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Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

Concluding observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of the Russian Federation*

I. Introduction

1. The Committee considered the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of the Russian Federation¹ at its 2768th and 2769th meetings,² held on 22 and 23 January 2024, and adopted the present concluding observations at its 2786th meeting, held on 2 February 2024.

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of the State party and the written replies to the list of issues,³ which allowed for a better understanding of the situation of children's rights in the State party. The Committee expresses its appreciation for the constructive dialogue held with the high-level and multisectoral delegations of the State party.

II. Follow-up measures taken and progress achieved by the State party

3. The Committee welcomes Presidential Decree No. 240 of 29 May 2017 declaring the period 2018–2027 as the Decade of Childhood and Government Order No. 122-r of 23 January 2021 approving the plan for the main activities to be carried out within the framework of the Decade of Childhood.

III. Main areas of concern and recommendations

4. The Committee reminds the State party of the indivisibility and interdependence of all the rights enshrined in the Convention and emphasizes the importance of all the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations. The Committee would like to draw the State party's attention to the recommendations concerning the following areas, in respect of which urgent measures must be taken: independent monitoring (para. 13); cooperation with civil society (para. 15); freedom of expression and access to appropriate information (para. 22); sexual exploitation and abuse (para. 27); education, including vocational training and guidance (para. 40); and violations of children's rights under the Convention in Ukraine and violations of children's rights in the Autonomous Republic Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation (paras. 46 and 48).

* Adopted by the Committee at its ninety-fifth session (15 January–2 February 2024).

¹ [CRC/C/RUS/6-7](#).

² See [CRC/C/SR.2768](#) and 2769.

³ [CRC/C/RUS/RQ/6-7](#).



5. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the realization of children's rights in accordance with the Convention, the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, throughout the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It urges the State party to ensure the meaningful participation of children in the design and implementation of policies and programmes aimed at achieving all 17 Sustainable Development Goals as far as they concern children.

A. General measures of implementation (arts. 1, 4, 42 and 44 (6))

Legislation

6. The Committee urges the State party to amend its legislation, in particular laws concerning freedom of expression and non-discrimination, to better reflect the principles and provisions of the Convention. It also recommends that the State party ensure children's active participation in discussions concerning national legislation that has an impact on them.

Comprehensive policy and strategy

7. While noting Government Order No. 122-r of 23 January 2021 adopting the plan of action to implement the Decade of Childhood until 2027 and the adoption of data indicators to measure the progress made in the implementation, the Committee recommends that the State party ensure that the plan of action covers all areas under the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto and is supported by sufficient human, technical and financial resources.

Coordination

8. The Committee notes the establishment of the Coordinating Council for the Decade of Childhood but regrets its limited role in coordination and cooperation among government institutions. The Committee recommends that a designated body at the federal level assume the responsibility for implementing the Convention and its Optional Protocols at the federal, regional and local levels.

Allocation of resources

9. While noting the State party's information that the consolidated children's budget has significantly increased at both the federal and regional levels, the Committee regrets the lack of information on resources allocated specifically for children in marginalized and disadvantaged situations. Recalling its general comment No. 19 (2016) on public budgeting for the realization of children's rights, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Define budgetary lines for all children, with special attention to those in disadvantaged or vulnerable situations who may require affirmative social measures, and make sure that those budgetary lines are protected even in situations of economic crisis, natural disasters or other emergencies;

(b) Utilize a child rights-based approach in the elaboration of the State budget by implementing a tracking system for the allocation and use of resources for children throughout the budget. The State party should also use that tracking system for conducting impact assessments on how investments in any sector may serve the best interests of the child, ensuring that the different impacts on children of such investments are measured;

(c) Conduct a comprehensive assessment of budget needs and ensure transparency in the allocation of resources to progressively address the disparities in indicators relating to children's rights.

Data collection

10. While noting the lack of information on a comprehensive data-collection system and recalling its general comment No. 5 (2003) on general measures of implementation of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Further strengthen its data-collection system and ensure that data collected on children's rights cover all areas of the Convention and the Optional Protocols, with data disaggregated by disability, geographical location, ethnic and national origin and socioeconomic background, including migration status, in order to facilitate the analysis of the situation of children, particularly those in situations of vulnerability;

(b) Ensure that statistical data and indicators on children's rights are shared among the ministries concerned and used for the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and projects for the effective implementation of the Convention.

Access to justice and remedies

11. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that all children have access to:

(a) Confidential, child-friendly and independent complaint mechanisms in schools, alternative care settings, including foster care systems, mental health institutions and in detention, for reporting all forms of violence, abuse, discrimination and other violations of their rights. The Committee also recommends that the State party raise awareness among children of their right to file a complaint under existing mechanisms;

(b) Social and legal support for all children, including those living in disadvantaged and marginalized situations, to have access to those mechanisms.

