



Омбудсман України  
Ombudsman of Ukraine

# TO RETURN MEANS TO SAVE

Point 4 of the President of  
Ukraine Peace Formula



# DEPORTATION OF UKRAINIAN CHILDREN IS GENOCIDE!

Since 2014, the Russian Federation has been deporting and forcibly transferring **Ukrainian children**. The goal is to change their identity and thus raise the next generation of Russian soldiers.



Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, according to the information platform “Children of War”, Ukraine **has verified about 20,000 cases of deportation and forcible transfer of children**. The actual number of such cases may reach hundreds of thousands!

**We are out of time – children need to be returned now.** Because they are growing up very quickly, and the Russian Federation is re-educating Ukrainians and imposing Russian narratives on them.

## IF UKRAINE RETURNS AT LEAST ONE CHILD EVERY DAY, IT WILL TAKE 55 YEARS! WE NEED TO ACT TODAY!

To return means to save



*In June 2023, the Child Rights Protection Center was opened at the initiative of President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy to restore the rights of children returned home by Ukraine and to protect the best interests of children.*





# RUSSIA KEEPS UKRAINIAN CHILDREN IN CONSTANT FEAR!



**Interrogations, electric shocks, torture** – this is what a Ukrainian child survived on the TOTs of Ukraine! The boy told his story in Geneva at the side event “The end of ‘Whataboutism’: Unity for the Return of Ukrainians”.

The child **found himself under Russian occupation** after the full-scale invasion. While under occupation, the boy remained in a **temporary detention centre** on charges of alleged sabotage! He was constantly interrogated, electrocuted and **tortured**. He was forced to sign a confession to a crime he had nothing to do with.

On 29 November 2022, the child was released. Later, with the assistance of the Ombudsman of Ukraine, he managed to see his mother and leave the occupied territory.

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## STORIES OF UKRAINIAN CHILDREN WHO RETURNED HOME

The stories of other returned children were heard by the **First Ladies and Gentlemen of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Guatemala, Lithuania, Serbia and Slovenia**. They visited the **Child Rights Protection Center**. The meeting was also joined by **the UN Messenger of Peace and American actor Michael Douglas and his son**.



**Families from the TOTs** told the guests their stories about the horrors they had experienced under occupation, the Russian practice of forced issue of passports, propaganda at schools and the sentencing of relatives for decades for their pro-Ukrainian position.





# UKRAINE'S PEACE FORMULA

Just and lasting peace  
for Ukraine and the world

**Ukraine wants international partners to take concrete steps to bring home deported and forcibly transferred children.**

## **DEMAND THAT THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION:**

1. Promptly return to Ukraine illegally deported and forcibly transferred Ukrainian children. Provide data on the location of children who were deported from the territory of Ukraine to the territory of the Russian Federation or forcibly transferred to the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and ensure their safe return to the territory controlled by Ukraine.
2. End the illegal deportation and forcible transfer of Ukrainian children. Ensure the safe evacuation of families with children in the temporarily occupied territories who wish to leave these territories for the territory controlled by Ukraine. Ensure the safe evacuation of family-type children's homes, foster families and guardians together with their foster children and children under guardianship to the territory controlled by Ukraine.
3. Document unaccompanied asylum-seeking children; children in alternative care (including institutions and foster families); children separated from their families due to displacement, detention, death or other conflict-related incidents; children in need of family reunification or long-term placement; children in need of state assistance, especially those unaccompanied, residing in the Russian Federation and expeditiously transmit this information to the ICRC's Central Tracing Agency, in compliance with international humanitarian law.
4. Cease to change the names, identity, and citizenship of Ukrainian children.
5. Cease to move Ukrainian children and place them in foster care or adoption processes.
6. Prohibit the recruitment and involvement of children in armed formations, paramilitary formations and military education, as well as the use of children for active participation in hostilities, in compliance with the Geneva Conventions (IV).
7. Stop the imprisonment, persecution or other significant deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental norms of international law of Ukrainian children in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.
8. Provide information to Ukraine on all Ukrainian children who, since 2022, as a result of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation, are located on the territory of the Russian Federation, both accompanied and unaccompanied.

## **WORK WITH WG4 MEMBERS TO:**

1. Advocate the Russian Federation to provide ICRC, UN, intermediary states, international and/or humanitarian organisations that are trusted by the parties, unimpeded access to all places of residence of Ukrainian children on its territory and on the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including children residing in Russian homes and other forms of family-based care.
2. Support efforts in the retracing, return, and rehabilitation of children using a survivor-centred approach that prioritizes the best interests of the child.
3. Facilitate the creation of an international register of officials of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus who have taken part in the deportation and forcible transfer of Ukrainian children, with a view to further imposing sanctions on them by Ukraine and partner countries and issuing arrest warrants by the International Criminal Court.



# IN CAPTIVITY: RUSSIA UNLAWFULLY DETAINS UKRAINIAN CIVILIANS!

Currently, **more than 14,000 people** are considered **missing under special circumstances** and unlawfully deprived of their personal liberty as a result of Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine. And this number is growing every day!

