https://ivo.garant.ru/#/document/413165837/paragraph/93565/doclist/2339/1/0/0/0%20федеральном%20бюджете%20на%202026%20год:1>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/tQ75T>

47 Calculated on the basis of the official exchange rate of the Russian rouble to the US dollar as of 1 January 2026.

Russia's budget for youth policy (billion rubles)



The increase in funding since 2021 is highly likely linked to preparations for the full scale invasion of Ukraine and the perceived need to condition young people to accept decisions taken by the Kremlin. It also explains the further growth in funding during the years of active military aggression, aimed at fostering loyalty to the authorities and cultivating a generation of compliant youth. These figures demonstrate that the militarisation and ideological work with children are supported not only organisationally but also financially at the federal level.

Documentary evidence of the systematic nature of Russian policy was also provided by the adoption in July 2025 by the Coordinating Council of the Movement of the First of a Programme of Military Patriotic Work with Children and Youth.⁴⁸ The programme envisages targeted involvement of children in military patriotic training, the formation of an **“attitude towards the defence of the Fatherland as a sacred duty”**, and the cultivation of ideals of service to the state. In this way, militarised practices receive formal normative consolidation and are integrated into both formal and non formal education.

3.1. “Young Army”⁴⁹

One of the key instruments of the militarisation of children remains the all-Russian military patriotic movement “Young Army”, through which the Russian Federation has been conducting targeted work with children and adolescents since 2016.

According to its founding documents, the “Young Army” is defined as a “military patriotic movement”.⁵⁰ In practice, its activities are aimed at the militarisation of children and adolescents.

In the federal budget of the RF for 2025, **999.6 million roubles⁵¹ were allocated for the activities of the “Young Army” movement, equivalent to approximately**

48 <https://xn--d1abknlude.xn--p1ai/upload/iblock/67c/67c5e034fe21b03d07b5c0d38e1abb36/Patriotika.pdf>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/NWdeH>

49 “Young Army” is the English rendering used in this report for Russia's militarised youth movement “Yunarmiya”, which is also commonly translated as “Youth Army”.

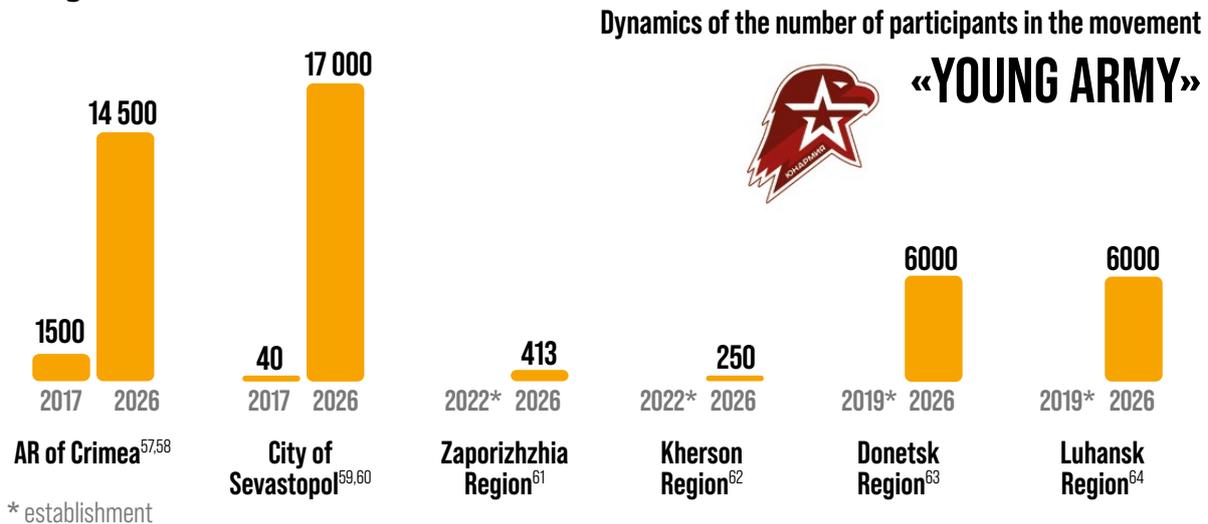
50 <https://yunarmy.ru/ustav.pdf>, archive: <https://archive.ph/gYhB6>

51 <https://ivo.garant.ru/#/document/411024352/entry/17100/doclist/3038/1/0/0/0%20федеральном%20бюджете%20на%202025:0>, archive: [archive: https://archive.ph/wip/pwDNT](https://archive.ph/wip/pwDNT)

9.83 million US dollars.⁵² In 2026, the level of funding was increased to **1.25 billion roubles**,⁵³ equivalent to approximately **16.0 million US dollars**,⁵⁴ including within the framework of the RF state programme “Ensuring the Defence Capability of the Country”.

As of 2025, the movement has approximately **2 million participants**⁵⁵ aged between 8 and 18, of whom more than **44,000 children** reside in the TOT.

The expansion dynamics of the “Young Army” in the TOT indicate its active scaling:⁵⁶



The relatively low participation figures in the “Young Army” in the TOT of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson Regions may indicate the limited success of the occupation structures in recruiting children and young people into the militarised movement. This may reflect a low level of popularity of the initiative among the local population and the presence of resistance from children, parents and local communities, which complicates the implementation of policies of mass militarisation and political indoctrination.

It is important to note that membership in the “Young Army” for at least one year entitles participants to an additional three points in entrance examinations when applying to higher military education institutions.^{65 66} Graduates of Suvorov and Nakhimov military schools and cadet corps benefit from preferential admission rights. This system of benefits creates not only an ideological but also a socio economic incentive for children to join militarised structures, shaping a long term orientation towards a military career in the Russian Federation.

