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# 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report: Ukraine

## UKRAINE (Tier 2)

The Government of Ukraine does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated overall increasing efforts compared with the previous reporting period; therefore Ukraine remained on Tier 2. These efforts included significantly increasing cooperation with European counterparts on anti-trafficking investigations despite diminished resources and capacity due to Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine. For the second consecutive year, the government also allocated more money to its national budget for anti-trafficking measures. Finally, the government increased awareness efforts, especially among displaced Ukrainians, and screened for potential trafficking victims amongst vulnerable populations. During the reporting period, Ukraine's government operated on a total-war footing to withstand Russia's unprovoked full-scale invasion, performing a range of core functions to mitigate trafficking risks despite major war-related challenges, continued Russian strikes on Ukrainian civilian and critical infrastructure targets, and displacement of nearly one-third of Ukraine's population, many of whom faced increased human trafficking risks. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. Authorities prosecuted and convicted fewer traffickers, and most convicted traffickers avoided imprisonment. This lenient sentencing weakened deterrence, did not adequately reflect the nature of the crime, and undercut broader efforts to fight trafficking. Despite persistent concerns about corruption fostering impunity for trafficking crimes, for the sixth consecutive year the government did not secure any convictions of complicit officials. The government identified fewer victims and, while the government took some steps to protect unaccompanied children, deficiencies in the government's oversight of children evacuated from Ukrainian care institutions, increased their trafficking risk. NGOs continued to identify systemic shortcomings in the implementation of the NRM and victim services.

## PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Identify and certify the official status of more victims to ensure they are afforded their rights under the trafficking law and modify the procedure for granting victim status to lessen the burden on victims to self-identify and divulge sensitive information.
- Vigorously investigate and prosecute alleged trafficking crimes and seek adequate penalties for convicted traffickers, which should involve significant prison terms.
- Increase efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict officials allegedly complicit in trafficking crimes under the trafficking statute.
- Increase efforts to identify victims and vigorously screen for trafficking victims among highly vulnerable populations, such as IDPs, refugees, unaccompanied minors, children evacuated from care institutions, undocumented persons, foreign migrant workers, women in commercial sex, and Ukrainian citizens whom Russia has forcibly deported to its territory.
- Provide additional, extensive training on the NRM and the difference between trafficking and other crimes to local officials and service providers throughout the decentralization process to minimize disruption in identification, referral, and assistance to trafficking victims.
- Increase protections for, and maintain data on, unaccompanied and separated children, including children evacuated from Ukrainian care institutions.
- Increase training for law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases, particularly on forced labor, using a victim-centered

and trauma-informed approach, and how to gather evidence outside of victims' testimony.

- Maintain victims' access to legal assistance throughout the criminal process and improve victims' ability to access court-ordered restitution in criminal cases and compensation through civil proceedings.
- Establish and fill a dedicated national coordinator position to lead national efforts to coordinate and implement anti-trafficking policies.
- Increase worker protections by eliminating recruitment fees charged to workers by labor recruiters and ensuring employers pay any recruitment fees.
- Increase government funding for anti-trafficking efforts, particularly funding for local communities.
- Increase law enforcement investigations and prosecutions of labor recruitment firms engaged in fraudulent practices.
- Finalize the anti-trafficking strategy and allocate resources to its implementation.

## PROSECUTION

The government decreased law enforcement efforts; law enforcement capacity may have been affected by other, critical wartime policing needs in government-controlled areas or lack of access to occupied territory. Article 149 of the criminal code criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking and prescribed penalties of three to eight years' imprisonment, which were sufficiently stringent and, with respect to sex trafficking, commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. An international organization reported Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine significantly and adversely affected the court system, delaying judicial proceedings. In addition, law enforcement only operated in areas that remained under government control, but not in territories occupied by Russia's forces. Law enforcement investigated 70 new trafficking cases in 2022, a decrease compared with 222 new investigations in 2021. These included 26 sex trafficking cases, 26 labor trafficking cases and 18 unspecified trafficking cases. In addition, the government continued the investigation of 112 cases. The government prosecuted 70 suspected traffickers in 2022, compared with 101 in 2021. The government convicted 18 traffickers in 2022, compared with 24 in 2021 and 29 in 2020. Of the 18 convicted traffickers sentenced in 2022, only three (17 percent) received prison sentences; 15 traffickers received suspended sentences. This was similar to 2021 when courts sentenced only 21 percent of convicted traffickers to imprisonment.

