



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE

As delivered by Yuriy Vitrenko, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organisations in Vienna

1572nd meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

Agenda Item 5, "Moscow Mechanism invoked by 41 participating States in relation to the militarization and indoctrination of Ukrainian children by the Russian Federation"

(09 July 2026)

Mr Chairperson,

The Delegation of Ukraine thanks the independent experts - Professor Hervé Ascensio, Dr Elina Šteinerte and Professor Stefan Wolff - for their thorough work under the OSCE Moscow Mechanism.

We also thank the 41 participating States that invoked the Mechanism on 14 May 2026. This sixth Moscow Mechanism mission, invoked since the start of the fullscale invasion of Ukraine, demonstrates that the OSCE continues to confront Russia's violations and refuses to allow occupation and atrocity to become normalised.

Distinguished colleagues,

Ukraine fully cooperated with the Mission. Russia, once again, refused.

That refusal reflects the same pattern documented throughout the Report: concealment, denial and obstruction aimed at preventing accountability and delaying the return of Ukrainian children.

The Report documents far more than isolated human rights violations. It exposes a comprehensive state policy designed to erase Ukrainian identity and replace it with loyalty to the occupying power. Schools, youth organisations, camps, citizenship policies, religious structures and military-patriotic programmes form a single system serving this objective.

The experts conclude that this legislative and institutional framework has been deliberately developed for more than a decade. Tested in occupied Crimea after 2014, it has been expanded and intensified since Russia's full-scale invasion.

The scale is alarming. Up to 1.6 million Ukrainian school-age children remain under Russian control, while at least 582,000 are being educated under Russian state standards in the temporarily occupied territories. Behind these numbers are children taught that their language is foreign, their country has no future, and their place belongs in the service of the aggressor state.

We should therefore use accurate language. Russia's so-called "patriotic education" is coercive indoctrination. Its so-called "security training" is the

militarisation of protected children. Its so-called "integration" is forced assimilation under occupation.

Mr Chairperson,

The Report shows how Ukrainian-language education has effectively been eliminated. Order No. 729 of the Russian Ministry of Education removed Ukrainian language and literature from educational standards in the occupied territories. This is not an administrative change; it is an attack on children's identity, language and cultural heritage.

The same system distorts history and normalises aggression. Compulsory ideological lessons, military symbolism, "Lessons of Courage", letters to Russian soldiers and constant propaganda have become part of everyday school life.

Then comes the military component. Older schoolchildren receive compulsory military training, including weapons handling, drone operation and tactical medicine.

Organisations such as Yunarmiya, the Movement of the First, Voin centres, DOSAAF and Zarnitsa 2.0 create a direct pathway from classroom to military service. The experts also document at least 210 facilities across Russia and the occupied territories where Ukrainian children have been taken. Many of these camps conduct systematic re-education and military training, transforming places intended for rest into instruments of forced identity change.

This system extends well beyond military institutions. Ministries, occupation authorities, Rosgvardiya, the Russian Orthodox Church, youth organisations and even state-controlled companies all play a role. Particularly disturbing is the documented involvement of Gazprom and Rosneft structures in facilitating the transfer and reeducation of approximately 2,200 Ukrainian children.

Distinguished colleagues,

The Report is equally clear about coercion. Parents who refuse Russian schooling face intimidation, fines and even the loss of parental rights. Teachers who resist the imposed curriculum risk dismissal, detention and ill-treatment. Children who continue studying in Ukrainian, speak Ukrainian or express pro-Ukrainian views are subjected to pressure, surveillance and intimidation.

Forced passportisation reinforces this system. Russian citizenship becomes a condition for education, healthcare and other essential services. Once citizenship is imposed, boys become subject to pre-conscription measures and, eventually, military service in the armed forces of the occupying power.

The Report also links these practices to the continuing crimes of deportation and forcible transfer. As of June 2026, Ukraine had documented 20,610 deported or forcibly transferred children. Only 2,274 have been returned. The Mission concludes that Russia deliberately obstructs returns by concealing information, changing children's legal status and creating administrative barriers.

We must reject any attempt to describe these children as "evacuated" or "integrated". A Ukrainian child does not become Russian because the occupying power issues a different passport.

The Mission's legal conclusions are unequivocal. Russia has violated its obligations under international humanitarian law, including Article 50 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. It has committed multiple violations of international human rights law. The Report further concludes that the indoctrination and militarisation of Ukrainian children may amount to the crime against humanity of persecution, while deportation and forcible transfer constitute crimes against humanity.

These conclusions reinforce ongoing international accountability efforts. The International Criminal Court has already issued arrest warrants for Vladimir Putin and Maria Lvova-Belova for the unlawful deportation and transfer of Ukrainian children.

The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry has concluded that Russian authorities committed crimes against humanity through deportation and forcible transfer of Ukrainian children. The European Union has imposed restrictive measures against those involved in deportation, forced assimilation, indoctrination and militarised education. The Register of Damage for Ukraine now includes categories related to forcible transfer and deportation of children and adults, while the International Claims Commission for Ukraine is moving from legal design to implementation.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Russian Federation must implement the Mission's recommendations: end the indoctrination and militarisation of Ukrainian children; stop coercion against children, parents and teachers; reverse unlawful changes to education in the occupied territories; end forced passportisation; suspend all adoptions of Ukrainian children; provide complete information on every Ukrainian child under its control; restore their identity; and ensure their immediate, safe and unconditional return.

We call on participating States and international organisations to implement the Report's recommendations by supporting Ukrainian education for children under occupation, strengthening efforts to locate and return every deported child, supporting rehabilitation and reintegration, expanding sanctions against all those involved—including corporate enablers—and ensuring that no country facilitates these unlawful programmes.

We also encourage the OSCE to follow the example of the **OSCE Parliamentary Assembly by joining the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children**. Such participation would reinforce the Organisation's practical contribution to international efforts to locate, protect and bring home every Ukrainian child.

The findings of this Mission should continue informing accountability efforts, sanctions policy, universal jurisdiction investigations and future compensation mechanisms.

Ukraine will continue identifying every child, securing every possible return and supporting every child and family affected by these crimes. The return of Ukrainian children is not a confidence-building measure or a political concession. It is a legal obligation of the occupying power.

This Report leaves no room for ambiguity. It is now our responsibility to ensure that its findings lead to concrete action. For the children still living under occupation, these violations are happening today. Our response must be equally immediate.

In conclusion, I would like to once again thank the distinguished experts for their invaluable work. Their Report is an important contribution to truth, accountability and, ultimately, to bringing Ukraine's children home.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.