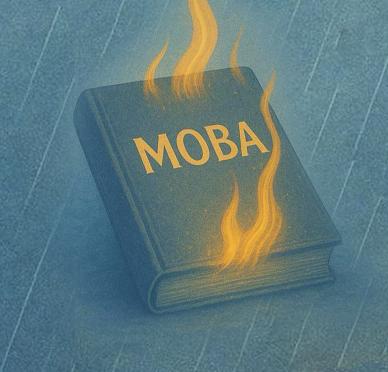


FROM OBLIVION TO DISCRIMINATION: UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF OCCUPIED CRIMEA









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NGO «Crimean Center for Business and Cultural Cooperation «Ukrainian House» within the framework of the project: «The right to education in the context of the occupied Crimea».

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Team of authors: Yulia Tyshchenko, Andriy Shchekun, Vladyslav Miroshnychenko.

INTRODUCTION

The occupation of the Crimean Peninsula has led to systemic violations of international law and fundamental human rights. Among the most affected rights is the right to education in one's native language, which has been systematically and deliberately undermined by the Russian Federation (the occupying power), particularly through the suppression of the Ukrainian language in the educational process. In practice, this reflects the occupying power's broader policy of forced assimilation, which involves the denial of Ukrainian identity as such. Special reports of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights stated that the Russian authorities in Crimea denied the right to various manifestations of Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar identity¹.

Educational institutions in the temporarily occupied territory became central tools of the occupation authorities of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (hereinafter - TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol) for inclusion of the region into the Russian socio-cultural space. To this end, the possibility of studying the Ukrainian language and related subjects including literature, history, geography and law as part of the Ukrainian-language curriculum in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol was systematically destroyed and the local educational process is being subjected to Russification and

¹ https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Countries/UA/Crimea2014_2017_Ukrainian.pdf

militarization without any alternative. According to Ukraine, a comprehensive policy characterized as linguocide is being applied by the Russian Federation to the Ukrainian language in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol. Taras Kremin, the Commissioner for the Protection of the State Language, pointed out² that the occupation authorities have turned the process of destroying the Ukrainian language into a systemic state policy that involves the use of a wide range of repressive tools – from the ban on education in the native language to the physical destruction of its speakers.

The Secretariat of the Commissioner for the Protection of the State Language documents the facts of linguistic violence in the occupied territories³. It refers to the destruction of the Ukrainian education infrastructure - the closure of schools with Ukrainian as the language of instruction, the destruction of cultural and educational institutions, arrests and killings for speaking Ukrainian, manifestations of discrimination based on language (linguistic discrimination). In general, linguocide can be interpreted as a type of ethnocide aimed at destroying the language as an integral part of the identity of a particular ethnic community⁴. Historically, the concept of ethnocide was introduced in the United States by Raphael Lemkin simultaneously with the synonymous concept of genocide in 1944⁵. Today, ethnocide can be defined as a deliberate state policy to destroy the culture and identity, including language, of certain ethnic groups.

² https://zmina.info/news/movnyj-ombudsman-ozvuchyv-fakty-lingvoczydu-rf-v-ukrayi ny-za-ostannij-rik/

³https://mova-ombudsman.gov.ua/news/upovnovazhenyi-vystupyv-na-kruhlomu-stoli-porushennia-prava-na-osvitu-derzhavnoiu-movoiu-v-okupovanomu-krymu

⁴ https://esu.com.ua/article-55514

⁵ https://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/fr/document/ethnocide. html

Everyone's right to education is based on the principles of accessibility, quality and non-discrimination. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁶ (Article 26) guarantees the right to education, emphasizing its freedom and universal accessibility. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and shall further the understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups. Similarly, the Convention on the Rights of the Child7 (Articles 28-29) states that education shall promote the full development of the personality, respect for human rights and for cultural and ethnic identity. International standards applicable to mother tongue education recommend that instruction in the mother tongue «should be provided up to the last level of education, as far as possible», as stated, for example, in the UNESCO Guidelines on Languages and Education («Education in a Multilingual World», UNESCO's Constitutive Document on Education, Paris, 2003, Part III, Principle I). These standards are focused on creating conditions for personal development, promoting civic awareness and integration into a free and pluralistic society, with equal access to knowledge for all segments of the population. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has pointed out that States Parties have direct obligations about the right to education, such as guarantees that this right will be exercised without discrimination (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 13: The Right to Education (Article 13 of the ICESCR), July 8, 1999, paras. 6 (б), 43, 50.)

⁶ https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995_015#Text

⁷ https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995 021?find=1&text=освіт#Техt

The Tbilisi Declaration and the resolution of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe «Violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol» of 2016 referred to the increase in repression, violence and discrimination against ethnic Ukrainians in these regions. In addition, deep concern was expressed about the fact that in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol, the possibility of receiving education in the Ukrainian language and studying it is disappearing as a result of pressure on school administrations, as well as on teachers, parents and children to stop teaching and learning the Ukrainian language, which further limits the presence of the Ukrainian language and culture on the occupied peninsula⁸.

International humanitarian law establishes special rules that ensure the protection of civilians and infrastructure, including educational facilities, during armed conflict and occupation. International humanitarian law establishes the obligation of the occupying power to facilitate the proper functioning of educational institutions and Article 38 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child obliges states to comply with international humanitarian law in relation to children in armed conflict. Thus, according to Article 50 (1) of the Geneva Convention IV9: the Occupying Power shall, in cooperation with the state and local authorities (of the occupied territory), facilitate the proper functioning of institutions responsible for the care and education of children. In addition, the Occupying Power is obliged to maintain the status quo in the field of education: it must facilitate the continuation of

https://www.oscepa.org/en/documents/all-documents/annual-sessions/2016-tbilisi/declaration-24/3373-tbilisi-declaration-rus/file

⁹ https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995 154#Text



their content or impose its ideology. Changes in the educational system are allowed only if necessary and in compliance with the principles of non-discrimination and preservation of the cultural, linguistic and national identity of the population. Thus, the main idea of international humanitarian law in the field of education in the occupied territories is to preserve the previous state of the educational system, to protect students and teachers and to prevent the forced implementation of ideological frameworks imposed by the occupying power in the educational process.

1

UKRAINIAN-LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN CRIMEA BEFORE RUSSIAN OCCUPATION

Prior to the illegal Russian occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, the Ukrainian education system was actively developing in the region, with Ukrainian language, literature and history being taught, as well as comprehensive education in schools and classrooms with Ukrainian as the language of instruction.

Historically, the establishment and development of Ukrainianlanguage education in Crimea was linked to Ukraine's and independence the corresponding development education. According to Ukrainian researchers from Crimea, Ukrainian public organizations in Crimea began to work on the creation of Ukrainian-language classes and schools as early as the Gorbachev perestroika era, but the situation remained difficult. The local authorities made efforts to preserve the Russian-language education system, which did not consider the educational needs of citizens who wanted to learn Ukrainian or participate in the Ukrainian-language educational process. At the same time, international organizations noted difficulties with teaching in Ukrainian in Crimea and organizing the entire educational process in the state language.

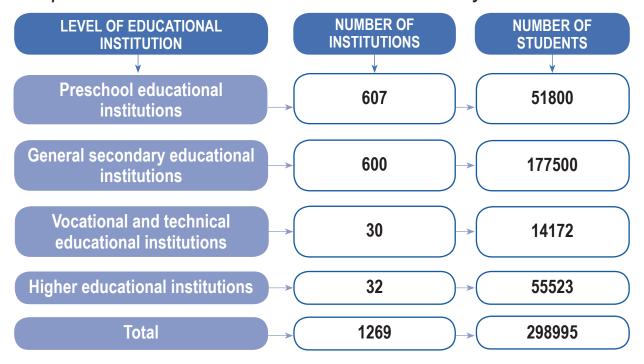
Since 1998, state education standards have clearly defined that the invariant part of education includes such compulsory subjects as the Ukrainian language, Ukrainian history and world history. As of 1996, only 81% of students in Crimean schools were studying Ukrainian language and literature; in 1997, these subjects became compulsory for all students in Crimean schools¹⁰.

