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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 administrators attended the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) to secure additional investment and development opportunities for the occupied regions of Ukraine. Russia's investment in occupied Ukraine is driven by two predominant factors: first, the desire to reap economic benefit from the occupation, and second, to further integrate occupied Ukraine into the Russian sphere of influence using economic levers.
- Russia is expanding its infrastructure for the forced removal and militarization of Ukrainian children in occupied Crimea and is opening a new children's camp on the premises of the sanctioned "Artek" international children's center.
- Russian occupation authorities continue to target religious minority communities in occupied Ukraine.

Russian occupation administrators attended the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) to secure additional investment and development opportunities for the occupied regions of Ukraine. SPIEF took place from June 18 to June 21, and occupation officials from Kherson, Zaporizhia, Luhansk, Donetsk oblasts, and Crimea took part in various panels, meetings, and discussions at the event.[1] Sevastopol occupation governor Mikhail Razvozhaev reported that his administration secured 200 billion rubles (\$2.5 billion) in investment pledges for the development of the Sevastopol seaport, for the "integrated development" of occupied Sevastopol, and for the construction of new housing.[2] Razvozhaev also highlighted several agreements he signed with Russian companies regarding building projects in occupied Sevastopol.[3] Crimea occupation head Sergei Aksyonov reported that he signed two agreements and six memoranda of cooperation amounting

to a 68 billion ruble (\$866 million) investment in various development projects in occupied Crimea.[4] Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) Head Denis Pushilin claimed that he secured 53 billion rubles (\$675 million) in investments in economic, housing, and employment projects for the occupied Donetsk Oblast.[5] Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) Head Leonid Pasechnik highlighted his efforts at SPIEF, reporting that he signed a partnership agreement with Russia's Vologda Oblast, which will increase bilateral trade and require Vologda Oblast to provide economic assistance to occupied Luhansk Oblast.[6] Zaporizhia Oblast occupation head Yevgeny Balitsky similarly signed a partnership agreement with Leningrad Oblast, and the Kherson Oblast occupation administration signed a partnership agreement with the Chuvash Republic.[7] The Kherson Oblast occupation administration also signed an agreement on developing trade and economic relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC), Vietnam, and the Asia-Pacific countries.[8]

Russia's investment in occupied Ukraine is driven by two predominant factors: first, the desire to reap economic benefit from the occupation, and second, to further integrate occupied Ukraine into the Russian sphere of influence using economic levers. Several occupation administrators and Russian officials, including Russian Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin, emphasized these factors during a SPIEF session entitled "Revival of New Regions of Russia as a Driver of Economic Growth." [9] Occupation authorities appear to be going to great lengths to attract Russian investment into occupied Ukraine, and have proposed incentives such as insurance to protect investors against "war risks." [10] The prevalence of Russian companies in occupied Ukraine strengthens Russia's economic control over occupied areas and also allows Russia to better extract economic benefit from its occupation, as ISW has previously assessed. [11] Russian economic ties with occupied areas will also complicate Ukrainian efforts to eventually reintegrate its territories, which is likely a desired impact of Russia's economic policy vis-à-vis occupied areas.

Russia is expanding its infrastructure for the forced removal and militarization of Ukrainian children in occupied Crimea. First Deputy Director of the Russian "Artek" international children's center Elena Zhivoglyad gave an interview to Kremlin newswire TASS on the sidelines of SPIEF on June 22 and stated that the new "Solnechny" children's camp will open on the premises of the "Artek" center by the end of 2025. [12] Zhivoglyad noted that "Solnechny" will operate year-round and will help "Artek" increase the number of children attending its camps to 56,000 per year. Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Chernyshenko previously visited "Solnechny" in December 2024 and claimed that there were 10 separate construction projects ongoing at the site. [13] Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin reported on June 16, 2025, that "Solnechny" has completed the construction of two dormitories that can house up to 1,000 children. [14] "Artek" operates several camps in occupied Ukraine, including a network of camps in occupied Crimea and the "Krasnaya Gvozdika" camp in occupied Berdyansk, Zaporizhia Oblast. [15] While children from Russia and other foreign countries also participate in summer camps at "Artek," "Artek" has been central to Russia's campaign to forcibly remove Ukrainian children from their homes in occupied Ukraine and militarize and indoctrinate them. [16] Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky recently sanctioned "Artek" on June 10 for its involvement in crimes relating to the militarization, deportation, and indoctrination of Ukrainian children. [17] As "Artek" continues to expand by creating new camps such as "Solnyechny," the number of Ukrainian children who will go through its programming likely will increase.

