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Melania Trump Says Has 'Open Channel' With Putin on Ukrainian Kids

By AFP

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U.S. First Lady Melania Trump said Friday she had been communicating with Russian President Vladimir Putin on the fate of children abducted by Russia in the Ukraine war.

In an announcement at the White House, the 55-year-old said eight children had been reunited with their families in the past 24 hours following negotiations between her team and Putin's.

Melania Trump said that Putin had responded to a letter she sent via her husband, President Donald Trump, at a summit in Alaska in August that otherwise failed to provide a breakthrough in ending Russia's invasion.

"Much has unfolded since President Putin received my letter last August. He responded in writing signaling a willingness to engage with me directly and outlining details regarding the

Ukrainian children residing in Russia," she told reporters.

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"Since then, President Putin and I have had an open channel of communication regarding the welfare of these children."

The Slovenian-born former model said that both sides had also had "several back channel meetings and calls, all in good faith."

"My representative has been working directly with President Putin's team to ensure the safe reunification of children with their families between Russia and Ukraine," she said.

"In fact, eight children have been rejoined with their families during the past 24 hours," adding that one of them had been displaced by fighting and was returning from Ukraine to Russia.

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