



THE BULLETIN

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



Dear readers!

We have prepared the third issue of the bulletin on the activities of the Russian Federation Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights to protect children during a special military operation (SMO). The first one was presented on April 4, 2023, and the second on October 13, 2023. The issue #2 was translated into seven foreign languages – Azerbaijani, English, Arabic, Armenian, Spanish, Chinese and French.

Our institution has been engaged in rescuing and supporting the children of Donbass since the early days of the SMO. Humanitarian issues and the safety of children and families with children have been and remain our priorities.

To date, there were ten of my working visits to the Donetsk People's Republic, seven to the Luhansk People's Republic, four to the Zaporozhye region and three to the Kherson region. Our main tasks now are to build the work of children's ombudsmen in new regions, develop our strategic programs, and make regional child protection systems more effective.

Another important area we are leading on the order of Russian President Vladimir Putin is the reunification of children with their relatives in Ukraine, Russia and other countries. In total, we have already succeeded in reuniting 70 children with 52 families in Ukraine, not counting those children whose parents from Kherson, Zaporozhye, Kharkov regions and other territories in the fall of 2022 were sent by their own decision to the health camps in the Russian south and were unable to pick them up in time. Also, nine children were reunited with five families in Russia. This requires serious well-coordinated work, in which we receive assistance from international organizations and foreign partners. Each case is a great joy and inspiration.

In this issue of the newsletter, we present up-to-date data, including a list of stories of reunification of children with loved ones in Russia, Ukraine and other countries (see Appendices).

Maria Lvova-Belova,
Russian Federation Presidential
Commissioner for Children's Rights

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. Today, commissioners and advisers to the heads of regions on children's rights act in 88 regions, the approval of the children's ombudsman in Kherson region is expected in the nearest future.

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;
- assistance in reuniting children with parents and other loved ones who were sepa-

rated for various reasons during the period of SMO;

- 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 and partners 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.
- exclusively humanitarian nature of the activity.

Payments to children injured as a result of Ukrainian aggression

Russian President Vladimir Putin has supported Maria Lvova-Belova's proposal for a lump-sum payment to children maimed as a result of Ukraine's aggression. The measure was established by Presidential Decree No. 975 of December 21, 2023, «On social support measures for families with children affected by the aggression of Ukraine».

Assistance has already been received by 241 children, most of them – 128 – in the Donetsk People's Republic. There are difficulties in obtaining payments for children who received medical care in mobile hospitals – they often do not have documents confirming their injuries. The mechanism for providing assistance is being improved.

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

Regional commissioners for children's rights are involved in providing assistance to families and children living in TAFs. The Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights holds regular meetings to develop systemic solutions to urgent issues of assistance to children and families in the new regions. For more details, see Issue #1 of the bulletin «Activities of the Russian Federation Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova to protect children during a special military operation».

Today, the institution of commissioners for children's rights provides medical, psychological, legal, material and educational assistance when necessary and at the request of citizens living in TAFs. For example, in June 2023, in the framework of the humanitarian action «To the children's hands» Maria Lvova-Belova sent humanitarian aid totalling over 700 kg to 135 children from the Shebekinsky Urban District who were staying with their families in one of the TAFs in Belgorod due to shelling from Ukraine. The humanitarian cargo included bed linen, clothes, baby food, hygiene products and educational toys.

Ombudspersons or advisors to heads of child rights in the regions – the DPR, LPR, Republic of Crimea, Belgorod, Bryansk, Zaporozhye, Kursk, Kherson regions, etc. – are engaged in extensive humanitarian activities. They visit families with children living in TAFs, helping them with paperwork, receiving payments, finding jobs for parents, enrolling in kindergartens and schools, and bringing humanitarian aid.

«We organize holidays in TAFs, for example, on Children's Day we held sports competitions and brought gifts for children. In addition, we take the children on excursions and plays»

Inna Mukhina, commissioner for children's rights in the Bryansk region

At the personal request of Marina Peschanskaya, the commissioner for children's rights in Sevastopol, 17 students who arrived from the war zone in the Kherson region were assisted in enrolling in school without a personal file or medical card.

In addition, the children's ombudsmen visit children injured as a result of shelling in hospitals and, if necessary, together with Maria Lvova-Belova help with their referrals to federal clinics.

On January 11, 2024 in Moscow, Maria Lvova-Belova together with the Governor of Belgorod region Vyacheslav Gladkov visited children in hospitals who were injured during the Ukrainian terrorist attack in Belgorod on December 30, 2023. The Russian Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights handed over a medical device for wound healing with consumables to the Children's Regional Clinical Hospital in Belgorod.

Commissioners for children's rights take a proactive role in organizing recreation for children who are suffering from shelling by Ukraine, both from the new regions and from those adjacent to the line of hostilities. They check the conditions in which minors are living in children's health camps, respond promptly to appeals from parents, and provide the necessary assistance.

«Thank you to my colleagues for taking care of our children. For example, in the Astrakhan region, one of the children was sent to hospital immediately after his arrival due to illness. At my request, the regional commissioner for children's rights, Alexandra Bondareva, visited him and brought him sweet gifts, puzzles, art supplies and fruit».

Galina Pyatykh, children's rights commissioner in Belgorod region

Children's ombudspersons conduct personal receptions and work on citizens' appeals, among the main requests are humanitarian aid, assistance in processing documents and payments, and psychological support.

In order to train personnel to work with war-affected children, the Commissioner, together with St. Petersburg State University and the «Country for Children» Charitable Foundation, launched an additional education program. It was attended by 100 educational counselors, teachers, psychologists, and counselors from 26 regions of Russia. The program contains both theoretical and practical modules.

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. This took place between April and October 2022. For more details, see the section «Placement of children left without parental care, under foster care in the families of Russian citizens».

In November 2022, the Alyoshki 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.

At the end of August 2023, due to the assistance of the Russian Federation Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights, a boy from the Alyoshki orphanage was handed over to his grandmother from Ukraine. It took a long time for the woman to get her own grandson out of the orphanage because it was impossible to determine his parentage from the documents. The boy was left at the orphanage by his parents before the start of the SMO. In order to reunite the grandmother

and grandson, the Office of the Commissioner organised a DNA examination with the assistance of the Russian Centre for Forensic Medical Expertise of the Ministry of Healthcare of the Russian Federation. When the kinship was confirmed, the child was handed over to the grandmother in the presence of Maria Lvova-Belova.

All the residents of the Alyoshki orphanage have already returned to their native region, to a specialized social institution in Skadovsk.

In March 2024, the Children's Commissioner facilitated the reunification of a ten-year-old boy from the Alyoshki orphanage with his grandmother. He was transported to the border with Ukraine in an ambulance.

In addition, with the participation of the Commissioner, seven children living in the «Yelochka» Republican specialized children's home for children with damage to the central nervous system and mental disorders in the Republic of Crimea, where they had been sent from the Kherson orphanage, were reunited with their relatives.

In March 2024, the mother came from Ukraine to pick up her two twin daughters. The children were left without parental care in January 2022 and were placed in the Kherson regional orphanage, from where in 2022 they were removed to a safe territory. Subsequently, they lived in the «Yelochka» orphanage in the Republic of Crimea.

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.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has made his position on family reunification clear: «We have never been against children being reunited with their families, if, of course, their relatives are declared. There have never been any obstacles to this, there are none and, of course, there never will be»

In the vast majority of situations, the child is with a parent or relative. In this case, there is a need for reunification with other family members. Difficulties may be due to lack of necessary documents, lack of funds for travelling expenses or family disputes.

There are several ways of reunification:

- families resolve the issue on their own or with the help of volunteer organisations, and no administrative assistance is required;
- families or volunteer organizations apply to the Russian Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights;
- families apply to the official structures of Ukraine, which pass information to Russia, in particular, through the State of Qatar, to the Office of the Russian Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights.

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

To this end, the Office of the Commissioner maintains a database of wanted children. A working channel for co-operation with the Ukrainian side has been organised, which makes it possible to deal with each request. The necessary documents and information are exchanged through this channel, and the process of family reunification is co-ordinated. Children can be in both Russia and Ukraine; there are situations when we are talking about children in third countries, such as the EU. Since October 2023, communication with the Ukrainian side and work on reunification has been carried out mainly through the mediation of the State of Qatar. (For more details, see the section «Cooperation of the Commissioner and the State of Qatar»).

