



THE BULLETIN

**Activities of the Russian Federation Presidential
Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria
Lvova-Belova to protect children during
a special military operation**

Issue #1 / April 4, 2023

SALVATION. CARE. FUTURE.

Since the start of the special military operation (SMO) Russian Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova has been participating in the realization of rights and interests of minors who have been affected by military actions.

On the institution of Commissioners for children's rights

The position of the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights was established by Presidential Decree No. 986 of September 1, 2009.

A significant step in the development of the institution was the adoption of the Federal Law of 27.12.2018 № 501-FZ «On Commissioners for Children's Rights in the Russian Federation». Among other things, it established the legal status of federal and regional commissioners.

The activities of the Commissioner are aimed at guaranteeing state protection of the rights and legitimate interests of children, the realization and observance of the rights and legitimate interests of children by state bodies, local government bodies, and officials.

The Commissioner promotes:

- ▶ restoration of violated rights and legitimate interests of children;
- ▶ improving legislation in the Russian Federation concerning the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of children;
- ▶ international cooperation in protecting the rights and legitimate interests of children;
- ▶ improving the forms and methods of protecting the rights and legitimate interests of children.

The Federal Commissioner acts as a coordinator of the activities of commissioners in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

At the regional level, the position of a Commissioner for children's rights has now been established in 86 regions, including the Luhansk People's Republic (LPR).

In the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Zaporozhye region, the protection of children's rights is currently the responsibility of regional heads' specialized advisers.

In the Kherson region the establishment of a corresponding position is only planned.

Goals of the Russian Federation Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights in the framework of the SMO:

- ▶ assistance in ensuring the safety of children who find themselves in war zones;
- ▶ assistance in the realization of children's rights to education, medical care, social security, family environment, etc;
- ▶ provision of humanitarian aid;
- ▶ assistance in organizing psychological support for children affected by military actions;
- ▶ assisting executive authorities of the DPR, LPR, Zaporozhye and Kherson regions in building child protection systems;
- ▶ interaction with international organizations on child protection issues during the SMO.

Principles of the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights work within the framework of the SMO:

- ▶ the interests of children and families are the top priority;
- ▶ promptness: assistance to children in a war situation must be provided quickly;
- ▶ family environment - a key condition for the harmonious development of a child;
- ▶ transparency: all of the Commissioner's work is covered in the mass media and social media.

Protection of Children's Rights in Temporary Accommodation Facilities (TAF)

Since the beginning of the SMO, regional commissioners for children's rights have been coordinating assistance to families and children who have arrived in Russia or are in the DPR and LPR.

Commissioners for children's rights in the regions are part of the operational headquarters and respond to appeals from citizens. The Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights holds regular meetings to develop systemic solutions to urgent issues of assistance to children and families in Donbass.

Types of assistance to children and families in TAFs organized in the regions with the participation of commissioners for children's rights:

1. Medical

- ▶ Conducting medical examinations of children;
- ▶ Assigning medical institutions to TAFs;
- ▶ Providing children with medicines;
- ▶ Hospitalization, emergency care;
- ▶ Polio vaccination.
- ▶ Provision of children with disabilities with technical rehabilitation equipment (wheelchairs, canes, glasses, hearing aids, orthopedic shoes, etc.) and medical devices.

2. Psychological

For assistance to internally displaced persons, mobile groups of psychologists were created. In some TAFs there is a round-the-clock duty.

3. Legal

Families are assisted in completing the documents necessary to obtain citizenship of the Russian Federation, placing children in day care centers, receive free medical care, benefits and allowances.

4. Material

- ▶ Payment of a one-time monetary allowance;
- ▶ Provision of clothes and shoes according to the season;
- ▶ Issuance of sanitary and hygienic supplies;
- ▶ Providing textbooks, writing and art supplies;
- ▶ Providing (free of charge) SIM cards of local mobile operators for communication with relatives.

5. Educational

- ▶ Groups for pre-school children were created (including day care);
- ▶ Continuous educational process for schoolchildren was provided (provision of places in educational institutions, organization of training in the TAF);
- ▶ Additional places are allocated for adolescents wishing to continue their education in secondary vocational educational organizations;
- ▶ Developmental leisure activities were organized: sports activities and training, excursions, access to libraries and roadshows.

