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Moscow Returns 8 Ukrainian Children With Qatari Mediation

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Moscow has returned eight Ukrainian children to their families with the assistance of Qatari mediators, Russia's presidential children's rights commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova announced Thursday.

Lvova-Belova, who said the children are between the ages of 5 and 15, shared two photos of them with their guardians inside the Qatari Embassy in Moscow.

She said most of the children were being reunited with their mothers — and one with their father — after living with their grandmothers in Russia. A brother and sister were being reunited with their aunt in Ukraine after staying in an orphanage following their mother's death, she added.

Since July 2023, Qatar has helped facilitate the return of dozens of Ukrainian children taken to Russia and occupied territories.

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Kyiv accuses Moscow of unlawfully deporting more than 19,000 Ukrainian children since the full-scale invasion, a claim Russia denies.

In 2023, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Lvova-Belova and Russian President Vladimir Putin on charges of the illegal deportation of Ukrainian children.

Russia says 15 children from 10 families have been reunited with relatives in Russia, while 95 children from 74 families have been returned to Ukraine.

Kyiv disputes Moscow's characterization of the process as a "child exchange," emphasizing that Ukraine has not kidnapped or detained Russian children.

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