Independent monitoring

12. The Committee is deeply concerned about the alleged responsibility of the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights, Maria Lvova-Belova, whose mandate is to protect children, in the war crime of the unlawful deportation of children and the unlawful transfer of children from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation. The Committee also remains concerned about the non-transparent procedure for appointing federal and regional commissioners and reports that many of them have little experience in protecting children's rights, do not observe the confidentiality of cases and act, rather, as law enforcement officials.

13. The Committee urges the State party:

(a) To investigate allegations of war crimes perpetrated by the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights;

(b) To strengthen existing human rights monitoring institutions, such as the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights and the regional commissioners for children's rights by guaranteeing their independence, including with regard to their funding, mandate and immunities, and ensuring that they are in line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) and that the commissioners comprehensively and systematically monitor children's rights;

(c) To ensure the privacy and protection of child victims and undertake monitoring, follow-up and verification activities for child victims.

Cooperation with civil society

14. The Committee is deeply concerned about:

(a) Federal Act No. 255-FZ of 14 July 2022 on monitoring the activities of persons acting under foreign influence and the continued application of Federal Act

No. 121-FZ of 20 July 2012 on the activities of non-commercial organizations that carry out the functions of foreign agents;

(b) The continued persecution of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including those working on the rights of children, and individual rights defenders as foreign agents or undesirable organizations;

(c) The decision of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation declaring the international lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender movement and its structural units as “extremist”, which effectively bans all public lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender activities and organizations within the country, negatively affecting children who belong to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups or children from lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender families.

15. The Committee urges the State party:

(a) **To repeal its legislation declaring human rights organizations and individual persons to be foreign agents;**

(b) **To take immediate action to allow journalists, human rights defenders and all NGOs, including those working in the field of children’s rights, to exercise their right to freedom of expression and opinion without threats or harassment;**

(c) **To ensure that reported instances of intimidation and harassment of NGOs, human rights defenders and civil society activists, including those working in the field of children’s rights, are promptly and independently investigated and those responsible for such abuses are held accountable;**

(d) **To systematically involve all NGOs working in the field of children’s rights in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of laws, policies and programmes relating to children;**

(e) **To repeal decisions declaring the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender movements as “extremist” and repeal laws that restrict the work of human rights defenders defending the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons.**

Children’s rights and the business sector

16. Recalling its general comment No. 16 (2013) on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children’s rights and the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, endorsed by the Human Rights Council in 2011, the Committee recommends that the State party establish and implement regulations to ensure that the business sector complies with international and national human rights, labour, environmental and other standards, particularly with regard to children’s rights. In particular, it recommends that the State party:

(a) **Establish a clear regulatory framework and legal accountability for the industries, especially the oil and gas and coal-extraction industries, operating in the State party or managed from the State party to ensure that their activities do not negatively affect human rights or contravene environmental, health, labour and other standards, especially those relating to children’s rights, including the rights of Indigenous children, and are in line with the Convention and the Optional Protocols;**

(b) **Require companies to undertake assessments of and consultations on the environmental, health-related and children’s rights impacts of their business activities and their plans to address such impacts and to provide full public disclosure of those impacts and plans.**

B. General principles (arts. 2, 3, 6 and 12)

Non-discrimination

17. Taking note of targets 5. 1 and 10.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recalls its previous concluding observations and recommends that the State party:

(a) Adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination law and ensure that it covers discrimination on all grounds and, in particular, hate speech;

(b) Prevent discrimination against children in marginalized and disadvantaged situations, including children belonging to minority groups, Roma children, the children of irregular migrant workers, the children of stateless persons, girls in the North Caucasus and children who do not possess permanent residence registration;

(c) Repeal its laws prohibiting propaganda of “non-traditional sexual relations” and ensure that children who belong to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups or children from lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender families are not subjected to any form of discrimination or hate crimes by raising the public’s awareness of equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Best interests of the child

18. Recalling its general comment No. 14 (2013) on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration, the Committee recalls its previous concluding observations and recommends that the State party:

(a) Amend its legislation to better reflect the right of children to have their best interests taken as a primary consideration and strengthen its efforts to ensure that that right is appropriately integrated and consistently applied in all legislative, administrative and judicial proceedings and in all policies, programmes and projects relevant to and with an impact on children;

(b) Develop procedures and criteria to provide guidance to all relevant professionals in authority for determining the best interests of the child in every area and for giving them due weight as a primary consideration. Such procedures and criteria should be disseminated to the public, including religious leaders, courts of law, administrative authorities and legislative bodies.

