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Russian Occupation Update, June 18, 2026

Key Takeaways

The Kremlin facilitated the temporary deportation of Ukrainian children to the Russian-occupied separatist region of Abkhazia in Georgia, likely for the first time in an official capacity since 2022. Russian nuclear energy operator Rosenergoatom organized and financed the temporary transfer of children from occupied Enerhodar to children's camps in occupied Crimea as part of a career guidance and support program.

Russian occupation officials are responding to Ukraine's intermediate-range strike campaign against logistics in occupied areas by restricting the transfer and deportation of Ukrainian children to Russian-run summer camps.

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree codifying Russia's penetration into the most local level of the legal system in occupied Zaporizhia Oblast.

Russian occupation officials issued first-time Russian passports to teenagers from occupied Donetsk Oblast in a Russia Day ceremony.

Ukraine's intermediate and long-range strike campaign against Russian logistical and energy assets is generating economic pain in occupied Crimea.

A Russian-controlled occupation court in Simferopol extended the pre-trial detention of four Crimean Tatar women in a case alleging their involvement with the Hizb ut-Tahrir pan-Islamic organization.

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law refining the regulatory framework for the free economic zone (FEZ) operating in occupied Ukraine.

Russian state-owned Sberbank continues to expand and deepen its influence in the financial sector of occupied Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

Russian occupation administrators are responding to Ukraine's intermediate-range strike campaign against Russian logistics in occupied areas by intensifying controls on information flows and access.

Russian President Vladimir Putin held a video conference on Russian development efforts in occupied Ukraine.

Deportation and Forcible Transfer of Ukrainian Citizens, Including Children

The Kremlin facilitated the temporary deportation of Ukrainian children to the Russian-occupied separatist region of Abkhazia in Georgia, likely for the first time in an official capacity since 2022.

Kremlin-appointed Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova claimed on June 15 that Russian authorities organized a program in the Russian-occupied Abkhazia separatist region (Georgia) for 200 children and their parents from occupied Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts who experienced traumatic events.[1] Participants received psychological support through group and individual sessions led by trained specialists, alongside engaging in recreational activities such as sports, excursions, and family events.[2] The program is part of Russia's broader Day After Tomorrow (Poslezavtra) program, which previously conducted similar family sessions involving participants from occupied Ukraine and Russia.[3] Russian officials routinely use the guise of medical or psychological care as a pretext to deport children from occupied Ukraine to Russia, and now appear to be extending the practice to Russian-occupied parts of Georgia.[4] This is the first time ISW has observed evidence in the open-source of Russian officials facilitating the deportation of Ukrainian children to Abkhazia. Abkhazia has, however, shared diplomatic and humanitarian ties with occupied Donbas since 2014.[5]

Russian nuclear energy operator Rosenergoatom organized and financed the temporary transfer of children from occupied Enerhodar to children's camps in occupied Crimea as part of a career guidance and support program.

The Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) occupation administration claimed on June 15 that Rosenergoatom organized and funded summer trips for children from occupied Enerhodar to the I-Camp and Mandarin camps on the Black Sea coast in occupied Crimea as part of a broader support, adaptation, and career orientation program.[6] More than 350 children participated in the first of five total sessions of the program.[7] The Enerhodar occupation administration has temporarily transferred children from occupied Enerhodar to both the I-Camp and Mandarin camps since Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022.[8] The ZNPP occupation administration and Rosenergoatom temporarily

transferred 1,600 children from occupied Enerhodar to children's camps in occupied Crimea in summer 2025.[9] ZNPP and Enerhodar occupation officials and Rosenergoatom likely use this type of programming to indoctrinate and militarize Ukrainian children, prepare them for future careers in the Russian nuclear industry, and legitimize Russian occupation of Ukrainian nuclear energy infrastructure.[10]

Russian occupation officials are responding to Ukraine's intermediate-range strike campaign against logistics in occupied areas by restricting the transfer and deportation of Ukrainian children to Russian-run summer camps.

The Zaporizhia Oblast occupation Defense Headquarters announced on June 10 that it is imposing a ban on the transportation of organized groups of children within Zaporizhia Oblast until further notice due to the current operational situation in the region.[11] The Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) Defense Headquarters similarly announced on June 11 that it has suspended the dispatch of organized groups of children for recreation and recuperation outside of occupied Donetsk Oblast.[12] These restrictions are part of Russia's wider response to Ukrainian intermediate-range strikes against Russian logistics in occupied areas.[13] Restrictions on the transportation of Ukrainian children to summer camp and rehabilitation programs within occupied Ukraine and in Russia highlight the delicate balance that Russia must strike when administering the occupation of Ukraine. Occupation authorities are simultaneously trying to maintain the fiction that occupied areas are not part of an active warzone while also trying to maintain create the veneer of legitimacy for their involvement in an illegal occupation. Persistent Ukrainian intermediate-range strikes on Russian military assets and logistics in occupied areas are challenging these fictions, while also complicating Russia's ability to forcibly transfer or deport children to summer camp programs intended to re-educate and Russify them.

#### Sociocultural Control

Nothing significant to report.