52 Calculated on the basis of the official exchange rate of the Russian rouble to the US dollar as of 1 January 2025.

53 <https://surl.li/yfvsai>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/2lKW7>

54 Calculated on the basis of the official exchange rate of the Russian rouble to the US dollar as of 1 January 2026.

55 According to data published on its official website – <https://yunarmy.ru/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/onfoP>

56 Due to restricted access to the TOT, the statistics are based on open sources of the RF. The data reflect the situation as of late 2025 and early 2026.

57 <https://surl.li/jyfyedy>, archive: <https://archive.ph/RVn9u>

58 <https://surl.li/ryemnh>, archive: <https://archive.ph/oxzBO>

59 <https://sevastopol-news.com/politics/2019/04/18/92073.html>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/CjZAO>

60 <https://surl.li/xkhwec>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/YYQ0B>

61 <https://surl.li/eigyvb>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/8P59f>

62 <https://t.me/YunarmiaHerson/907>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/4Ljjc>

63 https://t.me/youngguard_youngarmy/16527, archive: <https://archive.ph/r5fu0>

64 https://t.me/glava_lnr_info/3713, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/F2ne0>

65 <https://dvoku.mil.ru/Postupayuschim/Pravila/Perechen-nachisleniya-dopolnitelnyh-ball>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/r7Gpw>

66 https://t.me/crimean_patriot/9589, archive: <https://archive.ph/D6xiD>

3.2. “Movement of the First”

Alongside the “Young Army”, the process of political indoctrination and militarisation of children in the TOT is carried out through the all-Russian public state movement of children and youth “Movement of the First”, which began operating in the TOT in 2022.

The “Movement of the First” is the largest children’s and youth organisation in the Russian Federation. According to official Russian data, it has more than **13 million** participants, including over **344,600** in the temporarily occupied territories. Participation in the movement is open to individuals aged 6 to 25, effectively covering the entire period of growing up and socialisation.

In the federal budget of the RF for 2025, **22.13 billion roubles**⁶⁷ were allocated for the activities of the “Movement of the First”, **equivalent to approximately 217.7 million US dollars**.⁶⁸ For 2026, funding was increased to **22.61 billion roubles**,⁶⁹ **equivalent to approximately 289.1 million US dollars**.⁷⁰

Such substantial funding enables not only the organisation of mass events promoting russification and propaganda, but also the implementation of large-scale campaigns, including “We Are Citizens of Russia”, which is regularly conducted in all temporarily occupied territories.⁷¹ This campaign involves the public presentation of Russian passports to Ukrainian children and constitutes a form of forced passportisation.

In cooperation with the “Young Army” and the occupation administrations, the movement also implements all stages of the game “Zarnitsa 2.0” (“Summer Lightning”), aimed at the militarisation of children and youth. The game includes training in tactics, drill, weapons handling and the acquisition of skills directly associated with real military specialisations, including UAV operator, assault soldier, sapper and military medic.⁷² **In this way, elements of real warfare are incorporated into a format presented as a “game” for minors.**

The expansion of the movement’s activities into preschool education in 2025 is particularly indicative:⁷³

- **TOT of Zaporizhzhia Region:** a primary branch of the movement was opened in Kindergarten No. 10 in the occupied city of Enerhodar;⁷⁴
- **TOT of the AR of Crimea:** primary branches were opened in Kindergartens No. 30 “Berezka” (“Little Birch”)⁷⁵ and No. 27 “Alyonkiy Tsvetochek” (“The Scarlet Flower”).⁷⁶ As of 2025, the movement operates in six kindergartens in occupied Simferopol.⁷⁷

The establishment of primary branches in kindergartens in the TOT demonstrates **the institutional consolidation of indoctrination from the earliest age and bears no resemblance to voluntary participation.**

67 <https://surl.lu/xakjqp>, archive: [archive: https://archive.ph/wip/pwDNT](https://archive.ph/wip/pwDNT)

68 Calculated on the basis of the official exchange rate of the Russian rouble to the US dollar as of 1 January 2025.

69 <https://surl.li/nymurp>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/2lKW7>

70 Calculated on the basis of the official exchange rate of the Russian rouble to the US dollar as of 1 January 2026

71 <https://t.me/mypervie92/6724>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/uHFFG>; <https://t.me/mypervie84/8470>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/XFz45>; https://vk.com/wall-122681115_9135, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/dtRC2>

72 <https://almenda.org/en/gra-zarnicya-2-0-vijskovij-vishkil-ditej-na-tot/>

73 Involvement of children from preparatory groups aged 5 to 6

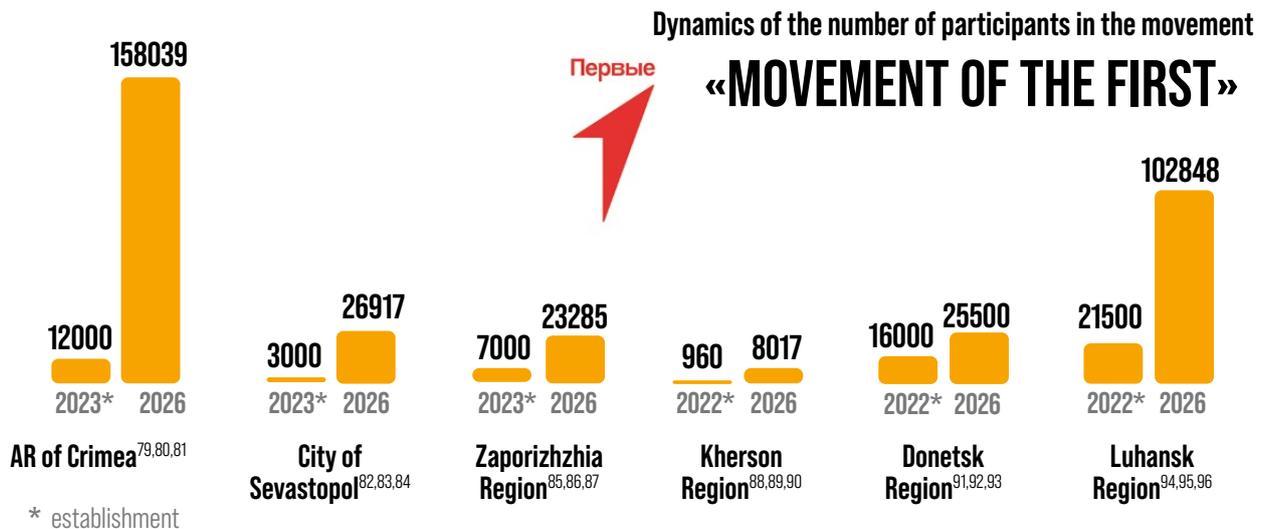
74 https://t.me/Pukhov_M/4319, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/SudgE>