Respect for the views of the child

19. In the light of the information concerning the draft act No. 157281-8 on amendments to the Family Code giving parental rights priority over the child’s rights, the Committee reminds the State party that children’s evolving capacities must be recognized and respected by the adults who provide direction and guidance to children. Reminding the State party that, in the exercise of their rights, children should receive appropriate direction and guidance by parents as well as direct protection from the State in cases where parents fail to provide adequate protection of or, in some cases, abuse the rights of children, the Committee recalls its general comment No. 12 (2009) on the right of the child to be heard and recommends that the State party ensure that children’s views are given due consideration, in accordance with article 12 of the Convention, in the family, in schools, in the courts and in all relevant administrative and other processes concerning them through, inter alia, the adoption of appropriate legislation, the training of professionals and the establishment of specific activities in schools.

C. Civil and political rights (arts. 7, 8 and 13–17)

Birth registration and nationality

20. Taking note of target 16.9 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee urges the State party to ensure that all children, including children born to Roma, refugee and asylum-seeking mothers with non-Russian passports or without identity documents born in its territory, are registered at birth and issued with a standard birth certificate. The Committee also recommends that the State party take measures to prevent and reduce statelessness and to protect the rights of stateless children and consider acceding to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Freedom of expression and access to appropriate information

21. The Committee is seriously concerned about:

(a) Reports that the State party persecutes children for expressing political opinions that are not in line with the State party's position;

(b) The Act of March 2022 introducing administrative and criminal liability for "discrediting the armed forces of the Russian Federation";

(c) Reports of bans and restrictions on social media platforms, such as Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter) and TikTok.

22. The Committee urges the State party to take immediate measures:

(a) To end the persecution of children for expressing their views, in particular regarding the political situation, including in the digital environment, and ensure that no child is arrested, charged with criminal or administrative offences or sentenced for expressing such views and revoke such charges with immediate effect;

(b) To ensure that children have access to information in the digital environment and are informed about and can easily find diverse and good-quality information online, including content independent of commercial or political interests, and that any restrictions on the operation of any Internet-based, electronic or other information dissemination systems are in line with article 13 of the Convention;

(c) To ensure that children have access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of their social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health.

Freedom of association and peaceful assembly

23. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Promote children's right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly and ensure that no child is prosecuted or threatened for participating in associations or assemblies that are not in line with the position of the State party;

(b) Ensure that children are not put under undue pressure to join the new Pioneer-type all-Russian youth and schoolchildren movement called "Movement of the First".

D. Violence against children (arts. 19, 24 (3), 28 (2), 34, 35, 37 (a) and 39 of the Convention and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography)

Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

24. Recalling its general comment No. 13 (2011) on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence and taking note of target 16.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recalls its previous concluding observations and recommends that the State party:

(a) Launch prompt and effective investigations into all allegations of ill-treatment of children and ensure that the perpetrators are prosecuted and punished under the relevant articles of the Criminal Code;

(b) Collect data on the number of children who have suffered from ill-treatment by law enforcement officers and the staff of detention centres and orphanages and the number of cases investigated and prosecuted and perpetrators punished;

(c) Prevent the abuse and ill-treatment of persons, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender children, at the hands of law enforcement officers, including the abduction and torture of and the fabrication of criminal charges against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender children, especially in the North Caucasus;

(d) Provide access to human rights defenders and public commissions to monitor children's rights in places of detention;

(e) Revise its legislation to ensure the rights and safety of children during police operations, including the arrest and detention of the family members of children, and develop special protocols to end egregious law enforcement behaviour during such operations.

Corporal punishment

25. While noting the State party's information that physical violence against children is an administrative and criminal offence and that, when the crime is committed by a parent or other legal representative or by a teacher or other person working with children, it is an aggravating circumstance, the Committee recalls its general comment No. 8 (2006) on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment, and recommends that the State party:

(a) Explicitly prohibit corporal punishment in the law in all settings, including in the home, alternative care settings and day-care centres;

(b) Promote positive, non-violent and participatory forms of child-rearing and discipline;

(c) Conduct awareness-raising campaigns for parents and professionals working with and for children to promote attitudinal change within the family and the community with regard to corporal punishment.

Sexual exploitation and abuse

26. The Committee is seriously concerned about:

(a) The lack of proper and child-friendly investigations into allegations of sexual abuse and the exploitation of children;

(b) The stigma and ostracization associated with victims of sexual crimes, especially in the North Caucasus;

(c) The non-reporting of cases of sexual abuse and exploitation resulting in the impunity of perpetrators.