In general, on the eve of the Russian invasion, Crimea had an extensive system of educational institutions that operated in accordance with Ukrainian standards and educational plans.

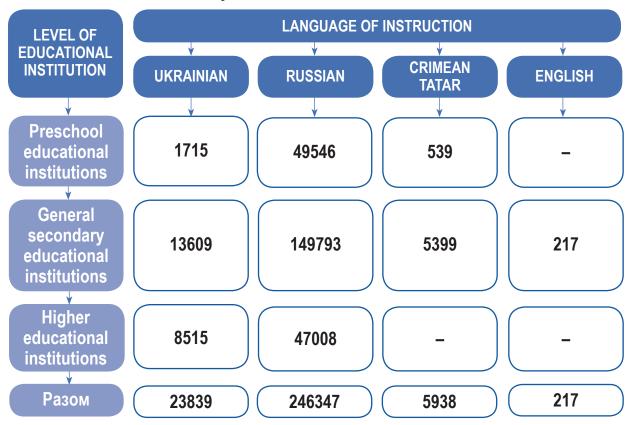
 $^{^{10}}$ http://ukrlife.org/main/uacrim/vuzol.htm



Structure of the educational system in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea in the 2010/2011 academic year



Distribution of languages of instruction in the educational institutions of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea in the 2010/2011 academic year



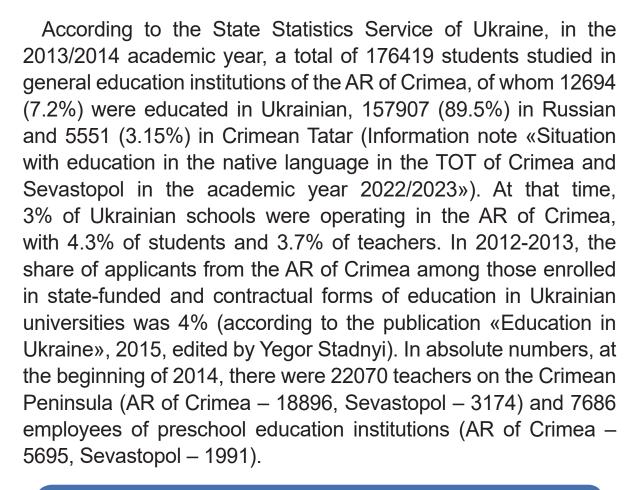
According to the study of Valentina Potapova, Yuri Smelyansky. "Formation of a comprehensive vision and recommendations to the state authorities of Ukraine on overcoming the consequences of the occupation and challenges in the process of reintegration of the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol in the educational and scientific field».

In accordance with the Model Curriculum of General Education Institutions, including those with instruction in Russian or other languages of national minorities, as well as bilingual classes with Ukrainian as the language of instruction, in 2012-2013, all general education schools in the AR of Crimea taught Ukrainian language, Ukrainian literature and history of Ukraine. (Order No. 409 of 03.04.2012 on approval of the Model Curriculum of Secondary Education Institutions: Annex 2, Annex 9)¹¹.

TYPICAL CURRICULUM in general education institutions with instruction in Russian or other languages of national minorities in 2012-2013.

		Weekly hours allocated				
Field of Study	Subject	5	6	7	8	9
Languages and literature	Ukrainian Ianguage	3,5	3,5	2,5	2	2
	Ukrainian literature	2	2	2	2	2
	Russian or another minority language	2	2	2	2	2
Social studies	History of Ukraine	1	1	1	1.5	1.5

¹¹ https://zakononline.com.ua/documents/show/51261 570884#



In the 2013/2014 academic year 176419 students were enrolled in general secondary education institutions of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea

12,694 students (7.2%) received education in the Ukrainian language

5,551 students
(3.15%) received
education in the
Crimean Tatar
language

157,907 students (89.5%) received education in the Russian language

208,536 schoolchildren and their family members, nearly 60,000 university students

586 general education institutions of all types

In 2014 there were 22,070 teachers (18,896 in AR of Crimea and 3,174 in the city of Sevastopol), as well as 7,686 employees of preschool education institutions (5,695 in AR of Crimea and 1,991 in Sevastopol)

AT THE BEGINNING OF 2014, THERE WERE 8 SCHOOLS WITH UKRAINIAN AS THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION IN CRIMEA:

- Educational complex «Ukrainian School-Gymnasium» (Simferopol, 177 Kyivska St.; renamed by the occupation authorities to «Simferopol Academic Gymnasium»)
- Educational complex No. 15 «Gymnasium-school-kindergarten» named after Stepan Rudansky (Yalta, 43 Rudansky Street; renamed by the occupation authorities in honor of the Soviet Union hero Ivan Managarov)
- Secondary school No. 9 (Kerch, 12a Pirogova St.; the occupation authorities named it after the hero of the Soviet Union, Sergei Borzenko)
- Olena Teliha Secondary School No. 20 (Feodosia, Primorske village, 7 Prorizna Street; deprived of Olena Teliha's name by the occupation authorities; current number of students is about 146)
- Secondary school No. 13 with Ukrainian and Russian languages of instruction (Yevpatoria, 16 Sytnikova St.)
- Secondary school No. 3 with Ukrainian as the language of instruction (Kerch district, Shcholkino, 3rd microdistrict, 109; operated on the basis of school No. 1, liquidated by the occupation authorities)
- 7 School-College (11 Krasnoarmeyskaya St., Alushta)
- Lesya Ukrainka Gymnasium No. 5 with Russian and Ukrainian languages of instruction (50 Symonka Street, Sevastopol; deprived by the occupation authorities of the name of Lesya Ukrainka and the status of an institution with Ukrainian as the language of instruction)

Ukrainian language teachers for Crimean schools were trained at the Vernadsky Tauride National University in Simferopol. The training program was launched in the mid-1990s and allowed for the graduation of nearly 50 Ukrainian language teachers annually. In addition, specialists came from mainland Ukraine. Also, until 2014, the Crimean Engineering and Pedagogical University had a 4-year joint program in Ukrainian and English, which enrolled approximately 240 students in the 1st-4th years. Ukrainian curriculum and textbooks were used, teacher training was underway, multilingual approaches to language learning were introduced and educational reforms continued, as part of Ukraine's participation in the Bologna Process, which the state joined in 2005.

2

UKRAINIAN-LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN CRIMEA AFTER RUSSIAN OCCUPATION

2.1. RADICAL CHANGE IN THE CONTENT AND DIRECTIONS OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY BY THE OCCUPYING POWER

The Russian occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol has resulted in the fundamental dismantling of the Ukrainian-language education system, which once served as a critical pillar of cultural and national identity in the region. The eradication of Ukrainian identity through the education system in the region has become a key tool of the occupation authorities to establish a pro-Russian worldview and erase the cultural memory of new generations. The educational infrastructure has been actively used by the occupying power as a means of assimilation, the introduction of Russian identity and indoctrination of students with Russian militaristic and ideological narratives. As early as 2015, international organizations pointed out to the more than real risks of destroying the possibility of learning the Ukrainian language in the occupied region: «The situation with teaching in Ukrainian, which was a de facto minority language on the peninsula even before the annexation, has become particularly critical. It is a matter of concern that in the long run it may disappear from the education system in Crimea» 12.

The occupation authorities stated that since September 1, 2023, all educational programs have been brought in line with the federal basic general education programs (FGBEP)¹³, and schools have been fully provided with Russian textbooks and teaching materials.