The algorithm of processing a request by the Commissioner's Office consists of six steps:

1. Obtaining the full name of the wanted child and data about the applicant, as well as the presumed place of stay.
2. Sending a request to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for clarification of the place of stay, additional requests to other departments of Russia and other countries.

3. If the child is in Russia, the Office of the Commissioner sends a request to the constituent entity of the Russian Federation with a request to visit the minor and clarify the information.
4. Coordination of the position and the list of documents with the authorised bodies of the constituent entity of the Russian Federation.
5. Request from Ukraine the necessary documents confirming the legal grounds for reunification.
6. Coordination of transfer details with the Ukrainian side; if necessary, co-operation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

In the process of reunification, the Commissioner's Office helps with translation and notarisation of documents, transport costs, hotel accommodation, provision of food and mobile communication, DNA analysis, if it is not possible to document the kinship.

Within the framework of interaction between the Commissioner's office and the Ukrainian side, the Russian-Latvian and Russian-Estonian borders were most often used for family reunification to enter Russia, while the exit could be via them or via Belarus directly to Ukraine. At the same time, both relatives and authorized persons can come to pick up children. Recently, the reunification algorithm has been simplified: since February 2024, families are reunited in Moscow, which shortens by almost a week the route of parents, legal representatives and accompanying persons. From the capital of Russia, they travel with their children to Minsk, and from there – to Ukraine and other countries.

As of June 19, 2024, 70 children from 52 families were reunited with their relatives living in Ukraine and other countries with the direct participation of the Commissioner's office. These figures do not include data on children who were sent by their parents from the Kherson, Zaporozhye, Kharkov regions and other territories in the fall of 2022 to vacation in health resorts in southern Russia (for more details, see the section «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»).

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 region. 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. She 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 to 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 officials the 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 region, 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.

Example 4. At the beginning of March 2022, a girl arrived in Russia with her maternal aunt. Her mother and grandmother knew about it and were in touch with her. As a result of a number

of factors, the girl ended up in a social rehabilitation centre and also got into a bad story, which caused various kinds of legal restrictions that took time to resolve.

In April 2023, from the rostrum of the UN Security Council, the girl's mother Nina Vlasova stated that the child was being held in Russia. She herself could not go to pick up her daughter, as she is associated with the Ukrainian armed forces. The Commissioner's Office started to deal with this case even before the mother's statement. On April 26, an employee of the Commissioner's Office in Lipetsk region met with the girl. Already on May 3, Maria Lvova-Belova's advisor contacted the girl's mother to coordinate the details of her return home.

The girl's own grandmother came to pick her up. The Commissioner's Office helped with the hotel and transfer to Lipetsk region, translation of all necessary documents, and subsequent transfer to the Russian-Latvian border. The woman was accompanied by the Presidential Commissioner's advisor and a representative of the ICRC. The Russian Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights gifted the girl a new cellphone. In May, the girl and her grandmother returned to Ukraine.

Example 5. In July 2023, the Presidential Commissioner's Office helped a grandmother and her two granddaughters, aged 12 and 5, from Donetsk to reunite with the children's mother in Ukraine. The Ukrainian side asked for assistance. The Presidential Commissioner's Office worked out a safe route in detail - through several regions of Russia, then to Belarus and Ukraine. At each stage of the journey, regional ombudspersons for children's rights were involved: they met the children, accompanied them on the road, and saw them off to their hotels and trains. The ICRC provided transport support across Russia and Belarus, as well as accommodation expenses.

Example 6. In September 2023, the Presidential Commissioner's Office facilitated the reunification of a 15-year-old teenager with his mother. The boy and his dad came to Russia after the start of the SMO, they lived in the south of the country, but the child missed his mother, his home school, and his classmates in Ukraine very much. A mother from the Mykolaiv region decided to take her son home. The Presidential Commissioner's Office accompanied her at all stages: it co-operated with the Ukrainian side

to draw up the necessary documents, helped the woman with logistics, and partially paid for travel and accommodation. The commissioners for children's rights in the Krasnodar, Leningrad, Smolensk regions and specialists from the ICRC also contributed.

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

The Presidential 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 or by using the form on the www.deti.gov.ru website., as well as contact the International Committee of the Red Cross: +7 800 234 07 07, rfl@red-cross.ru.

In addition, the Commissioner's Office receives appeals from parents and close relatives living in Russia who are trying to reunite with children who have found themselves on Ukrainian territory.

In total, nine children from five families were reunited with loved ones in Russia with the assistance of the Russian Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights.

Example 1. On October 11, 2023, with the support of the Commissioner's Office and the Ukrainian side, a mother was reunited with her daughter, who had been living in a Ukrainian social rehabilitation centre. The girl had been placed there by the Ukrainian authorities of the system for the prevention of child neglect, having been taken from her father, who had failed in his parental duties.

Example 2. In December 2023, the Office of the Children's Commissioner helped two brothers, aged 9 and 17, and their sister, aged 12, to return from Ukraine to their parents in Russia. They were accompanied by their grandmother, with whom the children, due to family circumstances, had been living in Ukraine since the end of 2021.

The parents tried several times to take the children home, including with the help of volunteers. But it did not work, as the children did not have the necessary documents. In July

2023, the father appealed to the children's ombudsman in Belgorod region Galina Pyatykh. In the end, in dialogue with the Ukrainian side, with the help of the State of Qatar, an agreement was reached to return the children to Russia accompanied by their grandmother. The assistance was provided by the employees of the Border Guard Service of the Federal Security Service of Russia, the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, and the authorities of Belgorod region.

Example 3. In March 2024, a 14-year-old teenager was helped to move from Ukraine to Russia. His grandmother and his own older sister, whom he had not seen for more than six years, were waiting for him here. The boy's parents died, for the last year and a half he lived with a great-uncle. The grandmother had been looking for ways to reunite with her grandson all this time and wrote an appeal to the Commissioner. Their reunification was preceded by active negotiations with the Ukrainian side under the mediation of the State of Qatar.

Example 4. At the end of May 2024, the Commissioner's Office received an appeal from the Committee of Families of Fatherland Warriors requesting help to return to Russia from a woman raising three children – two teenage sons and a young daughter. In 2021, they came together to visit their grandmother in Ukraine, but they could not leave. First they were hampered by restrictions imposed because of the coronavirus pandemic, then the SMO began.

The Migration Service of Ukraine put a stamp in the woman's passport stating that she had to leave the country by 8 June 2024. The family could have left via Moldova, but the daughter did not have the necessary documents for this.

Through the mediation of the State of Qatar, it was possible to agree with the Ukrainian side that the family would be able to leave for Russia. An alternative way of transfer to Russia was agreed upon. Additional assistance was provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross. The family returned to their relatives in the Republic of Bashkortostan.

Reunification cases typology:

1. Lived with parents or blood relatives in the territory of the Russian Federation, reunited with parents or other blood relatives in the territory of Ukraine (29 children)

2. Lived with an unrelated guardian who arrived with children from Ukraine on the territory of the Russian Federation, reunited with a mother from Ukraine who, having come to pick up the children, decided to stay on the territory of the Russian Federation (5 children).
3. Lived with unrelated guardians (close family acquaintances) on the territory of the Russian Federation, reunited with parents or other blood relatives on the territory of Ukraine (6 children).
4. Lived with unrelated guardians (family acquaintance) on the territory of the Russian Federation, reunited with parents or other blood relatives on the territory of Ukraine (1 child).
5. Were in social institutions in the territory of the Russian Federation, reunited with parents or other blood relatives in the territory of Ukraine (29 children).

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 region.

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 were not allowed out by the Ukrainian authorities, the mothers had other children in their arms, and the state of their health prevented the parents from going. Not everyone was able to find a trusted person to pick up their children and the necessary funds for the trip. Families living in both Russia, Ukraine and the EU were assisted by volunteers from both Russia and Ukraine.

Staff members from the Commissioner's Office personally visited children in Crimea to take additional measures for those who stayed longer than others. There was a plan of action for each child. Two children from the group in Crimea were discussed with representatives of the ICRC about assistance in finding their parents who lived in EU countries.

Volunteer organizations in Russia and Ukraine played an active role in family reunification. The latter were afraid to address the Russian authorities and the Commissioner's Office directly.