75 <https://simf.rk.gov.ru/articles/5355a49c-069d-4df4-b9bc-a2c865fccc44>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/xpgjv>

76 https://t.me/simadm_news/55468, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/eUwVv>

77 <https://crimea24tv.ru/content/v-detskom-sadu-n27-alenkiy-cvetocek-s/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/506qd>

The expansion dynamics of the “**Movement of the First**” in the TOT demonstrate rapid growth.⁷⁸



According to the head of the occupation administration of the so called “DPR”, Denis Pushilin, a **system of additional points for admission to HEIs is being introduced in the region for activists of the “Movement of the First”**. In 2025, this mechanism is already in operation in nine universities, with further expansion planned from 2026.⁹⁷ This approach effectively transforms educational advantages into an instrument for recruiting children from the TOT into a movement controlled by Russia, **where participation is driven not by voluntary choice but by the desire to increase the chances of admission to an HEI.**

78 Due to restricted access to the TOT, the statistics are based on open sources of the RF. The data reflect the situation as of late 2025 and early 2026.

79 <https://www.rusprofile.ru/id/1239100002151>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/TcCxl>

80 <https://rk.gov.ru/articles/37a61136-20f7-44dd-a66e-bec38f658919>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/CrsMR>

81 https://xn--90acagbhgpca7c8c7f.xn--p1ai/regional-offices/regionalnoe-otdelenie-respubliki-krym_47/, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/kAbBK>

82 <https://www.rusprofile.ru/id/1239200000632?ysclid=mk6py5fsnz898435111>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/3PQzS>

83 <https://surl.lt/faopgj>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/SEpZ>

84 https://xn--90acagbhgpca7c8c7f.xn--p1ai/regional-offices/regionalnoe-otdelenie-goroda-sevastopolya_4/?ysclid=mkaaivqa875617299, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/cCzrZ>

85 https://t.me/zap_admin/1757, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/SieiO>

86 <https://t.me/YugMolodoj/10767>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/xl1VB>

87 <https://surl.li/wpazqz>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/BRwPQ>

88 <https://hersonka.ru/news/125880>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/cmJCT>

89 <https://disk.yandex.ru/d/fzxlADZHBWG00w>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/47nWv>

90 https://xn--90acagbhgpca7c8c7f.xn--p1ai/regional-offices/regionalnoe-otdelenie-hersonskoy-oblasti_71/, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/UiWuS>

91 <https://surl.li/gphbvn>, archive: <https://archive.ph/yB0xQ>

92 https://vk.com/video-76988535_456242217?t=1h33m6s, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/YVuV0>

93 <https://t.me/PushilinDenis/8102>, archive: <https://archive.ph/aiUom>

94 <https://pobedarf.ru/2022/12/28/dvizhenie-pervyh-otkryto-pervuyu-yachejku-v-lnr/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/6jjTD>

95 <https://lugansk.bezformata.com/listnews/podvel-itogi-raboti-dvizheniya/133832424/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/UDbh8>

96 https://xn--90acagbhgpca7c8c7f.xn--p1ai/regional-offices/regionalnoe-otdelenie-luganskoy-narodnoy-respubliki_70/, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/7MAMs>

97 https://t.me/mol_dnr/11082, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/Enm58>

This practice is further confirmed by statements from the federal leadership of the movement. The Chair of the Board of the “Movement of the First”, Artur Orlov, has published a list of universities that take applicants’ participation in the movement’s projects into account during the admissions process. The list includes not only institutions in the so called “DPR”, but also universities across Russia.⁹⁸

In particular, Transbaikal State University awards up to 25 additional points for various forms of participation within the “Movement of the First”, including membership in local or regional “Councils of the First”, victories and prize places in federal and regional projects, and **participation in the “University Sessions” programme.**

Some universities award additional points for prize places in the **All-Russian military patriotic game “Zarnitsa 2.0” and in the UAV piloting championship “Pilots of the Future”**, including the so called “Donbas State University of Justice”, Ryazan State University named after S. A. Yesenin, and Tomsk State University of Control Systems and Radioelectronics.

Thus, educational incentives effectively become a mechanism for recruiting children from the TOT into the “Movement of the First”, including through participation in pro Russian military patriotic activities. Although admission is possible without participation in the movement, the allocation of additional points creates a strong incentive to engage in such activities. The extension of this system to universities in Russia creates conditions for the relocation of young people from the TOT, which in the longer term may contribute to increased educational migration to Russian regions.

More detailed information on Russian children’s and youth movements operating in the temporarily occupied territories can be found in the monitoring report by CCE “Almenda” entitled [“Universal Soldier” or The Activities of Russian Children’s and Youth Movements in the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine](#).

3.3. Cadet Classes

Another element of the system of militarisation of children within formal education is the opening and expansion of cadet classes. Cadet classes are typically established under the patronage of security and military structures, state bodies and organisations with a military patriotic orientation.

For example, in the TOT of the AR of Crimea in 2025, cadet classes operated under the patronage of the Investigative Committee of the RF, the police, the prosecutor’s office, the FSB, the National Guard of Russia and other structures. **Their role extends far beyond education**, as it involves the active participation of security bodies in the upbringing of children, the organisation of military events, and direct campaigning for admission to higher education institutions affiliated with security and law enforcement agencies.

