



**Centre of civil education “Almenda” Submission
to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
prior review of the Russian Federation during 78th session
August 2025**

We write in advance of the 78 session of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (“the Committee”). We hope this submission will inform the Committee’s preparation of its concluding observations on Russia’s compliance with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). This submission focuses on rights abuses in the context of Russia’s occupation of territory of Ukraine, specifically Right to education (Art.13, 14 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights).

1. In its List of issues, the Committee requests information on measures taken to enhance the quality of language teaching and the production of teaching materials in Indigenous and minority languages and to ensure the availability of qualified teachers. The situation with access to study Ukrainian language in the occupied territories of Ukraine remains critical. Before occupation in 2014 100% of children studied Ukrainian language and literature as part of the school curriculum.¹ This applies both to the territories occupied in 2014 (the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions) and to the territories occupied after 2022 (occupied territories of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, Zaporizhia regions). As of 2024, according to information published on the website of the occupation Ministry of Education of Crimea, 1249 children study Ukrainian as a native language², which is 0.5% of the total number of school-age children in occupied Crimea.
2. On 19th of July on website of Ministry of education of Russian Federation was published “Draft Order of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation "On Amendments to Certain Orders of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation Concerning Federal Educational Programs for Primary General Education, Basic General Education, and Secondary General Education".³ As mentioned in Explanatory Note the Order will come into force on September 1, 2025. In the first version of an Explanatory Note to draft Order was mentioned *“Amendments are being made to the federal educational programs at the levels of primary general, basic general, and secondary general education to exclude the*

¹ <https://www.prostir.ua/?news=dyskryminatsiya-movna-sytuatsiya-v-krymu-pislya-7-rokiv-okupatsiji> , archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/vAMy9>

² <https://monm.rk.gov.ru/structure/3748b454-d262-48b3-b605-85cf93fadbbc> , archive: <https://archive.ph/vWZkl>

³ <https://docs.edu.gov.ru/document/32d2eb4f4e529b320e4b3d1a625d4b8d> , archive: <https://archive.ph/fc89D>

*Ukrainian language due to the changed geopolitical situation in the world.”*⁴. As on the date of writing this submission Explanatory Note was changed⁵ and the mentioned above paragraph was deleted. At the same time suggested changes still include removal of the Ukrainian language from the list of subjects with working programs. Which is a clear violation of the rights of Ukrainian children who remain on the occupied territories.

3. In its List of issues the Committee also requests information on measures taken, and their impact, to ensure that education, including the teaching of history, is delivered in such a way as to prevent the predominance of a single historical narrative and ethnic hierarchization. The Russian Federation, having the opportunity to continue the educational process in Ukrainian schools, purposefully stopped it, changed educational standards to Russian one⁶, removed all Ukrainian textbooks from schools and libraries⁷ and replaced them with Russian textbooks⁸. Which violates not only obligations to guarantee full realization of the right to education, but also obligations which the Russian Federation has as an occupying power due to IHL.⁹
4. Analysis of Russian textbooks which were imposed on the occupied territories showed that education on occupied territories of Ukraine instead of being aimed on “*full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity [...] strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. [...] promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace*” focused on glorification of war, militarisation of children and erasure of their Ukrainian identity¹⁰. In order to form a positive attitude of Ukrainian children to military service in the Russian Federation, many examples of “military feat” are given, the Russian army is glorified, and high moral virtues are attributed to it.
5. During school lessons children are told about the benefits of service in the Russian armed forces, its prestige and the guarantees that await those who join the Russian army. It aims to develop in children an attitude towards the army as an extremely favourable environment for personality development and towards military service as a suitable option for a life scenario.¹¹
6. As of 1 September 2024, the subject “Fundamentals of Life Safety” was replaced with “Fundamentals of Security and Defence of the Homeland” for pupils in years 8 to 11. The

⁴ <https://docs.edu.gov.ru/document/32d2eb4f4e529b320e4b3d1a625d4b8d/download/7560/> , archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/Vw3J5>, pdf: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NbHcQvngAEa-LqxdDTf8iCEuHKwzjXl4/view?usp=share_link

⁵ <https://docs.edu.gov.ru/document/32d2eb4f4e529b320e4b3d1a625d4b8d> , archive: <https://archive.ph/fc89D>

⁶ <https://lug-info.ru/comments/ministr-prosvesheniya-rossii-sergej-kravcov-novye-rossijskie-regiony-vlilis-v-edinuyu-sistemu-obrazovaniya/> , archive: <https://archive.ph/cXEev>

⁷ <https://t.me/melitopoladmin/576> , archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/DVHm1>

⁸ <https://объясн.рф/articles/news/shkoly-novykh-regionov-polnostyu-obespecheny-uchebnikami/> , archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/mZLB>

⁹ <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gciv-1949/article-50?activeTab=undefined>

¹⁰ https://almenda.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Expert-conclusions-of-the-study_Textbooks-and-war-educational-literature-in-the-Russian-Federation-as-a-tool-for-destroying-the-identity-of-Ukrainians_1.pdf

¹¹ https://almenda.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/2024-Eng_web-1.pdf

transition is being implemented under Order No. 1028 of the Ministry of Education of the RF, aimed at strengthening military training within the school curriculum, fostering patriotism, and preparing future graduates for the defence of the Homeland (i.e., the Russian Federation).¹² The emphasis in the updated programme is placed specifically on militarism, and veterans of the so-called “SMO” are to be involved in its teaching.¹³