Observers reported many judges underestimated the severity of trafficking crimes and continued to hold entrenched stereotypes about what constitutes trafficking in persons, while others engaged in corrupt practices. These lenient sentences weakened deterrence, did not adequately reflect the nature of the crime, created safety concerns, and undercut broader efforts to fight trafficking. The National Police Unit (NPU) and the Migration Police (MiPol) cooperated extensively with foreign counterparts to exchange information for investigations, including on cybercrime. NPU expanded its international and national partnerships despite also assuming more national security tasks. Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, MiPol, and NPU investigated trafficking cases among civilians, while the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) investigated war crimes, including those with a trafficking nexus. Authorities cooperated extensively with foreign governments on multiple transnational investigations including through joint investigative teams, joint actions days, extraditions, and bilateral cooperative agreements; these investigations were specifically to identify Ukrainian trafficking victims, including among unaccompanied children and those arriving to European countries. In one example, NPU established a joint task force with multiple European countries to identify potential Ukrainian victims and protect Ukrainian refugees from trafficking, which resulted in identifying 62 potential Ukrainian victims in five investigations.

There was widespread turnover in many government institutions, including within the ranks of the NPU and the judiciary. As of January 2023, the government reported nearly 3,000 judicial vacancies; these vacancies exacerbated delays in court cases, though the government took significant initial steps to address the judiciary shortage by reforming its judge selection process. Courts were critically understaffed and judges did not specialize in trafficking cases. Turnover of personnel led to a lack of qualified prosecutors to supervise trafficking cases at the regional level.

The government, with international funding and partners, conducted multiple trainings for law enforcement, civil servants, and other officials on investigative techniques, detection, prevention, and the heightened risks of trafficking in the war. All new police recruits received trafficking training. However, observers assessed MiPol staff and NPU investigators were not sufficiently trained on trafficking.

Despite judicial reform, corruption remained a serious concern in the police and judiciary, which enabled trafficking and exacerbated impunity for trafficking crimes. In an ongoing case, authorities continued investigating two city council members for recruiting and transporting vulnerable people to two agricultural companies for the purpose of forced labor. Although the government continued to report investigations of officials allegedly complicit in trafficking, for the sixth consecutive year, the government did not secure any convictions of complicit officials. The government also did not report on the status of high-profile cases from previous years, many of which have stalled with the courts for years, including those against the former commander of the Kyiv city police counter-trafficking unit, three police officers, recruiters accused of trafficking Ukrainians into a drug-trafficking ring in Russia, and a teacher at a government-run boarding school for orphans in Kharkiv who attempted to sell one of her students.

## PROTECTION

The government demonstrated mixed efforts in victim protection; although the government identified fewer victims, it allocated more funding to protection efforts, and conducted screenings for potential victims among IDPs and children. Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine reduced the government's capacity to provide services to trafficking victims, as resources were diverted to the humanitarian response. In 2022, authorities reported there were 47 officially identified victims – a status that granted victims access to government services upon approval of an application – a decrease compared with 64 officially identified victims in 2021. The government reported police identified 131 potential victims and referred them to services in 2022 compared to 155 in 2021. Observers reported Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine impeded the processing time for granting official victim status due to significant strains on resources and the displacement of staff. While some observers said anti-trafficking resources were diverted to the humanitarian response, others assessed the overall increase in humanitarian service provision, including shelters and aid to people in desperate need, may have reduced the risks of human trafficking, as coordination among service providers increased. The government reported screening undocumented foreign migrants for indicators of trafficking; however, observers noted authorities did not consistently do so. Authorities, in cooperation with international organizations, visited facilities for internally displaced persons and children's care facilities, to screen for potential trafficking victims, and NPU disseminated written instructions to local authorities to improve screening for victims. Russia's occupation prevented Ukrainian authorities and NGOs and international organizations from identifying or providing protection services to victims in Russia-occupied territory.