27. Taking note of targets 5.2, 16.1 and 16.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Promptly investigate all allegations of sexual abuse and violence and ensure that perpetrators are punished with sentences proportionate to the gravity of their crimes and provide adequate protection and support to victims and their families;

(b) Conduct awareness-raising activities to combat the stigmatization of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse and ensure accessible, confidential, child-friendly and effective reporting channels for such violations;

(c) Ensure that all children who are victims or witnesses of violence have prompt access to child-friendly, multisectoral and comprehensive interventions, services and support, including forensic interviews and psychological therapy, with the aim of preventing the secondary victimization of those children, and allocate sufficient resources for the implementation and expansion of the *barnahus* and similar models;

(d) Consider, as a standard procedure, the acceptance of audiovisual recordings of the child victim's testimony as evidence, followed by cross-examination without delay in child-friendly facilities;

(e) Bring its legislation concerning the sexual exploitation and abuse of children into line with international standards.

Harmful practices

28. Recalling joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2019) on harmful practices and taking note of target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Put an end to prevailing harmful practices in the North Caucasus, including femicide, killings in the name of so-called honour, child marriage, the abduction of women and girls for forced marriage, female genital mutilation and polygamy;

(b) Develop awareness-raising campaigns and programmes on the harmful effects of child marriage on the physical and mental health and well-being of girls, targeting households, local authorities, religious leaders and judges and prosecutors;

(c) Establish protection schemes for victims of harmful practices who file a complaint.

Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

29. The Committee regrets the limited information provided by the State party on the implementation of its concluding observations on the report of the State party submitted under article 12 (1) of the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Recalling its 2019 guidelines on the implementation of the Optional Protocol and its previous concluding observations on the report of the State party submitted under article 12 (1) of the Optional Protocol, the Committee urges the State party:

(a) To prevent all offences under the Optional Protocol, including the sale of children for the purposes of child labour and online child sexual exploitation and abuse;

(b) To define and explicitly prohibit and criminalize all offences, in particular all forms of the sale of children and the sexual exploitation of children in prostitution and all elements of child sexual abuse material;

(c) To establish mechanisms and procedures for the early identification of child victims of offences under the Optional Protocol;

(d) To ensure that children who are victims of offences under the Optional Protocol, including children sexually exploited in prostitution, are not treated as offenders or subjected to sanctions for offences relating to their situation and are given appropriate support and services.

E. Family environment and alternative care (arts. 5, 9–11, 18 (1) and (2), 20, 21, 25 and 27 (4))

Family environment

30. The Committee notes the State party's efforts to keep families together and recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts:

(a) To further prevent the forced separation of children from their parents and to develop its social services to provide support and assistance to families;

(b) To take measures to encourage positive parenting with a view to building the capacity of parents, extended families, legal guardians and community members to provide appropriate direction and guidance to children as rights holders with evolving capacities;

(c) To combat the practice in the North Caucasus of separating and alienating children from divorced and widowed mothers in favour of the husband's family;

(d) To enforce the prohibition against polygamy and to ensure that discriminatory religious and customary laws on divorce, inheritance and child custody have no legal effect and are not applied in practice.

Children deprived of a family environment

31. Drawing the State party's attention to the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Further reduce institutionalization and ensure sufficient alternative family-based and community-based care options for children who cannot stay with their families, including by allocating sufficient financial resources for foster care, regularly reviewing placement measures and facilitating the reunification of children with their families, when possible;

(b) Ensure adequate safeguards and clear criteria based on the best interests of the child for determining whether a child should be placed in alternative care, particularly in cases in which the parents declare "valid reasons" for placing the child in out-of-home care under article 155.1 of the Family Code;

(c) Establish quality standards for all alternative care settings and take effective measures to prevent child abuse and to protect children, including by addressing the conflict of interest of the directors of institutions who are the guardians of some children placed in them, ensuring the regular monitoring of the quality of care and inspections without preliminary announcements and providing child-friendly and accessible channels for reporting incidences of child abuse;

(d) Ensure that adequate human, technical and financial resources are allocated to alternative care centres and relevant child protection services in order to facilitate to the greatest extent possible the rehabilitation and social reintegration of children who reside in alternative care centres, particularly children suffering from mental health problems, behavioural difficulties or drug addiction.

Adoption

32. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure that the best interests of the child are the paramount consideration in adoption procedures for children of all ages and ensure the right of adoptive children to know their biological origins;

(b) Ratify the Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption and ensure that all of the safeguards provided therein are met when children are adopted to countries that are not parties to it.