Inter alia, owing to the Commissioner's efforts, to date all children of Ukrainian citizens who had been on vacations in the Krasnodar region and were delayed in returning have been reunited with their families.

In the Republic of Crimea, of the 2,360 children who had been sent by their parents for recreation, 38 children remained as of April 3, 2023, 6 as of April 19, and 3 as of May 29. The decision that it was better for the children to stay on the peninsula for the time being was made by their parents. As a result, 2 children were taken away by their parents in September, and only one child remained in Crimea as of October 1, 2023 – by the decision of his family. The boy has already reached adulthood and is studying at a Russian university.

Protection of 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 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.

In November 2023, helped Bogdan Yermokhin, who was in the group of 31 children, to reunite with his cousin in Ukraine, as the teenager himself wanted to do so. In Russia, he was living in a foster family of his own volition. He was escorted to Minsk by authorised representatives, and there he met his cousin. To ensure safe border crossing and family reunification, the Commissioner's institution consistently worked out the details with the Ukrainian side, as well as the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation, Tat'yana Moskalkova, and the International Committee of the Red Cross. The Pope's envoy, Cardinal Matteo Zuppi, and representatives of the Apos-

toxic Nunciature in the Russian Federation also provided support.

To date, 12 of the 27 children have reached adulthood, two have gone to Ukraine, and the rest continue to live in Russia by their own decision.

In autumn 2022, the Russian military found 13 children from a correctional boarding school in Kupyansk (Kharkov region of Ukraine) in basements and took them out from under shelling. The children were without teachers and tutors, only three of them had documents. Information about the rest of the children was written with their words.

The administration of the boarding school where they were placed, as well as LPR Ministry of Internal Affairs officers, began searching for the parents and other legal representatives of the remaining children. The Office of the Presidential Commissioner, as well as the commissioner for children's rights in the Luhansk People's Republic, Inna Shvenk, became involved.

Some relatives were found quickly: in November one child was handed over to his mother, in December a boy and a girl were handed over to a guardian-grandmother, in January four siblings were handed over to their father, and in March another boy was handed over to his mother.

In May 2023, there was a reunion of a mother from Ukraine and her son, who was taken from the Kupyansk boarding school. After the volunteers' appeal, the Commissioner's Office helped with logistics, bought air and railway tickets, and provided a hotel. At various stages, the family was also accompanied by the commissioners for children's rights in Rostov region and LPR, and staff of the ICRC.

In June 2023, the brother and sister were picked up by their mother. The last children from this group – also a brother and sister – were reunited with their mother in early September this year. As of today, all children from the correctional boarding school in Kupyansk are in their families.

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. And reunification with the birth family was not possible in the short term due to the crisis situation of the parents and the impossibility of restoring parental rights in the near future.

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.

At the Commissioner's initiative, independent experts are currently conducting a study involving children affected by the military actions in Ukraine, including those placed in foster care. The report is expected by the autumn of 2024.

«My life has changed a lot. Before, when I was in Luhansk, I was, how to say, a slacker. We used to get into fights with the boys there. We were so angry, aggressive. And now, when I moved here, I got... I got an opportunity to play sports. Now there is an opportunity to live well. I had an opportunity to change myself and become a better person».

a boy, 16 years old

The greatest difficulties arose in the course of children's adaptation to new schools, in particular, to the change of educational programmes. According to children, many disciplines were practically not taught in the previous schools. There was also a practice of overestimating grades for children from residential institutions, which resulted in a discrepancy between previous grades in academic disciplines and the actual level of children's knowledge in the subjects after the change of educational institution.

«Is it easier or harder to study at all? Harder. Because in that school, when we were there, because we were in an orphanage, we were always getting higher grades. In my last school I always had all B's, and here I have only two quarters I had all B's, and now I kind of tried to have all B's for the year, but it didn't work out».

a girl, 13 years old

However, some participants of the study note that this change, on the contrary, helped them to increase their motivation to study, to build more thorough educational plans.

«There I studied with C's, and here I got B's [...] I just realised that it is more difficult to get into something here. There, if I had studied even for C's, I could have got into any college at all, but here it's not like that. You have to study here. Well, I realised that here it works out the other way and you have to study.».

a boy, 15 years old

The study found that many children underwent their first full medical examination only after moving to other regions of Russia, which led to the discovery of diseases that had not previously been reflected in their medical history and medical records, and, in some cases, the removal of diagnoses that had previously been made.

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, and in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which recognizes that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.

On the initiative of the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights, the Ministry of Education and Science has issued explanations to Federal Law of 18.03.2023 № 62-FZ «On the peculiarities of the legal status of citizens of the Russian Federation who have Ukrainian citizenship» with regard to orphans and children without parental care who are under guardianship. It states that a change of nationality must be considered in the light of the specifics of the life situation of each individual child, taking into account the presence of close relatives and the nature of their relationship with the minor. A prerequisite for the adoption is the ascertainment of the children's views.

In April-October 2022 adoption was not used as a form of family placement with respect to children from the DPR and LPR.

The Day After Tomorrow Shifts

The Commissioner holds shifts for teenagers from war-affected areas. Since August 2022, thirteen such camps have taken place. Their participants were 2,700 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. Thus, according to the psychologist's conclusions, 36% of the participants of one of the shifts understood their strengths, found new behavioural strategies, and gained an understanding of what they needed to develop in their dream profession. 28% of the children decreased their anxiety, they learnt to fight internal aggression and felt proud of themselves.

«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

«I liked the shift very much because of the kind counsellors who were always on the same wavelength with us and the rich programme. We managed to unite and become a real team. Every day there were interesting circles - in maths, analytics. The camp gave me an impetus to change myself!».

Artem M., 15, Belgorod region

«I am very glad that I went to this camp! I have unforgettable impressions about it! The squad became a big family for me. I will always remember my two counsellors! Thank them very much! If I have an opportunity, I would like to go there again».

Artem V., 17, Kursk 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 Presidential Commissioner receives many requests from those wishing to participate and gratitude afterwards.

In December 2023, the Moscow Region held a shift-festival «The Day After Tomorrow» for 500 teenagers. Its participants compiled an album «100 Ideas from Children», which included the children's proposals for the development of their homeland. Some of the initiatives have already materialised. Thus, in Melitopol, Zaporozhye region, a summer cinema was opened for watching films in the open air. Maria Lvova-Belova, the Russian Presidential Commissioner, visited the site during her working trip in April 2024.

The Children's Commissioner took under her patronage the initiative to organise acting master classes. In April 2024, during a trip to new regions, Maria Lvova-Belova launched the first such event for children and parents – «Theatre begins with the family» at the M. Golubovich Theatre in Luhansk. Larisa Sanatovskaya, executive director of the National Parents Association, and Irina Galanova, a motivational trainer, met with the participants. Vyacheslav Naumenko, artistic director of the Moscow School of Family Theatre, organised a master class dedicated to amateur home theatres using family theatres as an example. Tatiana Nosach and Den Larionov, actors of the Donetsk playback theatre «Besedka», held a workshop on the development of emotional intelligence. Then

children and parents prepared a play and acted out their own improvised performance.

The Governor of the Tyumen region, Alexander Moor, is preparing to send a bus with a library inside to the LPR so that remote areas of the region can have access to literature.

The children's other ideas include excursions to the Golden Ring, compiling an up-to-date Red Book with rare animals and plants, and so forth.

The country's first centre for teenagers and their parents «Pulsar» is preparing to open in Zaporozhye region. Here they will be able to find support for any initiatives related to joint leisure activities, to invent and implement projects useful for families, and to receive counselling and advice from helping specialists.

In addition, at the request of the children, family shifts «The Day After Tomorrow» were organised for 60 families from the DPR, LPR, Zaporozhye and Belgorod regions. They took place in February and May 2024 and included an extensive psychological, cultural, sports and entertainment programme – master classes, sports activities, meetings with interesting people, concerts and much more. The next such shift, aimed at strengthening families and creating conditions for the realization of ideas, self-expression and communication between children and parents, is planned to be held in August.

«The family shift of the project allows its participants to look at their interaction with each other in a new way, discover new character traits of each family member, unite and all together take part in creative, educational, sports and psychological activities, share the secrets of family happiness».

Anna B., supervisor of the psychological service of the project «The Day After Tomorrow», a practicing psychologist.

