



ASSOCIATION OF REINTEGRATION  
OF CRIMEA

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*To Expert Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children*

**Russian Aggression in Ukraine and  
Challenges to Trafficking in Women and Children**

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Our Association of Reintegration of Crimea (ARC)<sup>1</sup>, is non-governmental expert and human rights organisation, with activities devoted to Crimea's issues. ARC's expert researches are related with human rights of Crimean residents and ethnic groups, including social and economic rights. Since 2020 we sent more than 150 submissions and proposals to UN human rights' strictures, major part of them were published in the UN web-sources, including the issues of women and children rights<sup>2345</sup>

*Regarding questionnaire of UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children we submit such information describing situation on Russia-occupied territories of in Ukraine*

In 2014 Russia occupied Crimea and some areas on East of Ukraine.

We informed UN rapporteurs in October 2021<sup>6</sup> that criminal groups, involved in the child sexual abuse and child trafficking in the Crimea, are closely connected to Russia's special services and to the so-called "Crimean republican authorities"<sup>7</sup>. So there is no surprise that, no "criminal cases" or "court decisions" on those issues have been initiated or finalized in the Crimea by Russia de-facto "authorities" since 2014<sup>8</sup>.

We informed UN rapporteurs that such groups, involved in the child sexual abuse and child trafficking in the Crimea, have features of ethic-grounded criminal entities that operate in Yalta<sup>9</sup>, Alushta<sup>10</sup> and other places<sup>11</sup>. They have close connection with "Crimean republican authorities" as the "Head of the Republic of Crimea" Sergey Aksyonov<sup>12</sup>, "Head of State Council of the Republic of Crimea" Vladimir Konstantinov<sup>13</sup>, head of "Supreme Court of the Republic of Crimea" Igor Radionov<sup>14</sup> and others<sup>15</sup>. Sergey Aksyonov played a key role in the

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.journal-officiel.gouv.fr/associations/detail-annonce/associations\\_b/20210005/1348](https://www.journal-officiel.gouv.fr/associations/detail-annonce/associations_b/20210005/1348)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/OlderPersons/OlderWomen/submissions-csos/Association-reintegration-Crimea.docx>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/CEDAW/DGD24June2021/Oral\\_statements/Part1/31.DOC](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/CEDAW/DGD24June2021/Oral_statements/Part1/31.DOC)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Women/SR/Femicide/2021-submissions/CSOs/association-of-reintegration.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/Association%20of%20Reintegration%20of%20Crimea.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Children/SR/GA76/Association-of-reintegration-of-crimer.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220513192034/https://arc.construction/5153?lang=ru>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/children/cfi/vulnerabilities-children/csos/2022-07-26/submission-sdgs-cso-ARC-second-submission.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220609150130/https://arc.construction/10072>

<sup>10</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220807154450/https://arc.construction/10172>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/children/sr/cfi-chidrenvictims/csos/2023-01-23/submission-reparation-hrc52-cso-association-of-reintegration-of-crimea.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220607092333/https://arc.construction/8656>

<sup>13</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220615101543/https://arc.construction/6015>

<sup>14</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220527225826/https://arc.construction/8712>

criminal group “Seylem” before 2014, while Vladimir Konstantinov is a de facto boss of the concern “Consol” closely connected with the criminal world. Thus, the criminal groups that use forced labour in Crimea (including youth sexual exploitation in digital environment), are subordinated and closely cooperate with the Russian de facto “authorities”.

We informed UN rapporteurs that these criminal groups operate internationally, with connections to some regions of Russia like Moscow Region<sup>16</sup>, Ossetia<sup>17</sup>, Chechnya, Tatarstan, Bashkortostan<sup>18</sup> and Ukraine’s mainland. The ethnic criminal group from Yalta is connected with child trafficking and child pornography, including Internet and other digital forms, as well as with forced labour in building sector, and in the same time this group is the key sponsor of so-called “Friends of Crimea” project<sup>19</sup>, co-ordinated by the Russian government, with participation of extremist and marginal politicians from Austria<sup>20</sup>, Italy, Germany, France<sup>21</sup> etc. We informed UN rapporteurs that the “Crimean authorities”, including the highest “judges” are totally corrupted and connected to the organised criminal groups involved in the child sexual abuse and child trafficking in Crimea, including digital environment, that enjoy impunity.

Since 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2022 Russia commits broad and open military aggression to all Ukraine’s territory against Ukrainian mainland.

Due last twenty eight monthes Russia occupied some territories of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhya regions and active hostilities were are going with total population of thousands of persons near the frontline and millions in the occupied zones.

