

CHILDREN: 20,651 NAMES

Ukraine has recorded 20,651 children deported or forcibly transferred to Russia or occupied territory. 2,665 have come home. The ICC issued its first arrest warrants of the war — for Vladimir Putin and Maria Lvova-Belova — for exactly this crime. The Commission of Inquiry has found the transfers to be a war crime.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB

VERIFIED RECORD

OCT 2026

20,651

children recorded as deported or forcibly transferred B

Commissioner for Human Rights of Ukraine, childrenofwar.gov.ua · 7 Oct 2026

2,665

returned to Ukraine, through mediation by Qatar, the Holy See, the UAE and others B

Bring Kids Back UA; Commissioner for Human Rights · 7 Oct 2026

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ICC arrest warrants: Putin and Lvova-Belova, unlawful deportation and transfer of children A

ICC Pre-Trial Chamber II, 17 Mar 2023

835

children killed since Feb 2022 among 17,257 civilian deaths verified by OHCHR A

OHCHR, as of 31 Aug 2026 (UN USG DiCarlo, UNSC 23 Sep 2026)

WHAT HAPPENED

The mechanism. Children removed from occupied areas — from institutions, "evacuations", summer "camps", filtration — placed in Russian families or facilities; citizenship and adoption decrees (May 2022, Jan 2024) make return harder; re-education programmes documented across dozens of sites.

Verification. The national register (Commissioner for Human Rights) records cases with identifying data; Yale Humanitarian Research Lab has mapped the camp network and identified thousands of children by name; the Commission of Inquiry confirmed the pattern and its unlawfulness.

Returns. Case-by-case: 2,665 children as of 7 Oct 2026, mostly through third-country mediation. Identification of children already relocated inside Russia remains the bottleneck; Russia has not provided lists.

WHO VERIFIED IT

- A ICC, 17 Mar 2023: warrants for Putin and Lvova-Belova — war crime of unlawful deportation and transfer of population (children), art. 8(2)(a)(vii), 8(2)(b)(viii)
- A Commission of Inquiry, A/HRC/52/62 (2023): transfers and deportations of children violated IHL and amount to a war crime; reiterated in 2024–25 reports
- A OHCHR: verified child casualties (835 killed as of 31 Aug 2026)
- B Commissioner for Human Rights of Ukraine (childrenofwar.gov.ua); Bring Kids Back UA (Office of the President); Ministry of Reintegration
- C Yale Humanitarian Research Lab (camp network, identifications); Save Ukraine; ICMP

LEGAL QUALIFICATION — THREE LAYERS

ESTABLISHED

ICC warrants (17 Mar 2023) and COI findings: unlawful deportation and transfer of children is a war crime established at the level of international findings. Genocide Convention art. II(e) ("forcibly transferring children of the group to another group") is engaged on the face of the facts.

PATTERN

Rome Statute art. 8(2)(a)(vii), 8(2)(b)(viii); Fourth Geneva Convention arts. 49, 50; AP I art. 78. The combination of removal, citizenship imposition and adoption decrees forms a single policy, not isolated acts.

POSITION

Ukraine qualifies the policy as an act of genocide under art. II(e) of the Convention and art. 6(e) Rome Statute, and as the crime against humanity of deportation (art. 7(1)(d)). Pending international findings.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

President of the Russian Federation	Decrees of 30 May 2022 and 4 Jan 2024 simplifying citizenship and adoption of Ukrainian children	Vladimir Putin — ICC arrest warrant, 17 Mar 2023
Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights	Maria Lvova-Belova — organisation of transfers and placements	ICC arrest warrant, 17 Mar 2023
Occupation administrations	Removal from institutions and families in occupied Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk, Luhansk regions	EU/UK/US/Canada sanctions on named officials
Camp and institution network	43+ facilities mapped (Yale HRL)	Sanctions on operators; evidence shared with ICC OTP

RUSSIA SAID / THE RECORD SAYS

RUSSIA (STANDING POSITION)
Children were "evacuated" from combat zones for their safety; placement in families is "humanitarian".

LVOVA-BELOVA, VARIOUS DATES
Numbers are small; children are "happy".

AMB. NEBENZIA, ARRIA, 14 OCT 2026
The UN "is doing everything to avoid documenting the crimes of the Kiev regime".

THE RECORD
The ICC rejected this framing when issuing warrants. Evacuation ends with return; Russia has not published lists and has naturalised and adopted children instead.

THE RECORD
Ukraine has 20,651 recorded cases with identifying data. Children returned describe re-education, name changes and separation from relatives.

THE RECORD
OHCHR reports casualties on both sides of the line (496 civilians killed in Russia Jan–Sep 2026). The UN's findings on children are a matter of record: ICC warrants and COI reports.

WHAT WE ASK OF MEMBER STATES

- Join or reaffirm membership of the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children; raise the ICC warrants whenever Russia speaks of "evacuation".
- Demand that Russia provide complete lists of children in its custody to the ICRC and the UN.
- Support third-country mediation channels (Qatar, Holy See, UAE) and the identification work of Yale HRL and ICMP.
- No settlement without a return mechanism for children; no amnesty for art. 8(2)(a)(vii).