Additional training was organised for specialists working on the shifts in cooperation with St. Petersburg State University and Moscow State Pedagogical University. The experience of the psychological service of «The Day After Tomorrow» project was summarised and used to prepare a methodological guide for working with children from war zones, new and border regions.

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, 11 and other partners, we launched the humanitarian mission of the Presidential Commissioner – the action «To the children's hands». Its main idea is targeting: work with on concrete requests from concrete families. Humanitarian convoys are delivering supplies to TAFs and operational headquarters of the action in the new Russian regions, as well as to the Belgorod region.

At the moment, five humanitarian headquarters are operating – in Donetsk, Mariupol, Luhansk, Melitopol and Genichesk. From there, humanitarian aid is distributed to needy minors, families with children, and children's institutions, including in areas of active hostilities. In 2023, the headquarters received more than 3,600 requests from citizens. In 2024, 460 appeals were submitted and 1,490 children received targeted aid. They concerned targeted assistance – provision of food packages, personal hygiene products, clothes, stationery, household appliances and furniture, assistance in improving housing conditions, obtaining documents and processing social payments.

As part of the humanitarian action 28 humanitarian convoys were organized, and targeted aid was provided to more than 16000 people. In total, more than 250 tonnes of aid have been delivered.

The humanitarian cargo included medicines and vitamins, specialized food for children with disabilities, wheelchairs, verticalisers, exercise equipment for disabled children, 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.

A young mum turned to the Mariupol headquarters «To the children's hands». Her room in the dormitory was burnt down, her husband died on the SMO. After the death of her husband, the woman spent a month and a half in Mariupol maternity hospital and gave birth to a daughter. They had nowhere else to go. Together with the local guardianship authorities, the staff of the «To the children's hands» headquarters found a place for the young mum in a hostel in Makeevka. They helped her to move and collected everything the

family needed: a pram, nappies, clothes, bedding and hygiene products.

In addition, charitable funds were used to equip computer classes and family-type TAFs, deliver necessary medicines and equipment to children's medical facilities, and help to prepare schoolchildren in the DPR, LPR, Kherson and Zaporozhye regions for the 2023-2024 school year.

In August 2023, musical instruments were purchased and delivered to two art schools in Melitopol, Zaporozhye region. Also in Mariupol, a master class in classical choreography was organised for young ballerinas, which was requested by one of the local residents to the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights.

In September 2023, a charitable campaign «Schoolchild to Schoolchild» took place. 1.5 tonnes of notebooks, diaries, pens, pencils, paints, felt-tip pens, albums and other stationery for 250 children were sent to new regions.

In addition, in the framework of the humanitarian action «To the children's hands», a sports ground has been installed in Mariupol (DPR) in the «Rodina» park.

Children's clothes, educational games, personal items, and equipment for fine motor skills and sensory enrichment were purchased for the Republican Centre for Social Rehabilitation of Disabled Children (LNR).

The Luhansk Republican Children's Home received a specialised hospital wheelchair washer.

Melitopol Regional Centre for Social and Psychological Rehabilitation of Children in Zaporozhye region received ironing presses, TV sets, sports equipment, and costumes for children.

«Happy Childhood» Charity Project

CSince 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.

As a result of the Happy Childhood project in 2023, 15 children's organizations and institutions received assistance worth 28.5 million roubles and more than 4,000 children received targeted support.

Some of the funds raised by the project are used to repair and improve the Shakhter orphanage (DPR), the Krasnodon orphanage (LPR), and the Terpenyevsk boarding school (Zaporozhye region). 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 12 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 Terpenyevsk boarding school.

In March 2023, a team of highly qualified doctors from Moscow and the Moscow region worked at the Shakhtersk and Krasnodon boarding schools. They gave recommendations on care, treatment and rehabilitation of children.

A repeat visit of specialists to the institutions of the new regions took place in April 2024. A neurologist, a psychiatrist, a paediatric rehabilitologist, a psychologist and a palliative care doctor from Moscow examined children in the Shakhtersk children's boarding school (DPR) and the Rovenkovo boarding school for people with special needs (LPR).

The charity event also raised 750,000 roubles to purchase expensive specialised equipment for the Republican Psychological-Medical-Pedagogical Commission (LPR), in particular, an interactive speech therapy mirror, sensory plates, simulators, as well as tests to study children's intelligence and methodological materials.

On June 1, 2023, the «Happy Childhood» charity festival – the first festival of safe content for children of all ages – was held in Moscow. It was attended by more than 6,000 people – the proceeds from ticket sales were used to support the charity project of the same name.

During her working trip in August 2023, Maria Lvova-Belova handed over a new car to the Donetsk Republican Specialised Children's Home (Care Centre), a new car to the Republican Trauma Centre of the Ministry of Healthcare of the DPR, devices for treating wounds with negative pressure, and also presented a

5 million roubles certificate to representatives of the LPR to create a new teenage space.

As part of the project, an interactive speech therapist's mirror, sensory plates, simulators, tests to study children's intelligence and methodological materials were donated to the Republican Psychological-Medical-Pedagogical Commission in the LPR. Expendable medical supplies were purchased for the Children's Regional Clinical Hospital in Belgorod.

Ten electrically powered specialised medical beds were handed over to the Krasnodon orphanage (LNR).

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. In September 2023 a spacious house was bought for a single father of many children who lost his leg during the SMO.

The «White Handkerchief» campaign was a success: it raised 3 million roubles, which were allocated to the needs of displaced persons from war zones, families with children, and organisations promoting the interests of children.

Assistance in rehabilitation and treatment of children

A separate area of the Commissioner's Office work is assistance in the rehabilitation of children affected by Ukraine's military aggression.

In 2023-2024, nine visits for medical rehabilitation and sanatorium treatment took place, in which 246 children participated, all of whom returned home immediately after the treatment programme.

- 15 children from the DPR diagnosed with cerebral palsy, accompanied by their parents, underwent a rehabilitation course in the Moscow region.
- 23 children with disabilities underwent a programme of comprehensive psychologi-

cal, medical and social support in the Moscow region;

- 12 children from DPR with motor disorders due to diseases of the central nervous system, including cerebral palsy, together with their parents and legal representatives, were on resort treatment in the Moscow region.
- 50 children with diseases of respiratory tract, musculoskeletal apparatus, gastrointestinal tract from Zaporozhye region underwent resort treatment in Krasnodar region.
- 50 children with chronic respiratory diseases from the Kherson region underwent rehabilitation and had recreation holidays in Krasnodar region.
- 14 children with disabilities from a residential institution of the DPR were treated in the Republic of Crimea.
- 25 children with disabilities from the LPR residential institution were treated in the Republic of Crimea.
- 45 children from an orphanage in Zaporozhye region were treated in the Republic of Crimea.
- 12 children with their parents and accompanying persons from the village of Novoluganskoye were on holiday in the Krasnodar region.

In August 2023, Maria Lvova-Belova visited 16-year-old Kirill, who had come under Ukrainian shelling in Horlovka and suffered extremely serious injuries, at the Republican Children's Clinical Hospital in Donetsk. The boy's mother had earlier asked the Presidential Commissioner to help with further treatment and rehabilitation in Moscow.

In early September, Kirill was hospitalised in a federal medical centre in Moscow. At the same time, two children from the Shakhtersk boarding school, DPR, arrived for rehabilitation.

The Commissioner's Office assists in organizing the treatment and medical rehabilitation of children with mine blast injuries, including prosthetics. With the Commissioner's assistance, children are sent to metropolitan and federal children's clinics, which are the best in the country in their field. For example, to the Russian Children's Clinical Hospital and the Research Institute of Emergency Paediatric Surgery and Traumatology.

For example, a boy from the DPR suffered a severe mine blast injury and was urgently hospitalised at the Research Institute of Emergency Children's Surgery and Traumatology. The doctors did everything possible to treat him, to carry out all the necessary stages of complex rehabilitation with him and to prepare him for prosthetics. Thanks to specialists from Motorika LLC, the teenager received a bionic prosthetic hand with a handpainted design, which was made by hand and according to his sketch. After learning all the functions of the prosthesis, the boy will be able to use both hands again. The costs of the bionic prosthesis totalled 1.5 million roubles and were paid for from charitable funds raised by the Presidential Commissioner.

