

The OSCE Secretariat bears no responsibility for the content of this document and circulates it without altering its content. The distribution by OSCE Conference Services of this document is without prejudice to OSCE decisions, as set out in documents agreed by OSCE participating States.

PC.DEL/1443/23
20 October 2023

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1447th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

19 October 2023

On the protection of children's rights

Mr. Chairperson,

We firmly reject the insinuations made regarding some sort of “deportations” of Ukrainian children by representatives of Russia.

We emphasize that the actions by the Russian Federation authorities are aimed at saving the lives of the children affected by the ongoing hostilities, regardless of their nationality, and at ensuring their safety and decent conditions for their development and education. We are sincerely and deeply grateful to our Belarusian friends for their assistance in protecting the childhood and health of all those who are in dire need of this assistance.

We would remind you that since 2014 the Kyiv regime's armed formations have been systematically shelling the territory of Donbas. Since 2022, casualties among the civilian population as a result of the actions of Ukrainian neo-Nazis have also been recorded on the territory of the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions.

Even before the Russian special operation, against the backdrop of a dramatic increase in shelling by Volodymyr Zelenskyy's armed formations, the leaders of the People's Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk appealed to the Russian authorities to take in civilians and ensure their safety. There were around 2,000 parentless children on the territory of Russia in February 2022.

After the start of the special operation, the Russian Federation admitted to its territory around 4.8 million residents of Ukraine and the Donbas republics, more than 700,000 of whom were children. The overwhelming majority of these children arrived in safe regions of Russia together with their parents or close relatives. Those who had no one to take care of them were likewise provided with safe living conditions, food and care and were given the opportunity to receive an education.

Representatives of the Kyiv regime and its Western sponsors have launched an unprecedented disinformation campaign on international platforms, seeking to politicize the issue of child protection as much as possible. The departure of children to safe places, including for rest and recuperation, in

neighbouring regions with the consent of their legal representatives or guardianship authorities is being portrayed as practically forcible deportation.

In this way, the Kyiv regime is dealing a double blow to these children – both the direct risks to their physical safety, given the continued shelling by Zelenskyy’s formations of peaceful towns and civilian infrastructure, and the emotional distress through political speculations about their fate. It appears that the Kyiv regime is focused not so much on helping the children themselves as on creating yet another myth to fit the narrative of alleged Russian aggression.

On 16 October this year, a press conference was held at the press centre of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the Russian Federation Presidential Commissioner for Children’s Rights, Maria Lvova-Belova, who gave a detailed account of the work being carried out in our country to protect the rights of children during the special military operation.

On a separate note, we should point out that Russia has a working channel for co-operation with the Ukrainian side on all contentious issues, which makes it possible to deal with individual requests. The necessary documents and information are exchanged, and the reunification of families of children currently in Russia and in Ukraine is co-ordinated. We emphasize that, since the start of the Russian special military operation, the Commissioner’s Office has been engaged in reuniting families that have been separated for some reason or another, and this work is being carried out in a consistent and open manner.

We recommend that you read the thematic bulletin of 13 October this year, which is available on the official website of the Commissioner’s Office. The Commissioner’s activities and the efforts of the authorities at all levels are helping to save children’s lives, protect their childhood and restore their violated rights and legitimate interests. Once again, we call for refraining from the politicization of these matters.

Thank you for your attention.