Russia-controlled troops and mercenaries committed in Ukraine, during this aggressive operation, gross violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights’ law already, including broad crimes against women<sup>22</sup>.

Russia commenced an unprovoked invasion throughout Ukrainian territory, which is already causing catastrophic harms to Ukraine and its people, including gross violation the international humanitarian law and destruction the fundamental human rights<sup>23242526272829</sup>. All war crimes, committed by Russian invaders during ongoing hostilities, are connected with absolutely clear Russia’s war targets in maximal destruction the civil infrastructure, including objects, essential for human security, sustainable developent and ecologic systems<sup>303132333435</sup>.

So millions of Ukrainians, including women and children, who are extremely vulnerable in conditions of the interstate conflict, lost their houses and save access to medical and social services due to Russian aggression and related hostilities<sup>36</sup>.

Russia’s broad-scale aggression created principal barriers facing these realization by

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/children/sr/cfis/entertainment-industry/subm-study-sexual-abuse-cso-association-reintegration-crimea.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220608185639/https://arc.construction/10705>

<sup>17</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220807152501/https://arc.construction/3537>

<sup>18</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220608181507/https://arc.construction/13499>

<sup>19</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220609150130/https://arc.construction/10072>

<sup>20</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220609150222/https://arc.construction/8345>

<sup>21</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220706035205/https://arc.construction/13035>

<sup>22</sup> <https://sofrep.com/news/russian-soldiers-gang-raped-ukrainian-woman-as-her-child-was-crying-in-the-next-room/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/182/182-20220307-PRE-01-00-EN.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-60888528>

<sup>25</sup> <https://hromadske.radio/en/news/2022/03/09/members-of-the-wagner-group-have-been-killed-in-ukraine>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60547807>

<sup>27</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220326173016/https://arc.construction/26892>

<sup>28</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1113652>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/03/ukraine-apparent-war-crimes-russia-controlled-areas>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2022/ukraine-before-after-destruction-photos/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2022/ukraine-before-after-destruction-photos/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://nv.ua/kharkiv/harkov-obstrel-y-skolko-domov-razrusheno-dannye-31-marta-novosti-harkova-50229919.html>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2022/03/31/7336102/>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.liga.net/politics/interview/mer-aleksandr-senkevich-rakety-do-nas-doletayut-za-tri-minuty-pod-pritselom-ves-nikolaev>

<sup>35</sup> <https://unitar.org/maps/map/3540>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/russia-ukraine-war/128m-people-displaced-in-ukraine-since-russia-launched-war-un-human-rights-experts/2580552>

Ukrainian women and girls the right to equality, to sustainable development and to dignity.

In Russia-occupied territories women are vulnerable targets of rape, enforced disappearances, tortures and degrading threatment; Ukrainian-speaking and Crimean Tatar women are victims of racial discrimination also.

Women lost in Russia-controlled zone their property, works and assets, social payments and family connections. It generated high level risks for growth of prostitution, including trafficking, minors' prostitution and diseases' dissemination. This approach is accompanied by the attitude of the occupiers, Russian colonizers and collaborators to "Ukrainian refugees" as "third-class people" because of "their long residence in Ukraine"<sup>37383940</sup>.

Some thousand persons, including women were kidnapped by Russian militaries and punitive structures in occupied part of Kherson Region only. A lot of persons were kidnapped by Russian invaders in the "checkpoints" between the Crimea and Ukraine's mainland<sup>41424344454647</sup>. Now there are currently 403 Ukrainian women in Russian captivity, many of them illegally detained civilians, the Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War said on May, 24, 2024.<sup>48</sup>

Fourth ODIHR OSCE Interim Report on reported violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in Ukraine, published on December, 2023, pointed on example of female survivor from Zaporizhzhia region, who spent 35 days in arbitrary detention by Russian forces and told ODIHR, "When I was captured, I asked if I could call my family. They did not allow. In the detention facility they also did not allow any calls or visits. You would be lucky if someone you knew was released; you could ask them to tell your family."

Another witness explained that, after the recapture of Kherson by Ukrainian armed forces in November 2022, she lost contact with her husband, who had been unlawfully detained by occupation Russian "authorities" in June and transferred to occupied Crimea in September the same year. Only a few months later, she learned from a former detainee that her husband was still detained in occupied Sevastopol. Despite numerous attempts to find out his status and location from the Russian "authorities", as of mid-August 2023, the Russian "authorities" had not provided her with any information<sup>49</sup>.