7. As of 1 September 2024, amendments to the law on education came into force, abolishing the requirement for parental consent to involve children in labour activities during the learning process. This gives teachers the permission to engage children in activities such as sewing uniforms for Russian military personnel in the SMO zone or assembling drones without parental consent, under the guise of the “labour-educational process”.¹⁴ Additionally, from 1 September 2024, the subject “Technology” was renamed “Labour (Technology)” along with the introduction of a new federal curriculum. The content of the “Robotics” module for pupils in years 7, 8, and 9 was expanded to include the study of unmanned aerial systems, their design, programming, and piloting.¹⁵
8. The Russian Federation continues to use education for militarisation of children on the occupied territories and propaganda of service in armed forces of occupying power which clearly violates Article 51 of the Convention for the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and core principles of Right to education of ICESCR. As of the end of 2024, according to the occupation authorities, there were 260 cadet classes and 16 Cossack classes operating in the temporarily occupied territory of the AR of Crimea, with 6,265 children enrolled.¹⁶ To compare as of May 2024 number of cadet classes in occupied Crimea was 197¹⁷, and in 2016 number of cadets classes in occupied Crimea was 12¹⁸. Which shows the dynamics of militarisation of education through the years. The situation with cadets classes on other occupied territories is next: TOT of Kherson region – 9 classes¹⁹, TOT of Zaporizhzhya region – 13 classes²⁰, TOT of Luhansk region – 86 classes²¹, TOT of Donetsk region – unknown.
9. The Russian Federation is also creating serious obstacles for children in getting access to Ukrainian online education. Which includes but not limited in blocking ukrainian websites,

¹² https://yaychitel.ru/osnovy-bezopasnosti-i-zachity_rodiny#popup:infoblock3, archive: <https://archive.ph/zhZ9x>

¹³ For example, in one of the schools in occupied Melitopol, the updated subject is being taught by a special forces officer from the regional department of the Russian Guard: <https://zonews.ru/news/povezlo-s-uchitelem.-osnovam-bezopasnosti-v-melitopolskoj-shkole-obuchit-boec> , archive: <https://archive.ph/ILRD5>

¹⁴ <https://www.kp.ru/edu/shkola/trudovoe-vospitanie/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/KVwxT>

¹⁵ <https://edsoo.ru/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/metodicheskoe-pismo-po-pred-metu-trud-tehnologiiya.pdf?ysclid=m69odo9p9u979092622>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/Dpznq>

¹⁶ <https://monm.rk.gov.ru/structure/a98ae330-6d53-4d32-ad5c-df3bfe1d20c5>, archive: <https://archive.ph/4Lqm7>

¹⁷ https://almenda.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Cadet_web_eng.pdf

¹⁸ <https://crimea-news.com/other/2017/08/29/318029.html> , archive <https://archive.ph/rcbMJ>

¹⁹ <https://vuz.edu.ru/news/regiony/v-shkolah-hersonskoy-oblasti-otkryto-devyat-kadets/> , archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/jspNa>

²⁰ <https://edu.gov.ru/press/9330/v-shkolah-vossoedinennyh-regionov-rabotayut-okolo-12-tys-profilnyh-klassov> ,archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/Ly5Hy> ; <https://edu.ru/news/regiony/v-zaporozhskoy-oblasti-v-profilnyh-klassah-obuchae/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/jspNa>

²¹ <https://edu.gov.ru/press/9330/v-shkolah-vossoedinennyh-regionov-rabotayut-okolo-12-tys-profilnyh-klassov> ,archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/Ly5Hy> ; <https://edu.ru/news/regiony/v-shkolah-lnr-otkryto-svyshe-520-profilnyh-klassov/> ,archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/Vd0o3>

threaten families for joining Ukrainian schools online, including Ukrainian books in the list of extremism materials²², perceiving support to Ukraine as extremism behaviour²³, considering issues which are part of Ukrainian school curricula (for example events related to “Revolution of Dignity”, occupation of Crimea and start of invasion of Russian Federation in 2014) as violations of Russian law (mainly articles 280.1 “Calls for the violation of territorial integrity” and 280.3 “Discrediting the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation” of Criminal code of RF). The measures taken by the Russian Federation as an occupying power block the liberty of parents and guardians to choose other than public schools for their children to ensure moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions, as guaranteed in article 13 (3) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.²⁴

10. *Centre of civil education “Almenda” recommends that the Committee call on the government of Russia to:*

- legally halt restrictions on access for children from the occupied territories of Ukraine to education and learning of the Ukrainian language as their native language, in particular by removing provisions from the “Draft Order of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation "On Amendments to Certain Orders of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation Concerning Federal Educational Programs for Primary General Education, Basic General Education, and Secondary General Education" related to removal of the Ukrainian language from the list of subjects with working programs;
- ensure unrestricted access for Ukrainian children living in the temporarily occupied territories to Ukrainian online education and stop the process of Russification;
- end the practice of labelling pro-Ukrainian positions as extremist behaviour, as well as the persecution of individuals for holding pro-Ukrainian views;
- stop the militarization of children through formal and informal education systems, and ensure that education is aimed at “*promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace*”;
- guarantee the preservation of cultural identity for children in the occupied territories through unhindered access to the study of Ukrainian history and literature;
- ensure a neutral, academically grounded teaching of history in accordance with international standards on children's rights in education, and refrain from exercising political control over the content of education, including official interpretations of historical events that restrict the freedom of teachers and students.

²² <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/extremist-materials/>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/elyl0>

²³ <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202412280115?ysclid=m5aysfziug379203810>, archive: <https://archive.ph/wip/bFcoR>

²⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights>