



Foreign, Commonwealth
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AssemblyChair@london.gov.uk

Dear Mr Duvall,

Thank you for your correspondence of 16 June to the Foreign Secretary about the London Assembly's motion "Condemning Russia's Forced Abduction of Ukraine Children". Your email has been passed to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Correspondence Team for a response.

As the Prime Minister stated in Parliament on 23 March, the abduction of Ukrainian children is grotesque, and the UK will play our full part to bring them home. Russia's forced deportation of Ukrainian children is one of the most heinous aspects of Russia's war on Ukraine and one that the Foreign Secretary considers a personal priority. It is a despicable and systematic attempt by Vladimir Putin to erase Ukrainian identity, and with it, Ukraine's future and is a clear violation of international law.

We are consistently raising awareness of child deportations in our communications and across multilateral fora and have raised this issue at the OSCE, and the UN Human Rights Council. We are also an active member of the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children and continue to work closely with the Ukrainian government.

Last week, the Foreign Secretary met with War Child to discuss their vital work to protect child victims of conflicts, including advocating with partners for the return of Ukrainian children that Russia has forcibly deported. In March, Minister Doughty met Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister Betsa and representatives from Bring Kids Back UA, where they discussed efforts to return Ukraine's stolen children. The UK, alongside eight of our western allies, supports Save Ukraine and the Bring Kids Back initiative through the Partnership Fund for a Resilient Ukraine to identify, locate, return, and reintegrate Ukrainian children. To date, around 900 children have been returned, and we will continue to play our full part in international efforts to reunite more children with their families.

It is imperative that Russia be held to account for their actions. We have built on the sanctions' packages announced by the previous Government – which included sanctioning the Russian Children's Rights Commissioner, Maria Lvova-Belova, in 2022 – with ten new designations related to child abductions announced in

November. These targeted leading Russian officials and state-linked youth organisations involved in forcibly deporting and indoctrinating Ukrainian children.

We are also supporting the work of the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine and the International Criminal Court (ICC) to ensure allegations of war crimes are fully and fairly investigated by independent, effective and robust legal mechanisms. In February 2022, the UK led efforts to bring together allies to expedite an ICC investigation into Russian war crimes in Ukraine, through state party referral. With 41 other countries now joining the UK, it is the largest referral in the history of the ICC. We welcome the progress the ICC is making in its active investigation, including the issuing of arrest warrants for individuals connected to the forced deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia.

Please be assured that a lasting, just peace settlement in Ukraine must involve holding Russia accountable. It must also see affected children reunited with their families.

Thank you for writing to the FCDO on this important matter.

Yours sincerely

FCDO Correspondence Team
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