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Promotion and protection of the rights of children

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**Letter dated 21 June 2024 from the Permanent Representative of
the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit herewith the comments of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations in connection with the annual report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on children and armed conflict ([A/78/842-S/2024/384](#)) (see annex).

I should like to emphasize that the information reflected in the report on alleged violations by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation is inaccurate, unreliable and unverifiable. I would also like to note that the crimes committed by the Armed Forces of Ukraine and associated groups are grossly underreported.

I hereby inform you that the Armed Forces of Ukraine are responsible for the deaths of 192 children and for the maiming of 554 children in the Russian Federation over the period from February 2022 to April 2024 alone. They are also responsible for 129 deaths and for the maiming of 503 children in Donbass between 2014 and 2022. In 2023 alone, more than a thousand medical and educational facilities in the Russian Federation were destroyed or damaged by the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated urgently as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 67, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) V. Nebenzia



Annex to the letter dated 21 June 2024 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

The Russian Federation is disappointed by the biased decision to leave the Russian armed forces on the list of parties engaging in violations against children annexed to the report. There is no basis for this.

The information reflected in the report was obtained from the monitoring mission in Ukraine of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which is biased and in fact controlled by Kiev. The report lacks specifics: instances of supposed violations are described in such a way that they cannot be verified. Our repeated requests to receive clarifying information for verification purposes did not yield the necessary results.

A separate question is why the Secretary-General did not include the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the list of parties engaging in violations against children. According to the same report, they are responsible for a significant number of violations, such as the killing and maiming of children and attacks on schools and hospitals. At the same time, the bulk of violations against children by Ukrainian armed forces and groups were not duly reflected in the document.

The report ignores the fact that gross and systematic violations of international humanitarian law by Ukraine, dating back to 2014, continue.

Ukrainian armed units, including national volunteer battalions and other organized groups, are carrying out actions aimed at harming the civilian population, including children. The methods used by the Kiev regime consist of the daily shelling of peaceful neighbourhoods, critical facilities and civilian infrastructure facilities. At least 50,000 civilian infrastructure facilities have been destroyed or damaged in the Donetsk People's Republic and the Lugansk People's Republic during the 10 years of Kiev's war against the residents of Donbass.

From 2014 to January 2022, 91 children were killed and 469 children were injured in the Donetsk People's Republic; and 38 children were killed and 34 minors were injured in the Lugansk People's Republic.

Since February 2022, Ukrainian criminals have carried out more than 1,625 attacks on civilian infrastructure facilities in Moscow, Sevastopol, the Provinces of Belgorod, Bryansk, Voronezh, Kaluga, Kursk, Moscow, Oryol, Pskov, Rostov, Ryazan, Smolensk, Tambov, Tver and Tula, the Republics of Adygea and Crimea, Krasnodarsky krai and other regions.

As of the first quarter of 2024, 28 regions of the Russian Federation were under attack, with minors harmed in 10 of them.

In Belgorod Province, as a result of shelling and attacks by drones in the first quarter of 2024, nine minors received injuries of varying severity and two were killed.

In view of the escalating situation and the systematic shelling of Belgorod, the operational headquarters under the leadership of the Governor of Belgorod Province decided to evacuate minor children living in the regional centre and nine border districts to other constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

The largest number of children have suffered from the criminal acts of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, as well as in Belgorod Province.

Since February 2022 (as at 1 April 2024), 148 children have been killed and 400 children have been injured in the Donetsk People's Republic. During the same period, 25 children were killed and 50 children were injured in the Lugansk People's Republic. In Belgorod Province, 10 minors were killed and 59 were injured during the same period. In Bryansk Province, two children were killed and seven injured. In Kursk Province, two minors were killed and six injured. In Kherson Province, two children were killed and four injured. In the Republic of Crimea, two minors were killed and one was injured. In Zaporozhie Province, 1 child was killed and 20 were injured. In addition, the actions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine resulted in six minors being injured in the Republic of Tatarstan and one minor being injured in Voronezh Province.

Attacks on civilian targets in Russian regions are being carried out using uncrewed aerial vehicles, kamikaze drones and multiple rocket launchers. Armed units controlled by the Kiev regime are deliberately hitting civilian objects – schools, kindergartens and medical facilities.

In 2023 alone, more than 20,500 residential buildings and almost 3,500 civilian infrastructure facilities were destroyed and damaged in the Donetsk People's Republic and the Lugansk People's Republic, including some 700 educational and 300 medical institutions and over 1,250 electricity, water, heat and gas supply facilities.

As a result of shelling in Belgorod Province, 253 educational, cultural, sports and health-care facilities and 1,280 critical facilities (892 power grid facilities and 388 gas and water supply facilities) were damaged.

The real scale of destruction in the territory liberated during the special military operation remains to be seen.

Attacks on civilian passenger cars have become the trademark of Ukrainian units. Here are just a few examples from March to May 2024 of minors killed or injured in such attacks.

On 20 March 2024, in Kherson Province, the Armed Forces of Ukraine directed a drone at an ambulance transporting a seriously ill child to the hospital, wounding the driver.

On 7 April 2024, drone debris hit a car with a family of six people in Shagarovka, a village in Belgorod Province. One girl died and five people, including two children, were injured.

On 10 April 2024, an explosive device was dropped from a Ukrainian drone on a civilian car in Apanasovka, a village in the Korenevsky district of Kursk Province. The three people who were in the car at the time were killed, two of them children.

On 25 April 2024, four civilians, among them a child, were injured as a result of an attack by the Armed Forces of Ukraine on a passenger bus in Kurkovichi, a village in the Starodubsky municipal district of Bryansk Province.

On 6 May 2024, two shared taxi vans transporting company employees and two passenger cars were attacked by the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the Borisovsky district of Belgorod Province. As a result, eight civilians were killed and 42 people, including three children, sustained injuries of varying severity.

On 16 May 2024, a moving car with a driver and three passengers was attacked by a kamikaze drone in Oktyabrsky, a village in Belgorod Province. A woman and a child were killed and two men were injured.

On 25 May 2024, the enemy used two drones to attack a car in Borisovka, a village in the Volokonovsky district of Belgorod Province. A child was injured in the explosion.

It is an irrefutable fact that the Armed Forces of Ukraine use weapons which are prohibited by the Geneva Conventions and which also harm children. According to the information available, 158 cases have been reported of civilians being blown up by prohibited PFM-1 Lepestok anti-personnel mines since the start of the special military operation and only in territory controlled by the authorities of the Donetsk People's Republic. Among them are 11 children.

The Russian competent authorities are recording all the crimes of the Kiev regime and are establishing not only the full range of persons involved in the aforementioned terrorist acts, but also all those involved in their organization, planning and financing. Russia is committed to the principle that punishment for all the crimes of the Kiev regime is unavoidable. All those responsible will inevitably be justly punished.

As of March 2024, about 4,500 criminal cases have been filed. The majority of them were initiated after February 2022. Cases opened since 2014 also remain pending. More than 120,000 residents of Donbass have been recognized as victims, of whom 24,000 are children.

Irrespective of any reports, the Russian Federation reaffirms its continued commitment to the protection of children during armed conflict, specifically during the special military operation. We are adopting every systemic measure to prevent the deaths of children and damage to hospitals and schools. All this time, Russia has been open to cooperation with the United Nations on this issue, specifically with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.
