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ISW's Russian Occupation Update tracks the activities that occur in the Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine. The occupation updates will examine Russian efforts to consolidate administrative control of annexed areas and forcibly integrate Ukrainian citizens into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems. This product line replaces the section of the Daily Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment covering activities in Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine.

Key Takeaways:

- **Russia is inventorying real estate in occupied Ukraine in order to seize property from Ukrainian residents, likely in part to facilitate the transfer of Russian citizens to occupied territories.**
- **Russia may be using children's summer camps in occupied Crimea to discourage Ukrainian strikes against Russian military assets located throughout occupied Crimea, effectively using children as shields in a violation of international humanitarian law.**
- **Russian occupation officials continue to promote and expand the "Zarnitsa 2.0" military patriotic game as part of Russia's wider campaign to militarize Ukrainian children and erase Ukrainian identities.**
- **Russia is struggling to adequately staff occupied territories with doctors and other medical personnel.**

Russia is inventorying real estate in occupied Ukraine in order to seize property from Ukrainian residents, likely in part to facilitate the transfer of Russian citizens to occupied territories. Russian Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin claimed on April 29 that Russia entered 251,750 real estate objects from occupied Ukraine into the Russian Unified State Register of Real Estate as part of an inventory of real estate objects in occupied territories.^[1] Khusnullin claimed that the inventory process will allow residents of occupied areas to quickly formalize and "protect" their property rights and allow Russia to value real estate objects. Ukrainian Mariupol Mayoral Advisor Petro Andryushchenko responded to Khusnullin's statements and emphasized on May 6 that Russia is planning to nationalize all the inventoried real estate objects in occupied Ukraine, essentially "looting" the property from its Ukrainian owners.^[2] ISW previously observed how the

nationalization of property in occupied Ukraine allows the Russian government to auction that property off to Russian citizens, which facilitates the illegal relocation of Russian citizens to occupied areas of Ukraine from Russia.[3] *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)* Crimea service *Krym Realii* published a story on May 7 detailing how two women who left occupied Crimea for Kyiv in 2019 after refusing to receive Russian passports discovered that the Russian occupation administration seized and sold their apartment in Crimea to a Russian servicemember.[4] Russia's property nationalization policy is increasingly displacing residents of occupied Ukraine and robbing them of their homes, as ISW has assessed.[5]

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Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's (RFE/RL) Crimea service *Krym Realii* warned on May 5 that Russian officials may use the presence of children in summer camps in Crimea to deter Ukrainian forces from striking military assets on the occupied peninsula.[6] Russia simultaneously continues to militarize Crimea while advertising it as a location for summer tourism, including for children. Sevastopol occupation governor Mikhail Razvozhayev claimed on May 5 that Russian officials plan to operate seventeen summer camps for Russian and Ukrainian children in occupied Sevastopol, including orphans and the children of Russian soldiers.[7] Russian officials have claimed that over 400 facilities in occupied Crimea will host children this summer.[8] ISW previously assessed that Russia used summer tourism in Crimea to deter Ukrainian strikes on legitimate military targets, particularly in 2024.[9] Ukrainian forces recently targeted occupied Crimea with over 30 naval drones and 100 aerial drones on the night of May 1 to 2, and occupied Crimea remains strategically important to Ukrainian forces.[10] ISW previously noted that Russia is likely using human shields in violation of international humanitarian law, which states that "the military command shall avoid deploying military objectives in densely populated areas or in their vicinity." [11] Russia's insistence on treating occupied Crimea as a tourist destination, despite the fact that Russia uses Crimea to support its continued military aggression against Ukraine, places civilian lives (particularly children's lives) at risk.

Russian occupation officials continue to promote and expand the "Zarnitsa 2.0" military patriotic game as part of Russia's wider campaign to militarize Ukrainian children and erase Ukrainian identities.

"Zarnitsa 2.0" is a Russian military-patriotic game designed to indoctrinate and militarize children aged seven to 17 by training them in military tactics, modern warfighting technologies, and Russian military history.[12] Children register for "Zarnitsa 2.0" and create squad-sized "detachments" that compete against other "detachments" on the municipal, regional, and national level.[13] Russian youth civic activism initiative "Movement of the First," Yunarmia (Russian Young Army Cadets National Movement), and the "Voin" network of military-patriotic training centers organize and hold "Zarnitsa 2.0" competitions throughout occupied Ukraine and the Russian Federation.[14] The Kherson Oblast occupation administration reported on May 5 that high school students from occupied Chaplynka took part in the municipal stage of the "Zarnitsa 2.0," which included events such as drill training, shooting, drone control, tactical medicine, practice protecting against radiation and chemical attacks, and other military skills.[15] Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) Head Leonid Pasechnik reported on May 5 that 13,000 Ukrainian children from occupied Luhansk Oblast have so far participated in the qualifying and municipal stages of "Zarnitsa

2.0.”^[16] The official “Zarnitsa 2.0” Telegram channel previously reported in February that over one million students registered to participate in the game, including children from occupied Ukraine.^[17] Russian opposition outlet *Verstka*, however, reported that Russian teachers and instructors forced a number of these students to register for the competition.^[18] “Zarnitsa 2.0” is part of Russia’s long-term strategy to Russify, militarize, and indoctrinate Ukrainian children in occupied areas, erasing their Ukrainian identity and preparing them to fight for the Russian military against their fellow Ukrainians, as ISW has previously assessed. ^[19]

Russia is struggling to adequately staff occupied territories with doctors and other medical personnel. The Russian Ministry of Health published a draft bill on May 6 that would require graduates of Russian medical schools to work for three years in hospitals and clinics after their graduation, or else face a fine three times higher than their medical school tuition.^[20] The Russian Ministry of Health framed this bill as a response to Russia’s growing shortage of medical staff, and Ukrainian sources noted that, if passed, the bill will impact Russian health policy in occupied Ukraine. The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on May 6 that Russia will compel some of these recent graduates to work in Ukraine under the threat of mobilization into the Russian army.^[21] Ukraine’s Luhansk Oblast Administration Head Oleksiy Kharchenko noted that Russian occupation officials hope to use these doctors to offset a “catastrophic” shortage of medical professionals in occupied Ukraine.^[22]

The medical system in occupied Ukraine appears to be in a state of disarray due to Russian mismanagement. Kherson Oblast occupation Health Minister Elena Borchaninova recently claimed on April 21 that medical institutions in occupied Kherson Oblast are gravely short of qualified personnel, having only filled 40 percent of the needed quota for doctors, 58 percent of the quota for middle medical staff, and 64 percent of the quota for junior medical staff.^[23] Kherson Oblast occupation head Vladimir Saldo met with the Russian Deputy Health Minister Andrei Plutnitsky on May 6 to discuss a plan to overhaul the Henichesk Medical College and convert a five-story building in occupied Novooleksiivka into housing for doctors in order to encourage medical personnel to move to occupied Kherson Oblast to remedy medical personnel shortages.^[24] Russia previously implemented the “Zemskyi Doktor” (“Rural Doctor”) program to relocate Russian doctors to occupied Ukraine, and ISW previously assessed that “Zemskyi Doktor” and similar Russian programs are in part also efforts to facilitate the repopulation of areas of occupied Ukraine with Russian citizens.^[25] The lack of qualified doctors in occupied Ukraine may worsen a humanitarian crisis in these areas, particularly if Russia continues to inadequately implement health policy and maintain the medical system.

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- [5] <https://isw.pub/RussianOccupationUpdate041025>; <https://isw.pub/OccupationUpdate042125>;
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- [6] <https://ua.krymr.com/a/yak-rosiya-prykryvaye-dit%CA%B9my-svoyi-viyskovi-obyekty-ukrymu/33403174.html>
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- [8] <https://ua.krymr.com/a/yak-rosiya-prykryvaye-dit%CA%B9my-svoyi-viyskovi-obyekty-ukrymu/33403174.html>
- [9] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-23-2024>
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- [12] <https://verstka.media/en/zarnitsa-2-0-a-new-military-patriotic-game-for-russian-schoolchildren>
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[25] <https://understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-occupation-update-april-24-2025;https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/24-210-01%20ISW%20Occupation%20playbook.pdf>