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Russia Returns 7 Ukrainian Children to Their Families in Initiative Backed by Melania Trump

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Melania Trump. **The White House**

Russia has returned seven Ukrainian children to their families with the help of U.S. First Lady Melania Trump, the White House said Thursday.

Six boys and one girl were reunited with their families in Ukraine as part of Trump's "reunification initiative."

The Kremlin's children's rights commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova confirmed the return and thanked the first lady for her "unwavering commitment and involvement in the effort."

Trump said in October that she had been in touch with Russian President Vladimir Putin via a representative about the fate of Ukrainian children who have been taken to Russia since the full-scale invasion in February 2022.

She said that Putin had responded to a letter she sent via her husband, President Donald

Trump, at a summit with the Russian leader in Alaska in August.

Lvova-Belova and Putin are wanted by the International Criminal Court for the suspected unlawful transfer of Ukrainian children into Russia, an act prosecutors classify as a war crime. Russia, which does not recognize the ICC, has dismissed the charges.

Kyiv accuses Moscow of deporting more than 19,000 children since the start of the full-scale invasion, a claim Russia denies. Ukraine's Foreign Ministry said Thursday that only 1,850 children had been returned so far.

The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on Wednesday, which was joined by the United States, demanding that Russia immediately return all forcibly transferred Ukrainian children.

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