In July 2023, the Commissioner assisted in the transport, hospitalization and subsequent rehabilitation at the Research Institute of Emergency Children's Surgery and Traumatology of a 13-year-old boy from the DPR.

Development of children's infrastructure in new regions

With the support of the Russian Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights, three teenage centres have been opened in Belovodsk, Mariupol and Makeevka of the DPR, where children can spend their time in an interesting and useful way. They also run the «Parents' Lounge» project and hold monthly meetings with specialists on child-rearing issues.

In December 2023, with the support of the Commissioner, a day care centre for children with disabilities was opened in Luhansk, where parents can bring their children for a few hours and then take a break and do their own things.

In June 2024, the Regional Centre for Psychological, Pedagogical, Medical and Social Assistance (Melitopol, Zaporozhye region) became one of 15 winners of the All-Russian grant competition «Centres of New Opportunities». The winners will receive up to 2 million roubles to create a new comfortable space for children with disabilities. The competition was held jointly with the Charitable Foundation «Country for Children». The space is scheduled to open in 2024.

International cooperation

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.

At present, some cases involving the reunification of children with their families are being worked out with the active support of the ICRC. Its representatives assist in organising transfers and payment for accommodation, a humanitarian corridor from Russia to Ukraine via Belarus, as well as in finding children who are in third countries and reuniting them with their parents who are in Russia.

On April 5 2023, Maria Lvova-Belova spoke at an informal UN Security Council meeting on the «Arria Formula» on the topic «Children and armed conflict: the Ukrainian crisis. Evacuation of children from the conflict zone». Reports on the situation in Donbass were also presented by Daria Morozova, Commissioner for Human Rights in the DPR, Eleonora Fedorenko, advisor to the head of the DPR on children's rights, and Evgeny Zhilitsyn, a trauma doctor from Donetsk. Aleksey Petrov, head of the humanitarian action «To the children's hands», shared the current results of the campaign.

On May 16, 2023, Maria Lvova-Belova had a working meeting with the leadership of the ICRC Regional Delegation for the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus. The issues of searching for children and their parents or other close relatives were discussed in detail. An agreement was reached to continue co-operation.

On May 19, 2023, the Commissioner met with the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba. The key topic of the conversation was the protection of the rights of children affected by conflict. Measures to prevent possible violations against minors were discussed.

On June 29, 2023, Maria Lvova-Belova held a working meeting in Moscow with Cardinal Matteo Zuppi, President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Italy. The parties discussed humanitarian issues related to military action and the protection of children's rights. As a result of the negotiations, a bilateral group was formed, and within its framework, with the support of the Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs, information is being exchanged on children with whom relatives from Ukraine wish to be reunited, and actions are being co-ordinated.

Cardinal Matteo Zuppi facilitated the negotiation process leading up to the reunion of Bogdan Ermokhin with his relative. Representatives of the Apostolic Nunciature in the Russian Federation help to certify information about the stay of children, as well as families with children and adult citizens in Russia in cases where they are not ready to provide full information about themselves to the Ukrainian side for whatever reason. Thus, in Moscow, in the building of the Apostolic Nunciature, a meeting was held on December 1, 2023 with the mother and her five children, who were reunited in Russia about a year ago and decided to stay here to live.

On July 4, 2023, the Commissioner met with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Qatar to Russia, Sheikh Ahmed bin Nasser bin Jassim Al-Thani. The topic of the conversation included the actions of the Russian side to protect the health and lives of minors facing military action, as well as the reunification of children and parents separated during the SMO.

Cooperation of the Commissioner and the State of Qatar

Representatives of the State of Qatar have been deeply immersed in the reunification process: they have studied the details, assisted not only in negotiations with the Ukrainian side, but also in organising and paying for the transfer and accommodation of children, parents and accompanying persons.

Since October 2023, with the direct involvement of the State of Qatar, significant progress has been made in family reunification:

– eight children from four families were reunited on the territory of the Russian Federation:

– on the territory of Ukraine – 34 children from 27 families.

Representatives of the State of Qatar personally verify all cases of family reunification on the territory of their foreign diplomatic institutions – the Embassy of the State of Qatar in the Russian Federation has already held six such meetings. The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Qatar to the Russian Federation Sheikh Ahmed bin Nasser bin Jassim Al-Thani is often present at these meetings.

Each new case of reunification within the framework of our joint activities is widely and impartially covered both by the media of the Russian Federation and by the Al Jazeera television channel, founded by the State of Qatar, which contributes to the dissemination of reliable information on our work on family reunification at the international level.

Nowadays, in cases of family disputes where parents cannot reach an understanding on their own, it is possible to resort to mediation and reach a compromise with the assistance of a neutral party, primarily for the sake of the children's interests. So far, no one has taken advantage of this opportunity.

Qatar's assistance is not limited to the reunification of children with their families. The State is further involved in their lives, showing genuine concern for their continued reintegration into society and their physical as well as psycho-emotional health.

In April 2024, Qatar hosted a rehabilitation programme for reunited families in Doha, which was attended by 10 children and their families.

The Russian Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights, Maria Lvova-Belova, met with the families in Doha.

Also, as part of the official visit to Qatar, talks were held between the Russian Children's Commissioner and Lolwah R. M. Al-Khater, Minister of State for International Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, on further co-operation.

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.

Over time, a working channel of communication has developed between the Commissioner's Office and Ukraine for the exchange of information, verification of data, and coordination of the reunification process. Work through this channel is regular and constructive.

In October 2023, Qatar became the mediator in the contacts, and on the 24th of April, 2024, in Doha, with the mediation of Qatar, face-to-face talks were held for the first time with the Ukrainian side to discuss assistance to families who want to be reunited and the current lists, including 29 children who live in Russia and want to be reunited with their relatives in Ukraine, as well as 11 children living in Ukraine who are waiting for their relatives in Russia.

Six children from this list were reunited with their relatives in Ukraine on 23 May 2024. Work within the framework of the agreements is continuing.

At the same time, the Ukrainian side in a number of cases delays the process of returning children to their relatives in Russia without taking all possible measures of administrative assistance.

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 is now conducting a mandatory evacuation - without the right to choose which side to move to, although, according to information we have received, a number of families would like to leave for Russian territory.
- 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. Volunteers, humanitarian project workers who help in the process of reuniting children with their families are harassed too.

In April 2023, an orphaned teenager from Mariupol living in a foster family in Russia was attacked with phone calls and messages from Ukraine. He was forced to say that he had been placed in a family against his will and wanted to go back. In response to the boy's refusal, the attackers began threatening the lives of his sisters. To save them, the teenager had to return to Ukraine. The provocation was prevented.

- Ukraine put pressure on parents, whose children had been sent on vacation to recreation camps in Russia, and demanded their prompt return and obliged them to testify against the Russian organizers of the holiday.
- On the Ukrainian side, there are non-profit organisations, such as Save Ukraine, which, without coordinating their actions on reunification with their Russian counterparts, instruct relatives and invent legends, which they in turn tell to border guards. As a result, the time required to cross the Russian border and wait for the preparation of docu-

ments necessary for the transfer of children increases, which is not conducive to rapid family reunification. It also leads to difficulties in crossing the border, in particular when people pretend to be someone they are not.

- Ukraine is systematically shelling populated areas in the Belgorod, Bryansk, Kursk and other regions, as a result of which children, among others, are suffering. The Presidential Commissioner is taking part in providing assistance to civilians in border areas.
- Ukraine supports initiatives to track children using open data.
- Ukraine requires reunited families to testify and present the situation in a light that does not correspond to reality. Comments and feedback from families after crossing the border into Ukraine often change dramatically.
- Ukraine creates fakes that complicate the work to reunite children with their families, in particular, by creating distrust in the actions of Russia among parents and relatives. For example, it publishes information about allegedly wanted Ukrainian children on the www.childrenofwar.gov.ua website. The Commissioner's Office has repeatedly checked the information posted there and found inconsistencies: for example, the children have long since returned home from the health camp and the family has been reunited, but the data about them still remain on the website. Some relatives wrote requests to the site in the first months of the SMO, when for some reason they lost contact, but now the children have been found. Thus, the information contained on this resource about 19 thousand children allegedly forcibly displaced to Russia is not true and cannot be trusted.