 $^{^{12} \}quad https://docs.rferl.org/uk-ua/2019/09/04/22426220-11b4-4944-bb6a-f632ecc10269. \\ pdf$

¹³ https://crimea-news.com/society/2025/03/18/1620396.html

In order to «integrate» the educational system of the Crimean peninsula into the Russian humanitarian space, the occupying authorities adopted Federal Law No. 84-FZ «On the Specifics of Legal Regulation of Relations in the Field of Education in Connection with the Accession of the Republic of Crimea to the Russian Federation and the Establishment of New Constituent Entities within the Russian Federation – the Republic of Crimea and the Federal City of Sevastopol»14, according to which educational institutions of the occupied region in 2014 were transferred to educational standards and programs in accordance with the Russian Thus, this law established norms that ensured the «integration» of the education systems of the AR of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol into the educational space of the Russian Federation, as well as the conformity and recognition of education, educational and educational qualification levels, academic degrees and academic titles, positions of pedagogical and scientific-pedagogical staff, qualifications, certification, etc. obtained before the occupation.

In 2014-2015, the activities of the occupation authorities-controlled educational management structures on the Crimean Peninsula were aimed at creating conditions for the transition of regional education to Russian standards. Massive retraining of teaching staff was organized: according to the reports of the occupation authorities, more than 30 thousand Crimean teachers took so-called advanced training courses on the legal regulation of the education system of the Russian Federation, the specifics of teaching financial literacy subjects, etc. In addition, so-called professional retraining was organized in the areas of «Theory and Methods of Teaching a Foreign Language (English)», «Practical Psychology», «Social Pedagogy», etc. The occupation authorities also purchased more than 2.5 million new Russian textbooks for Crimean schools.

¹⁴ http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/38441

Among other things, in June 2015, under the program «Philology. Russian Language and Literature» program, 563 Crimean teachers of Ukrainian language and literature were «retrained»

according to the occupation administration's report «On the activities of the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea: Report on the work in the 2014/2015 academic year)¹⁵

The occupying power also developed 4 sectoral programs that implemented Russian policy on the absorption of Ukrainian education in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol. In particular, we are talking about the so-called «State Program for the Development of Education and Science in the Republic of Crimea for 2015-2017» («Resolutions of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Crimea» of 30.12.2014 №651 and №653), so-called «People's Program of the Republic of Crimea for 2015-2020» (block «Education: Kindergartens»), so-called «laws» «On Education in the Republic of Crimea», «On Organization and Provision of Recreation for Children in the Republic of Crimea», «On Commissions on Minors and Protection of their Rights in the Republic of Crimea», «On Prevention of Delinquency in the Republic of Crimea», «On Organization of Activities of Guardianship and Trusteeship Bodies in the Republic of Crimea», «On Vesting Local Self-Government Bodies of Municipalities of the Republic of Crimea with State Powers of Guardianship and Care of Minors», «On Provision of Housing for Orphans, Children Deprived of Parental Care and Persons from Among Them in the Republic of Crimea».

¹⁵ https://monm.rk.gov.ru/structure/7b56727b-7598-4264-b4b7-5bdcc6f3061e



As part of the further absorption of Ukrainian educational institutions, the occupation authorities formed the following so-called «institutions» in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol to implement their policy on working with children and youth:

- «State Budgetary Institution «Regional Center for Preparation for Military Service and Military-Patriotic Education»
- «State Treasury Institution «Center for Evaluation and Monitoring of Education Quality»
- «State Budgetary Institution «Center for Social Support of Families, Children and Youth"
- «State Autonomous Educational Institution of Additional Vocational Education of the Republic of Crimea «Crimean Multifunctional Center for Applied Qualifications»»

It is also worth noting the creation of 25 so-called «centers of social services for families, children and youth.»

The so-called «State Program for the Development of Education and Science in the Republic of Crimea for 2015-2017» declared that students were provided with «constitutional guarantees and rights to study in Russian». Later, in a similar program until 2023, one of the many directions was «the development of the Russian language, national and multicultural education and the provision of equal opportunities for education in the Crimean

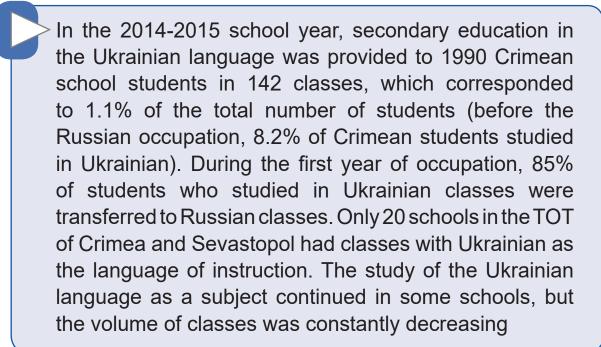
Tatar and Ukrainian languages.» However, in practice, this did not mean any promotion of the Ukrainian language. Since the Russian occupation of the Crimean Peninsula, the history of Ukraine, the Ukrainian language and literature have been excluded from the structure of curriculum and subjects, especially in the humanities. The content of education was changed by the occupying power through the introduction of Russian curriculum and the re-profiling of teachers. «Educational areas» were included in the educational process, including through the «concept of patriotic and spiritual and moral education of the population in the Republic of Crimea» of December 18, 2014, the provisions of which were aimed at «military and patriotic education of students». In subsequent years, this «concept» explicitly provided for the involvement of teachers, educators and representatives of «traditional» religious denominations in the conduct of «national-patriotic education», within the framework of which military organizations and «patriotic education» programs are actively developing.

2.2. EDUCATION AND LEARNING OF THE UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE AFTER RUSSIAN OCCUPATION

The occupation authorities' publicly released statistics have consistently demonstrated the implementation of targeted actions and policies to reduce and remove the Ukrainian language from the educational process in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol, as well as the possibility of studying the Ukrainian language as a subject, not to mention Ukrainian literature or the history of Ukraine. Particularly revealing is the data on the reduction of opportunities to study and learn the Ukrainian language included in the 2014-2015 reports, in the first years of the Russian occupation of Crimea.



Prior to the occupation, in the 2013-2014 school year, there were 7 secondary schools with Ukrainian as the language of instruction in the Crimean Peninsula in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and 1 in Sevastopol (a total of 2215 students, 103 classes). 142 schools in the region offered education in Ukrainian and Russian; 8,536 students in 602 classes studied in Ukrainian. 31 schools provided education in three languages - Ukrainian, Russian and Crimean Tatar: 1847 students in 132 classes studied in Ukrainian. In Sevastopol, there were 10 schools with both Ukrainian and Russian classes, with 994 students instructed in Ukrainian.





There were no plans to create first classes with Ukrainian as the language of instruction for the 2015-2016 school year, as school administrations reported that there were no such applications from parents¹⁶.

 $^{^{16}\,}https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/4/8/180606.pdf$

The occupation authorities attributed the significant decrease in the number of people willing to learn Ukrainian or study it to the alleged loss of popularity and the lack of parental applications to educational institutions for children to learn Ukrainian. In general, the occupation education system determines the language of instruction based on the parents' wishes: «The number of classes in a general education institution is determined depending on the number of applications submitted by citizens and the conditions created for the educational process and taking into account the sanitary standards and control standards specified in the license» («Legal Regulation of Education in Native Languages and Learning of Native Languages»). Reports by international institutions documented systematic and constant cases of pressure on parents, the creation of an atmosphere of fear, anti-Ukrainian sentiment and denial of Ukrainian identity by «officials». These factors supported intolerance of children's learning and teaching of the Ukrainian language, as well as a sense of threat and pressure on the families of these children. This policy took place against the backdrop of opposition to Ukrainian media and religious organizations, blocking of Ukrainian media, etc.

