



On the return of illegally displaced Ukrainian children from the territories of Russia and Belarus to Ukraine

The Saeima of the Republic of Latvia,

having regard to the deliberate, illegal, and systematic relocation of Ukrainian children by Russian officials, supported by the Russian state leadership, from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to Russia and Belarus since 2014, and in particular since 24 February 2022, during the Russian full-scale war against Ukraine;

referring to international humanitarian law, the Convention of 9 December 1948 on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, the UN General Assembly resolution of 2 March 2022 on Aggression against Ukraine, and its resolution of 24 February 2023 on Principles underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine;

recalling the Declaration of the Heads of State of the Council of Europe on the situation of the children of Ukraine adopted at the Reykjavik Summit of 17 May 2023, and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Resolution 2495 of 2023 entitled Deportations and forcible transfers of Ukrainian children and other civilians to the Russian Federation or to temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories: create conditions for their safe return, stop these crimes and punish the perpetrators;

referring to the decision of the International Criminal Court of 17 March 2023 on the responsibility of the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin and the Russian Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova for the war crime of unlawful deportation of population (children) and that of unlawful transfer of population (children) from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to the Russian Federation, and the arrest warrants issued accordingly;

recalling previous statements and resolutions of the Saeima on Ukraine and Russia, in particular the Statement of 23 February 2023 on the anniversary of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the Statement of 8 December 2022 on Russia's international crimes in Ukraine and the prosecution of those responsible, and the Statement of 11 August 2022 on Russia's targeted military attacks on Ukrainian civilians and public space;

reiterating its strongest condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, its unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, and calling for Russia to immediately cease all military

activities in Ukraine and to remove all its armed forces and military equipment from the entire internationally recognised territory of Ukraine without any conditions;

noting that the illegal and forced displacement of Ukrainian children by Russia and Belarus to the territories of Russia and Belarus violates international humanitarian law and constitutes a crime of war and genocide with the aim of destroying Ukrainian national identity;

underlining the provisions of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular as regards the right to education and access to information, the right to rest and leisure, the right to participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts, the right to freedom of conscience and religion, as well as the right to health care and ultimately social security,

strongly condemns the illegal and forced displacement of Ukrainian children by Russia and Belarus to the territories of Russia and Belarus;

supports the investigation launched by the International Criminal Court with a view to identifying and prosecuting those who have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity on Ukrainian territory;

calls on the international community and organisations, in particular the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, to play an active role in addressing the issue in order to return the stolen Ukrainian children to their families or legal guardians as soon and safely as possible;

appreciates the progress already made by many participating countries in returning Ukrainian children;

expresses support for the International Coalition for the Return of Illegally Deported and Forcibly Displaced Children to Ukraine;

urges, in line with Ukraine's intention, to establish an international centre in a third country to work on the return of the displaced Ukrainian children and serve as a point of contact for the international organisations involved, Ukrainian children, and their parents or legal guardians;

encourages other countries and international organisations to take an active and immediate role in the matter and to adopt similar resolutions.