Protecting the Rights of Evacuated Residents of Social Institutions in the DPR, LPR, and Kherson Region

In February 2022, the Heads of the DPR and LPR appealed to the Russian authorities to accept civilians on their territory. Among those arriving in the Russian Federation in February 2022 were the pupils of the republican boarding institutions for orphans and children without parental care (about 2 thousand people in total), whose legal representatives were the directors of the above institutions.

Children from the DPR were subsequently placed in foster care with Russian citizens or transferred from the border TAFs to children's institutions in other regions of Russia. The fate of each of these children is known. The protection of their rights is under the control of the commissioners in the regions.

Children from the LPR have returned to their institutions in their entirety. Then, at the request of the Republic's authorized guardianship and custody agencies, some of them were placed under the care of Russian foster families.

A total of 380 orphans from the DPR and LPR were placed in Russian foster care families. For more details, see the section «Placement of Children without Parental Care in Russian Families».

In November 2022, the Alyoshkin orphanage in the Kherson region was in close proximity to the front lines. With the assistance of the commissioner, 52 children with severe pathologies were temporarily transferred to safe territory in the Republic of Crimea. During their stay there, the children were provided with everything they needed by regional executive authorities, non-profit organizations, philanthropists.

Most of the residents of the Alyoshkin orphanage have already returned to their native region, to a new specialized social institution in Skadovsk. Eight children remain in Crimea, where they undergo a rehabilitation course. Upon the completion of the course they will also return to Skadovsk.

The Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights' Assistance to Family Reunification

It doesn't matter where or in what status a child is in Russia, in an orphanage, in a foster family, whether he or she has Russian citizenship or not. If he has a parent with full parental rights, the family has every opportunity to be reunited.

The Commissioner's office promptly assists all legal representatives of children. Such work has been done since the beginning of the SSE and is of an individual nature.

As of March 29, 2023, with the direct involvement of the Commissioner's office, 16 children from 9 families were reunited with their relatives living in Ukraine and in other countries.

As of March 29, 2023, with the direct involvement of the Commissioner's office, 16 children from 9 families were reunited with their relatives living in Ukraine and in other countries.

Example 1. On January 31, 2023 a resident of Ukraine was reunited with her two younger teenage sisters living in a social rehabilitation

center in Ryazan Oblast. Earlier, the girls, along with their mother, had been evacuated to Russia from the territory where active hostilities were taking place, and lived in a TAF. Mom became seriously ill and died. The older sister, who lived in the Volyn region, wanted to take the custody of the girls. The older sister turned to the Commissioner's office. The staff members of the Commissioner's office counseled her on necessary documents, and provided assistance in contacting the guardianship agencies, and also provided escort from Moscow to Ryazan, where the three sisters were reunited. Subsequently, with the help of volunteers, the family returned Ukraine.

Example 2. The mother of five minors, a citizen of Ukraine, left for work several months prior to the SMO. As a result, the children were temporarily placed in an institution.

Due to the increased danger to the lives of the local population, by order of the Ukrainian children were placed under the guardianship of a Ukrainian citizen. Subsequently, the guardian and the children voluntarily decided to move to the territory of the Russian Federation. The mother, wanting to be reunited with her children, contacted the guardianship authorities and the Commissioner's office. Volunteers paid for her tickets to Moscow, and the Commissioner's office provided her with transportation to the children's location. The family was successfully reunited in January 2023.

Example 3. The parents of two children lived in different countries for several years: the father in Ukraine and the mother in Russia. The children lived with their mother, but she became seriously ill and died in November 2022, raising the question of the future arrangements for the children. Both their grandmother, who lived in Kursk Oblast, and their father, who lived in Kiev, were ready to take the children.

The father sent the corresponding application to the guardianship and custody agencies at

the place of the children's residence, executed a power of attorney to his mother to bring the children to Kiev. The family was reunited at the end of November 2022.

A child's stay in a family, with relatives, and even more so with blood relatives, has been and remains a priority for of the institution of commissioners for children's rights.

Assistance from the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights in reunification of children sent on recreation in the Republic of Crimea and Krasnodar and their parents.

In January 2023, the Commissioner responded to information from regional authorities and open sources about difficulties in reuniting children sent on vacation to the Republic of Crimea and Krasnodar region and their parents (legal representatives) - citizens of Ukraine. The Commissioner decided to get involved in the process of family reunification.