According to the occupying power:

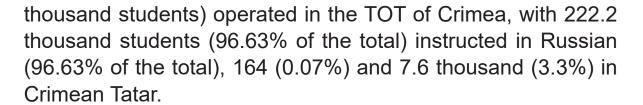
In 2017, 371 children in the TOT of Crimea received education in Ukrainian, which was 0.1% of the total number of students in the region. According to the 'so-called "Ministry of Education of the Republic of Crimea" (occupation authority)', there was only one school in the TOT of Crimea with Ukrainian as the language of instruction, in Feodosia, where 132 students in grades 9 studied in Ukrainian. In addition, in 12 schools where the main language of instruction was Russian, there were 19 Ukrainian-language classes. (M. A. Marusenko, N. M. Marusenko, M. S. Samaryna. Russian language in Crimea: the story of return).

- In the 2022/2023 academic year, 545 general education organizations with 230.3 thousand students were operating in the TOT of Crimea. There was one general education organization with Ukrainian as the language of instruction (9 classes, 182 students). In addition, a class with Ukrainian as the language of instruction was opened based on the Simferopol Academic Gymnasium for 15 students. During this period, 222.8 thousand students (96.7% of the total contingent) studied in Russian (96.7%), 7.3 thousand in Crimean Tatar (3.2%) and 197 (0.1%) in Ukrainian. In addition, teaching and study of 7 native languages of the «peoples of the Russian Federation» living in the occupied region was organized in the TOT of Crimea:
 - Armenian (134 students).
 - Bulgarian (49 students).
 - Greek (142 students).
 - Crimean Tatar (33351 students);
 - German (117 students);
 - Russian (178454 students);
 - Ukrainian (3486 students).

In the 2022/2023 academic year, 78.6 thousand children studied in 562 preschool education organizations in the TOT of Crimea, of whom 72.6 thousand (98.33%) studied in Russian and 1.3 thousand (1.63%) in Crimean Tatar¹⁷.

As of the beginning of the 2024/2025 academic year, 538 state and municipal general education organizations (229.9)

¹⁷ https://monm.rk.gov.ru/structure/3748b454-d262-48b3-b605-85cf93fadbbc



The TOT school in Crimea organized the study of 7 native languages:

- Armenian (96 students).
- Bulgarian (33).
- Greek (83).
- Crimean Tatar (30729).
- German (44).
- Russian (57434).
- Ukrainian (1249).

In total, 89668 students study native languages.

There are 74.6 thousand children enrolled in preschool education organizations in the TOT of Crimea, of whom 73.2 thousand (98.07% of the total number of pupils) study in Russian, 1.4 thousand (1.9%) in Crimean Tatar and 24 children (0.03%) in Ukrainian¹⁸.

By the end of 2014, Ukrainian as the language of instruction was completely removed from education in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol. In the 2013/2014 academic year, 12694 students studied in Ukrainian in the TOT of Crimea, in the 2022/2023 academic year, only 197 (0.1% of the total) were fully taught in Ukrainian and 3486 people studied Ukrainian as

¹⁸ https://monm.rk.gov.ru/structure/3748b454-d262-48b3-b605-85cf93fadbbc

a school subject, elective or extracurricular activity ("Ten years of occupation by the Russian Federation: Human Rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol, Ukraine. February 28, 2024")¹⁹.

In 2022, according to the occupying power, there were 227540 students in schools in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol. In 2023, the Russian authorities declared an increase in their number to 232369, of whom 3580 arrived in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol from the temporarily occupied territories of southern and eastern Ukraine. However, the number of newcomers, who were more likely to have received Ukrainian-language education before, also did not affect the language of education in the region. It was declared that in 2023, more than 20 000 children will enter the first grade the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol; in 2022, about 25 000 children were enrolled in the first grade²⁰.

Thus, various statistical indicators, practical examples and policies of the occupation authorities demonstrate a more than significant decrease in the possibility of learning Ukrainian and teaching in Ukrainian in educational institutions of the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol. The minimum number of pupils in preschool educational institutions in the region also shows a tendency to further reduce the teaching of the Ukrainian language in the coming years.

Thus, the eradication of Ukrainian identity of education in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol has been a deliberate policy of the occupation authorities since 2014. Back then, local guidelines on education and language use indicated that the number of hours of Ukrainian language teaching in schools with a «native (non-Russian) language of instruction» should be

¹⁹ https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/ukraine/2024-02-28-OHCHR-Ten-Years-Occupation-Crimea-UKR.pdf

²⁰ https://tass.ru/obschestvo/18503753

almost half that of Russian: thus, 15 hours were allocated for Ukrainian language and literature and 28 hours for Russian. It is noteworthy that a foreign language is also studied for 15 hours a week. By this criterion, Ukrainian was practically equated with a foreign language.

In accordance with the approaches set out in the «Concept for the Teaching of Native Languages of the Peoples of the Russian Federation (approved by the decision of the Collegium of the Ministry of Education of Russia in October 2019)»²¹, it is stated that the final certification in the subject «Native language» is in the state language, i.e. Russian; the subject itself is usually studied 2 hours per week.

Even the study of the Ukrainian language under Russian occupation is also subordinated to the goal of assimilation, destruction of Ukrainian identity and indoctrination of children and youth. For example, according to the Russian applied working program of the academic subject 'Native Language (Ukrainian)²²» students in grades 10-11 of secondary schools are expected to achieve the following results «to have an understanding of the Old Russian language as the historical basis of all East Slavic languages, Russian civic identity, patriotism, respect for their own people, a sense of responsibility to the homeland, pride in it, in their land, the past and present of the multinational people of Russia, respect for state symbols (coat of arms, flag, anthem), a civic position as an active and responsible member of Russian society, aware of their constitutional rights and duties, respecting the law and order, having a sense of

 $^{^{21}}$ https://monm.rk.gov.ru/uploads/txteditor/monm/attachments/d4/1d/8c/d98f00b204e98 00998ecf8427e/phpL20mLt_Концепция%20преподавания%20родных%20 языков%20народов%20России.pdf

²² https://monm.rk.gov.ru/uploads/txteditor/monm/attachments/d4/1d/8c/d98f00b204 e9800998ecf8427e/phpx3gOXI_Родной%20(украинский)%20язык%20для%20 10-11%20классов.pdf



dignity, consciously accepting traditional national and universal humanistic and democratic values, being ready to serve the homeland and defend it» etc.

The priority for children in the occupied territories, of course, is to learn Russian. For example, in the recommendations²³ of the Department of the State Policy in the Sphere of General Education of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation on the application of the legislation in terms of ensuring the possibility of obtaining education in native languages among the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation, studying the state languages of the republics of the Russian Federation, native languages among the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation, including Russian as a native language, which were extended to the occupied Crimea in 2019, state that it is impossible to study different languages by using hours for studying the state (Russian) language²⁴.

These requirements were first introduced by the occupying Russian authorities in 2014. Thus, according to the explanations of the so-called «Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Crimea» of June 25, 2014, No. 01-14/382, «teaching and learning of the state languages of the Republic of Crimea (Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar) should not be carried out to the detriment of teaching and learning of the state language of the Russian Federation,» i.e. Russian. The criteria for «harm» are not defined and local «authorities and self-government bodies» have direct influence on language practices in education, effectively banning education in Ukrainian. The occupation authorities have

²³ https://monm.rk.gov.ru/uploads/monm/attachments/d4/1d/8c/d98f00b204e9800998 ecf8427e/phprEVmSi Об%20изучении%20родных%20языков.pdf

https://monm.rk.gov.ru/uploads/monm/attachments//d4/1d/8c/d98f00b204e98009 98ecf8427e/phprEVmSi_%D0%9E%D0%B1%20%D0%B8%D0%B7%D1%83%D1%87 %D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B8%20%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%BD%D 1%8B%D1%85%20%D1%8F%D0%B7%D1%8B%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B2.pdf

generally extended to the region the approaches to language learning that are used in the territory of the Russian Federation and reflect assimilationist approaches to the cultures and languages of different peoples.

