



South African insights on Ukraine's path to Peace:
Preventing unlawful and forcible deportation and transfer of
Ukrainian children to Russian territory

EVENT DETAILS

Friday, 15 March 2024

09h00 – 10h30 SAST

The Centre for Human Rights lecture hall

RSVP



BACKGROUND

As of December 2023, Russian agents have taken 19 546 children from Ukraine to 57 regions of the Russian Federation: from Rostov to Murmansk, Astrakhan, Siberia, Vladivostok, as well as to Belarus and even occupied South Ossetia. Among these children, 3 790 are orphans and children deprived of parental care. Under Russian control, Ukrainian children are placed in foster families or orphanages. At least 380 minors were put under guardianship, and 31 children were adopted by Russian citizens. Simultaneously, the personal data of these children were altered, including their first name, last name, date, and place of birth. This alteration significantly complicates their identification and reunification with blood families.

The African peace mission to Ukraine and Russia provided special emphasis on returning Ukrainian children. Children “should also be returned to where they have come from, to their homes.” South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has repeatedly accentuated the importance of returning Ukrainian children, as this would be a crucial confidence-building measure.

This event brings together South African and Ukrainian experts who have collaborated in studying and exploring the topic of unlawful and forcible deportation and transfer of Ukrainian children to Russian territory, as well as the challenges that parents and caregivers face in attempts to repatriate such children. The event centres on extracting lessons from the conflict and exploring avenues for enhancing peace on the African continent as well as internationally to lead the change in developing effective measures to identify and repatriate children unlawfully and forcibly deported and transferred not only in Ukraine, but any state embroiled in armed conflict globally.

PANELLISTS:

- Oleksandra Romantsova, Centre for Civil Liberties
- Dzvinka Kachur, Ukrainian Association of South Africa
- Dr Mispa Roux, Centre for Human Rights, UP
- Dr Elvis Fokala, Centre for Human Rights, UP

The platform for expert collaborations was initiated in partnership with the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation, the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation, the Democratic Institute Foundation (DIF), and the Ukrainian Association of South Africa (UAZA).