Also women activists, expecially Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians, are the victims of systematic repressions in Russia-occupied territory, including Crimea<sup>50</sup> A lot of persons, including children and their relatives, who tried to evacuate themselves from conflict zone, were killed or kidnapped as "non-loyal" ones<sup>51</sup>. Russian troops blocked since 2022 the humanitarian corridors established to evacuate civil population, including children from hostilities zones and occupied territories and blocked any information about such corridors.

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<sup>37</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20221002154444/https://arc.construction/28224>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/children/cfi/vulnerabilities-children/csos/2022-07-26/submission-sdgs-cso-ARC-second-submission.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/children/sr/cfi-childrenvictims/csos/2023-01-23/submission-reparation-hrc52-cso-association-of-reintegration-of-crimea.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/children/cfi/vulnerabilities-children/csos/2022-07-26/submission-sdgs-cso-Association-of-reintegration-to-crimea.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220608175342/https://arc.construction/30144>

<sup>42</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220929173744/https://arc.construction/29005>

<sup>43</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220609151253/https://arc.construction/32309>

<sup>44</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20221004172453/https://arc.construction/28407>

<sup>45</sup> <https://arcrimea.org/en/news/2023/01/15/disappearance-of-kidnapped-kherson-children-from-yevpatoria/>

<sup>46</sup> <https://arcrimea.org/en/news/2023/01/22/invaders-propaganda-and-missed-kherson-children/>

<sup>47</sup> <https://arcrimea.org/en/news/2023/01/27/new-questions-about-children-deported-by-occupiers/>

<sup>48</sup> <https://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/989021.html>

<sup>49</sup> [https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/e/560325\\_0.pdf](https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/e/560325_0.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> <https://arcrimea.org/en/news/2023/07/28/aggressor-continues-to-persecute-crimean-tatar-activists-2/>

<sup>51</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220819134455/https://arc.construction/26918>

In the Russia-occupied Crimea, all Ukrainian minors taken in this way from the war zone to the peninsula were subject to criminal “sorting”<sup>52</sup>. A lot of displacing persons, including children, disappeared after they were captured by Russians to the so-called “filtration camps”.<sup>53</sup> This approach is accompanied by the attitude of the occupiers, Russian colonizers and collaborators to “Ukrainian refugees” as “third-class people” because of “their long residence in Ukraine”<sup>54</sup>. Local sources informed about sexual exploitation of such children.

On April, 2022 the aggressor-controlled newspaper “Yevpatoriyska Zdravnitza” published a de facto instruction for scheme of criminal “re-registration” of deported children that simplified its illegal sexual exploitation<sup>55</sup>. On May 31, the aggressor-controlled so-called “Commissioner for protection of children’s rights” of Sevastopol, Marina Peschanskaya, stated during a “report” that displaced persons who arrived in the city from the war zone in mainland Ukraine were “massively hiding from registration”. Ukrainian citizens do it understanding the corresponding risks for them and their own children in the occupied Crimea<sup>56</sup>.

Some thousand persons were kidnapped by Russian militaries and punitive structures in occupied part of Kherson Region only. A lot of persons were kidnapped by Russian invaders in the “checkpoints” between the Crimea and Ukraine’s mainland<sup>57</sup>. In the Russia-occupied Crimea a lot of children, transferred from Ukraine’s mainland, disappeared in April-May, 2022<sup>585960</sup>. A big group of Ukrainian youth disappeared from Yevpatoria, where the Russian occupiers concentrated up to 2,000 criminally “evacuated” children in September, 2022 on the basis of Ukrainian children’s sanatoriums illegally seized in 2014, those children have been in difficult living conditions, had significant problems with food and warm things.

*Local sources informed about sexual exploitation of such children by “administration” of those “youth camps” and a lot of propaganda media content was made by aggressor’s authorities with those children, including digital environment.*

Later, from the last days of December 2022, all these “evacuated” children of the aggressor’s structures were suddenly, without warning, and en masse taken out of occupied Yevpatoria, but they did not return to the Kherson region, in particular, to its Russian-occupied part, there was no information about the current whereabouts of these children for months<sup>616263</sup>.

Next search of this children and returning them to Ukraine, as the PACE and Euro Parliament resolutions 2482 (2023) and 2022/2049 directly pointed<sup>6465</sup>, demand usage modern technologies, including genetic expertise. “Conflict Observatory” published on February, 14 report “Russia’s systematic program for the ‘re-education & adoption’ of Ukraine’s children”. Report points that facilities in Russia and Russia-occupied Crimea had held, at least, 6,000 children from Ukraine’s mainland since 24 February 2022.