It is also worth noting that on August 1, 2024, the Russian Federation withdrew from the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which it signed in 1996 in Strasbourg (France). The Convention protects, among other things, the rights to the free expression of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity, as well as non-discrimination, the preservation and development of minority cultures, religions and languages, teaching in schools in minority languages, etc.

In the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol it is also «unacceptable to study the subjects 'Native language' and 'Literary reading in the native language / Native literature' at the expense of the time allocated by educational organizations for the study of Russian language and literature, as well as for preparation for any form of state final certification. An analysis of the timetable in educational institutions where Ukrainian is taught as a subject shows a general prevalence of the number of hours of studying Russian as a subject compared to studying Ukrainian as a native²⁵.

Tools and mechanisms for ousting the Ukrainian language from the educational process in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol were used during the Russian occupation of other territories of Ukraine, in the east and south. Thus, in 2024, reports by international human rights organizations stated that the Russian authorities, «contrary to the legal regime of occupation, are trying to establish full control over educational policy and educational institutions in the occupied territories of Ukraine as if they were in Russia.»



As in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol, other temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine have seen the seizure of Ukrainian textbooks and a reduction in the study of the Ukrainian language. In addition, the occupation authorities prevented students from receiving education if they did not receive illegal passports of Russian citizens (according to publication "Education under occupation: forced Russification of the education system in the occupied territories of Ukraine", 2024, Human Rights Watch). In general, according to Ukraine on the temporarily occupied territories, there may be almost 600 thousand school-age children: AR of Crimea - 285 000, Sevastopol - 53 000, TOT of Zaporizhzhia region - more than 41 000, TOT of Kherson region - about 20 000, TOT of Donetsk region - 147 000, TOT of Luhansk region - more than 100 000.

DESTRUCTION OF UKRAINIAN EDUCATION IN OCCUPIED CRIMEA IN THE ASSESSMENTS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

During the occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol since 2014, the occupying power has been implementing a deliberate policy of destruction of the Ukrainian education system. It provided for the rapid transfer of the educational process in the occupied region to Russian parameters, standards, content and the dominance of the Russian language. To this day, there is an ongoing militarization of education and youth policy in the region, along with the targeted ousting of the Ukrainian language from the educational process as a part of the destruction of Ukrainian identity, including through its denial, as well as the introduction of a general Russian discourse on the temporarily occupied territory. The education system was subordinated to the task of «integration into the Russian space» - cultural, historical, social, legal, etc.

The process of violation of the language rights of the residents of the TOT of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol to access education in the Ukrainian language has been repeatedly recorded in the decisions of international judicial institutions.

On 25 June 2024, the European Court of Human Rights publicly delivered its judgment on the merits in the inter-State case Ukraine v. Russia (regarding Crimea) concerning applications No. 20958/14 and No. 38334/18²⁶. They dealt with the ban on the Ukrainian language in schools and the persecution of Ukrainian-speaking students by the Russian Federation. It was

https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/yespl-oholosyv-svoie-rishennia-u-mizhderzhavnii-spravi-ukraina-proty-rosii-shchodo-krymu

noted that since 2014, there has been a significant decrease in the number of educational institutions and classes in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol with Ukrainian language instruction: the number of students receiving education in Ukrainian decreased by 80% during the first year of occupation and by another 50% the following year..

Overall, the judgment noted a dramatic decline in the number of students receiving school education in the Ukrainian language between 2014 and 2016—an 80 percent drop. It concluded that this sudden and severe deterioration had a disproportionate negative impact on the rights of ethnic Ukrainians, especially children and their parents. The Russian Federation was found to exercise full control over the state school system in Crimea, including over the language of instruction and the conditions under which Ukrainian could be used by parents and children²⁸.

Earlier, on January 31, 2024, the International Court of Justice recognized that the Russian Federation discriminates Ukrainian minority in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol in the educational sphere, violating the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination²⁷. Russian Federation violated its obligations regarding school education in the Ukrainian language in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol after 2014, according to Article 2, paragraph 1 (a) and Article 5 (e) (v) of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Among other issues, attention was drawn to the data indicating a sharp decline in the number of schoolchildren receiving education in Ukrainian in the TOT of Crimea and

https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/166/166-20240131-sum-01-00-en.pdf

 $^{^{28}\} https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/166/166-20240131-sum-01-00-en.pdf$

Sevastopol²⁹. In addition, the court found unconvincing the explanations of the Russian Federation about the «natural» reasons for such a decrease. The conclusions noted that such a sharp decline in Ukrainian-language education in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol had an incredibly negative impact on the rights of ethnic Ukrainians in the region and that the Russian Federation exercises full control over the local education system in terms of the language of instruction³⁰.

Also, since the Russian occupation of Crimea, international institutions, analyzing the situation in the educational and language spheres in the region, documented violations of human rights by the occupying power regarding access to Ukrainian-language education.

In the Report of the Human Rights Assessment Mission to the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol (6-18 July 2015)³¹, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities stated that in schools throughout Crimea, teaching and learning in the mother tongue, Ukrainian, was being widely reduced or eliminated, with requests for Ukrainian-language classes being denied by parents of students, which had a negative impact on the Ukrainian community's enjoyment of their cultural and linguistic rights. It was also documented that books in Ukrainian, on Ukrainian topics and by Ukrainian authors were removed from schools and public libraries. The certificates issued by Crimean schools became invalid for Ukrainian universities, which stimulated further waves of migration of families who wanted to take their children to the mainland of Ukraine to study³². The monitoring concluded that, in

²⁹ https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2024/01/31/7178642/

https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/166/166-20240131-sum-01-00-en.pdf

³¹ https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/4/8/180606.pdf

³² https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/4/8/180606.pdf

practice, opportunities to learn the native language and receive education in it have sharply decreased in Crimea.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in its special reports on the situation in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol pointed out the growing trend of Russian language dominance, particularly in the educational process, in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol since 2014³³. The first special report referred to the targeted policy of the Russian Federation to exclude the Ukrainian language from the educational process, reducing the opportunity for pupils and students to receive education in the Ukrainian language. It was emphasized that after the occupation of Crimea, local schools and universities began to function in accordance with the curriculum and educational standards of the Russian Federation, which limited the right of Ukrainians to education in their native language. Although in grades 1-9 of secondary school, according to the legislation of the Russian Federation, teaching in minority languages is provided, in the upper (10-11) grades all subjects must be taught in Russian. In addition, there is no clear procedure regulating education in the mother tongue and the law does not set a quantitative criterion for opening schools or classes. As noted above, in the 2013/14 academic year, 12694 people studied in Ukrainian in the TOT of Crimea and in subsequent years this number rapidly decreased: in 2014/15 - 2154, in 2015/16 - 949, in 2016/17 - 371. Between 2013 and 2017, the number of Ukrainian-language schools in the TOT of Crimea decreased from 7 to 1 and the number of Ukrainianlanguage classes from 875 to 28. (Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (Ukraine)34.

 $^{^{33}\} https://docs.rferl.org/uk-ua/2019/09/04/22426220-11b4-4944-bb6a-f632ecc10269.pdf$

³⁴ https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Countries/UA/Crimea2014_2017_Ukrainian.pdf



in 2014/15 academic year – 2154 in 2015/16 academic year – 949

in 2016/17 academic year – 371

Between 2013 and 2017, the number of Ukrainian-language schools in the TOT of Crimea decreased from 7 to 1 and the number of Ukrainian-language classes from 875 to 28.

(Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (Ukraine)³⁶.

The 2019 special report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation in the TOT of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol stated that the situation in the region is largely the result of the predominance of the Russian cultural environment and the reduced availability of education in the Ukrainian language. Potential discrepancies were noted between the official language status of a school or classroom and the actual use of the Ukrainian language in the curriculum: in some cases, students at such schools or classes did not actually have access to education in Ukrainian and were able to study their native language only as an elective or

https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Countries/UA/Crimea2014_2017_ Ukrainian.pdf

optional subject³⁶. The 2024 report explicitly stated that there was almost no education in Ukrainian in Crimea ("Ten years of occupation by the Russian Federation: Human Rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol", Ukraine. February 28, 2024)³⁷.

UN resolutions also pointed to negative trends implemented by Russia in the TOT of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. In particular, they referred to changes in the educational context due to the militarization of education and indoctrination of students with Russian military meanings. Thus, in the resolution «Problem of the militarization of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, as well as parts of the Black Sea and Sea of Azov»³⁸ of 2020, the UN called on the Russian Federation to «refrain from establishing educational institutions that provide combat training to Crimean children with the stated aim of training for military service in the Russian armed forces, to refrain from establishing combat training courses at Crimean schools and to cease efforts to formally incorporate Crimean educational institutions into the "military-patriotic" education system of the Russian Federation»

 $^{^{36}\} https://docs.rferl.org/uk-ua/2019/09/04/22426220-11b4-4944-bb6a-f632ecc10269.pdf$

³⁷ https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/ukraine/2024-02-28-OHCHR-Ten-Years-Occupation-Crimea-UKR.pdf

³⁸ https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3893540?v=pdf

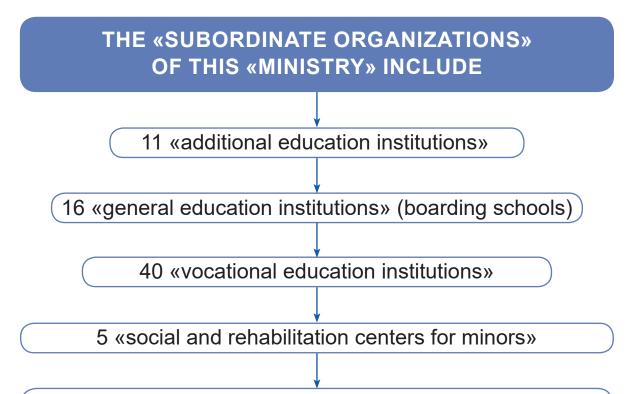
OCCUPATION AUTHORITIES AND INDIVIDUALS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF UKRAINIAN-LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN OCCUPIED CRIMEA

The policy of destruction of Ukrainian-language education in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation can be assessed as a manifestation of the genocide of Ukrainians organized by the occupation authorities, as well as systemic discrimination against Ukrainians on the basis of language, which violates the norms and principles of international humanitarian law. The relevant policy is formed by the leadership of the occupying power and implemented by officials heading Russian federal institutions and is implemented through the occupation «authorities» in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol. The latter include the so-called «executive branch of power», which includes the so-called «Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea».

The so-called "state administration" bodies of the illegal occupation authorities of the Russian Federation in occiped Crimea include, in particular, the so-called "executive branch of the Republic of Crimea"

One such body is the so-called "Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea"

The structure of the "ministry" includes a "minister," five "deputy ministers," and eight "departments": general education; additional education, organization of extracurricular activities, recreation and health improvement for children; protection of minors' rights; science, secondary vocational and higher education; youth affairs; planning and finance, civil service, human resources, and legal and regulatory support; and supervision and control over compliance with education legislation.



as well as such «state institutions» as the «regional center for preparation for military service and military-patriotic education», «republican center for psychological, pedagogical and medical-social support», «Crimean engineering and pedagogical university», «republican center of social services for family, children and youth», «municipal centers of social services for family, children and youth», etc.

It is worth noting that persons involved in the destruction of Ukrainian-language education and Ukrainian identity of children in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol may be charged with crimes under Ukrainian and international law. Article 111 «High Treason» of the Criminal Code of Ukraine provides for liability for intentional actions that harm the sovereignty, territorial integrity, defense capability, state, economic or information security of Ukraine. This may mean siding with the enemy during an armed conflict, espionage or assisting a foreign state in conducting subversive activities against Ukraine. Citizens who have taken positions in illegal authorities, law enforcement or judicial

institutions in the occupied territories and are performing official duties may be held liable for a range of crimes, including treason and collaboration (depending on the period of the offenses). Actions aimed at consistently destroying the Ukrainian language in the education system, changing educational content and denying the right to Ukrainian identity also violate international humanitarian law.

According to parts 1, 3 and 5 of Article 111-1 «Collaboration Activities» of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, effective from March 3, 2022, public denial of armed aggression against Ukraine, support for the occupation regime, cooperation with the aggressor state, armed groups or occupation administration, as well as non-recognition of Ukraine's sovereignty over the temporarily occupied territories are criminalized. The offenses include propaganda in educational institutions, implementation of the aggressor state's education standards, voluntary holding of positions in illegal authorities, participation in the organization and holding of pseudo-elections or referendums, as well as public calls for their holding. The mere fact of holding a position in the occupation structures may qualify as one of the grounds for criminal proceedings under this article, as such activities contribute to the creation and functioning of illegal authorities, which is a key element of the management of the occupied territories. Their social danger is obvious: the person helps the aggressor to create a system of illegal authorities, which is the basis for the functioning of the state mechanism in general.

Since 2014, the Crimean Center for Business and Cultural Cooperation «Ukrainian House» has been monitoring and providing information coverage of the illegal actions of the occupation regime in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol. In September 2024, the organization launched the project «The Right to education in the context of occupied Crimea» with



the support of the International Renaissance Foundation. The aim of the project is to monitor human rights violations in the educational sphere of the occupied Crimea, to form an evidence base for these violations, to actively disseminate the collected information and to appeal to law enforcement agencies to open criminal proceedings based on the information collected.

Monitoring of the activities of «officials» of the so-called «Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea» and local «departments of education» for violations of the right to education revealed that since 2014 they have been committing illegal actions to introduce Russian education standards and militarize it in the occupied region. With their assistance, the Ukrainian language and culture were harassed; they supported and implemented actions and policies of the aggressor state in the educational sphere that threaten the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine.

The actions of persons who cooperate with the occupation authorities, hold senior positions in illegal authorities and implement the policies of the occupying power may have signs of genocide against Ukrainians, including through the impossibility of exercising language rights in education and other areas. The systematic violation of the language rights of citizens, denial of the identity of representatives of various ethnic groups (in particular, Ukrainians in Crimea), together with systematic measures of Russian indoctrination and assimilation, can be regarded as manifestations of the policy of genocide against the Ukrainian population in the occupied territories.

At the same time, there are signs of violations of international humanitarian law in the field of education through: introduction of curriculum, activities or materials containing hostile propaganda; introduction of education standards of the occupying power and deliberate changes in the content of curriculum in educational institutions; support or implementation of ideas that deny Ukraine's sovereignty and support the occupation of its territories. In Ukrainian law, such actions can be assessed as manifestations of collaborationism through cooperation with the occupation authorities in the organization of the educational process; they violate students' rights to Ukrainian-language and unbiased education and pose a threat to the future generation of Ukrainians and therefore harm Ukraine and undermine its national security.

Among the documented actions of the NGO «Ukrainian House» by «officials» of the so-called «Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea» are the actions of the following persons responsible for the destruction of Ukrainian-language education, introduction of Russian educational standards and the elimination of opportunities to study and learn in the Ukrainian language, which can be interpreted as manifestations of discrimination and violations of international humanitarian law and contains signs of genocide:

Goncharova Natalia Georgiivna, in 2014-2019 – «Minister of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea».