The government provided services, including medical, psychological, and legal assistance and temporary shelter to victims granted official victim status. The government approved 81 percent (47 of 58) of applications for official victim status in 2022, an increase compared with 67 percent (64 of 96) of applications in 2021. The National Social Service (NSS), formed in 2020, assumed the role of granting official victim status to potential victims in May 2021 and began devolving the responsibility of granting official victim status to local communities through an ongoing decentralization reform process. In 2022, the government took steps to improve the victim designation process by recommending local authorities maintain statistics with victims' demographic information. Officials noted a decreased number of victim applications in 2022, which they attributed to several factors amid the disruption of the war, including some victims not being able to report their exploitation, some who may not have recognized they were exploited, or Ukrainian refugees exploited abroad who may not have reported their exploitation to authorities upon their return to Ukraine. Civil society previously reported the government rejected a high

percentage of victim applications due to strict internal guidelines for classifying cases as trafficking crimes, police pursuing indictments under statutes other than the trafficking law, and the government demanding additional evidence to confirm victim status, contrary to Ukrainian law, including confirmation that the victim was recognized as such in court proceedings or demanding evidence to show movement across a border. Victims not requiring specialized services may have chosen not to apply for official victim status, and NGOs reported the emphasis on documents requiring the divulging of sensitive information likely deterred some applicants from applying. The government did not report granting official victim status to any individuals incarcerated abroad in 2022, compared with one in 2021. In the context of Russia's war against Ukraine, authorities informed victims of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) of their right to apply for official victim status; however, experts expressed concern that the government conflated CRSV with sex trafficking, instead of seeing these as distinct crimes.

During the previous year, newly devolved local administrative structures were not yet officially part of the NRM, resulting in some confusion over responsibilities. In 2022, civil society reported continued, systemic shortcomings in the functioning of the NRM in part due to war-related capacity limitations and high personnel turnover. Some newly established communities, especially smaller ones, lacked sufficient personnel, infrastructure, or financial resources to effectively provide services to trafficking victims. Observers noted some local officials responsible for identifying and screening victims were not trained on trafficking. The government continued to rely on international organizations and NGOs, with international donor funding, to identify victims and provide most victim protection and assistance. While not all anti-trafficking organizations in Ukraine reported the number of victims they served, one international organization in Ukraine assisted 361 victims in 2022, compared with 1,010 victims in 2021. In the first quarter of 2023, an international organization reported the majority (98 percent) of victims they identified were labor trafficking victims; most of those exploited after the full-scale invasion were exploited abroad. NGOs did not report identifying any victims in eastern Ukraine.

The government allocated 2.19 million hryvnia (\$59,820) to the national budget for anti-trafficking measures in 2022, an increase from 2.03 million hryvnia (\$55,550) in 2021; however, the government did not allocate funding for local budgets for the second consecutive year. Ukraine's trafficking law entitled victims with official victim status to accommodation at a government shelter, psychological assistance, medical services, employment counseling, and vocational training, regardless of whether a victim cooperated with law enforcement or if a criminal case proceeded. Adult victims could also stay at government-run centers for psycho-social assistance for up to 90 days, with the option to extend, and receive psychological and medical support, lodging, food, and legal and social assistance. In 2022, the government increased the one-time financial payment amount to trafficking victims from 7,443 hryvnia (\$203) to 7,888 hryvnia (\$216). Authorities could accommodate child victims in centers for socio-psychological support of children for up to nine months and administer social, medical, psychological, education, legal, and other types of assistance. Authorities identified three child trafficking victims in 2022; each received financial, medical, and psychosocial support.