Particular emphasis is placed on the involvement of orphaned children from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine who, according to statements by officials of the RF, may apply for admission to educational institutions subordinate to the Investigative Committee of the RF.⁹⁹ This creates heightened risks of the use of vulnerable groups of children for militarised purposes.

In the TOT of the AR of Crimea, the number of cadet classes **increased 102 fold, from 3 in 2015 to 306 in 2025**, demonstrating the systematic and targeted expansion of milita-

98 <https://t.me/Orlovpervye/2373>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/wTFLA>

99 https://xn--90aivcdt6dxbc.xn--p1ai/articles/news/deti_siroty_iz_novykh_regionov_mogut_postupit_v_kadetskie_korpusa_sk/, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/JbtJ5>

rised education as an instrument of influence by the RF over children residing in the TOT.^{100 101} In 2025, pupils of these classes in occupied Crimea took part in military patriotic camp sessions where they underwent military training.¹⁰²

Similar processes of expanding cadet classes have also been recorded in other TOT:¹⁰³

- **Zaporizhzhia Region:** from 1 class in 2023¹⁰⁴ to 11 cadet classes and 4 classes under security structures in 2025, including those of the Investigative Committee, the Ministry of Emergency Situations and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.¹⁰⁵
- **Kherson Region:** from 1 class in 2023¹⁰⁶ to 7 classes in 2025.¹⁰⁷
- **Donetsk Region:** in 2025, at least 2 cadet corps and 5 cadet classes are in operation.^{108;}
- **Luhansk Region:** in 2025, 95 cadet classes are in operation.¹⁰⁹
- **City of Sevastopol:** from 3 classes in 2015¹¹⁰ to 55 classes in 2025.¹¹¹

4. Anti Extremism Legislation of the RF

In 2025, Russia intensified the practice of intimidating children and young people in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine through the application of anti-extremism legislation. A key normative document in this sphere is the updated Strategy for Countering Extremism in the Russian Federation, approved on 28 December 2024 and actively implemented from 2025.

The Strategy identifies a broad range of sources of extremist threats, from radical groups and “colour revolutions” to the “falsification of the history of the RF”. It introduces the concepts of “Russophobia”, “xenophobia”, “radicalism” and “extremist ideology”, which serve as grounds for counter measures. In practice, the legislation and the updated Strategy function as instruments of pressure on Ukrainian identity, freedom of expression and any manifestations of disloyalty to the occupation authorities.

Particularly alarming is the fact that anti extremism legislation of the RF, combined with new ideological programmes, including the updated Strategy for Countering Extremism, reinforces the implementation of educational, upbringing and law enforcement practices aimed at eradicating the Ukrainian language, culture, symbols and patriotic education among children. In this way, the fight against “extremism” becomes an instrument of large-scale ideological intervention designed to reshape the consciousness of the next generation of Ukrainians.

100 <https://gazetacrimea.ru/news/kolichestvo-kadetskikh-klassov-v-krymu-uvelichilos-v-100-raz-s-2015-goda/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/Wu9XI>

101 <https://cadets.rk.gov.ru/page/o-nas?ysclid=mk8piy1m9t70359024>, archive: <https://archive.ph/ly5LF>

102 <https://t.me/minobrKrima/14797>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/czZMl>

103 Due to restricted access to the TOT, the statistics are based on data from open sources of the RF.

104 <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/18525003>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/k8nHR>

105 <https://zo.gov.ru/docs/show/2261>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/fBc9N>

106 <https://kherson-news.ru/society/2023/05/17/133344.html>, archive: <https://archive.ph/Ua8MW>

107 <https://tavria.tv/radio/radio-programms/vechernij-kherson/igor-chernij-kadetskoe-obrazovanie-eto-formirovanie-grazhdanina>, archive: <https://archive.ph/X73Qb>

108 <https://dan-news.ru/exclusive/skolko-kadetskikh-klassov-est-v-dnr-otvechaet-ministr/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/YhS3t>

109 <https://t.me/minobrInr/17790>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/OWypA>

110 <https://sevastopol.su/news/dlya-budushchih-sledovateley-i-spasateley-v-sevastopole-otkrylis-kadetskie-klassy>, archive: <https://archive.ph/SdNpO>

111 https://sevizakon.ru/assets/files/otchety/gubernator/otchet_ot_27_05_2025.pdf, archive: <https://archive.fo/wip/JxY6S>

The provisions of the above mentioned Strategy and other normative legal acts of the RF in the field of countering extremism and terrorism are widely used to persecute children on the basis of their Ukrainian identity, as detailed in the analytical report "[How Russia Erases Ukrainian Identity Under the Guise of Combating Extremism](#)".

5. Comprehensive Plan for the Upbringing of Youth

On 23 October 2025, by Order of the Government of the RF No. 2970 r, the **Comprehensive Plan for Patriotic and Spiritual Moral Education of Youth up to 2028** was approved, hereinafter referred to as the Comprehensive Plan.¹¹² This document has the status of a federal normative legal act, the effect of which extends to all subjects of the RF and is forcibly applied in the TOT to Ukrainian children and young people residing in these territories.

The Comprehensive Plan **institutionalises the militarisation of children and youth as a long-term state policy**. The very fact that it is planned three years ahead demonstrates that Russia is not preparing for the end of the war but is instead institutionally constructing mechanisms for its continuation. It treats children not as a vulnerable group but as a resource to be prepared for service in Russian security structures and the armed forces.

The Comprehensive Plan places significant emphasis on integrating participants and veterans of the so called SMO into the upbringing of children, including granting them access to teaching the subject "Fundamentals of Security and Defence of the Fatherland" and involving them in military patriotic clubs and associations, including those operating within schools. A substantial part of the measures is aimed at strengthening this direction through personnel policy, including the training of teachers from among veterans of the so called SMO, the development of infrastructure for militarised clubs, the standardisation of methodological materials, and the establishment of a system of regular monitoring and reporting on the "patriotic" upbringing of children. In addition, the Plan envisages the annual organisation of militaristic activities such as the game "Zarnitsa 2.0"¹¹³ by the "Movement of the First" and the "Young Army", competitions entitled "Heirs of Victory 2025" and "To Be, Not to Seem", projects such as "Guardians of History" and "Victory Train", and events held at sites of military historical significance. These activities combine ideological education with practical military training, creating a system of comprehensive influence over children.