During 2014-2015, the administration of Crimean schools, contrary to all norms and rules, refused to accept applications from parents of students to open classes with Ukrainian as the language of instruction. In 2016, administrations refused parents one by one, telling them that schools would not open classes with Ukrainian as the language of instruction «for the sake of a single student.» In schools, hours of Ukrainian language instruction were reduced in favor of Russian and classes with in-depth study of Ukrainian language and literature were disbanded. Instead, a powerful propaganda effort was carried out to «foster patriotic feelings»



towards the occupying power. According to the explanations of the «so-called "Ministry of Education of the Republic of Crimea" (occupation authority)» of 25.06.2014 № 0114/382³⁹ «Teaching and learning of the state languages of the Republic of Crimea should not be carried out to the detriment of teaching and learning of the state language of the Republic of Crimea», i.e. Russian. The relevant changes were reflected in the roadmap⁴⁰.

In 2019, Natalia Goncharova became the so-called «director of the municipal budgetary general education institution «Lyceum of the Crimean Spring» in the Simferopol district of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, where she still works. In this institution, Goncharova continues to implement the standards of the aggressor state in the educational process, which violates international humanitarian law.

Sanctions were imposed on Natalia Goncharova (identifier in the register - 12541)⁴¹ saccording to the Decree of the President of Ukraine № 126/2018⁴², and criminal proceedings were opened No. 42024010000000059 of 23.09.2024.

 Lavryk Valentyna Vasylivna, from December 2019 to the present day – so-called «Minister of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea».

In June 2021, Valentyna Lavryk joined the «council on the use of the Russian language and improvement of the internal

³⁹ https://monm.rk.gov.ru/file/01-14-382-25062014.docx

⁴⁰ https://monm.rk.gov.ru/uploads/txteditor/monm/attachments//d4/1d/8c/d98f00b204e98 00998ecf8427e/php8uhyn0_%D0%94%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B6%D0 %BD%D0%B0%D1%8F%20%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%80%D1%82%D0%B0%20 %D0%BF%D0%BE%20%D0%A8%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B5%20 %D0%9C%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%B2%D 0%B5%D1%89%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%8F-4.pdf

⁴¹ https://drs.nsdc.gov.ua/actions/personal

⁴² https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/1262018-24150

language policy» established by the sp-called «decree of the head of the Republic of Crimea» Sergei Aksyonov.

In July 2022, she told the Russian newspaper Vzglyad that «author teams» in the TOT of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol «wrote textbooks on the Ukrainian language and literature» for students of grades 5-9 in schools in the Russian-occupied territories of southern and eastern Ukraine, which the «minister» called «liberated» according to Russian propaganda narratives: these textbooks were allegedly undergoing examination and revision at the Institute of Native Languages in Moscow.

After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Valentyna Lavryk facilitated and was responsible for coordinating and supervising the relocation of children from the occupied regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia oblasts to camps in the temporarily occupied territory of Crimea and Sevastopol.

EU sanctions 2024/753 of 23.02.2024 (Ukraine, territorial integrity – R (EU) 269/2014)⁴³.

Criminal proceeding No. 22024011000000276 of 25.11.2024 was opened.;

 Zhurba Natalia Viktorivna, in 2014-2020 –»First Deputy Minister of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea».

By the Order of the so-called «Council of Ministers of the Republic of Crimea» of July 09, 2014, No. 644-r, she was appointed «Deputy Chairman of the Board of the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea».

⁴³ https://www.opensanctions.org/entities/NK-dBNaaWDAs78Qg5TSN8pB74/

Currently, Natalia Zhurba is the so-called «deputy director» – «head of the structural unit «Kindergarten «Mriya» of the municipal budgetary general education institution «Lyceum of the Crimean Spring» in the Simferopol district of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea; in this institution, she continues to implement the standards of the aggressor state in the educational process, which violates international humanitarian law.

On December 5, 2023, Natalia Zhurba received the «honorary title» of «Honored Education Worker of the Republic of Crimea» for «significant personal contribution to the development of preschool education» in the TOT of Crimea.

Lvova Svitlana Mykolaivna, in 2019-2022 – «Deputy Minister of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea», from 2022 to the present – «First Deputy Minister of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea».

From December 2014 to July 2016. Svetlana Lvova held the position of «Head of the Education Department of the Bakhchisaray District Administration», from July 2016 to January 2018 - «Head of the Department of Education, Youth and Sports of the Bakhchisaray District Administration», from February 2018 to October 2019 - «Head of the Bakhchisaray District Administration».

By the Order of the «Council of Ministers of the Republic of Crimea» of November 25, 2022, No. 1869-r, Svetlana Lvova was appointed «Deputy Chairman of the Board of the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea».

Ablyatipov Ayder Serverovych, in 2014-2020 – «Deputy Minister of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea».

By his own admission, on June 3-7, 2019, he participated in court hearings as a member of the Russian delegation at the International Court of Justice in the case of Ukraine v. Russia, where he defended the position of improving the situation in education for Crimean Tatars in the TOT of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the absence of discrimination. At that time, the court rejected the Ukrainian side's accusations of violations of the rights of the Crimean Tatar community in the TOT of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol in the educational sphere by the occupying power. In 2019-2020, Ablyatipov was a member of the «conscription commissions», helping to ensure the conscription of residents of the TOT of Crimea for military service in the armed forces of the occupying power. On March 31, 2022, the printed edition of the «State Council of the Republic of Crimea» «Crimean News» published Ablyatipov's program material, in which the author justified Russia's war against Ukraine. As of 2022, Ablyatipov was an «advisor to the Chairman of the State Council of the Republic of Crimea».

 Alikin Kostyantyn Borysovych, in 2017-2020 – «Deputy Minister of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea».

In 2019, he was a member of the «conscription commissions», helping to ensure the conscription of residents of the TOT of Crimea for military service in the armed forces of the occupying power. In 2022, he was repeatedly interviewed by the Russian occupation authorities'-controlled media as the «first deputy head of the regional branch of the Voluntary Society for Assistance to the Russian Army, Air Force and Navy in the Republic of Crimea» on the topic of «patriotic education» of children and youth in the TOT of Crimea.

 Narkunas Iryna Oleksandrivna, in 2014-2020 – «Deputy Minister of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea».

By the so-called "Order of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Crimea of December 24, 2019, No. 1673-r", she was appointed «a member of the Board of the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea»;

 Asanov Tymur Reshatovych, in 2020-2024 – «Deputy Minister of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea».

In 2020 and 2023, he was a member of the «conscription commissions», helping to ensure the conscription of residents of the TOT of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea for military service in the armed forces of the occupying power. On October 19, 2022, during an «expanded meeting of the Public Council under the State Committee for Interethnic Relations of the Republic of Crimea», he reported on the protection of the rights of minors who arrived in the TOT of Crimea from the TOT of Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

- **Krasnikova Oksana Valentynivna**, from 2014 to the present day -» Deputy Minister of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea».

By the so called «Orders of the Head of the Republic of Crimea» of October 12, 2022, No. 1333-rg «On the Establishment of an Interdepartmental Working Group to Attract the Necessary Number of Specialists (Employees) to the Enterprises of the Defense Industry of the Republic of Crimea» and of March 29, 2023, No. 434-rg «On the Establishment of a Working Group

on Patriotic Education of Children and Youth in the Republic of Crimea» included the above-mentioned «working groups».

 Bespalova Svitlana Edyslavivna, from April 2022 to the present day –»Deputy Minister of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea».