In December 2022, the government reported vulnerable populations, including trafficking victims, could access government-funded services through a total of 44 shelters, 39 day centers, 68 consultative services, and 516 mobile brigades. The shelters served 39 trafficking victims and provided legal assistance, accommodation, medical aid, or psycho-social support. Separately, in July 2022, the government reported there were 853 village and city centers providing general social services trafficking victims could access; 369 social service centers, which assist older adults, are also available to trafficking victims and provide temporary shelter; 84 social support institutions for families, children, and youth; 20 centers for social and psychological assistance, which could also provide temporary shelter for trafficking victims; 72 centers for social and psychological rehabilitation for children; 17 centers of social support for children and families; and four general children's shelters. In February 2022, the government amended the regulations for the centers for social and psychological assistance to allow the centers to accommodate families with children and to refer individuals to medical care. Observers reported government assistance remained insufficient to meet victims' needs, and victims continued to rely on NGOs for assistance. Foreign victims were entitled to the same benefits as Ukrainian citizens and had additional access to

interpretation services, temporary legal stay, and voluntary repatriation. Although legally entitled to the same benefits, observers noted some foreign nationals and members of underserved communities faced barriers to accessing services. Authorities could grant permanent residency to foreign victims in danger of retribution should they return to their country of origin. Foreign victims were able to obtain an immigration permit after residing continuously in Ukraine for three years.

The government, often in partnership with international organizations, provided training for officials on victim identification and assistance. The Witness Protection Law provided protections for victims, but observers noted courts rarely used protection measures. Closed hearings and remote procedures for questioning and identification were the most frequently used witness and victim protection mechanisms. The government reported witness protection measures were neither requested nor provided in 2022. Video testimony systems that ensured the complete separation of victims or witnesses from the accused existed in 14 courts in various regions. In the previous reporting period, the government, with the assistance of an international organization, established several regional specialized centers for child victims or witnesses; at these centers, specialized staff interviewed children in a trauma-informed manner and children received psycho-social, legal, and medical care, as needed. During the current reporting period, the Office of the Prosecutor General (OPG) assigned a specialized unit to assist all children in the judicial process. The government reported courts ordered restitution for 14 victims amounting to 75,000 hryvnia (\$2,050).

## PREVENTION

The government increased prevention efforts. The Ministry of Social Policy (MSP) continued to lead anti-trafficking efforts at the national and local levels, but observers continued to widely criticize the ministry for ineffective coordination and engagement on anti-trafficking efforts, especially as Russia's war against Ukraine affected MSP resources and personnel. Experts noted no one individual held the position of national coordinator to execute the ministry's anti-trafficking responsibilities, weakening its leadership on this issue. The government expanded the membership of the interdepartmental working group for combating trafficking. In 2022, the government, in partnership with an international organization, consulted stakeholders to revise its national anti-trafficking strategy to account for the impacts of Russia's war against Ukraine; at the close of the reporting period, the strategy was pending further input before it could be referred to the cabinet for approval. In the absence of a national strategy, some oblasts pursued their own anti-trafficking measures. MSP did not publish a report on the implementation of the government's anti-trafficking policies. The NPU published its efforts to combat trafficking online. Throughout 2022, the government passed laws, regulations, and decrees in response to social and economic hardship resulting from Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine; while most laws did not directly address trafficking, taken together, the laws reduced vulnerability to exploitation among Ukrainians, migrant workers, foreign nationals, stateless persons, displaced children, missing persons, and prisoners of war. In May 2022, the government and the UN Secretary General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict signed a framework agreement to counteract sexual violence, including preventing conflict-related trafficking. In August 2022, the government adopted a new State Strategy for Equal Rights of Women and Men Until 2030, which included the topic of trafficking in persons. The government continued to sponsor a hotline dedicated to trafficking, gender-based violence, and violence against children. In 2022, the government hotline received 50,944 calls, a significant increase compared with 22,128 calls in 2021; 56 potential victims were identified or referred to local agencies and NGOs for assistance (75 in 2021). In 2022, the government added a line to receive international calls from Ukrainians who fled the war. NGOs, with international donors, operated additional anti-trafficking and migrant advice hotlines, which received over 81,000 calls; the NGOs did not report how many calls were related to trafficking. OPG, in collaboration with partner organizations, continued dedicated channels on social media platforms to prevent and detect child trafficking, and improve communication with child trafficking victims or witnesses. The government took several measures to improve access to