The separation of children from their parents for indefinite periods documented in this report, which constitute a violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Some of the actions of Russia’s government and its proxies detailed in this report, such as unnecessarily expediting the “adoption and fostering” of children from Ukraine during the current emergency,

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<sup>52</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220929173744/https://arc.construction/29005>

<sup>53</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220701233834/https://arc.construction/33269>

<sup>54</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20221002154444/https://arc.construction/28224>

<sup>55</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220607090836/https://arc.construction/29119>

<sup>56</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220608184817/https://arc.construction/32274>

<sup>57</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220608175342/https://arc.construction/30144>

<sup>58</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220929173744/https://arc.construction/29005>

<sup>59</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20220609151253/https://arc.construction/32309>

<sup>60</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20221004172453/https://arc.construction/28407>

<sup>61</sup> <https://arcrimea.org/en/news/2023/01/15/disappearance-of-kidnapped-kherson-children-from-yevpatoria/>

<sup>62</sup> <https://arcrimea.org/en/news/2023/01/22/invaders-propaganda-and-missed-kherson-children/>

<sup>63</sup> <https://arcrimea.org/en/news/2023/01/27/new-questions-about-children-deported-by-occupiers/>

<sup>64</sup> <https://arcrimea.org/en/analytics/2023/01/26/new-fundamental-resolution-of-pace-regarding-russias-aggression/>

<sup>65</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0011\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0011_EN.html)

constitute a potential war crime and crime against humanity in some cases, researchers stress. Experts identified the network at least 43 facilities, 41 of which are pre-existing summer camps in Russia-occupied Crimea and Russia. Experts point that the exact number of facilities is likely significantly higher than identified in this report<sup>66</sup>.

On February, 23, 2023 the UN General Assembly expressed grave concern at the high number of civilian casualties, including women and children, the number of internally displaced persons and refugees in need of humanitarian assistance, and violations and abuses committed against children<sup>67</sup>. On February 24, 2023 OSCE officials and structures made a number of statements, condemning the relevant Russia's atrocities<sup>6869</sup>. Also on February 24, a Joint Statement of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Bureau, was made also. In a Joint Statement, the OSCE PA Bureau condemned Russia's kidnapping of thousands of Ukrainian children for forced adoption and assimilation. OSCE PA Bureau also called to support the children of Ukraine to overcome the trauma they have experienced<sup>70</sup>.

On March, 17, 2023 ICC has issued an arrest warrant for Russia's president Vladimir Putin for overseeing the abduction of Ukrainian children. In granting the request for warrants by the ICC prosecutor, a panel of judges agreed that there were reasonable grounds to believe Putin and his children's rights commissioner, Maria Lvova-Belova, bore responsibility for the unlawful deportation of Ukrainian children<sup>7172</sup>.

So regarding conditions on hostilities and interstate conflict demands of Rome Statute, Geneva Convention and Additional Protocols must be taken in account regarding war crimes and crimes against humanity committed against women and children, who are victims of trafficking.

Regarding potential areas of thematic focus for the UN future work our Association propose thematics of: prevention discrimination and criminal violence against women in conflict zones and territories under foreign control; prevention discrimination and criminal violence against deported, displaced and migrated women and girls; prevention discrimination and criminal violence against indigenous women and girls.

Our Association believes that next urgent, immediate steps of the UN officials and working groups in Ukraine, in condition of ongoing interstate conflict and hostilities, must be done, including all observation procedures and visit to Ukraine; monitoring procedure, mentioned in UN HRC resolution 49/1, must be enforced immediately.

20th of June, 2024

Association of Reintegration of Crimea



<sup>66</sup> <https://arcrimea.org/en/news/2023/02/15/american-researchers-confirmed-illegality-of-aggressors-deportation-ukrainian-children/>

<sup>67</sup> <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/N23/048/58/PDF/N2304858.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>68</sup> <https://arcrimea.org/en/news/2023/02/25/osce-statements-were-made-on-large-scale-russian-aggression-anniversary/>

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.osce.org/odihr/537933>

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.oscepa.org/en/documents/officers-of-the-assembly/4627-joint-statement-of-the-osce-pa-bureau-action-on-the-one-year-anniversary-of-russia-s-war-against-ukraine-and-the-international-legal-order-24-february-2023/file>

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/situation-ukraine-icc-judges-issue-arrest-warrants-against-vladimir-vladimirovich-putin-and>

<sup>72</sup> <https://arcrimea.org/en/analytics/2023/03/04/deportation-of-ukrainian-youth-by-russian-invaders-specifics-of-legal-response/>