Misinformation in the public space

Unfortunately, information about the work of the Russian Federation and the Russian Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights in rescuing and protecting children's rights during the SMO is misrepresented by foreign media and politicians, as we assume, in some cases deliberately, in some cases due to ignorance of the situation or unprofessionalism.

Ukraine has launched an unprecedented disinformation campaign in which the issue of child protection is being politicized to the maximum extent possible. It seems that the Ukrainian side needs not so much to help families as to create a mythological system.

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 departs children» (about children who have arrived in safe regions), «Russia prevents parents and children from reuniting» (the Commissioner's Office 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.

At the same time, the activities of the Russian Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova to protect children during the SMO are as transparent as possible. Information about this work is easily available on the Internet – on the official website of the Commissioner www.deti.gov.ru, on the Commissioner's personal pages and the «Children's Ombudsman» communities in the social network Vkontakte and Telegram. In addition, on a regular basis, the Commissioner gives press conferences, interviews and comments for the Russian and foreign media.

Thus, the press centre of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation hosted two press conferences of the Commissioner in April and October 2022, at which Maria Lvova-Belova gave a detailed account of her work and answered questions from journalists, mostly foreign. The event was held in person and online. A third such press conference is scheduled for June 2024.

In addition, in 2023, the Commissioner gave exclusive interviews and assisted in filming to a number of foreign media outlets. These included the American news channel Vice News, the Japanese television channel NHK, the Italian television channel RAI, the Spanish newspaper El País, the Swiss magazine Weltwoche, the Spanish video blog 100 Giorni da Leoni, the Colombian radio station W Radio, and the British television channel ITV.

Predominantly the same questions were asked in the interviews. It is important to note that some of the publications used the incorrect terms «adoption» and «deportation» again.

In November 2023, a press tour for foreign journalists was organised for the 12th shift of «The Day After Tomorrow». Journalists from the American TV channel ABC News, the Italian newspaper La Repubblica, the Finnish newspaper Helsingin Sanomat, and the Japanese newspaper Sankei Shimbun came to see how children from new regions of Russia are having a rest and to talk to them.

The main fakes created by Ukraine and its supporters regarding the protection of children during the SMO include the following.

Fake #1 «Russia is deporting and exporting children»

It is not true. Since February 2022, the Russian Federation has not deported but has taken in about 4.8 million residents of Ukraine and the Donbass republics, more than 700,000 among them are children. The overwhelming number of children came to the safe regions of Russia together with their parents or close relatives. Children's social institutions in Donbass travelled out from under shelling to ensure the safety of their pupils.

Fake #2 «Russia has a programme for adopting children»

The Russian Federation does not have a programme for adopting children from the SMO zones. Information about thousands of adopted children is inaccurate. 380 orphans and children left without parental care - large family groups and children with disabilities - were placed under guardianship and custody in Russian families with the assistance of the Commissioner in April-October 2022. According to the Commissioner's Office, no children from the DPR and LPR were adopted when the republics were sovereign states.

For more details, see the section «Placement of children left without parental care, under foster care in the families of Russian citizens».

Fake #3 «Russia does not return children from Ukraine»

We have been dealing with the reunification of families separated for one reason or another since the beginning of the SMO, consistently and openly. We promptly process the appeals we receive: we help in finding a child, if necessary, although more often children are with close relatives and their whereabouts are known to their parents. We provide assistance in drawing up documents. We accompany a mother, grandmother or other close person on the territory of Russia, often paying for hotel and travel expenses and organising a meeting. We carry out these activities in co-operation with the ICRC, the State of Qatar, the Vatican.

We also note that a significant number of families are reunited independently or with the

help of volunteer organisations. For more information, see the section «The Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights' Assistance to Family Reunification»

Fake #4 «Russia does not co-operate with the Ukrainian side on the return of children»

Russia has a working channel for co-operation with the Ukrainian side, which makes it possible to deal with individual requests. The exchange of necessary documents and information is taking place, with the assistance of Qatar and the Vatican, the process of family reunification is being coordinated. Children may be on the territory of both Russia and Ukraine. For more information, see the section «The Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights' Assistance to Family Reunification».

Fake #5 «Children from the SMO zones are 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.

Fake #6 «There are re-education camps for children from the SMO zones in the Russian Federation. Military training is organized 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 «The Day 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 Kursk and other regions. The format of the «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. For more information, see the section «The Day After Tomorrow Shifts».

Fake #7 «The International Criminal Court (ICC) order has intensified Russia's measures to reunite families»

This thesis is not true. Prior to the International Criminal Court (ICC) warrant against Russian President Vladimir Putin and Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova, the Commissioner's Office was also working on family reunification.

The ICC warrant, by contrast, has only increased the flow of misinformation and created tension by erecting unnecessary barriers, which is clearly not in the interests of children and families. Parents and relatives who really want to be reunited with their children are afraid to contact the Presidential Commissioner and the Russian authorities, although the Commissioner's Office was working to protect children's rights before the ICC warrant, is doing so now, and will continue to do so in the future.

To date, the Russian Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights does not know what exactly the charges of the ICC are and what they are based on. The Presidential Commissioner or her Office has not been contacted by representatives of the ICC, nor have any documents been received or requested.

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

The Russian Federation does not recognize the jurisdiction of the ICC, and its representatives are wanted in our country.

The Commissioner continues to work as usual.

Assistance in protecting the rights of children affected by the terrorist attack at Crocus City Hall

Immediately after the terrorist attack in Crocus City Hall (Moscow region) on the 22nd of March 2024, the Office of the Russian Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights formed a task force of lawyers to help the victims and

work with families. The tasks included urgent humanitarian aid, counselling, and family support.

Of the seven children affected, five were hospitalised in hospitals in Moscow and the Moscow region. Maria Lvova-Belova visited the children at the Z.A. Bashlyayeva Children's City Clinical Hospital, where she met with the head doctor and made sure that the children received all the necessary help. As of today, all the children have already been discharged, and recovery and rehabilitation are continuing.

In the course of the task force's work, nine children from six families who were orphaned after the tragedy at Crocus City Hall and six children who had one parent deceased became known.

Lawyers helped relatives to formalize custody of the orphaned children. The children are doing well, all the grandmothers are being readmitted to permanent guardianship, except for

the girl who is about to turn 18. The families have been paid money in connection with the death of their parents and have been granted survivor's pensions. Banks wrote off loans and charitable assistance was provided by concerned citizens.

In addition, there were appeals from relatives of the victims – the staff of the Commissioner's office provided consultations on how to receive payments.

Provided legal assistance to an adult girl for guardianship of her younger sister, whose parents died in a terrorist attack. A psychologist was engaged to work with the family.



**Information on children reunited with relatives (in Ukraine)
with the participation of the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights**

Appendix # 1

Nº	Child	Parent or relative with whom the child is reunited	International partners involved in the reunification process	History and actions taken	Date of reunification or handover to an attorney-in-fact
1	boy	father		Children during the period of intense hostilities on the territory of the DPR were found to have been left without parental care and were placed in a social institution. They were sent to an institution in the Moscow region for rehabilitation. The children were handed over to their father on the territory of the medical centre.	June 18, 2022
2	girl				
3	girl				
4	girl	father		The mother died in August 2022. The grandmother was appointed as the children's guardian. The father applied to the guardianship and custody authorities with a request to transfer the children to him. As a result of this work, the children went to their father in Kiev.	November 30, 2022
5	boy				
6	boy	mother		On October 17, 2022, the mother was handed over to the Ukrainian side as part of the exchange of prisoners and civilians. The boy, who was left without parental care, was placed under the preliminary guardianship of his godmother in the DPR. As a result of joint work with the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation, the boy was handed over to his mother via a power of attorney given by the mom to his older brother.	December 13, 2022
7	girl	mother		The children were living in the Russian Federation with an unrelated guardian who had arrived with the children from Ukraine. The children's mother appealed to the Commissioner with a request for assistance in finding the children and reuniting with them. After the children were handed over to their mother, the woman decided to reside in the Russian Federation.	January 14, 2023
8	girl				
9	boy				
10	boy				
11	girl				
12	girl	older sister		The girls and their mother came from the LPR. They were together in a TAF in Ryazan region, where their mother died on December 17, 2022. The girls ended up in the institution. As a result of this work, the girls were taken by their older sister from Ukraine.	January 31, 2023
13	girl				
14	boy	mother		In the spring of 2022, due to the aggravation of hostilities on the contact line, with the consent of the parents, the child was sent on vacation and recreation to the Krasnodar region. Since the mother was in Ukraine and the father's whereabouts were unknown, with the participation of the Commissioner, the boy was handed over to an accompanying person from Ukraine under a power of attorney from the mother. The family was reunited.	March 21, 2023
15	boy	father		In the spring of 2022, due to the escalation of hostilities on the contact line, with the consent of the parents, the child was sent for vacation and recuperation in the Krasnodar region. The mother's whereabouts are not known. The father lived in Ukraine (he was unable to go to Russia to pick up the child). The boy was handed over to an accompanying person under the father's power of attorney.	March 21, 2023