In the late summer and fall of 2022, due to the situation on the front lines, parents from Kherson, Zaporozhye, Kharkov regions and other territories voluntarily sent children on vacation, including to protect them from military action. Children together with their attendants, by proxy of their parents, were admitted to sanatoriums and health camps in Crimea and Krasnodar Territory.

The situation on the front line did not always allow the children and their escorts to travel safely home at the end of their shifts. Therefore, it took time for the children to return.

A safe route around the front lines went through neighboring states. Reunification was also difficult because not all parents could come to pick up their children on their own. Conscript-age fathers are not allowed out by the ukrainian authorities, the mothers have other children in their arms, and the state of their health prevents the parents from going. Not everyone is able to find a trusted person

to pick up their children and the necessary funds for the trip. Families are helped by volunteers from both Russia and Ukraine.

Despite all the difficulties, the vast majority of children have already returned to their families. They live in Russia, Ukraine, and the EU. Staff members from the Commissioner's office personally visited children in Crimea to take additional measures for those who stayed longer than others. There is now plan of action for each child.

As of April 3, 2023, there were 2 children waiting to return home from among the children who came to Krasnodar region on vacation. As of April 3, 2023, 38 children remained in the Republic of Crimea, while in October 2022 there were 2,360 minors on vacation there.

Two children from the group in Crimea were discussed with representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross about assistance in finding their parents who live in EU countries.

Volunteer organizations in Russia and Ukraine play an active role in family reunification. The latter are wary of contacting directly to Russian authorities and to the Commissioner's office.

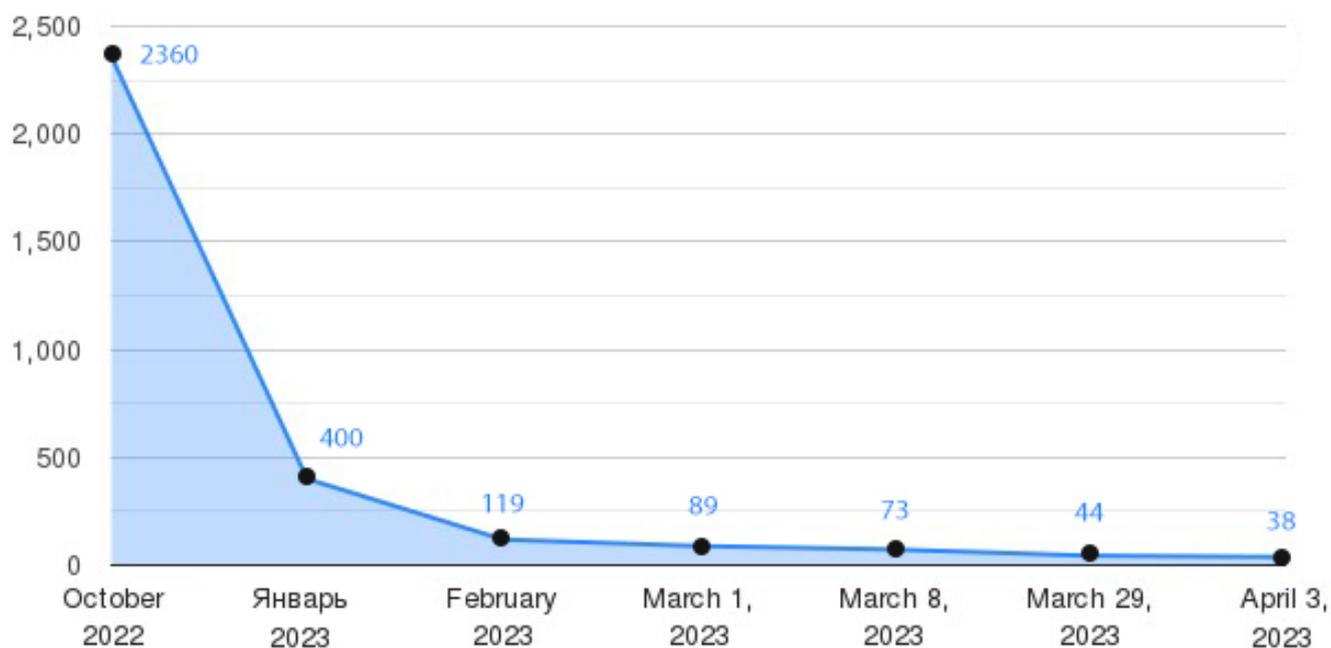
How parents or legal representatives can be reunited with their children who are on vacation:

Parents or legal representatives can come to a sanatorium or recreation facility recreation and rehabilitation organization on their own, having documents proving kinship or legal representation;

A child may be picked up from a sanatorium or recreation organization by an authorized person of the parents or legal representative. For this purpose, parents or legal representatives shall draw up a power of attorney with a notary for a relative or another person, such as a volunteer. The power of attorney must be translated into Russian and notarized.