F. Children with disabilities (art. 23)

33. The Committee notes Governmental Order No. 3711-r of 18 December 2021 approving a policy framework for the development of a comprehensive rehabilitation system for persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, for the period up to 2025 and Governmental Order No. 2253-r of 16 August 2022 approving an action plan for its implementation. Recalling its general comment No. 9 (2006) on the rights of children with disabilities, the Committee urges the State party:

- (a) To adopt a human rights-based approach to disability and set up a comprehensive strategy for the inclusion of children with disabilities;
- (b) To investigate allegations of the ill-treatment and abuse of children with disabilities in institutions, bring those who are responsible to justice and provide psychosocial support to victims;
- (c) To prevent institutionalization and develop community-based support for children with disabilities, especially for children with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities and their families and promote the rights of children with disabilities to live independently and be included in the community;
- (d) To undertake awareness-raising campaigns aimed at government officials, the public and families to combat the stigmatization of and prejudice against children with disabilities and promote a positive image of children with disabilities as rights holders;
- (e) To implement its legal provisions on inclusive education by training teachers, providing schools with the necessary equipment and educating school personnel, children and the general public on the rights of children with disabilities, with special attention given to children with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities;
- (f) To improve access to cultural life for all children with disabilities, including those with sensory disabilities.

G. Health (arts. 6, 24 and 33)

Health and health services

34. Recalling its general comment No. 15 (2013) on the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and taking note of target 3.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party take measures to provide all children, irrespective of their legal status in the country, with access to medical assistance, in particular preventive health care and emergency assistance, without any discrimination.

Mental health

35. While noting the adoption of the policy framework for the prevention of the use of psychoactive substances in the educational environment for the period up to 2025 and the action plan for its implementation for the period 2021–2025 and taking note of target 3.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recalls its previous recommendation that the State party:

- (a) Take urgent action to strengthen its efforts to prevent suicide among children and young persons, including by increasing the psychological counselling services available and the number of social workers in schools and communities, and ensure that all professionals working with and for children are adequately trained to identify and address early suicidal tendencies and mental-health problems;
- (b) Take measures to prevent drug and alcohol abuse among children by providing them with information about the negative health consequences thereof and develop specialized and youth-friendly drug-dependence treatment and harm reduction services for children and young people.

Adolescent health

36. Recalling its general comments No. 4 (2003) on adolescent health and development in the context of the Convention and No. 20 (2016) on the implementation of the rights of the child during adolescence and taking note of targets 3.5, 3.7 and 5.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Adopt a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents and ensure that sexual and reproductive health education is part of the mandatory school curriculum, with special attention to preventing early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections;

(b) Ensure that all children, including those who are out of school and those in rural areas, receive confidential and child-friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services, including access to contraceptives;

(c) Continue to guarantee access to safe abortion and postabortion care services for adolescent girls, making sure that their views are always heard and given due consideration as a part of the decision-making process;

(d) Put an end to the coercive treatment of transsexual and homosexual persons, in particular children, and to attempts to diagnose transsexuality as a psychiatric disease and provide lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender children with easy access to necessary sexual health information;

(e) Repeal Act No. 386 on banning gender transition of 24 July 2023, which criminalizes all forms of gender-affirming treatments.

H. Standard of living (arts. 18 (3), 26 and 27 (1)–(3))

Standard of living, including social security, housing and childcare services

37. Taking note of targets 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recalls its previous concluding observations and recommends that the State party:

(a) Guarantee an adequate and sustainable standard of living for all children within its territory, with particular focus on children in the most marginalized and disadvantaged situations, such as Roma children, Indigenous children and children of migrant workers, including irregular migrant workers, by providing them with appropriate accommodation, access to social and health services and benefits, nutrition and education;

(b) Put an end to the forced eviction of Roma and the demolition of their houses, including by providing security of tenure to Roma communities and legalizing informal settlements and, when house demolition or forced eviction cannot be avoided, ensure that the families and children affected are provided with adequate alternative housing and compensation;

(c) Adopt effective measures to ensure access in Roma settlements to basic services and provide uninterrupted gas and electricity.