**According to official figures, almost 1700 civilians are held in Russian detention facilities.** The real numbers may be much higher!

Many unlawfully detained civilians are held **incommunicado, in unofficial places of detention, in appalling conditions:** without sufficient food, water, or medical care. They are being tortured and subjected to torture!

The situation with the abduction of Ukrainian civilians by Russia requires the world's response!



## RUSSIA UNLAWFULLY IMPRISONS AND CONVICTS CIVILIANS!

**24-year-old Mariana Checheliuk was unlawfully detained by the occupiers as a police officer in 2022 in Mariupol.**

**The girl is not a combatant!**

Mariana was imprisoned for more than two years. During this time, she was held in a colony in Donetsk, in Olenivka, in a prison in Mariupol, and finally in Taganrog.





**She was held in inadequate conditions.** According to her mother, in captivity, **Mariana experienced a lot of torture – she was starved, beaten, and abused.** She was also kept in **complete information isolation.**

Due to the conditions of her captivity, her health deteriorated and she lost weight.



*Mariana returned home on May 31, 2024*

On 4 December 2022, **Leniie Umerova was detained** at the Russian-Georgian border because she was travelling to the temporarily occupied Crimea to care for her sick father. The formal reason for the detention was ‘violation of the rules of the restricted zone’, but the real reason may lie in the fact that Leniie gave up her Russian passport and was crossing the border as a citizen of Ukraine.



Point 4 of the President of Ukraine Peace Formula

*She was returned home from illegal detention by Russia on 13 September 2024*



Also, on 29 June 2024, **10 Ukrainians were returned to their homeland:** Kateryna Briukhanova, Liudmyla Honcharenko, Pavlo Kupriienko, Mykola Shvets and Nataliia Zakharenko, who were held in Belarus, as well as Nariman Dzhelial, Valerii Matiushenko, Olena Pekh, Bohdan Heleta and Ivan Levytskyy, who were detained in the Russian Federation.



At the same time, **hundreds more people are being unlawfully detained by Russia**, many of whom have serious health conditions and chronic illnesses. They are subjected to torture and lack proper medical care. **This includes 54-year-old Radio Liberty journalist Vladyslav Yesypenko, as well as Crimean Tatar Azamat Eiupov and others.**



# ANOTHER STORY OF A CIVILIAN WOMAN WHOSE LIFE WAS BROKEN BY RUSSIA



**She was detained in October 2019**, and lived in one of the temporarily occupied cities of Donetsk region. She helped orphans and half-orphans.

The Ukrainian was held in the 'Izoliatsiia' prison, where she was **subjected to severe torture**. During her detention, her health deteriorated significantly. **The conditions of detention were inadequate, and she was not provided with medical care.** She was later transferred to another detention facility on charges of 'espionage'. The Ukrainian woman's body was black from the beatings. Every day, she and other women were reminded that their bodies did not belong to them.

On October 17, 2022, the Ukrainian woman was released from detention as part of a 'women's exchange'. **She had been in captivity for over three years!**



## THE WORLD NEEDS TO KNOW THE TRUTH AND HELP UKRAINE RELEASE UNLAWFULLY DETAINED CIVILIANS





# UKRAINE'S PEACE FORMULA

Just and lasting peace  
for Ukraine and the world

**Ukraine wants its international partners to take concrete steps to release civilians unlawfully detained by Russia.**

## ALL PERSONS HELD

**Demand that the Russian Federation:**

1. End torture and ill-treatment, including during arrest and transportation.
2. Improve internment and detention conditions, including the provision of adequate food, water, medical care, primary and secondary legal aid.
3. Ensure prompt information-sharing on persons' status and whereabouts and provide international monitors regular access of delegates from the protecting power, international and humanitarian organisations, including the ICRC to all places of internment and detention and access to all persons (civilians and prisoners of war (POWs)) deprived of their liberty.
4. Facilitate communication channels between Ukrainian civilians and prisoners of war and their relatives and ensure the regular exchange of humanitarian parcels.
5. Provide access of accused persons to a fair and regular trial.
6. Provide systematic and timely transmission of accurate data on all persons protected by the Geneva Conventions (including POWs and civilians deprived of their liberty) through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Central Tracing Agency (CTA), with a view to preventing enforced disappearances. This should include information about the victim's status, location, alleged criminal charges, health situation and in the event of death, information about the causes of death and the conditions under which it occurred and exact location of the graves. This includes effective and independent operation of the National Information Bureau (NIB).
7. Cease the practice of treating those outside the categories mentioned in article 4 of GCIII as prisoners of war and immediately release from captivity all Ukrainian medical and religious staff captured during the occupation of the territory of Ukraine.
8. Ensure the investigation of crimes committed by officials of military units and the penitentiary system of the Russian Federation against prisoners of war and other persons held in places of detention.

## CIVILIANS DETAINED BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

**Demand that the Russian Federation:**

1. Release all civilians detained for acts or beliefs committed or expressed before occupation, in accordance with the Geneva Conventions.
2. Immediately end the practice of enforced disappearances, which are prohibited by International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
3. Ensure prompt information on grounds of internment, periodic review, effective appeal procedures, access for lawyers and release once grounds for internment cease to exist.

