

Ukraine Says 10 Children Returned From Occupied Territories

By [AFP](#)

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Ten Ukrainian children and their families have been returned to territory controlled by Ukraine's armed forces after living under Russian occupation, authorities in Kyiv said Thursday.

Ukraine has accused Moscow of abducting almost 20,000 children from parts of the east and south of the country, while many more have found themselves living under Russian occupation after Moscow's troops invaded in February 2022.

"The children and their families lived in the temporarily occupied territories in the Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions," human rights ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets said.

Lubinets said the children were recovering from the "horrors" they experienced and accused Moscow-backed officials of forcing the children to attend Russian schools and sing the

Russian national anthem.

He also said the families had been pressured to take up Russian passports as a pre-requisite for receiving essential services including medical care.

Kyiv has made returning the children to Ukrainian-controlled territory a diplomatic priority. Russia claims it moved some Ukrainian children from their houses or orphanages for protection.

Last year, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin and his children's rights commissioner, Maria Lvova-Belova, over the abduction allegations.

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