By the verdict of the Solomyansky District Court of Kyiv dated 06.02.2025 in case No. 760/23310/23, she was found guilty of committing a criminal offense under Part 5 of Art. 111-1 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, with a sentence of imprisonment for a term of 8 years, with deprivation of the right to hold positions related to the performance of organizational, administrative and economic functions in government bodies, institutions, enterprises and organizations, regardless of ownership, for a term of 10 years and confiscation of all property owned by her.

 Donchenko Illya Grygorovych, from 2024 to the present day – «Deputy Minister of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea».

On December 25, 2024, in accordance with the amendments to the «Decree of the Head of the Republic of Crimea» of August 3, 2021, No. 182-U, he was included in the «Interdepartmental Commission on Countering Extremism in the Republic of Crimea». On February 10, 2025, in accordance with the amendments to the «Order of the Head of the Republic of Crimea» of October 21, 2015, No. 407-rg, he was included in the «working group on «Cossacks» under the Head of the Republic of Crimea».

 Perepelytsia Galyna Viktorivna, from 2024 to the present day – «Deputy Minister of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea».

From February 2021 to September 2022, she held the «position» of «Deputy Head of Administration - Head of the Department of Education and Youth of the Administration of the City of Alushta». On December 16, 2024, in accordance with the amendments to the «Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Crimea» of February 3, 2015, No. 21 «On Commissions for Minors and Protection of Their Rights», she was included in the relevant «commission» with «the powers of the deputy chairman».

Pursuant to Article 216(2) of the Criminal Procedure Code of Ukraine, security investigative bodies conduct pre-trial investigations of criminal offenses under, inter alia, Articles 111 and 111-1 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine.

For example, the NGO «Ukrainian House» sent 11 statements to the Security Service of Ukraine about criminal offenses with relevant evidence and a request to take measures to open criminal proceedings against representatives of the so-called «Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea».

In addition, among the responsible «officials» of the regional «departments of education» who have been documented by the NGO «Ukrainian House», who ensured the implementation of Russian education standards at the local level and took measures to destroy Ukrainian-language education and committed other illegal actions in the TOT of Crimea, there are currently responsible «officials»:

- Sukhina Tetiana Ivanivna: November 2010 December 2014 so-called «Head of the Department of Education of the Executive Committee of the Simferopol City Council»; December 2014 November 2018 so-called «Head of the Department of Education of the Simferopol City Administration»; from November 2018 to the present so-called «Deputy Head of the Administration so-called Head of the Department of Education of the Simferopol City Administration";
- Kutkovsky Renard Volodymyrovych, since August
 2015 so-called «Head of the Department of Education and
 Youth Policy of the Yalta City Administration», since September
 20, 2024 «Deputy Head of the Yalta City Administration".
- Gladchenko Natalia Vasylivna so-called «Head of the Department of Education and Youth Policy of the Yalta City Administration";
- Protsenko Olena Ivanivna so-called «Deputy Head of the Department of Education and Youth Policy of the Yalta City Administration";
- Volkova Natalia Mykolaivna former head of the socalled «Department of Education, Youth and Sports of the Administration of the Bakhchisaray District";
- Ponkratova Maryna Fedorivna former head of the so-called «Department of Education of the Kerch City Administration» and currently the so-called «Head of the Department of Education, Youth and Sports of the Bakhchisaray District Administration".
- Shcherban Antonina Petrivna so-called «Deputy Head of the Department of Education, Youth and Sports of the Administration of Bakhchisaray District".

- Dimarzo Olena Volodymyrivna so-called «Deputy Head of the Department of Education of the Kerch City Administration".
- Zherebets Valentyna Ivanivna so-called «Head of the Department of Education, Youth and Sports of the Administration of the City of Yevpatoriya».

In addition, information regarding another 34 so-called wheads of city and district weepartments of education and their weepartments of solution and their weepartments of education and their weepartments of edu

Considering the above facts, we can conclude that the destruction of Ukrainian-language education in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol is part of the occupation authorities' policy aimed at Russification and assimilation of the Ukrainian-speaking population of the region and the destruction of its national identity. Persons involved in these processes must be held accountable, including under the laws of Ukraine. The NGO «Ukrainian House» will continue to monitor human rights violations in the field of education on the occupied peninsula, document the relevant facts and submit them to law enforcement agencies to initiate criminal cases.

CONCLUSIONS

In the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol, the occupying power is implementing a targeted policy of eradication of Ukrainian identity and assimilation of the Ukrainian population, one of the tools of which is forced changes in the educational process. The destruction of the regional system of Ukrainian-language education and the modification of educational content has led to the displacement of Ukrainian political and cultural identity, pressure on communities and individuals against the background of the general militarization of society. In particular, the following negative changes were noted:

- Implementation of policy of Russification and assimilation of Ukrainian citizens. Education in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol has become a tool for imposing Russian identity, militarizing youth and denying Ukrainian cultural heritage. By 2024, the number of students receiving education in Ukrainian had decreased by 90-95% and the only remaining Ukrainian-language classes are symbolic. The elimination of the Ukrainian language from the education system constitutes an integral part of the broader strategy aimed at eradicating Ukrainian identity in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol.
- Violation of international humanitarian law. Restrictions on access to Ukrainian-language education, coupled with the imposition of Russian curriculum and educational standards by the occupying authorities, constitute clear violations of international humanitarian law and fundamental human rights

norms, including those enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Geneva Conventions. The European Court of Human Rights and the International Court of Justice have recognized the actions of the Russian Federation as discriminatory in terms of providing an opportunity to study the Ukrainian language in the TOT of the Crimea and Sevastopol.

Systemic violation of human rights, linguocide as a component of ethnocide. After the occupation of Crimea began in 2014, Russia deliberately destroyed the Ukrainian educational system in the region, including by ousting the Ukrainian language from the educational process, closing schools and classes with the Ukrainian language of instruction and manipulating curriculum. This can be interpreted as one of the components of linguistic violence bordering on ethnocide. These concepts are not clearly defined in international law, but restricting the use of the mother tongue, particularly in education, is a violation of International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and other similar acts

The linguocide of the Ukrainian language in the occupied territories is carried out by the aggressor country not only in education, but also in the information space, cultural heritage of ethnic Ukrainians, as well as in the scientific and religious spheres. In fact, this is a deliberate attempt to ethnocide the Ukrainian community in the TOT of Crimea and Sevastopol. Given the repression by the occupation authorities because of belonging to the Ukrainian community, which is demonstrated in the expression of pro-Ukrainian sentiments, including through comments on social networks, performance of Ukrainian songs, etc., manipulation of demographic indicators, according to which



the number of Ukrainians in the occupied territories is rapidly decreasing, as well as information and propaganda pressure, abduction and torture of activists, persecution and arrests for the Ukrainian language and symbols, many Ukrainians in Crimea are forced to hide their identity. Through Russification and militarization, information pressure, ethno-demographic colonization, etc., the occupying power is taking all measures to forcibly assimilate Ukrainians in Crimea.

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FROM OBLIVION TO DISCRIMINATION: UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF OCCUPIED CRIMEA

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Certificate of registration in the State Register of Publishing Entities: DK № 3693 of 02.02.2010 Tel.: +38 (067) 440 63 97 info@b-logica.com www.b-logikca.com This study examines the violation of educational rights and the cultural assimilation policies implemented in occupied Crimea.

The urgency of this research arises from the critical state of education in the temporarily occupied Crimea. As documented in numerous international reports, the systematic displacement of the Ukrainian language, culture and historical heritage forms part of the Russian Federation's broader strategy of "russification" of Crimea. These actions not only constitute violations of international law but also pose long-term threats to the identity and distinctiveness of the Ukrainian community on the peninsula. The growing cultural aggression and the education policies imposed by the occupying authorities contribute to the gradual erosion of Ukrainian national identity, particularly among young people growing up in an environment increasingly detached from Ukraine.





Informational partner: https://www.voicecrimea.com.ua/uk/