**Given the function of WG4 as a coordinator of the efforts of countries and international organisations – to cooperate with the Working Group participants to support Ukraine in the search for and return of missing persons in order to:**

1. Directly or through states, international and/or humanitarian organisations that are considered credible by the parties, call on the Russian Federation to ensure that detainees and internees have access to international assistance and protection, and that family ties are restored and maintained.
2. Identify a Protecting Power to fulfil the role foreseen by Geneva Conventions.
3. Continue to raise international awareness of the issue and implement an effective stratcom and outreach campaign.



# UKRAINIAN PRISONERS OF WAR ARE VICTIMS OF TORTURE!

Thousands of Ukrainian prisoners of war are held in Russian captivity. **Russia is violating international humanitarian law, in particular the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War.**

All Ukrainian prisoners of war are held in appalling conditions, subjected to **systematic torture, ill-treatment and sexual violence.**

Families are often deprived of any information about the whereabouts and health of their prisoners of war, and the UN and ICRC do not have unimpeded access to places of detention.

## DOZENS OF KILOGRAMS LOST IS THE REALITY OF BEING A PRISONER OF WAR IN RUSSIA!

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**The Mariupol defender spent 8 months in Russian captivity. Five of them were in Olenivka, where he survived a terrorist attack by the Russian Federation.**

The Ukrainian says that every morning the prisoners of war were forced to sing the Russian anthem. After that, they were given a piece of bread and six spoons of porridge for breakfast.

Later, the guards would come and beat the prisoners in the corridor and force them to sing the Russian anthem again for 4 hours.

During the day, they were taken to the 'pain room', where they were **tortured with a taser and electric shocks to their private parts.**

**He witnessed the death of his fellow prisoners of war due to severe beatings in prison. Five prisoners of war committed suicide in front of him.**

**A Ukrainian soldier lost 40 kilograms of weight in Russian captivity!** Two years after his release, he is still undergoing treatment and rehabilitation. He was returned home in December 2022.



# MORE THAN 95% OF UKRAINIAN PRISONERS OF WAR TORTURED IN RUSSIA – UN DATA



*The photo shows Ukrainian soldiers released from Russian captivity. They all lost dozens of kilograms of weight and have health problems due to torture and inadequate conditions of detention!*



Five months after his captivity in Russia, **Ukrainian Oleh Mudrak died at the age of 35.** His friends and comrades-in-arms wrote that **the soldier's heart failed following the torture he suffered in Russian captivity.** In particular, he survived the terrorist attack in Olenivka.



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Ukrainian soldiers after being held in Russian captivity  
*Photo: Libkos*

**HELP US SAVE THE PRISONERS OF WAR!**



# UKRAINE'S PEACE FORMULA

Just and lasting peace  
for Ukraine and the world

Ukraine needs its international partners to take concrete steps to return Ukrainian prisoners of war.

## **WORK WITH WG4 MEMBERS TO ADVOCATE THAT THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS (III):**

1. Bring the conditions of detention of prisoners of war in line with the Geneva Conventions (III) by establishing specific POW camps away from conflict zones. Cease the practise of holding POWs in ordinary prisons.
2. Repatriate seriously sick and seriously wounded POWs, regardless of their rank and quantity, whose condition allows for such transfer, to their homeland, or to organize hospitalization in neutral countries.
3. Return all women POWs.
4. Establish a mixed medical commission to examine wounded and sick POWs and take decisions about their repatriation.



# WE ARE NOT STANDING STILL: STEPS TAKEN

The Ukraine's Peace Formula is a vision of how the international community should respond to the challenges that any country in the world may face. It contains 10 points.

In order to consolidate the efforts of states and international organisations, the Working Group on Point 4 of the Peace Formula was established.

**Co-chairs:** Ukraine, Canada and Norway.



Ukraine regularly holds meetings of **the Working Group of Point 4 of the Peace Formula**. So far, 6 such meetings have taken place, with the participation of states and international organisations.

To return means to save

**Dmytro Lubinets, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, stressed that it is important that ambassadors of different countries convey to their governments that they need to work to:**

1. Return deported and forcibly transferred children to Ukraine, as well as to verify their data.
2. Facilitate immediate access for the ICRC and the UN to places of detention of civilians and prisoners of war in order to stop the practice of torture.
3. Work for the return of prisoners of war and civilians to Ukraine.
4. Advocate before their parliaments the recognition Russia's atrocities in Ukraine as an act of genocide and facilitate the investigation of crimes.

**WE ARE SINCERELY GRATEFUL TO CANADA, THE CZECH REPUBLIC, ESTONIA, IRELAND, LATVIA, LITHUANIA AND POLAND FOR RECOGNISING RUSSIA'S ACTIONS IN UKRAINE AS AN ACT OF GENOCIDE!**



**ONLY TOGETHER CAN  
WE STOP THE AGGRESSOR!  
HELP UKRAINE  
BRING ITS  
PEOPLE HOME!**



**Омбудсман України  
Ombudsman of Ukraine**