Nº	Child	Parent or relative with whom the child is reunited	International partners involved in the reunification process	History and actions taken	Date of reunification or handover to an attorney-in-fact
16	boy	mother		In the spring of 2022, due to the escalation of hostilities on the contact line, with the consent of the parents, the child was sent on vacation and recuperation to the Krasnodar Territory. The mother has a disability (with limited mobility). The marriage was dissolved. The father was on the territory of the Russian Federation (another family). The child was handed over to the accompanying person under a power of attorney from the father. The boy was reunited with his mother in Ukraine.	March 21, 2023
17	boy	grandmother		Even before the start of the SMO, the boy was placed under the guardianship of his grandmother. Later, at her request, he was placed in the Alyoshki orphanage, Kherson region. Separated by the front line, the grandmother and the boy were parted. With the help of the Commissioner, the grandmother took the child from the institution.	March 27, 2023
18	girl	mother	The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	In early March 2022, the girl, together with her aunt, arrived in Russia from Ukraine; she subsequently ended up in a social rehabilitation centre. Together with the ICRC, the Commissioner helped the grandmother and granddaughter to reunite, assisted in their movement throughout Russia and accommodation, and a member of the Commissioner's Office escorted them to the Russian-Latvian border so that the daughter could later be reunited with her mother in Ukraine.	May 19, 2023
19	boy	mother		The mother asked for assistance in reuniting with her son, who previously lived in Kupyansk correctional boarding school, and returning to the territory of Ukraine. The child was handed over to the mother on the territory of the Luhansk People's Republic. Then a transfer to the Ukrainian border was organized.	May 20, 2023
20	boy	sister		After the mother's death in 2016 and the father's death in 2021, the boy was put under the guardianship of his grandmother. After her death in 2022, he was placed under the preliminary guardianship of his aunt. After the end of the period of provisional guardianship was placed by the aunt in a social institution in Luhansk. A sister from Ukraine, having learned about this situation, showed a willingness to take the boy. The office helped the family to reunite.	May 26, 2023
21	boy	mother		The brother and sister were in the DPR with their grandfather. The grandfather wrote a statement that he did not object to transfer the children to their mother in Ukraine. The children were handed over at the border of Belgorod region to an attorney-in-fact. Assistance was provided by the Russian Federation Human Rights Commissioner.	July 6, 2023
22	girl				
23	girl	mother	ICRC	Two sisters lived in the DPR with their paternal grandparents. The mother from Ukraine issued a power of attorney to the maternal grandmother, who accompanied the children until they were handed over to the mother.	July 13, 2023
24	girl				

Nº	Child	Parent or relative with whom the child is reunited	International partners involved in the reunification process	History and actions taken	Date of reunification or handover to an attorney-in-fact
25	boy	sister		After the death of both parents, the child was in Mariupol. He was placed under preliminary care in a family. On the July 22, 2023, the older sister from Ukraine took the brother with the assistance of the Commissioner.	July 22, 2023
26	boy	father, grandmother		The child was in a social institution in Donetsk. The mother died. The father from Ukraine issued a power of attorney to the grandmother from Ukraine, and a consent to travel within Ukraine and temporary departure from Ukraine between July 1, 2023 and January 1, 2024. The grandmother took the child.	July 25, 2023
27	boy	grandmother		The child was in a social institution in Donetsk. The parents had died. The Commissioner helped the grandmother to come for her grandson.	July 25, 2023
28	boy	mother	ICRC	The child has lived with the father in the Ryazan region since May 09, 2023. The father is not deprived or limited in parental rights. However, the mother reported that the child wants to stay with her. With the help of the Commissioner, a joint meeting of parents and child was organized, at which it was decided that the boy would live with his mother in Ukraine. They were reunited.	August 28, 2023
29	boy	mother	ICRC	The child lived in Zaporozhye region with his grandparents before the start of the SMO, the mother was in Poland. The mother wanted to take the child; the Commissioner helped in reunification.	August 28, 2023
30	boy	parents		The children were in the LPR, the military took them from the correctional boarding school to the LPR institution. Accompanied by an attorney-in-fact, they left for Ukraine to their parents.	August 28, 2023
31	girl				
32	boy	mother	ICRC	On July 27, 2023, a resident of St. Petersburg appealed to the Commissioner with a request to help reunite her nephew, who lives with her, with his mother in Ukraine. Mother and son were reunited.	August 29, 2023
33	boy	grandmother		The child was in the Alyoshki orphanage in Kherson region, where his parents had placed him before the start of the SMO. According to the documents, the kinship between the boy and the alleged grandmother could not be established. The Office organized confirmation of kinship through DNA-expertise. The kinship was confirmed. The child was handed over to the grandmother.	August 31, 2023
34	boy	mother	ICRC	The child was in the territory of the Russian Federation, Krasnodar region, living with his father. The parents decided that the child would live with his mother in Ukraine. The mother took the child to live with her.	September 6, 2023

Nº	Child	Parent or relative with whom the child is reunited	International partners involved in the reunification process	History and actions taken	Date of reunification or handover to an attorney-in-fact
35	girl	father	ICRC	The two sisters lived with a nanny in the Kherson region. The children have not seen their mother for about seven years, she does not participate in their lives and does not help them financially. The court decision dated 2011 on the children's residence with the father was received. On July 28, 2023, the children wrote a statement that they want to go to their father in Ukraine. The transfer of the girls to an accompanying person, for whom the father had provided a consent, took place in Novorossiysk of the Russian Federation. Later the children were reunited with their father.	September 6, 2023
36	girl				
37	boy	grandmother	State of Qatar, ICRC	The boy lived with his mother in the Bryansk region, but she was put in a pre-trial detention center and the child ended up in an institution. The office helped a grandmother from Ukraine, who had obtained guardianship of her grandson, to take him home.	October 14, 2023
38	boy	mother	State of Qatar, ICRC	In 2022 children were evacuated from the Kherson regional orphanage to the Republic of Crimea. The office helped a mother from Ukraine, she came to the Russian Federation to pick up her child.	October 13, 2023
39	boy	parents	State of Qatar, ICRC	The teenager lived in the Kherson region with his grandparents. His mother asked for help in moving him to Ukraine and gave her grandmother a power of attorney to accompany him. The family was reunited.	October 16, 2023
40	girl	parents	State of Qatar, ICRC	The girl was supposed to go to one of the European countries for education after the start of the SMO, but she came to Russia of her own will, where in June 2023 she was placed in a social institution as a person without a legal representative. The parents could not take their daughter away on their own. The family was reunited with the help of the Commissioner.	October 16, 2023
41	boy	guardian (mother's own sister)	State of Qatar, ICRC	The child's mother is a military servicewoman of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and was held captive. The boy lived in the DPR with his maternal uncle. The child's father died. The mother's sister from Ukraine obtained guardianship over her nephew. An attorney-in-fact from Ukraine came to pick up the boy. The boy arrived at his aunt's place.	December 1, 2023
42	boy	mother	State of Qatar, ICRC	Since March 2022, the child lived with his grandmother in the LPR. The mother came from Ukraine personally to pick up her son.	December 1, 2023
43	boy	mother	State of Qatar, ICRC	The child lived with his grandparents in Zaporozhye region. The mother from Ukraine issued a power of attorney for an accompanying person.	December 1, 2023
44	girl	mother	State of Qatar, ICRC	The children lived with their mother's second husband and older sister in the DPR. The mother from Ukraine issued a power of attorney for the eldest daughter to accompany the sisters. They were reunited.	December 1, 2023
45	girl				

