

Side event '**Uprooted Children: How the Russian Federation Deports Ukrainian Children and Erases Their National Identity**'

Strasbourg

Tuesday, 10 October 2023

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear colleagues,

Just like all of you, I am shocked about the ever-mounting evidence that Russian authorities are forcefully transferring and deporting Ukrainian children to Russia and Russian occupied territories.

Thousands of children have been forcibly transferred.

The Assembly has been actively examining this issue since the first alarm bells rang. We have continued to express our outrage, protest and have called for concrete action in support of the repatriation efforts. This includes the Ukrainian government, international organisations, human rights defenders, civil society and everyone else involved. Our Resolutions on the “legal and human rights aspects of the war” and on “deportations and forcible transfers of Ukrainian children and other civilians to the Russian Federation or to temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories...” are evidence of that.^{1 2}

Let me reiterate that such practices are prohibited under international humanitarian, human rights and criminal law and deserve prosecution as war crimes and crimes against humanity. In the case of forcibly transferred children, the crime of genocide has reared its head and must be thoroughly investigated and prosecuted.

I commend the tireless work of those who have repatriated almost 400 children up to now. We will continue our steadfast support of all the efforts to bring children back to their homes and bring them justice. I welcome the return of some of these children to their families, and I am so happy to see some of them here in Strasbourg.

I would like to thank the Chairpersons of the Ukrainian and Latvian delegations, Ms Mariia Mezentseva and Ms Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica, as well as Ms Olena Khomenko for organising this extremely important event.

¹ [Res. 2482 - Resolution - Adopted text \(coe.int\)](#), paras. 10, 12, 17, 20.5.

² [Res. 2495 - Resolution - Adopted text \(coe.int\)](#).