#### Militarization of Occupied Areas

Nothing significant to report.

#### Administrative and Bureaucratic Control

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree codifying Russia's penetration into the most local level of the legal system in occupied Zaporizhia Oblast.

Putin signed a law on June 10 establishing the number of magistrates (also called justices of the peace) in occupied Zaporizhia Oblast at 29.[14] The Zaporizhia Oblast occupation administration's magistrate department previously advocated for expanding the number of magistrates to 29 in June 2025, based on population estimates for occupied Zaporizhia Oblast.[15] Russian magistrates are judges of general jurisdiction who work in the initial phases of the Russian judicial system, often dealing with minor civil or criminal cases.[16] ISW previously assessed in June 2025 that Russian appeals to increase the number of magistrates in occupied Zaporizhia Oblast were likely intended to increase control over the judicial system on the most local levels.[17] The Plenum of the Russian Supreme Court additionally set the number of magistrates in occupied Luhansk Oblast at 75 on June 16.[18] Russian law currently mandates 264 magistrates between occupied Zaporizhia, Kherson, Luhansk, and Donetsk oblasts.[19]

Russian occupation officials issued first-time Russian passports to teenagers from occupied Donetsk Oblast in a Russia Day ceremony.

Russia celebrates its national holiday, Russia Day, on June 12, and organizes patriotic celebrations throughout Russia and occupied Ukraine.[20] The Donetsk Oblast occupation Ministry of Youth Policy claimed on June 12 that it issued first-time Russian passports to 35 teenagers from occupied Donetsk Oblast during a Russia Day ceremony under the We Are Citizens of Russia program, which the Russian youth military-patriotic organization Movement of the First organized.[KH3]. [21] Donetsk Oblast occupation Deputy Minister of Youth Policy Mikhail Frolov personally presented passports to participants.[22] Frolov claimed that the event marked the formal beginning of participants' Russian civic identity.[23] Russian occupation officials have previously used the circumstances of Russia Day festivities to forcibly passportize Ukrainian children in public ceremonies in 2025.[24] Russian occupation officials use passportization efforts to consolidate bureaucratic and administrative control over occupied Ukraine.[25]

#### Occupation Administration Mismanagement and Internal Dynamics

Ukraine's intermediate and long-range strike campaign against Russian logistical and energy assets is generating economic pain in occupied Crimea.

Ukrainian and Russian opposition sources have recently reported on the impacts of Ukrainian drone strikes on the summer tourist season in occupied Ukraine.[26] Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty television channel Current Time reported on June 6 that Crimea-based tour operators are failing to inform tourists about fuel shortages and Ukrainian drone strikes, and that tourists are arriving in occupied Crimea and realizing they cannot fill up their cars or move around the peninsula.[27] Independent Crimea-based outlet Inzhir Media reported on June 14, citing Russian tourism industry representatives, that fuel shortages, transportation issues, and the overall security situation in Crimea are causing tourists to cancel summer bookings en masse.[28] Inzhir reported that about 80 percent of tourist bookings for June have already been cancelled, and that hotel and guest house operators are facing significant revenue losses as a result. The tourist industry represents up to 18 percent of occupied Crimea's yearly revenue, according to Russian reporting.[29] Russia has heavily invested in building up and presenting Crimea as an attractive tourist destination since the 2014 invasion and annexation of the peninsula in order to ensure that Moscow materially benefits from the occupation.[30] Ukraine's strike campaign is already challenging the ability of Moscow to tap into Crimean tourist revenues in 2026, and the continuation of this campaign is likely to add strains to the occupation economy.

#### Physical and Legal Repressions

A Russian-controlled occupation court in Simferopol extended the pre-trial detention of four Crimean Tatar women in a case alleging their involvement with the Hizb ut-Tahrir pan-Islamic organization. Crimea-based human rights organization Crimean Solidarity reported that on June 10 that the Kyivsky Raion occupation court extended the pre-trial detention of four Crimean Tatar women—Esmie Nimetulaeva, Elviza Alieva, Nasiba Saidova, and Fevziye Osmanova—until September 14, 2026 in a closed door hearing.[31] The Russian State Security [KH4] Service (FSB) originally arrested these women in October 2025, alleging that they were involved with the Hizb ut-Tahrir pan-Islamic organization.[32] The Kyivskyi Raion occupation court previously extended the four women's pre-trial detention until June 14.[33] Russian occupation officials continue to systemically use fabricated extremism charges to persecute minority communities, particularly Crimean Tatar women, as part of broader efforts to consolidate cultural control over occupied Crimea.[34]

Russian occupation courts continue to issue harsh treason sentences for perceived or nebulously defined pro-Ukrainian sentiment or activities.