Nº	Child	Parent or relative with whom the child is reunited	International partners involved in the reunification process	History and actions taken	Date of reunification or handover to an attorney-in-fact
46	boy	mother	State of Qatar, ICRC	The boy lived with his grandparents in the Kherson region. He wanted to return to his mother. The office arranged the arrival of the mother from Ukraine to Russia to pick up the son.	December 2, 2023
47	boy	mother	State of Qatar, ICRC	The children lived with their grandparents in the Kherson region. The mother came from Ukraine to pick them up personally.	December 10, 2023
48	girl				
49	boy	mother	State of Qatar, ICRC	The father moved with the child from Ukraine to Krasnoyarsk in the Russian Federation, where he lived with the boy. The father ended up in a medical institution after a stroke. The child was in a residential care facility. The mother came from Ukraine to pick up the son.	February 18, 2024
50	girl	mother	Государство Катар, МККК	A mother from Ukraine took the child to her grandparents in the Zaporozhye region in February 2022. The grandmother accompanied the child to Minsk, where she handed the girl over to her mother.	February 19, 2024
51	girl	uncle	State of Qatar, ICRC	In 2021, parents in Ukraine applied to the guardianship and custody authorities to place the children in the Kherson regional orphanage due to the difficult financial situation of the family. From November 30, 2022, the children were placed in an institution in the Republic of Crimea. On December 07, 2022, the parents of the girls died, in connection with which, on November 20, 2023, a Ukrainian uncle took guardianship over them. The children crossed the border accompanied by a person with a power of attorney for further reunification with the uncle.	February 18, 2024
52	girl				
53	girl	aunt	State of Qatar, ICRC	The girl lived in the Zaporozhye region together with her mother. On May 01, 2023, the woman died as a result of shelling. In Russia, preliminary guardianship over the child was taken by the mother's friend, a citizen of the Russian Federation. The girl's aunt in Ukraine took guardianship over her niece. The girl confirmed to the local guardianship and custody authorities that she wanted to go to her aunt. The reunification took place.	February 18, 2024
54	boy	mother	State of Qatar, ICRC	In 2022, the children were evacuated from the Kherson regional children's home to the Republic of Crimea. Accompanied by an employee of the institution, they arrived in Moscow, where they were handed over to their mother from Ukraine.	February 18, 2024
55	girl				
56	boy	uncle	State of Qatar, ICRC	The children lived with their mother in Mariupol (DPR). On November 7, 2023, the woman died. After the mother's death, the children were temporarily sheltered by a distant relative. An uncle living in Ukraine took custody of the children. The children were reunited with the uncle.	February 18, 2024
57	girl				

Nº	Child	Parent or relative with whom the child is reunited	International partners involved in the reunification process	History and actions taken	Date of reunification or handover to an attorney-in-fact
58	boy	mother	State of Qatar, ICRC	At the time of the start of the SMO, the child was at his aunt's house in Mariupol (DPR). His mother wanted to take him back to Ukraine. The family was reunited.	February 18, 2024
59	boy	aunt	State of Qatar, ICRC	On July 7, 2022, while trying to evacuate the mother and older brother were killed, the boy was injured and was admitted to a hospital in Luhansk. In the LPR, a neighbor became the child's guardian. An aunt from Ukraine expressed her desire to take the child. The boy was handed over to her.	February 18, 2024
60	boy	grandmother	State of Qatar, ICRC	The child was in the the Alyoshki orphanage, Kherson region. The boy has a complex disease, due to which the safe movement of the minor requires individual transportation accompanied by two people, one of whom must be male. Also, one of the escorts must have a medical education. The grandmother of a child from Ukraine applied for reunification. The boy arrived in Moscow by train accompanied by the staff of the institution. From Moscow he traveled by ambulance together with his escorts to the border with Ukraine.	March 21, 2024
61	girl	mother	State of Qatar, ICRC	The children were left without parental care and on January 10, 2022 were placed in a hospital, then they were sent to the Kherson Regional Children's Home. Subsequently, they lived in an institution in the Republic of Crimea. The mother from Ukraine decided to take the children. The family was reunited.	March 20, 2024
62	girl				
63	boy	grandmother	State of Qatar, ICRC	The child was in a children's institution in Donetsk. The child's mother died on June 02, 2023. There was no information about the father's whereabouts for a long time. Fragments of remains, presumably of the child's father, were found on the territory of the DPR. DNA examination of the remains was carried out. It confirmed that the remains belonged to the child's father. Documentary confirmation of the information made it possible to establish the fact of the child's loss of parental care from the father and to transfer the child under guardianship. The guardianship was obtained from the maternal grandmother, a citizen of Ukraine. The child, accompanied by an employee of the institution, was taken to Moscow, where it was handed over to the grandmother from Ukraine.	March 20, 2024
64	girl	mother	State of Qatar, ICRC	The boy lived with his grandfather in the Zaporozhye region. The mother, who lives in Ukraine, asked for assistance in reunification, the child also expressed a desire to go to his mother. The boy was handed over to the accompanying person under a power of attorney from the mother. They were reunited in Ukraine.	March 20, 2024

Nº	Child	Parent or relative with whom the child is reunited	International partners involved in the reunification process	History and actions taken	Date of reunification or handover to an attorney-in-fact
65	boy	mother	State of Qatar, ICRC	The boy lived with his uncle and his family in Russia. The mother from Ukraine asked for help in reunification. The boy, accompanied by his uncle, arrived in Moscow, where he was handed over to an attorney-in-fact from Ukraine. He was subsequently reunited with his mother.	May 21, 2024
66	boy	mother	State of Qatar, ICRC	The child lived with his maternal grandparents and older sister in the LPR. The mother wanted to be reunited with her son. Accompanied by his sister, he arrived in Moscow, where he was handed over to an attorney-in-fact from Ukraine. He reunited with his mother on the territory of Ukraine.	May 21, 2024
67	boy	mother	State of Qatar, ICRC	The boy was living with his grandmother in the DPR. His mother from Ukraine asked for help in reunification. With an accompanying person he arrived in Moscow, where he was handed over to an attorney-in-fact from Ukraine for further reunification with his mother.	May 21, 2024
68	boy	uncle	State of Qatar, ICRC	The children lived with their mother in Zaporozhye region. She died in a traffic accident on October 12, 2023. The children lived with their grandmother, who had taken temporary guardianship over them. An uncle from Ukraine wanted to take the children. The reunification took place.	May 21, 2024
69	boy				
70	boy	mother	State of Qatar, ICRC	At the time of the SMO, the mother was in Kiev, and the boy lived with his mother's sister in the Zaporozhye region. Nothing is known about the child's father. The mother was unable to pick up the boy on her own: when trying to enter Russia from Ukraine, she got a refusal. The aunt brought the child to Moscow, where he was handed over to an accompanying person from Ukraine to be reunited with his mother. They are together.	May 21, 2024

**Information on children reunited with relatives (in Russia)
with the participation of the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights**

Nº	Child	Parent or relative with whom the child is reunited	International partners involved in the reunification process	History and actions taken	Date of reunification or handover to an attorney-in-fact
1	girl	mother		The girl's father took the child to an unknown destination without the consent of his former spouse. When the woman appealed to the Commissioner, the girl was in the Ukrainian center for social and psychological rehabilitation. The mother executed a power of attorney for an accompanying person, who brought the girl to her mother.	October 11, 2023
2	boy	mother	State of Qatar	Mom took her son to his grandmother in Ukraine in 2019, but she could not take him back on her own. The office helped to reunite the child with his mother.	December 18, 2023
3	boy	parents	State of Qatar	The children lived with their grandmother in Ukraine due to family reasons. The parents tried several times to take the children home, but they did not have the necessary documents. An agreement was reached with the Ukrainian side, and the children, accompanied by their grandmother, returned to their parents in Russia.	December 22, 2023
4	boy				
5	girl				
6	boy	grandmother	State of Qatar	The boy's parents died and he lived with his great-uncle in Ukraine. The child wanted to move to his grandmother in Russia. After assistance was provided, the family was reunited.	March 19, 2024
7	boy	grandmother	State of Qatar, ICRC	In 2021, a mother and her children came to visit Ukraine, and subsequently they were unable to leave. The children's grandmother appealed for help. The family could not leave because the youngest child did not have a passport and migration rules required them to leave the country. As a result of the arrangements, the family was able to return to Russia and reunite with their loved ones.	June 7, 2024
8	boy				
9	girl				



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