Further details are available in the article "[Russia Intensifies the Militarisation of Youth by Approving a Comprehensive Set of Measures on Patriotic Education](#)".

6. Glorification of the War Against Ukraine and the Armed Forces of the RF

In 2025, in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, the Russian Federation continued its systematic policy of glorifying the war against Ukraine as part of the broader milita-

112 <http://government.ru/docs/all/161566/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/ebRdG>

113 <https://almenda.org/en/gra-zarnicya-2-0-vijskovij-vishkil-ditej-na-tot/>

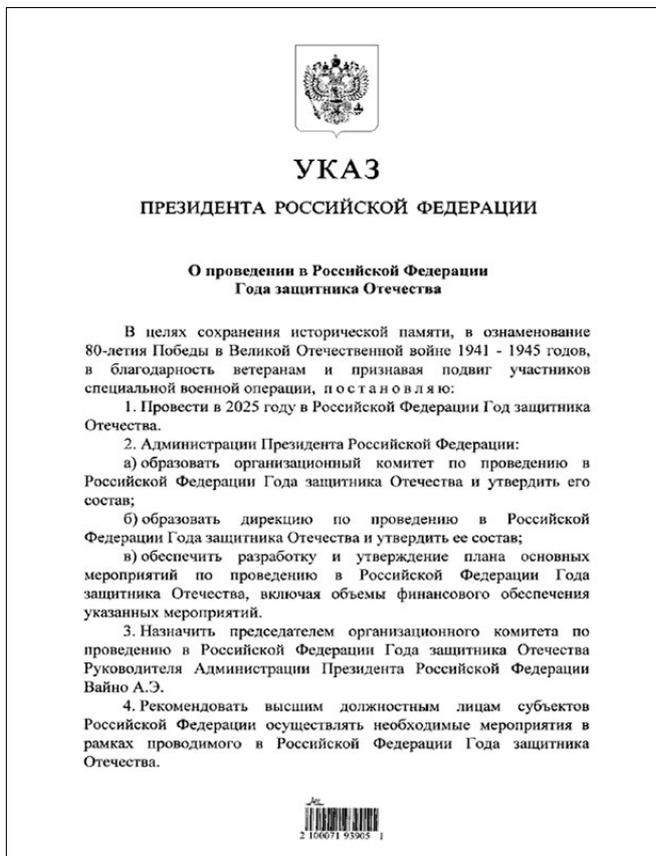
risation of the child environment. Amid the declared Year of the Defender of the Fatherland and preparations for the 80th anniversary of victory in the so called “Great Patriotic War”, the public space became saturated with militaristic rhetoric. Virtually every event, from school competitions to public campaigns, was devoted in one form or another to these themes.

Memorials, plaques, school desks and other objects dedicated to participants in the so called SMO and Soviet military personnel were unveiled in the public space. These symbolic elements are deliberately placed in educational institutions and in locations of children’s daily presence, creating a constant visual and ideological presence.

In parallel, military personnel and participants in the war against Ukraine are systematically involved in the educational process. With their participation, “Lessons of Courage”, “Dialogues on Equal Terms” and other events are organised, during which children’s understanding of the war initiated by Russia against Ukraine is deliberately distorted. Armed aggression is normalised and romanticised, while the aggressor state is consistently presented as a “liberator” and protector. At the same time, Ukraine is portrayed as a threat or an artificial construct, and the fact of occupation is framed as legitimate, necessary and “historical”.

Such an interpretation of reality shapes in children in the TOT a distorted perception of historical truth, replaces the concepts of victim and aggressor, and reinforces the perception of the occupying state as a bearer of justice and order.

6.1. “Year of the Defender of the Fatherland”



The year 2025 was declared in the RF as the Year of the Defender of the Fatherland with the stated aim of “preserving historical memory” and “recognising the feat of participants in the SMO” in accordance with Presidential Decree of the RF No. 28 dated 16 January 2025.¹¹⁴

The image shows a screenshot of the first page of the Presidential Decree of the RF “On Holding the Year of the Defender of the Fatherland in the Russian Federation”. Source: <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202501160039?index=1>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/OMrRj>

In the TOT, corresponding plans were developed for the organisation of so called “celebratory” events, including at the school level:

114 <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202501160039?index=1>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/bGqBY>

- the opening of the exhibition “Heroes of the Special Operation” in museums and galleries in the TOT of Donetsk Region, including at the “Kalchyn School of the DPR”;¹¹⁵
- the organisation of research projects for grades 5 to 11 on the topic “On the Historical Victories of Soviet Troops during the Great Patriotic War, the Combat Traditions of the Army and Navy, and the Contemporary Life of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation” in the TOT of the AR of Crimea, including at the “Yevpatoria Sanatorium Boarding School”.¹¹⁶

The opening and closing of the “Year of the Defender of the Fatherland” in the TOT were held in a so called “ceremonial” format.¹¹⁷ In particular, at Gymnasium No. 122 in temporarily occupied Donetsk, the initiative was formally concluded with the participation of pupils and teachers from more than 11 educational institutions, including two special boarding schools. The event also featured so called “modern heroes”, namely participants in the so called SMO.¹¹⁸



The photo shows pupils of Yalta School No. 7 at a “ceremonial assembly” dedicated to the opening of the Year of the Defender of the Fatherland, February 2025, TOT of the AR of Crimea. Source: <https://yalta7.crimeaschool.ru/news/43013>, archive: <https://archive.ph/k73qj>



The photo shows children at the closing ceremony of the Year of the Defender of the Fatherland at Gymnasium No. 122 in temporarily occupied Donetsk, December 2025. Source: https://t.me/navigatory_detstva_dnr/6299, archive: <https://archive.ph/Muwhl>

115 https://sh-kalchikskaya-r897.gosweb.gosuslugi.ru/netcat_files/187/3266/Plan_GOD_ZASchITNIKA_OTeChESTVA.pdf, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/EiRW8>

116 http://xn--80aaelcra4bbfjoevfe7s.xn--p1ai/index/god_zashhitnika_otechestva/0-373, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/OMrRj>

117 <https://yalta7.crimeaschool.ru/news/43013>, archive: <https://archive.ph/k73qj>

118 https://t.me/navigatory_detstva_dnr/6299, archive: <https://archive.ph/Muwhl>

The topic was also addressed in “Conversations about Important Matters”,¹¹⁹ which were conducted, including in the TOT.