identification documentation and official registration for vulnerable populations; lack of documentation and access to state services was a risk factor for trafficking. In October 2022, a government decree streamlined the process of issuing national identification documents and passports, and a similar resolution granted permission to foreign nationals and stateless persons holding temporary or permanent residence to stay in Ukraine if their residence expired after February 24, 2022. Authorities, in coordination with NGOs, international organizations, and local partners, conducted extensive awareness campaigns throughout the country, including via television, news outlets, social media, text message, print media, video, chat bots, and public awareness events. The campaigns focused on the risks of trafficking during the war for displaced persons, refugees, and Ukrainians abroad, particularly at border crossings and train stations. One nationwide campaign reached more than 28 million Ukrainians. NGOs and international organizations conducted additional awareness activities. The State Labor Service (SLS) published recommendations for Ukrainians contemplating working abroad, including information on trafficking risks on its website.

Unaccompanied minors, children in government-run institutions, and thousands of children forcibly transferred or deported to Russia were at high risk of trafficking. To track and protect such children, the government created a register for “displaced” children; however, observers noted the government only collected data on unaccompanied and evacuated children, not those separated from legal guardians. Even before Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, observers assessed protection of children in Ukraine’s government-run care system as inadequate. Human rights groups and media reported unsafe conditions in institutions, and there had been allegations that officials of several state-run institutions and orphanages had been complicit or willfully negligent in the sex and labor trafficking of girls and boys under their care. NGOs reported trafficking risks increased for such children due to the conflict. In March 2022, the government established a procedure for evacuating Ukrainian children from institutions in areas of armed hostilities to other areas in Ukraine and abroad. At least 195 education, health care, social protection, and private institutions for children were evacuated. The government developed recommendations for countries receiving Ukrainian children, visited institutions for children, and worked with international law enforcement to identify possible child trafficking victims. However, experts expressed serious concerns with the government’s evacuation efforts with consistent and troubling reports highlighting Ukrainian children’s vulnerability to exploitation, including trafficking. Media reported one case where a Ukrainian legal guardian of 10 Ukrainian children abused and allegedly exploited the children in sex trafficking in Poland.

NPU and MiPol continued to monitor and investigate formal and informal recruitment networks, including companies advertising jobs abroad, and worked with other stakeholders to raise awareness about known recruitment schemes. The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade oversaw the licensing of labor recruitment agencies and conducted regular and random inspections on their activities. During the previous reporting period, legislation banning recruitment companies from charging fees to citizens seeking employment abroad was registered in parliament; the legislation had not been adopted by the end of the reporting period. In March 2022, the government suspended planned and unplanned labor inspections during the conflict, compared with 7,231 labor inspections which it conducted in 2021. NGOs previously reported there was an insufficient number of labor inspectors to effectively meet their mandate. Observers expressed concern over the lack of oversight of the labor market, with reports of workers not receiving payments, although the SLS continued awareness efforts and informal monitoring. The government made some efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts; Article 149 reportedly criminalized the act of knowingly soliciting or patronizing a sex trafficking victim, but an NGO noted the language in the statute is broad. The government continued to provide victim identification and referral training to diplomats.

## TRAFFICKING PROFILE:

As reported over the past five years, human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Ukraine, and traffickers exploit victims from Ukraine abroad. Ukrainian victims are exploited in sex trafficking and forced labor in Ukraine as well as in Russia, Poland, Germany, and other parts of Europe, China, Kazakhstan, and the Middle East. Ukrainian victims are increasingly exploited in EU member states. Traffickers exploit most victims for forced labor. Traffickers exploit some Ukrainian children and vulnerable adults in forced begging. The commercial sexual exploitation of children remains underreported. NGOs estimate 10 to 15 percent of the Roma community lack identification documents, leaving them unable to access state social assistance programs and thereby increasing their vulnerability to trafficking. Traffickers exploit a small number of foreign nationals in forced labor in Ukraine. A growing number of forced labor victims in Ukraine and abroad are exploited in a variety of sectors, including construction, manufacturing, agriculture, criminal activity, and street begging. Traffickers force some victims to participate in the illegal production of counterfeit tobacco products and well-established criminal groups force some Ukrainian victims to engage in other illegal activities abroad. Some traffickers exploit victims in forced labor at rehabilitation centers under the guise of providing treatment for alcohol or drug addiction. Traffickers target low-skilled workers transiting Ukraine. Increasingly, well-educated workers are vulnerable to labor exploitation. The approximately 104,000 children institutionalized in state-run orphanages, many evacuated during Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, are at especially high risk of trafficking. Officials of several state-run residential institutions and orphanages have allegedly been complicit or willfully negligent in the sex and labor trafficking of girls and boys under their care.

