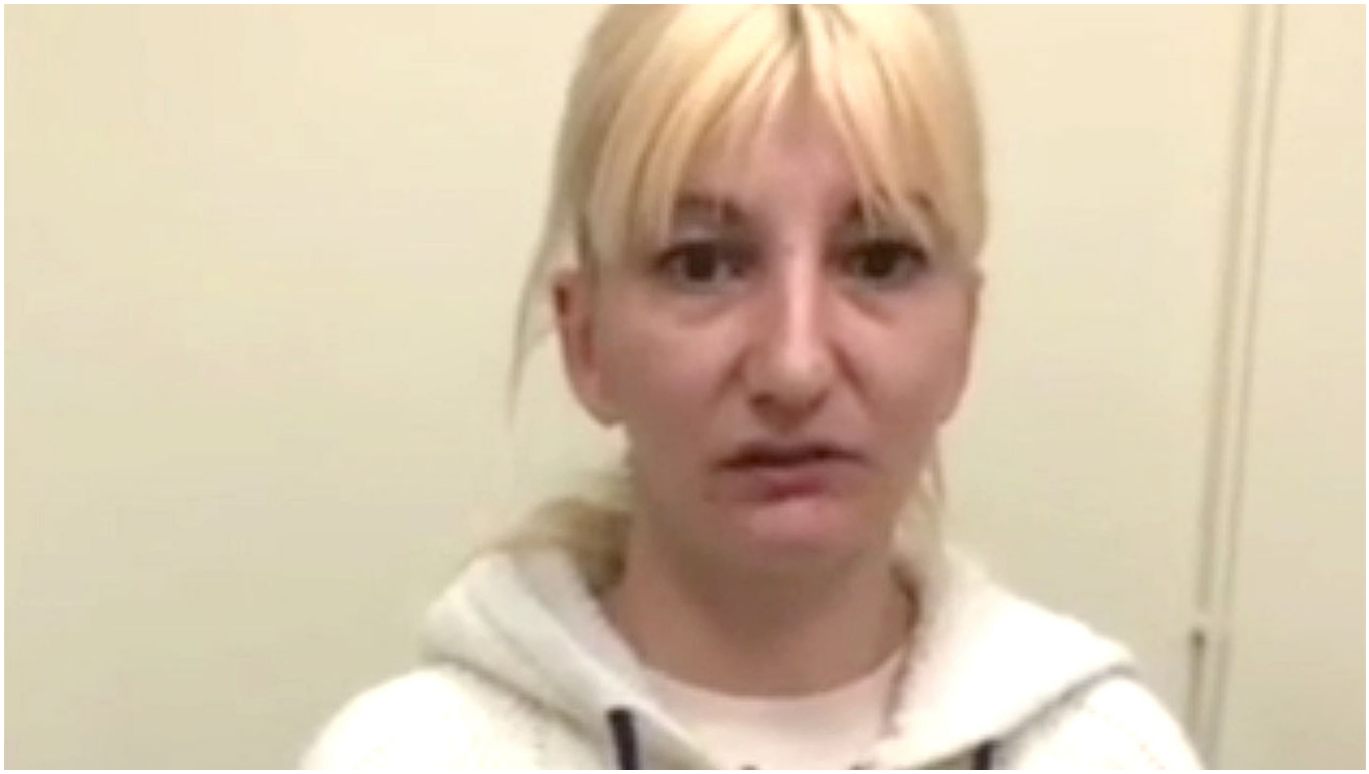
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Russia Deports Ukrainian Woman Seeking to Retrieve Godson – Reports

May 31, 2023



Olga Hurulia **Video grab**

A Ukrainian woman seeking to return her forcibly transferred godson and his brother from Russia has been detained and deported from Moscow, state media reported Tuesday.

Olga Hurulia said she was instructed to retrieve the two boys, who had been taken from southern Ukraine's Moscow-occupied Kherson region, according to a video of her interrogation at Moscow's Domodedovo Airport published by the state-run RIA Novosti news agency.

An unnamed security source was cited as saying that Hurulia had been "instructed by the Save Ukraine foundation," claiming that the charitable fund works with Ukraine's SBU security service.

Save Ukraine told the BBC's Russian service that Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) agents detained Hurulia on May 23 and threatened to imprison her for 15 years.

She was deported to Belarus without her 17-year-old godson and his brother several days ago, according to the BBC.

Related article: Activists Map Deported Ukrainian Children in Russia

Save Ukraine told the Kyiv Independent news outlet that Hurulia had the needed documents to prove her family connections with the children but was forced to deny those connections under duress.

Ukrainian media featured Hurulia in a July 2022 report on life in Kherson under Russian occupation before Ukrainian forces reclaimed the city last fall.

Kyiv says more than 19,000 Ukrainian children have been deported to Russia since invading Ukraine in February 2022, with many believed to have been placed in institutions and foster homes.

Ukraine has returned 371 of these children so far, according to President Volodymyr Zelensky.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) in March issued an arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin and his children's rights commissioner over the "unlawful deportation" of Ukrainian children.

A UN investigation has determined that Russia's forced transfer and deportation of Ukrainian children to Russian-controlled areas amounts to a war crime.

The pan-European rights group's parliamentary body, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), determined last month that the forcible transfer of Ukrainian children to Russia amounts to "genocide."

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