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Finland Orders Russian Asylum Seeker to Return Children to Russia – Media

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The supreme court of Finland. **Eetu (CC BY-SA 4.0)**

Finland's Supreme Court has ordered a Russian asylum seeker to return his two children to their mother in Russia despite their fears of being viewed as "traitors," Finnish media reported Wednesday.

According to the Helsingin Sanomat daily, the father applied for asylum on behalf of himself and his children — aged 10 and 12 — after bringing them to Finland illegally last fall. Their mother has sought legal action to return the children to Russia.

The outlet did not identify any of the family members by name.

A court of appeals in Helsinki initially rejected the mother's demand for the children to be returned to Russia due to the risk of "emotional harm," Helsingin Sanomat reported.

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The publication said one of the children was enrolled in a cadet school program, which provides basic military training to students, while the second is a member of Russia's *Yunarmia* — or Youth Army — a "youth military-patriotic movement" backed by Russia's Defense Ministry.

Finland's Supreme Court overturned the lower court's ruling after the mother promised to keep her older child away from the cadet school program, Helsingin Sanomat said.

The court argued that the children's interests are "best realized with their mother" despite their own opposition to being sent back to Russia.

The 12-year-old child claimed that they would be considered "traitors" in Russia for having traveled to Finland, according to Helsingin Sanomat.

The children previously stayed with their mother after their father moved out of the family home seven years ago.

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