Further details on the “Year of the Defender of the Fatherland” are available in the article [“What Does the ‘Year of the Defender of the Fatherland’ Mean for the Temporarily Occupied Territories?”](#).

6.2. Memorialisation of Participants in the so called SMO and Soviet Military Personnel

In 2025, Russia continued the practice of memorialising participants in the so called SMO and Soviet military personnel in the temporarily occupied territories, using symbolic objects as instruments of ideological influence on children and youth. According to the Ministry of Education of the RF, within the framework of the “Hero’s Desk” project, **1,058 desks** were unveiled in 2025 in Zaporizhzhia and Kherson Regions, as well as in the so called DPR and LPR.¹²⁰

The largest number was recorded in the TOT of Donetsk Region with **882 desks**, followed by the TOT of Luhansk Region with **134**, the TOT of Zaporizhzhia Region with **15**, and the TOT of Kherson Region with **27 desks**.



The photo shows the unveiling of a “Hero’s Desk” in the TOT of Donetsk Region, with the participation of representatives of the occupation authorities. Source: <https://edu.gov.ru/press/10930/v-vossoedinennyh-regionah-v-2025-godu-sozdano-svyshe-1-tys-part-geroev/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/oasRj>

The project has been implemented since 2018 under the auspices of the pro presidential party “United Russia”. As of May 2025, nearly 30,000 “Hero’s Desks” have been installed in 15,000 educational institutions across the RF.¹²¹ Each desk features a photograph of a serviceman, a biography and a description of his “feats”. **The right to be the first to sit at the desk is granted to selected categories of pupils, including activists, high achievers and prize winners of academic competitions,**¹²² which reinforces the symbolic value of both the “Hero’s Desk” and the image of the Russian serviceman.

According to the so called “State Committee for Youth Policy of the Republic of Crimea”, as of 2025 the following have been installed in the TOT of the AR of Crimea: **243 memorial plaques and commemorative signs, 12 remembrance corners, 57 “Hero’s Desks”, 1 bas relief,**

119 <https://xn--80aafadv9bifbaeqq0p.xn--p1ai/27-01-2025/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/OXwEe>

120 <https://edu.gov.ru/press/10930/v-vossoedinennyh-regionah-v-2025-godu-sozdano-svyshe-1-tys-part-geroev/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/oasRj>

121 <https://proekty.er.ru/news/er-news-3525900?ysclid=me95453h1f642076531>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/EUEfQ>

122 <https://edu.gov.ru/press/10930/v-vossoedinennyh-regionah-v-2025-godu-sozdano-svyshe-1-tys-part-geroev/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/oasRj>

1 obelisk, 1 memorial, 3 monuments, 14 stelae, 14 memorial exhibitions and 1 mural. In addition, five public squares, 35 streets and three educational institutions have been named after “heroes” of the so called SMO.¹²³ For example, at Dachnovska School in occupied Sudak, **memorial stands have been unveiled featuring at least 38 individuals who took part in the war against Ukraine**, creating a constant visual and symbolic influence on children.¹²⁴



The photo shows the unveiling of display boards featuring photographs of participants in the so called SMO at Dachnovska School in Sudak, TOT of the AR of Crimea. Source: https://vk.com/wall-214910068_222815, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/qfVAL>

According to the so called “Minister of Education and Science of Zaporizhzhia Region”, Oleksandr Kaliagin, by the end of the 2024 to 2025 academic year in the TOT of Zaporizhzhia Region, **35 “Hero’s Desks”, 77 “hero” corners and two museums dedicated to the so called SMO had been opened. In addition, 21 general secondary education institutions were named after “heroes”**.¹²⁵ Furthermore, **18 classes were awarded the title of “hero class”**, underscoring the integration of memorialisation into the everyday school environment and into the system of assessment and motivation of children.

7.

Militarised Camps and Field Training Exercises

In 2025, in the temporarily occupied territories, the Russian Federation continued the targeted practice of involving children in **militarised camps, field training exercises and specialised youth training centres**, including through the establishment and expansion of “Warrior” centres (known in Russian as “VOIN”). These structures serve as instruments of **early military and ideological preparation**, effectively forming a mobilisation reserve for the Russian army from among Ukrainian children and adolescents, who are being prepared for participation in the wars of the RF, including against their own country.

¹²³ <https://gkmp.rk.gov.ru/structure/7f4d917f-6d2e-4be0-8c3f-a37d3f746263>, archive: <https://archive.ph/JjRpW>

¹²⁴ https://vk.com/wall-214910068_222815, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/qfVAL>

¹²⁵ <https://edu.gov.ru/press/10337/na-avgustovskom-pedagogicheskom-soveshchanii-v-zaporozhskoy-oblasti-obsudili-plan-razvitiya-sistemy-obrazovaniya-regiona>, archive: <https://archive.ph/tUa3k>

The programmes of such camps and training exercises include **drill, tactical training, basic weapons handling**, military applied disciplines and an intensive ideological component. A particular role is played by **the involvement of active military personnel and participants in the war against Ukraine** as instructors and mentors, which reinforces the legitimisation of the war in the eyes of children and consolidates the image of service in the armed forces of the RF as prestigious.

