



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
in response to the address by H.E. Ms Vanessa Frazier,
Under-Secretary-General and Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General
for Children and Armed Conflict**

as delivered by Yurii Vitrenko, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to
the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1579th meeting of the Permanent Council,
01 October 2026

Mr Chairperson,

The Delegation of Ukraine welcomes Under-Secretary-General Vanessa Frazier. We thank you, Madam Under-Secretary-General, for your address, and for keeping the protection of children at the centre of the international response to armed conflict. We also highly value your personal engagement with Ukraine, including your first official visit to our country in April, and our constructive cooperation with your Office.

We also would like to express gratitude for your participation in the High-level Side Event on the UNGA margins «Ensuring Accountability for Ukraine», hosted by the Group of Friends of Accountability following the War of Aggression against Ukraine, as well as for your participation in the Second International Conference on Returning Ukrainian Children, Detained Civilians and Prisoners of War in Toronto this week.

Madam Under-Secretary-General,

Your latest annual report leaves no space for complacency. As it was already noted by the Chair, in 2025, in Ukraine alone, 1,899 grave violations against 781 children were verified. The Russian armed forces, one of the UNSC permanent members, remain listed for killing and maiming children, and for attacks on schools and hospitals – for the fourth consecutive year. And this is in addition to Moscow being included in another UN Secretary-General's list of shame of parties responsible for conflict-related sexual violence.

For us here in Vienna, these findings reinforce OSCE's own findings. Already back in 2023, a dedicated Moscow Mechanism mission established that large numbers of Ukrainian children had been forcibly transferred or deported, and that such conduct may amount to the crime against humanity of deportation or forcible transfer of population. It also documented targeted re-education and military education, changes to nationality, adoption and other assimilation measures, as well as obstacles to family reunification.

This year's Moscow Mechanism mission exposed these practices' further institutionalisation. The experts found a "system of purposeful design" combining education, youth policy, citizenship rules and repressive legislation to indoctrinate and militarise Ukrainian children and suppress dissent. Ukrainian-language instruction has been eliminated; schoolchildren are taught weapons handling, UAV operation and tactical medicine; and boys in the occupied territories receive pre-conscription notices from the age of 16. The Mission concluded that systemic indoctrination and militarisation

may amount to the crime against humanity, and identified probable war crimes, including unlawful deportation and transfer, torture and inhuman treatment.

The sequence is clear. The 2023 mission documented the removal of Ukrainian children from their families, communities and country. The 2026 mission documented the top-down state machinery designed to remove Ukraine from the child – identity, language, historical memory and citizenship, turning them into mankurts.

Madam Under-Secretary-General,

In this context Ukraine highly values the Children and Armed Conflict mandate and counts on your continued principled engagement, including in line with the UN general Assembly resolution on the return of all children, that you rightly mentioned, through independent monitoring, access, tracing, family reunification and safe return. Russia must provide complete and verifiable information on every Ukrainian child under its control, cease unlawful transfers and adoptions, forced passportisation, indoctrination and militarisation, and facilitate their safe, unconditional and expeditious return.

Dear colleagues,

The return of Ukrainian children is not a confidence-building measure, a concession or a bargaining chip. It is a legal and humanitarian obligation.

The evidence is already on the table. What is missing is not proof. What is missing is Russia's compliance.

Ukraine will continue working with the United Nations, the OSCE and all partners until every Ukrainian child is located and brought home. We call on all Participating States to support practical efforts on tracing, return, rehabilitation and reintegration, as well as accountability for crimes against children.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.