The Russian Federal Security Service's (FSB) occupied Zaporizhia Oblast directorate reported on June 11 that it detained a resident of occupied Vasylivka Raion on suspicion of treason on the allegation that he used a Ukrainian bank app to make 70 transfers to accounts used in the interests of the Ukrainian Armed Forces.[35] Russian law enforcement in occupied areas frequently uses the presence of a Ukrainian banking app on someone's personal phone to levy accusations of treason and financing the Ukrainian military, often fabricating evidence to pursue extreme prison sentences.[36] The FSB's occupied Crimea directorate additionally reported on June 15 that the Sevastopol occupation court charged a Simferopol resident with treason and sentenced him to 17 years in a maximum security prison on the allegation that he contacted Ukrainian intelligence via a foreign internet messenger.[37] Russian security forces have also used the presence of non-Russian applications on private phones to fabricate tenuous treason or espionage cases against residents of occupied areas.

#### Economic and Financial Control

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law refining the regulatory framework for the free economic zone (FEZ) operating in occupied Ukraine, suggesting that current Russian efforts to attract investment in occupied areas are not proving as successful as initially hoped.[38]

The law contains several provisions apparently intended to ease the entry of businesses and investors into the FEZ, which covers occupied Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts. A particularly notable provision reduces the minimum volume of capital required to invest in the first year of a project in the FEZ from 30 percent to ten percent.[39] The law also codifies a provision that authorizes the lease of land plots in occupied areas to FEZ participants without legal tender. ISW previously reported on this law after the Russian State Duma passed it as a bill in its second and third readings in late May 2026.[40] The fact that the Duma felt the need to push a bill intended to significantly lower barriers to entry into the FEZ suggests that the FEZ has so far failed to deliver the level of buy-in and investment that the Kremlin initially hoped it would.

Russian state-owned Sberbank continues to expand and deepen its influence in the financial sector of occupied Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

Occupied Donetsk Oblast-based outlet Donetsk News Agency (DAN) reported on June 11 that Sberbank is expanding its presence across occupied Ukraine and recently opened another office in occupied Donetsk City.[41]

Sberbank Head in occupied Ukraine Yevgeny Seryapin reported that Sberbank operates thirty offices, 332 ATMS, and 16,000 payment terminals in occupied areas. Occupied Luhansk Oblast-based outlet Luhansk Information Center reported on June 11 that Sberbank's occupied Luhansk Oblast branch has surpassed one million customers, and that Sberbank has opened 17 retail and corporate locations and three mobile offices in occupied Luhansk Oblast since June 2024.[42] Sberbank also promoted its 'SberBlizhe' subscription program, which is active only for residents of occupied Ukraine, and claimed that over 140,000 residents of occupied Luhansk Oblast have signed up for the program.[43] Sberbank and other Russian state and majority state-owned banks have been aggressively expanding their banking and financial service infrastructure in occupied Ukraine since 2023.[44] The proliferation of such Russian banks in occupied areas creates long-lasting dependencies on the Russian financial system and facilitates the forced financial integration of occupied areas into Russia. Information Space Control

Russian occupation administrators are responding to Ukraine's intermediate-range strike campaign against Russian logistics in occupied areas by intensifying controls on information flows and access in a way that is likely to even further increase Russian oversight into personal communications . Zaporizhia Oblast occupation head Yevgeny Balitsky reported on June 11 that his administration is introducing a ban on the publication and dissemination of information, photo and video materials, and messages exchanged via the internet related to Ukrainian drone strikes against occupied areas.[45] Balitsky connected these restrictions to the martial law regime in occupied Ukraine, and emphasized that it is also prohibited to publish or disseminate information about Russian troop locations, fuel and energy facilities, and communal services. Russia has maintained an active martial law regime in occupied Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts since October 2022, and Balitsky's announcement is explicitly a response to Ukraine's recently intensified intermediate-range strike campaign.[46] Russian authorities already harshly persecute residents of occupied Ukraine on allegations of sharing information about the Russian military with Ukrainian intelligence, and will likely use the restrictions on information about drone strikes to more tightly control the information space and levy harsh punishments against residents who are perceived as being non-compliant with the guidance.[47]

#### Infrastructure and Development Projects

Russian President Vladimir Putin held a video conference on Russian development efforts in occupied Ukraine on June 13.[48]

Putin outlined updates in the sphere of socioeconomic development in occupied areas and heard reports from Russian deputy prime ministers Marat Khusnullin and Tatyana Golikova. Putin emphasized that Russia's guiding goal is for occupied Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhia oblasts to reach the 'Russian standard' by 2030, including in the development of social, housing, transport, utilities, industrial, and agricultural infrastructure. Putin claimed that Russia has supported the restoration and reconstruction of tens of thousands of facilities and commissioned the building of nearly one million square meters of housing since 2023. Putin also highlighted the Azov Region Development Strategy-a long-term strategy for the development of occupied areas of Ukraine adjacent to the Azov Sea that will further facilitate the integration of these areas and their assets into the Russian sphere of influence.[49] Khusnullin reported to Putin on the economic development of occupied Ukraine, particularly emphasizing the alleged growth of the free economic zone (FEZ) and the restoration of housing infrastructure.[50] Golikova informed Putin about the progression of social support measures, such as maternity capital and compulsory medical insurance in occupied Ukraine.[51] The video conference highlighted the manner in which the Kremlin has weaponized the concept of development assistance as a tool to facilitate the forced integration of occupied areas into Russia.[52]

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