

Russia Committed Crimes Against Humanity in Transferring Ukrainian Children, UN Inquiry Says

By [AFP](#)

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Russia's deportation and forcible transfer of Ukrainian children amounts to a crime against humanity, a United Nations investigative body said Tuesday.

The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine said it had gathered evidence showing that "Russian authorities have committed the crimes against humanity of deportation and forcible transfer, as well as enforced disappearance of children."

The probe was established by the United Nations Human Rights Council shortly after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Investigators said Russia had deported or transferred "thousands" of children from occupied areas of Ukraine, confirming 1,205 cases so far.

“Four years on, 80% of the children deported or transferred in the cases investigated by the commission have not returned,” the report said.

The inquiry found that Russian authorities had failed to establish an effective system to facilitate the children’s return and instead focused on placing them long-term with families or institutions in Russia. In many cases, relatives were not informed of the children’s whereabouts.

The commission also reaffirmed its earlier finding that Russian authorities had unlawfully deported and transferred children and had “unjustifiably delayed their repatriation,” which it said also constitutes a war crime.

The measures “were not guided by the best interests of the child” and violated international law, the investigators said.

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The commission said the involvement of President Vladimir Putin, “including through his direct authority over entities that have steered and executed this policy, has been visible from the outset.”

In 2023, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Putin, accusing him of unlawfully deporting Ukrainian children.

The issue remains highly sensitive in Ukraine and has become a key point in discussions about a potential peace agreement between Kyiv and Moscow.

According to the Ukrainian government, nearly 20,000 children have been forcibly removed since Russia’s full-scale invasion began in 2022.

Russia has said it transferred some children from their homes or orphanages to protect them from hostilities.

The findings of the report, which also examined Russian criminal trials connected to the war and other issues, are scheduled to be presented on Thursday at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Russia does not recognize the commission and has not responded to its requests for access, information or meetings.

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