I. Children's rights and the environment (arts. 2, 3, 6, 12, 13, 15, 17, 19, 24 and 26–31)

38. Recalling its general comment No. 26 (2023) on children's rights and the environment, with a special focus on climate change, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Develop a national plan to monitor children's environmental health, conduct risk assessments and develop and implement measures to address priority concerns;

(b) **Ensure that children's special vulnerabilities, needs and views are taken into account in developing policies and programmes to address climate change and disaster risk management;**

(c) **Strengthen measures to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions in order to ensure a pathway to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, at the latest, including by reducing oil and coal production;**

(d) **Increase children's awareness and preparedness for climate change and natural disasters by incorporating information on climate change and natural disasters into the school curriculum and teacher training programmes;**

(e) **Seek bilateral, multilateral, regional and international cooperation in implementing the present recommendations on children's rights and the environment.**

J. Education, leisure and cultural activities (arts. 28–31)

Education, including vocational training and guidance

39. The Committee is seriously concerned about reports of:

(a) The interference of the ruling party in the educational process and the creation of “hero’s desks” to provide positive information about the participants in the armed conflict in Ukraine;

(b) Widespread and systematic State propaganda in schools about the armed conflict in Ukraine, including the introduction of a new history textbook, a new school subject entitled “Conversation about important things” and a new training manual for teachers conveying the Government’s position on the armed conflict in Ukraine;

(c) Difficulties faced by the children of migrant workers in access to school because of a lack of registration in their place of residence;

(d) The prevalence of bullying in schools and the lack of preventive measures.

40. **Taking note of targets 4.1, 4.5 and 4.a of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Put an end to the politicization and militarization of schools and ensure that education is aimed at the preparation of the child for a responsible life in a free society in a spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of the sexes and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of Indigenous origin, in line with article 29 of the Convention;**

(b) **Prevent any attempt to rewrite school curricula and textbooks to reflect the political and military agenda of the Government;**

(c) **Ensure that all children, including children of minority groups, children of irregular migrant workers and asylum-seeking children in the territory of the State party, have access to free and compulsory education up to the age of 18 years without any discrimination;**

(d) **Abolish the rule that requires the children of migrant workers to be registered in order to have access to school and ensure that such children are allowed to attend school for the duration of their stay in the territory of the State party;**

(e) **Urgently adopt effective measures to prevent and resolve bullying in schools by educating children and school staff.**

K. Special protection measures (arts. 22, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37 (b)–(d) and 38–40 of the Convention and the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict)

Asylum-seeking and refugee children

41. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Expedite the adoption of the new act on granting asylum in the territory of the Russian Federation and ensure access to fair and efficient asylum procedures and the documentation of children, including unaccompanied and separated children, and that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in all decisions throughout the asylum procedures;

(b) Uphold and respect the international principle of non-refoulement, thus guaranteeing that asylum-seeking and refugee children are not affected by the orders of return of their parents to countries where their freedom or lives would be threatened;

(c) Ensure that the regulations implementing Federal Refugees Act No. 4528-1 of 19 February 1993 are in line with articles 9, 22 and 37 of the Convention and the Committee's general comment No. 6 (2005) by, *inter alia*, preventing the detention of asylum-seeking children and their families.

Children belonging to Indigenous groups

42. Recalling its general comment No. 11 (2009) on Indigenous children and their rights under the Convention and its previous concluding observations, the Committee urges the State party:

(a) To preserve the cultural and linguistic identity and heritage of Indigenous children and ensure that they have access to school and receive basic education in their native language to the extent possible;

(b) To improve health-care facilities and services in remote villages for Indigenous children;

(c) To facilitate the traditional way of life, diet and traditional economic activities of Indigenous groups, such as access to wildlife and fishing.

Trafficking in children

43. While noting reports of the significant worsening of the situation of trafficking in persons in the country and the lack of measures undertaken by the State party to address the situation, the Committee recalls its previous concluding observations and recommends that the State party:

(a) Enact specific domestic legislation and a comprehensive policy and action plan on trafficking in persons to ensure that perpetrators are punished and victims are adequately protected and assisted;

(b) Establish mechanisms for the early identification and referral of child victims of trafficking in persons to appropriate services and provide systematic training on such mechanisms for the police, immigration officials and other law enforcement officers;

(c) Increase its efforts aimed at international, regional and bilateral cooperation with countries of origin, transit and destination through information exchange in order to prevent trafficking in persons and to harmonize legal procedures aimed at the prosecution of traffickers;

(d) Conduct studies on trafficking in persons and address its root causes in order to eliminate the vulnerability of children to traffickers and undertake efforts for the recovery and social integration of child victims.

