

For Immediate Release

A Call on President Cyril Ramaphosa to Support the UN Resolution for The Return of Ukrainian Children

Johannesburg, South Africa, 30 November - On December 3, the United Nations General Assembly will vote on a resolution titled “Return of Ukrainian Children”, demanding the immediate, safe, and unconditional return of all Ukrainian children who have been forcibly transferred or deported by Russia since 2014. The Ukrainian Association of South Africa calls on the South African government and President Cyril Ramaphosa to support the resolution.

“South Africa cannot abstain on children’s rights, even as a non-aligned country. Every child has the right to be with their family and community. There can be no long-lasting just peace in Ukraine without children coming back,” says Kateryna Aloshyna, UAZA President.

In June 2023, during the African Peace Mission to Ukraine and Russia, President Cyril Ramaphosa urged Vladimir Putin to return all forcibly deported Ukrainian children.

In November 2024, South Africa expressed its readiness to mediate in the return of Ukrainian children. And on 24 April 2025, during the official visit of President Volodymyr Zelensky, the names of 400 forcibly deported Ukrainian children were provided to President Ramaphosa to assist in their return.

This resolution is urgent: “Childhood has an expiry date, that is why we cannot postpone this matter. This resolution is a vital message to all those who abduct children in Nigeria, Sudan, and other countries on the African continent and beyond: children are not pawns of war and the international community does not accept such actions,” says Prof. Elvis Fokala from the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria.

In June 2024, [thirteen South African human rights NGOs](#) called for the return of Ukrainian children: [African Women Leaders Network-South Africa](#), [Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria](#), CSVR ([Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation](#)), [Democracy Works Foundation](#), IJR ([Institute for Justice and Reconciliation](#)), [In Transformation Initiative](#), [Foundation for Human Rights](#), [Lawyers for Human Rights](#), Mmabatho Foundation for Women’s Development, [Public Interest Practice](#), [Southern African Human Rights Defenders Network](#), [Southern African Liaison Office](#), and the [Ukrainian Association of South Africa](#).

Since 2022, Russian legislation has allowed changes to citizenship, name, surname, and date of birth of Ukrainian children without parental consent. As of 2025, the

Russian Federation has not stopped but continues efforts to deport Ukrainian children to “re-educate” them. The process of children’s deportation continues in 2025. Due to these violations of human rights, the International Criminal Court has issued warrants of arrest.

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