The Commissioner monitors the situation in the regions to take prompt action to reunite families if necessary (not all families need additional assistance). To find a child in Russia, a person can contact the Commissioner's office by e-mail: obr@deti.gov.ru.

The number of children on vacation in the Republic of Crimea, by decision of parents who are citizens of Ukraine



Protecting the rights of neglected children

During the spring of 2022, the Russian military in Mariupol discovered neglected children and turned them over to the social services of the city. Subsequently, the children were taken to the children's social Center in Donetsk as neglected children. In May, a group of 31 children with the consent of their legal representative - head of the Children's Social Center - was sent for recuperation to a sanatorium in the Moscow region.

Upon completion of the recuperation course the authorized bodies in the sphere of guardianship and custody of the DPR petitioned the authorized bodies in the sphere of guardianship and custody authorities of Moscow region about their further placement under provisional guardianship in the families of Russian citizens.

From the group of 31 children:

- ▶ 3 children at the request of their father, who arrived after the filtration measures, were handed over to him the next day after contacting the Commissioner through a volunteer organization;
- ▶ 6 children were placed in family centers at their request, almost all of them subsequently wished to be placed with foster families;
- ▶ 22 children were placed in provisional guardianship by residents of Moscow region.
- ▶ 1 girl was later placed in the custody of a neighbor who lived next door to her family in the DPR.

With each of the remaining 28 children, in addition to their readiness to be placed with foster families, the possibility of finding and returning them to families of relatives or close acquaintances was discussed. In addition, the children were informed of the ukrainian side's interest in their return. Many children expressed their reluctance to return to Donetsk, because the city was not safe. Some reported that they were ready to return after the end of hostilities. Those who wanted to return were assisted in their return.

To date, four of the 27 children have come of age, but continue to live with foster families and attend colleges.

Placement of children left without parental care, under foster care in the families of Russian citizens

In April-October 2022, 380 orphans and children left without parental care from the DPR and LPR were placed to Russian foster families from 19 regions of the country.

Most of the children have been in republican orphanages for a long time. Basically, these children are siblings, that is, they make up family groups of 3-9 people, some of the children are with special health conditions. The placement of such children is traditionally difficult. In addition, due to the current situation in the DPR and LPR, it is quite difficult to find families willing to accept children. It is important to understand that the territories of the DPR and LPR have been shelled by the Ukrainian Armed Forces for many years, and most orphaned children from social institutions in the republic are aware of this. Children do not perceive Russia as an enemy and expect protection and help from us, so being placed in safe territory with Russian foster families is not a traumatic circumstance for them.

All the work was done at the request of and with the active participation of the leaders and authorized bodies of the Donbass republics. In April 2022, the first group of 27 children was placed under foster care in families in Moscow Region by the DPR's guardianship authorities.

Assistance in placing children in foster care was temporary and urgent: it was necessary to remove children promptly from under fire and give them a family environment. An alternative would have been to place children in orphanages or TAFs in safe areas, but this creates additional risks associated with collective stay in institutions, and does not correspond to the world, including the Russian vector of deinstitutionalization. Among the

children placed in care there are 22 minors found neglected in Mariupol.

All children who were placed under foster care acquired Russian citizenship, retaining the citizenship of the LPR, DPR, or Ukraine.

Needless to say, that it is important to distinguish between the forms of family placement of children without parental care that exist in Russia.

Under Russian law, foster care (guardianship and custody) allows to place promptly a child without parental care into a family, by decision of the guardianship and custody agency. Adoption, on the other hand, leads to the establishment of a relationship between the adoptive parent and the adopted child, similar to the relationship between the parents and the children born to them, and is carried out by court order.

Foster care has been identified as the preferred form of placement given the potential reunification of minors with their blood relatives, if any are discovered.

Adoption was not used as a form of family placement with respect to children from the DPR and LPR.

If parents or legal representatives express a desire to be reunited with their children, the matter is considered immediately.