Prior to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, in areas of eastern Ukraine occupied by Russia-led forces, employment options were limited and Russia's proxies placed restrictions on international humanitarian aid intended to help meet civilian needs. IDPs, those living in Russia-occupied territory, and residents of Crimea faced significant barriers to obtaining or renewing identification documents, increasing their vulnerability to exploitation. Widespread reports also indicated Russian authorities confiscate Ukrainians' identification documents and force adoption of Russian passports. Persistent but uncorroborated reports indicated Russia-led forces exploited Ukrainians for labor, particularly in the mines of Russia-occupied Donbas; and Russia-led forces conscripted those living in Eastern Ukraine to fight or engage in forced labor, such as to clear rubble or dispose of corpses. International organizations reported the demographics of Ukrainian trafficking victims have shifted since the beginning of the conflict in 2014 to include more urban, younger, and male victims who are exploited increasingly in forced labor and criminality, such as for drug trafficking and as couriers. Traffickers reportedly kidnapped women and girls from conflict-affected areas for sex and labor trafficking in Ukraine and Russia. Traffickers targeted IDPs and subjected some Ukrainians to forced labor, forced conscription, and sexual exploitation in Russia-occupied areas, often via kidnapping, torture, and extortion. These abuses and vulnerabilities likely worsened after Russia launched its all-out war against Ukraine in February 2022.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine forced eight million people to flee Ukraine by January 2023, and displaced almost 5.4 million more within its borders, a total of almost one third of Ukraine's population, and 5.5 million returnees. Experts estimate as many as 90 percent of those who have fled the country are women and children, and that more than half of Ukraine's children have been displaced. These refugee and displaced populations are especially vulnerable to human trafficking. Traffickers allegedly sought to exploit refugees at border crossings and transit centers. Media reported traffickers allegedly targeted displaced Ukrainians at the Polish border by offering them transportation or accommodation, contingent upon domestic labor or commercial sex. Experts noted thousands of unaccompanied children, and children evacuated from at least 195 facilities, were at especially high risk of trafficking. Even for Ukrainians not displaced, the war and its economic impacts heightens individuals' vulnerability to trafficking. One 2022 survey found that more than half of Ukrainians are at risk of exploitation, and willing to accept a risky job offer that could lead to exploitation. This includes Ukrainian men and, increasingly, educated Ukrainians seeking to provide for their needs. Observers reported Ukrainian women and girls

being recruited for sex trafficking abroad. Online searches for “Ukrainian escorts” and other search terms related to the sexual exploitation of Ukrainian women and girls increased. Traffickers targeted displaced Ukrainians via information posted online or on social media. Across Europe, Ukrainian refugees were at risk of forced labor including in domestic work, childcare, and seasonal agriculture although there are only a few confirmed trafficking cases.

Russian forces forcibly transferred hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians, including thousands of children and at least 2,000 orphans, to the Russian Federation and occupied territories through their filtration and child deportation programs, including many to remote areas. In March 2022, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Russian officials allegedly responsible for the unlawful transfer of Ukrainian children to Russia. These children are highly vulnerable to trafficking. Citizens of Central Asian countries are recruited by Russia-affiliated private military companies to fight in Russia’s war of aggression and consistent media reports allege migrants are at risk of forced labor in Russia-occupied Ukrainian territory. Reports of Russia-led forces using children as soldiers, informants, and human shields persist. Russia-led forces in Russia-occupied areas of the Donbas have reportedly used children to take direct and indirect part in the armed conflict to perform armed duty at checkpoints, as fighters, and to serve as guards, mailpersons, and secretaries. The recruitment of children by Russia-led forces took place in territory occupied by Russia and in areas where the government was unable to enforce national prohibitions against the use of children in armed conflict.