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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.

To read ISW's assessment of how Russian activities in occupied areas of Ukraine are part of a coerced Russification and ethnic cleansing campaign, click [here](#).

Key Takeaways:

- Russian occupation officials continue to advertise the deportation of Ukrainian children to summer camps in Russia.
- Russian officials continue efforts to paint occupied Ukraine as an attractive tourist destination in order to encourage Russians to travel to occupied areas and support local occupation administration economies.
- Russian occupation officials articulated plans for the continued economic integration of occupied Ukraine into Russia during the St. Petersburg Economic Forum (SPIEF), focusing on attracting business and investment to occupied areas.

Russian occupation officials continue to advertise the deportation of Ukrainian children to summer camps in Russia. The Kherson Oblast occupation administration reported on June 16 that it plans to send over 4,000 children from 77 educational institutions in occupied Kherson Oblast to summer camps in Kaluga and Smolensk oblasts throughout Summer 2025.[1] An outlet affiliated with the Kherson Oblast occupation administration reported on June 15 and 16 that the camps will be open to children between the ages of 10 and 17 and that the Kherson Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology, and Fisheries is providing vouchers to children through their schools to attend the camps for free.[2] The outlet reported that this is the third year that Russian officials have sent children from Kherson Oblast to summer camps in Russia.[3] Another outlet affiliated with the Kherson Oblast occupation administration reported on June 16 that Kaliningrad and Ryazan oblasts and the Republic of Adygea sponsor the program, suggesting that the camps in these regions may have agreements with Kherson Oblast occupation authorities.[4] ISW reported in May 2025 that the Kherson Oblast occupation administration planned to send 600 children from occupied Henichesk Raion to summer

camps in the Adygea Republic throughout Summer 2025.[5] The Kherson Oblast occupation administration also reported on June 16 that 47 children from occupied Oleshky Raion are traveling to Moscow from June 15 to 21, where they will study Russian cultural, scientific, and historical heritage through the "Cultural Map 4+85" program.[6] ISW has previously assessed that "Cultural Map 4+85" and similar programs facilitate the forced assimilation of Ukrainian children into Russian sociocultural norms.[7] The deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia under the guise of participation in summer camps, regardless of the duration of their stay, is likely a violation of international law.[8] ISW continues to assess that these various summer camp programs are intended to indoctrinate and militarize Ukrainian children, eradicating their Ukrainian identities and instilling pro-Russian hyper-militarized sentiments in them to create the next generation of loyal Russians.[9]

Russian officials continue efforts to paint occupied Ukraine as an attractive tourist destination in order to encourage Russians to travel to occupied areas and support the local occupation administration economies. A delegation representing the Kherson Oblast occupation administration travelled to Moscow on June 16 to attend the "Travel!" international tourism forum.[10] The delegation held meetings about encouraging "rural tourism" in occupied Kherson Oblast. Rural tourism is a specific type of tourism wherein visitors travel to rural areas and small villages in order to experience daily life in these areas, including participating in local labor tasks.[11] Russian Minister of Transport Roman Starovoit similarly encouraged Russian tourists to visit occupied Ukraine in an interview with Russian outlet *Izvestia* on the sidelines of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) on June 18, and suggested that tourists travel to occupied Crimea via the Novorossiia highway, which runs from Rostov-on-Don through occupied Mariupol, Melitopol, and Sevastopol.[12] Starovoit claimed that Russia is focusing on creating "safe conditions" along the Novorossiia highway for "auto tourists." ISW has previously reported on Russia's insistence on treating occupied Ukraine as a viable tourist destination despite the fact that Russia has turned Ukraine into an active warzone.[13] Efforts to increase rural tourism initiatives and other similar vacation projects in Ukraine are likely intended to stimulate the economies of occupied areas, which have significantly suffered under Russian occupation. Tourism to occupied Ukraine along Russian-subsidized transportation infrastructure programs, such as the Novorossiia highway, additionally integrates and connects occupied Ukraine with Russia, as ISW has previously assessed.[14]

Russian occupation officials articulated plans for the continued economic integration of occupied Ukraine into Russia during the St. Petersburg Economic Forum (SPIEF), focusing on attracting business and investment to occupied areas. CEO of the Russian Small and Medium Business Corporation Aleksandr Isaevich claimed in an interview with Kremlin newswire TASS on the sidelines of SPIEF on June 18 that there are now 120 thousand registered small and medium businesses in "Donbas and Novorossiia" (referring to occupied Ukrainian territory).[15] Russian economic policy in occupied Ukraine seeks to simultaneously attract Russian businesses to occupied Ukraine and to encourage local businesses to register with the Russian government in order to maximize profit. Deputy Chairman for the Russian Federation Council Committee on Economic Policy Dmitry Vorona noted during the "Travel!" tourism forum on June 15 that the Russian Federation Council is considering amendments to the law on the free economic zone (FEZ) in occupied Ukraine in order to "attract business opportunities" and investors to the area.[16] Russia previously introduced a FEZ in occupied Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhia oblasts in June 2023, and incentivized participation in the FEZ via special insurance and tax benefits for participating enterprises starting on

January 1, 2024.[17] Russia appears to be now considering amendments to the FEZ to further attract investment and generate increased profit from its occupation of Ukraine. Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) Head Denis Pushilin also attended SPIEF on June 18 and highlighted various Russian investment and development projects, including a planned 600-million-ruble (\$8 million) investment by the Telmanovsky Quarry LLC into granite mining for infrastructure restoration in occupied Donetsk Oblast.[18] Such Russian investments in infrastructure in occupied Ukraine serve two purposes—first, to generate dependencies on Russian companies to maintain economic output, and second, they allow Russia to profit from industries and businesses in occupied Ukraine.[19]

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[1] https://t.me/VGA_Kherson/31490

[2] <https://www.herson.kp.ru/online/news/6424861/>; <https://www.herson.kp.ru/daily/27712.5/5100121/>

[3] <https://www.herson.kp.ru/daily/27712.5/5100121/>

[4] https://dzen.ru/a/aE_9ln8a1G6hzEvP

[5] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-occupation-update-may-1-2025>

[6] https://t.me/VGA_Kherson/31502

[7] <https://isw.pub/OccupationUpdate041725>

[8] <https://files-profile.medicine.yale.edu/documents/8c54abb4-3c6d-4b5c-be05-727f612afccc>

[9] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-occupation-update-june-3-2025>;
<https://isw.pub/OccupationUpdate051525>;
<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-occupation-update-may-5-2025>;
<https://isw.pub/OccupationUpdate050125>; <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-occupation-update-april-28-2025>; <https://isw.pub/OccupationUpdate041725>

[10] https://t.me/VGA_Kherson/31504

[11] <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/1200124942>

[12] <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/24258747>; <https://www.interfax-russia.ru/south-and-north-caucasus/main/federalnuyu-trassu-novorossiia-poetapno-rasshiryat-do-4-h-polos>

[13] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-23-2024>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/24-210-01%20ISW%20Occupation%20playbook.pdf>

[14] <https://isw.pub/OccupationUpdate051525>;
<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-occupation-update-may-5-2025>

[15] <https://tass dot ru/ekonomika/24249765>

[16] <https://tass dot ru/ekonomika/24222233>

[17] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-23-2024>; <http://kremlin dot ru/acts/news/71513>; <https://www.rbc dot ru/rbcfreenews/6491b23c9a7947e2d216fd94>

[18] <https://t.me/PushilinDenis/6746>; <https://t.me/PushilinDenis/6747>

[19] <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/24-210-01%20ISW%20Occupation%20playbook.pdf>