The Day After Tomorrow Shifts

The Commissioner holds shifts for teenagers from war-affected areas. Since August 2022, seven such camps have taken place. Their participants were 1,387 children from Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics, Kherson, Zaporozhye, Belgorod, Bryansk, and Kursk regions. The two-week program is designed for intensive social and psychological rehabilitation of adolescents.

All shifts have a psychological support service and an educational program with an emphasis

on career guidance, since the participants - are high school and graduate school students. Teenagers attend trainings, master classes, sports sections, go on excursions, get acquainted with the history and culture of Russia.

The program of the shifts does not include military training.

The shifts showed their effectiveness in solving teenagers' requests and problems, which is confirmed by the results of psychological diagnostics, as well as feedback from children and their parents.

The psychological state of the children is stabilizing, they are mastering ways to self-help.

«The psychologist was the only one I opened up to and told absolutely everything that was bothering me, and she helped me to solve my problem. We had very interesting trainings that I wanted to attend!»

Vladislav S., 17, DPR

«It was very interesting to be in a new place, to meet and make friends with people from different cities. The counselors and the psychologist really helped a lot to become one big family in just 14 days. It's an accomplishment that makes me delight».

Yegor N., 16, Zaporozhye region

The shifts are held at the expense of benefactors, and transportation and lodging are free for participants. Children participate in the shifts only of their own free will and with parental consent, and the Commissioner receives many requests from those wishing to participate.

Humanitarian Action "To the children's hands»

At the beginning of April 2022, in cooperation with the Russian Humanitarian Mission, an autonomous non-commercial organization, and other partners, we launched the humanitarian mission of the Commissioner -

the action "To the children's hands».

Its main idea is targeting: work with on concrete requests from concrete families. Humanitarian convoys deliver goods across Russian territory to TAFs for citizens who have arrived, to the territory of the new regions of Russia, including the areas of active combat operations.

As part of the humanitarian action 21 humanitarian convoys were organized, and targeted aid was provided to more than 10,000 people. A total of about 220 tons aid worth more than 157 million rubles.

The humanitarian cargo included medicines and vitamins, specialized food for children with disabilities, clothes and shoes, bedding, personal hygiene products, stationery, and food. In winter the list of critical needs was topped by everything that keeps you warm - warm blankets, portable heaters, generators for autonomous power supply. In 2023, 30 humanitarian convoys are planned. In addition, charitable funds were used to equip computer classes and family-type TAFs, deliver necessary medicines and equipment to children's medical facilities, purchase a house for a family with many children in the LPR, and help to prepare schoolchildren in the DPR.

An important direction is the organization of treatment and medical rehabilitation of children with mine blast injuries, including prosthetics. With the assistance of the Commissioner, children are referred to Moscow and federal children's clinics, which are the best in the country in terms of their profile. For example, to the Russian Children's Clinical Hospital and the Research Institute of Emergency Pediatric Surgery and Traumatology.

For example, a boy from the DPR, who had received a severe mine blast trauma, was urgently hospitalized at the Children's Emergency Surgery and Traumatology Research Center. Doctors did everything possible to cure him, to take him through all the stages of complex rehabilitation

and prepare him for prosthetics.

Thanks to the specialists from Motorika LLC, the teenager received a bionic arm prosthesis with a design, which was made by hand and based on his sketch. After learning all functions of the prosthesis, the boy will be able to use both hands again. The cost of for the bionic prosthesis amounted to 1.5 mln. rubles and were paid from funds raised charitable funds.

«Happy Childhood» Charity Project

Since January 2023 the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights and the St. Basil the Great Charitable Foundation implements the «Happy Childhood» project. It involves raising charitable funds and directing them toward the needs of children's social institutions, as well as targeted aid to children and families with children in new regions of Russia.

At present, support under the project is provided to three institutions. These are the Shakhter Orphanage (DPR), the Krasnodon Orphanage (LPR), and the Terpenyevsk Boarding School (Zaporozhye region). About 450 children and young adults are currently in their care.

Many of them have disabilities and have been left without parental care.

Part of the funds collected under the project goes to the improvement and repair of institutions. In addition, funds are used to build a staff of specialists with the necessary competencies to work with children with serious health problems. Generators, washing and sewing machines, furniture and hygiene products were purchased and delivered at the request of the heads of the institutions using project funds. A ten-seat minibus was purchased for the Terpenyev boarding school.