Administration of child justice

44. The Committee notes that the State party's Criminal Procedure Code has a special chapter dedicated to the specificities of criminal proceedings in relation to children accused of crimes and provides additional safeguards for those under the age of 18 years. Recalling its general comment No. 24 (2019) on children's rights in the child justice system, the Committee urges the State party to bring its child justice system fully into line with the Convention and other relevant standards. In particular, the Committee urges the State party:

(a) To promote non-judicial measures, such as diversion, mediation and psychosocial support, for children alleged as, accused of or recognized as having infringed the criminal law and, wherever possible, the use of non-custodial sentences for children, such as probation or community service;

(b) To accelerate the adoption of bill No. 381316-8 aimed at restricting the use of pretrial detention for children suspected or accused of crimes;

(c) To reduce the maximum length of pretrial detention and ensure that detention is used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible period of time and that it is reviewed on a regular basis;

(d) To ensure, in the few situations in which the deprivation of liberty is justified as a measure of last resort, that children are not detained together with adults and that detention conditions are compliant with international standards, including with regard to access to education and health services, and ensure access to independent oversight and accessible complaint mechanisms;

(e) To end the use of punishment cells and solitary confinement for children deprived of their liberty.

Violations of children's rights under the Convention in Ukraine, including in territory occupied by the Russian Federation

45. The Committee is deeply concerned that the ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine, initiated by the State party on 24 February 2022, has resulted in severe violations of rights under the Convention. In particular, the Committee is gravely concerned about:

(a) The killing and injury of hundreds of children as a result of indiscriminate attacks by the State party with explosive weapons with wide-area effects;

(b) Reports by the Government of Ukraine that thousands of children have been forcibly transferred or forcibly deported by the State party from Ukraine, including from and to areas in which the State party exercises effective control, in violation of rights under the Convention and with reference to article 38.1 of the Convention regarding the rules of international humanitarian law that are relevant to children;

(c) Presidential Decree No. 11 of 4 January 2024 providing Russian citizenship to forcibly transferred or deported children under the simplified procedure submitted by the guardians or authorized representatives of children without parental care and through the application of previous presidential decrees, including No. 330 of 20 May 2022, No. 187 of 29 April 2019 and No. 951 of 26 December 2022 in respect of Ukrainian children, including children residing in the Ukrainian territory occupied by the State party;

(d) Reports that Ukrainian children residing, including temporarily, in the territory of the State party or the territory of Ukraine temporarily occupied by the State party, are being deprived of their Ukrainian nationality, in violation of their rights under the Convention;

(e) Reports of sexual violence against children perpetrated during the State party's occupation of Ukrainian villages and, in the context of detention, perpetrated by the armed forces of the Russian Federation, law enforcement officials or penitentiary staff;

(f) The arbitrary detention, ill-treatment and torture of children by the Russian authorities in the occupied Ukrainian territory;

(g) Attacks on hospitals, schools and educational establishments and the occupation of schools by the armed forces of the Russian Federation, restricting access to education for millions of children;

(h) The enforcing of Russian curricula and military training in schools in the Ukrainian territory occupied by the State party.

46. While recalling that the State party's obligations under the Convention apply not only in the territory of the State party but also in all other territory over which the State party exercises effective control, the Committee urges the State party:

(a) To protect children in all circumstances and to provide clear instructions to the armed forces and security forces to prevent any possible killing and injuring of children, in line with the international humanitarian law principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution;

(b) To carry out a prompt, independent, effective and transparent investigation into the violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed since 24 February 2022 and before that date and, in that regard, to cooperate with the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine and the International Criminal Court;

(c) To put an end to the forcible transfer or deportation of children from occupied Ukrainian territory in violation of international human rights law and, with reference to article 38.1 of the Convention, of international humanitarian law relevant to children;

(d) To provide information on the precise number of children taken from Ukraine and on the whereabouts of each child so that parents or legal representatives can track them, including through the identification of such children and the registration of their parentage, and ensure that children are returned to their families and communities as soon as possible;

(e) To ensure that no child is deprived of their Ukrainian nationality in violation of their rights under the Convention and that their identity, name and family relations are preserved and protected;

(f) To take immediate measures to investigate all reports of sexual violence and other crimes against children committed by its armed forces, law enforcement officials and penitentiary staff and to prosecute and punish perpetrators, in particular commanders and other superiors and those ordering, soliciting or inducing the commission of crimes, with penalties commensurate with the gravity of the crime;

(g) To prevent violations and crimes, including the ill-treatment and torture of children, in particular through unequivocal instructions to all branches of the armed forces and other entities participating in the armed conflict, with a view to ensuring respect for international human rights and humanitarian law;

(h) To recognize that hospitals and schools are civilian objects that may not be targets of attack and to take measures to deter the military use of schools by the armed forces of the Russian Federation and affiliated armed groups;

(i) To take all precautions feasible to avoid damage and to protect civilian objects, including schools, and endorse the Safe Schools Declaration.