Particularly alarming is the fact that children are trained in skills **directly applicable to the war against Ukraine**, including the assembly and disassembly of FPV drones, UAV operation and the driving of buggy vehicles. This indicates the **deliberate preparation of a mobilisation reserve among minors**.

Specific examples illustrate this practice. During the summer period, the camp “Iskrennost” (“Sincerity”) in temporarily occupied Mariupol, Donetsk Region, was attended by 700 children from the TOT,¹²⁶ **including children with disabilities**.¹²⁷ In addition, children from the TOT were involved in:¹²⁸

- the military training camp **“Storm Crimea 2025”** in the TOT of the AR of Crimea, organised by “Crimea Patriot Centre” (“Krynpatriotcentr”).¹²⁹



The photo shows children undergoing military training, including instruction in operating buggy vehicles and UAVs, during the “Storm Crimea 2025” camp. Sources: https://t.me/crimean_patriot/9500, archive: <https://archive.ph/Uxi54>; https://t.me/crimean_patriot/9614, archive: <https://archive.ph/2HNMS>.



126 <https://t.me/mariupol24tv/100417>, archive: <https://archive.ph/zMgzg>

127 <https://mariupol-news.ru/society/2025/08/03/120454.html>, archive: <https://archive.ph/mEwKn>

128 https://almenda.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Solder_50.pdf

129 https://t.me/crimean_patriot/9480, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/pHhSK>

- five day summer training exercises for pre conscription youth in the TOT of the AR of Crimea, organised by “Crimea Patriot Centre” with the support of the occupation administration;
- the militarised camp session **“Time of Young Heroes”** in Volgograd, RF, organised by the “Warrior” centre;



The photo shows the third session of “Time of Young Heroes” in Volgograd, RF, attended by children from the TOT of Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk, Luhansk and Kherson Regions. Source: <https://t.me/BalitskyEV/5708>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wORxc>

- the military patriotic training camp **“Gvardeyets 2025”** (“Guardman 2025”) in Penza, RF, organised by the Plenipotentiary Representative of the President of the RF in the Volga Federal District and the Governor of Penza Region;¹³⁰
- a camp held at the training centre of the Airborne Forces Special Purpose Fund of the RF **“Preobrazhensky”**,¹³¹ among other locations.

These examples represent only a portion of the camps and field training exercises in which Ukrainian children from the TOT have been involved.

Russia's **preparation for the long-term continuation of hostilities** is evidenced by the large-scale **construction of branches of the Centre for Military Sports Training and Patriotic Education of Youth “Warrior” across all TOT**. The “Warrior” centre provides training for boys and girls aged 14 to 17 in various areas of military preparation, including first aid and tactical medicine, firearms training, tactics, engineering training, UAV operation, communications, survival and reconnaissance, with compulsory instruction in the “fundamentals of Russia's national security” and in “countering the ideology of terrorism and extremism”. Training at the centre encourages subsequent admission to military higher education institutions of the RF on preferential terms. The scale of investment demonstrates the strategic nature of this policy. In Mariupol alone, a centre is being constructed on an area of 8.73 hectares for 300 children, including residential buildings, a canteen and a training helicopter landing site, effectively transforming it into a full-scale military base for the training of minors. The opening is planned for the end of 2025 or the beginning of 2026.¹³² A similar centre is also planned in the TOT of Zaporizhzhia Region. In 2025, in the city of Berdiansk, reconstruction began of the children's recreational camp “Iskra” into the military sports camp “Warrior”, designed for the year round accommodation of 150 children.¹³³ Pursuant to instructions by V. Putin, such centres are to be established in every region by 2030.

130 <https://surl.li/uowhtv>

131 <https://surl.li/uowhtv>

132 As of the time of writing this Report, the center had not been opened. <https://www.donetsk.kp.ru/daily/27753.5/5200759/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/ALMuL>

133 <https://www.mk-zap.ru/social/2025/02/11/v-berdyanske-zavershaetsya-masshtabnaya-rekonstrukciya-lagerya-vojn.html>, archive: <https://archive.ph/BHJaV>

The operation of militarised camps, field training exercises and “Warrior” centres contributes to the institutionalisation of the militarisation of the child environment and to the formation of sustained loyalty to the aggressor state. Children are involved in military practices before reaching adulthood, which lowers the psychological barrier to participation in armed conflicts initiated by Russia in the future.

8. Transfer of Children from the TOT

The systematic **transfer of Ukrainian children from the TOT to the RF and to occupied Crimea** continues under the guise of “health and recreational programmes”, “patriotic education” and “educational trips”. In these conditions, children are subjected to the **imposition of Russian identity, the glorification of Russian military personnel** and the portrayal of Ukraine as a “hostile” state.

According to information from the occupation authorities, **181,000 children**¹³⁴ in the **TOT of the AR of Crimea** were covered by various forms of the so called health and recreational campaign. In the summer of 2025, **8,307 children** from Sevastopol participated in “health and recreational programmes”, and more than **4,320** in specialised military patriotic programmes implemented, inter alia, with the support of the “Young Army” and the “Movement of the First”.¹³⁵ A further 343 children from occupied Sevastopol were transferred to Russian federal children’s centres.



The photo shows children during a “Young Army” camp session at a children’s camp in the TOT of the city of Sevastopol, within which the programme “Young Warrior” is being implemented. Source: https://vk.com/wall-122681115_8820, archive: <https://archive.ph/YCu8u>

From the **TOT of Kherson Region**, **6,310 children** were involved in so called “health and recreational” programmes during 2025.¹³⁶ Children were transferred to camps located in the territory of the RF, including to the Republic of Adygea, Krasnodar Krai and temporarily occupied Crimea.

134 <https://monm.rk.gov.ru/articles/dff423b6-153a-45a5-a701-fd208e5c23c0>, archive: <https://archive.ph/MHlWx>

135 <https://t.me/sevobrazovanie/33379>, archive: <https://archive.ph/qsP1L>; <https://ruinform.com/page/v-sevastopole-podveli-itogi-masshtabnoj-ozdorovitelnoj-kampanii-2025-goda-skolko-gde-i-kak-otdohnuli>, archive: <https://archive.ph/4oPFfe>

136 <https://t.me/depobrherson/16498>, archive: <https://archive.ph/M2lue>

From the **TOT of Zaporizhzhia Region**,¹³⁷ at least **4,000 children** were covered by Russian so called “health and recreational” programmes. Children were transferred both to camps in the territory of Russia, including the Republic of Dagestan,¹³⁸ North Ossetia¹³⁹ and other regions, and to temporarily occupied Sevastopol.¹⁴⁰

In addition, in the summer of 2025 an unlawfully established branch of “Artek”, the children’s centre “Krasnaya Gvozdika” (“Red Cornation”), operated in temporarily occupied Berdiansk and hosted approximately **1,500 children** from the so called “historical subjects” of the RF.¹⁴¹

In the **TOT of Donetsk Region**, **56,692 children** were covered by programmes of so called “health and recreation”.¹⁴² In particular:

- 2,750 children were hosted by health centres including “Artek”, “Orlyonok” (“Eaglet”), “Smena”, “Alye Parusa” (“Scarlet Sails”) and “Snegiri” (“Bullfinches”);
- 14,046 children underwent “health and recreational programmes” under the sponsorship of patron regions, including transfers to Orenburg Region, and to the cities of Anapa and Sochi in the RF;¹⁴³
- 3,573 children were transferred on invitations from various organisations, for example under the initiative of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia to the “Victoria” sanatorium in Yessentuki, RF.¹⁴⁴

In the **TOT of Luhansk Region**, more than **56,000 children**¹⁴⁵ “spent their holidays” during the 2025 summer campaign. Children were transferred to the territory of the RF, including Altai Krai, Stavropol Krai, the Republic of Tatarstan, Astrakhan Region, Novosibirsk Region, Tyumen Region, the Karachay Cherkess Republic and the Republic of Bashkortostan,¹⁴⁶ as well as to temporarily occupied Crimea and the city of Berdiansk in Zaporizhzhia Region.¹⁴⁷

In addition to summer camps, transfers of children are carried out under the programmes “More Than a Journey”, “University Sessions” and “Cultural Map 4 + 85”.

In 2025, under the “University Sessions” programme, at least 7,533 children from the TOT were transferred to Moscow, Tomsk, Grozny, the Republic of Dagestan, Stavropol and other cities and regions of the RF.¹⁴⁸ In total, since the launch of this project in 2022, more than 38,000 Ukrainian children from the TOT have participated.¹⁴⁹

137 <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/24888221>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/T4DZ4>

138 <https://runews24.ru/makhachkala/18/07/2025/deti-iz-zaporozhyya-priexali-v-dagestan-chtobyi-otdoxnut-ot-voynyi>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/3skbG>

139 <https://www.mk-zap.ru/social/2025/06/20/okolo-100-detey-iz-zaporozhskoy-oblasti-otdokhnut-letom-v-severnoy-osetii.html>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/f8vAJ>

140 <https://t.me/obrzp/35104>, archive: <https://archive.ph/FOFDb>; <https://t.me/obrzp/35128>, archive: <https://archive.ph/aLAtL>

141 <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/24880985>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/g5G5d>

142 <https://t.me/OlegVTrofimov/9351>, archive: <https://archive.ph/CKjay>

143 <https://www.donetsk.kp.ru/daily/27712.5/5099987/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/qaU66>

144 <https://www.solidarnost.org/news/po-priglaseniyu-profsoyuzov-shkolniki-donbassa-otdohnuli-v-kavminvodah.html>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/GehGo>

145 <https://www.lugansk.kp.ru/daily/27735/5162559/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/OLOSX>

146 <https://www.mk-donbass.ru/social/2025/05/07/pochti-desyat-tysyach-detey-iz-lnr-otdokhnut-etim-letom-v-raznykh-ugolkakh-rossii.html>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/3mQFt>

147 <https://lug-info.ru/news/lnr-planiruet-letom-ozdorovit-ne-menee-30-tys-junyh-zhitelej-respubliki-/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/7xulf>

148 <https://zonews.ru/news/universitetskie-smeny-za-tri-goda-sobrali-desyatki-tysyach-rebchat-istoricheskikh/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/1q7eT>

149 <https://t.me/minobrnaukiofficial/14568>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/Ali8T>

Conclusions

Taken together, the documented measures point to a deliberate and long term state policy of the Russian Federation aimed at altering the identity of Ukrainian children in the temporarily occupied territories, militarising them and preparing them for service in the security structures of the aggressor state. Education, youth policy, militarised camps, specialised centres and programmes of so called patriotic education have been turned into key instruments of this strategy, which combines ideological indoctrination, military training and forced passportisation. Russia's actions include the large scale involvement of children in youth movements such as the "Young Army" and the "Movement of the First", in cadet classes, military patriotic camps and "Warrior" centres, as well as the systematic transfer of children to Russia and occupied Crimea under the guise of so called "health and rehabilitation programmes" and educational trips.

International reports published in 2025, including the annual UN report "Children and Armed Conflict", reports of the OHCHR, and specialised analytical and civil society studies, document the systematic transformation of educational and upbringing practices that facilitate the militarisation and ideological indoctrination of children in the TOT. The actions of the RF in the temporarily occupied territories contravene international standards for the protection of children's rights, in particular the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**. These include Article 38, which prohibits the recruitment of children into armed forces; Article 29, which guarantees education directed towards respect for national identity and culture; Article 30, which protects the rights of children belonging to indigenous and national minorities; and Articles 2 and 3, which enshrine the principles of non discrimination and the best interests of the child. This policy is deliberate, systematic and sustained, and it creates a high risk of serious violations of the rights of Ukrainian children, including their rights to education, freedom of thought and protection from involvement in armed conflict.

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