In March 2023, a team of highly qualified doctors from Moscow and the Moscow region worked at the Shakhter and

Krasnodon boarding schools. They gave recommendations on care, treatment and rehabilitation of children.

Assistance was also provided to other social institutions. In March 2023, certificates for 1 million rubles were handed over to the Donetsk Republican Specialized Orphanage and the Republican Trauma Center of the DPR Ministry of Health (for purchasing new medical equipment for wound healing).

Additionally, targeted aid is provided to families with children.

For example, a minivan was purchased for a family with many children from Zaporozhye region. The couple is raising ten children, seven of whom are under foster care.

A mother from the DPR with many children received a certificate for a two-story house. The woman is raising eight children alone, since their father, a serviceman, died last April. The family now lives in a small apartment from the emergency housing fund.

Interaction between the Commissioner and international organizations

The Commissioner is open for interaction with representatives of international organizations. Several meetings were held with representatives of international organizations during the period of the SMO.

Thus, in October 2022, the Commissioner met with Karim Atassi, Head of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the Russian Federation. The Commissioner provided detailed information on social support for orphans and children left without parental care from the territories affected by the SMO.

In addition, the representative office, at its request, was provided with additional information.

In January 2023, a meeting was held with UNICEF Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia Afshan Khan. The Commissioner spoke about

the relocation of children from the shelled areas, their placement, finding relatives and reuniting families, etc.

In addition, the Commissioner's office discusses with the International Committee of the Red Cross issues related to the search for and reunification of children with families in third countries. The ICRC received lists of children and contacts of their relatives in EU countries. Representatives of the ICRC also appealed to the Commissioner's office for help in searching for two missing minors, but they have not yet been found, additional search measures have been taken.

Interaction between the Commissioner and Ukrainian authorities

Since the beginning of the SMO, representatives of Ukrainian authorities have not officially contacted the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights. It should be noted that Maria Lvova-Belova is open to interaction with the Ukrainian side, and if official requests were received, they would be considered.

Ukraine's actions against the interests of children

The work of the Commissioner's office directly in SMO zones, communication with children and their parents and analysis of publications in the press show that Ukraine acts against the interests of children:

- ▶ Children are not evacuated from dangerous zones, including those where active military actions are taking place. Children act as human shields for the Ukrainian military and neo-nazi forces;
- ▶ Ukraine harasses Russian families and the orphans of Donbass they have taken into their care, as well as Russian specialists involved in providing humanitarian aid to children in the new regions of Russia, and their families. Threats are made to them by telephone and through social networks. The personal data of the families and specialists is publicly available on the Internet;

► Ukraine puts pressure on parents, whose children have been sent on vacation to recreation camps and returned from recreation camps on the territory of the Russian Federation.

Misinformation in the public space

Unfortunately, information about the work of the Russian Federation and the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights to save and protect the rights of children from the SMO and from September 30, 2022 new regions of the country is misrepresented by foreign mass media and politicians, we suppose, in some cases intentionally and in some cases out of ignorance of the situation.

Analysis of the foreign media shows that the authors of the materials draw conclusions regarding the work of the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights based on unsubstantiated data. Their arguments are abstract, with no names or addresses, and therefore impossible to verify.

In essence, the media are creating fakes.

Frequent statements by foreign media that do not correspond to reality include: "Russia deports children" (about children who have arrived in safe regions), "Russia prevents parents and children from reuniting" (the Office of the Commissioner is not aware of such cases, on the contrary, various efforts are being made to remove any barriers).

Let us also note the problem of the misuse of terms. For example, foreign media often use the term "adoption" to refer to the placement of orphans in foster care in Donbass, when the term "guardianship" or, with a large degree of convention, "foster care," "custody," should have been used.

We assume that such an error may be caused by significant differences in the approaches to this issue in the legislation of the Russian Federation and Western countries.

In addition, hackers attack Russian Internet resources in order to plant inaccurate information in the net and in the press.

For example, on August 23, 2022 the publications Meduza and Mediazona, citing the website Krasnodar's Department of Family and Childhood Affairs reported the following: «More than 1,000 babies from liberated Mariupol have already found new families in Tyumen, Irkutsk, Kemerovo, and Altai region. More than 300 more babies are in temporary custody at specialized institutions in Krasnodar Krai and are looking forward a to meet their new families. On August 24 the state agency published a rebuttal to this information, saying that the material had been posted unauthorizedly, using a vulnerability in the server software, and that subsequently the site had been subjected to a DDoS attack. Nevertheless, the article was the reason for the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry's statement about the illegal adoption of Ukrainian children by Russian citizens.