Violations of children's rights under the Convention in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation

47. The Committee is seriously concerned about reports of violations of children's rights in Crimea, including:

(a) Arbitrary arrests of children by Russian law enforcement officers, including for participation in peaceful assemblies;

(b) Pressure on teachers to actively endorse and cultivate a positive attitude among schoolchildren towards the Russian invasion of Ukraine and to generally refrain from criticizing the Russian authorities;

(c) Barriers for children to use and study in the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar languages.

48. **The Committee urges the State party:**

(a) **To carry out effective, thorough and impartial investigations into all reported cases of arbitrary detention, prosecution, intimidation and harassment of and threats and reprisals against children;**

(b) **To ensure that the rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression and opinion, association, thought, conscience and religion can be exercised by all children in Crimea, without discrimination on any grounds or unjustified interference and, in particular, that children are able to express opinions that are critical of the Russian authorities and the armed conflict in Ukraine without fear of retaliation, such as imprisonment or other sanctions;**

(c) **To adopt and implement measures to ensure the availability of education at all levels in the mother tongue of ethnic groups and Indigenous Peoples in Crimea and to ensure that education in the Ukrainian language is available and that instruction in and the teaching of the Crimean Tatar language satisfies, to the extent possible, the demand for such education.**

Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict

49. **The Committee welcomes Federal Act No. 260-FZ of 14 July 2022 on amendments to the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation and the Criminal Procedure Code of the Russian Federation, which increased the penalty to up to 20 years in prison for recruiting, training, financing or other material support of a mercenary who has not reached the age of majority and for his use in an armed conflict or hostilities, but regrets the limited information provided by the State party on the implementation of its concluding observations on the State party's report submitted under article 8 (1) of the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict. Recalling its previous concluding observations on the report of the State party submitted under article 8 (1) of the Optional Protocol, the Committee urges the State party:**

(a) **To ensure that children under the age of 18 years enrolled in higher military institutions are not subject to recruitment and use, even when they receive a military education;**

(b) **To ensure that children below the age of 18 years enrolled in civil and military schools do not undergo military training and are not subjected to military-style discipline;**

(c) **To amend the Criminal Code to add provisions that explicitly criminalize the recruitment of all children under the age of 18 years by the State party's armed forces or by non-State armed groups and the use of children in hostilities;**

(d) **To take measures to investigate claims of the involvement of children in the armed conflict in Ukraine, including the reports of the visit to the front line in the Donetsk region of Ukraine by the 14-year-old son of the Head of the Chechen Republic;**

(e) **To put in place mechanisms to identify, at an early stage, refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant children coming from countries where there are or have been armed conflicts and who may have been involved in armed conflict and provide adequate support and reintegration for them.**

L. Ratification of the Optional Protocols to the Convention

50. The Committee recommends that the State party ratify the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure.

M. Ratification of international human rights instruments

51. The Committee recommends that the State party, in order to further strengthen the fulfilment of children's rights, consider ratifying the following core human rights instruments:

(a) International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;

(b) International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance;

(c) Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty;

(d) Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

(e) Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

(f) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

IV. Implementation and reporting

A. Follow-up and dissemination

52. The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure that the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations are fully implemented and that a child-friendly version is disseminated to, and made widely accessible for, children, including those in the most disadvantaged situations. The Committee also recommends that the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports, the written replies to the list of issues and the present concluding observations be made widely available in the languages of the country.

B. National mechanism for reporting and follow-up

53. The Committee recommends that the State party establish a standing government structure and ensure that it has the mandate and adequate human, technical and financial resources to coordinate and engage with, and prepare reports to, international and regional human rights mechanisms and to coordinate and track national follow-up to, and the implementation of, treaty obligations and the recommendations and decisions emanating from such mechanisms. The Committee emphasizes that such a structure should be adequately and continuously supported by dedicated staff and should have the capacity to consult systematically with the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights and civil society.

C. Next report

54. The Committee will establish and communicate the due date of the eighth periodic report of the State party in due course, in line with the envisaged predictable reporting calendar based on an eight-year review cycle, and following the adoption of a list of issues and questions prior to reporting, if applicable, for the State party. The

report should be in compliance with the Committee's harmonized treaty-specific reporting guidelines⁴ and should not exceed 21,200 words.⁵ In the event that a report exceeding the established word limit is submitted, the State party will be asked to shorten the report. If the State party is not in a position to review and resubmit the report, translation thereof for the purposes of consideration by the Committee cannot be guaranteed.

⁴ [CRC/C/58/Rev.3](#).

⁵ General Assembly resolution 68/268, para. 16.