

UN Investigators: Russian Deportation of Ukrainian Children a 'War Crime'

By [AFP](#)

March 16, 2023



AP Photo / Michal Dyjuk

Russia's forced transfer and deportation of Ukrainian children to areas under its control amounts to a war crime, UN investigators said Thursday, adding that they are probing allegations of genocide in the Ukraine conflict.

Presenting their first report, the high-level team of investigators said they had determined that Russian authorities had committed "a wide range of war crimes" since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. They also warned of possible crimes against humanity.

But Erik Mose, chairman of the Commission of Inquiry, said that so far they had "not found that there has been a genocide within Ukraine."

Asked about specific accusations of genocide, including the forced transfer of Ukrainian children to areas under Russian control, Mose said: "We are absolutely aware of these

possibilities, and we will pursue this" if the commission's mandate is prolonged.

The investigators' report did however conclude that the forced deportations of Ukrainian children "violate international humanitarian law, and amount to a war crime."

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The Kyiv government believes that as many as 16,221 Ukrainian children have been deported to Russia as of last month.

The investigators said they could not verify the figures but said they had documented that Russian officials had taken measures to place transferred Ukrainian children in institutions and foster homes and to give them Russian citizenship.

The investigators said they had reviewed in detail incidents concerning the transfer of 164 children, aged four to 18, from the Ukrainian regions of Donetsk, Kharkiv, and Kherson.

They said parents and children had spoken of youngsters being informed by Russian social services that they would be placed in foster families or adopted, and said children "expressed a profound fear of being permanently separated" from relatives.

The report highlighted numerous other Russian violations in Ukraine that it said amounted to war crimes, including widespread attacks on civilians and infrastructure, killings, torture, rape, and other sexual violence.

It also said Moscow could be responsible for the even more serious "crimes against humanity," pointing to the wave of Russian attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure that began last October, and to a "widespread pattern of torture and inhuman treatment" in areas under Russia's control.

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