FAQ

Does the Russian Federation have a program for adopting children? Are there really thousands of children adopted by Russian families?

The Russian Federation does not have an adoption program for children from SMO zones. The information about thousands of adopted children is not reliable. 380 orphans and children without parental care, large family groups and children with disabilities have been placed under foster care and guardianship in Russian families with the help of the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights. No children from the DPR or LPR have been adopted, according to the Commissioner's office.

The existing forms of family placement of orphans in Russia and their differences are described in Chapters «Placement of children left without parental care, under

foster care in the families of Russian citizens» and «Misinformation in the public space».

Are children from the SMO zone forced to change their citizenship to Russian?

After the four new constituent entities became part of the Russian Federation, their residents, including minors, were recognized as citizens of Russia and were given the opportunity to obtain Russian passports. Children from 14 to 18 years old make the decision independently. For children under 14 years old the application is made by their legal representatives - parents or guardians. For orphans and children left without parental care, the legal representatives are the heads of social institutions where they are being raised.

New Russian citizens also retain their Ukrainian citizenship, if they had it before and have not voluntarily expressed a desire to renounce it. Thus, there is no question of changing citizenship.

Before becoming part of the Russian Federation, the DPR and LPR were independent states. Children born there after the formation of the republics received citizenship of the DPR and LPR respectively. Children born before April 7, 2014, mostly had Ukrainian citizenship.

Before the referendum, residents of the DPR and LPR (from 2019), Zaporozhye, and Kherson regions (from May 2022) and their minor children could acquire Russian citizenship through a simplified procedure in order to receive the rights and guarantees provided to Russian citizens, including social benefits.

The simplified procedure for acquiring citizenship does not limit children's rights, but expedites access to new opportunities, such as enrollment in educational institutions in the Russian Federation.

In the absence of citizenship, families with children and orphans can claim only a limited set of social guarantees.

When children reach the age of majority

(18 years of age), they will be able to independently decide for themselves whether they want to remain citizens of Russia. Right now, according to our data from families, if people want to return to Ukraine, they have to give up their Russian citizenship.

Does the Russian Federation have re-education camps for children from SMO zones? Is there military training for children there?

There are no re-education camps in Russia, including camps for children from the SMO zone.

The form of recreation for children in health centers and recreation camps is popular in the country and has been developing for 100 years, during which time an extensive infrastructure has been created. It is only logical, that this type of recreation also includes children from SMO zones.

As a rule, the program of camp shifts involves not only recreation, but also educational and developmental activities.

In November 2022, at the initiative of the Commissioner and the head of the Chechen Republic, a new format camp for teenagers in conflict with the law was held for the first time. The content of the shift is sports and patriotic. The format is aimed at socialization of underage boys, who are on the preventive registry of law enforcement agencies. There were 192 participants from 15 regions of the Russian Federation.

Among them were 30 teenagers from the DPR and 15 from the LPR - all of them came with the consent of their parents. The families have a pro-Russian stance and are interested in the patriotic upbringing of their children.

Since August 2022, at the initiative of the Commissioner, rehabilitation shifts «After Tomorrow» have been held for teenagers from the SMO zone. Initially, the participants were children from the DPR, then there were participants from the LPR, Zaporozhye and Kherson regions, and since 2023 - from

Belgorod, Bryansk and Kursk regions.

The format of the «Day After Tomorrow» shifts is designed to help children recover from the stress they've been through, adapt to new conditions, and find opportunities to build their own futures. After the recreation children return home to their families.

What are the charges of the International Criminal Court?

The Russian Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights does not know what exactly the charges of the International Criminal Court (ICC) are or what they are based on. The Commissioner or her office has not been approached by representatives of the ICC, and no documents have been received or requested.

The phrase «unlawful deportation of population (children)» used in the official communication on the ICC website is bewildering.

The Russian Federation does not recognize the jurisdiction of the ICC. The Commissioner continues to work as usual.

Prepared by the Russian
Presidential Commissioner's
for Children's Rights Office

obr@deti.gov.ru

deti.gov.ru

 t.me/malvovabelova

 vk.com/id52156120