Russian occupation authorities continue to target religious minority communities in occupied Ukraine. The Ukrainian Resistance Center and a Ukrainian partisan organization reported on June 21 and June 23 that Russian officials are in the process of dismantling a church organ and a Catholic-Orthodox religious unity bell at the Berdyansk Catholic Cathedral of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in occupied Berdyansk.[18] Russian officials reportedly plan to take the organ to Russia—effectively looting a piece of cultural heritage—and repurpose the church into residential quarters to accommodate “specialists” who are relocated to occupied Ukraine from Russia.[19] ISW recently reported on similar Russian efforts to appropriate the worship sites of religious minority groups in occupied Ukraine for the benefit of the occupation administration, which appears to be the case with the Berdyansk Catholic Cathedral.[20]



[1] <https://tass dot com/economy/1974829>

[2] <https://t.me/razvozhaev/12611>

[3] <https://t.me/razvozhaev/12588>; <https://t.me/razvozhaev/12591>; <https://t.me/razvozhaev/12599>; <https://t.me/razvozhaev/12600>

[4] <https://t.me/Aksenov82/7619>

[5] <https://t.me/PushilinDenis/6788>

[6] https://t.me/glava_lnr_info/3936; https://t.me/glava_lnr_info/3950

[7] https://t.me/VGA_Kherson/31567; https://t.me/VGA_Kherson/31571; <https://t.me/BalitskyEV/5608>

[8] <https://gov.khogov dot ru/news/na-pmef-podpisano-soglashenie-mezhdu-pravitelstvom-hersonskoj-oblasti-i-soyuzom-uchastnikov-otraslej-vneshneekonomicheskoy-deyatelnosti/>; <https://www.herson dot kp.ru/daily/27715/5104427/>; https://t.me/VGA_Kherson/31561

[9] <https://tass dot ru/ekonomika/24247527>; https://t.me/SALDO_VGA/7991; https://t.me/VGA_Kherson/31573; <https://t.me/BalitskyEV/5609>

[10] <https://t.me/BalitskyEV/5609>

[11] <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/24-210-01%20ISW%20Occupation%20playbook.pdf>; <https://understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-occupation-update-june-19-2025>; <https://understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-occupation-update-april-8-2025>

[12] <https://spb.mk dot ru/social/2025/06/23/lager-solnechnyy-pomozhet-arteku-uvelichit-kolichestvo-detey-do-56-tysyach-v-god.html>

[13] <https://национальныепроекты dot рф/news/detskiy-lager-solnechnyy-v-arteke-otkroetsya-v-2025-godu/>

[14] government dot ru/news/55362/

[15] <https://tass dot ru/obschestvo/24314719>; <https://isw.pub/OccupationUpdate061225>;
<https://isw.pub/OccupationUpdate060425>; <https://isw.pub/OccupationUpdate051525>

[16] <https://war-sanctions.gur dot gov.ua/kidnappers/companies/10335>

[17] <https://kyivindependent dot com/zelensky-imposes-sanctions-against-individuals-organizations-involved-in-deportation-of-ukrainian-children/>

[18] https://t.me/yellowribbon_ua/11554; https://t.me/yellowribbon_ua/11553;
https://t.me/sprotyv_official/7188

[19] https://t.me/yellowribbon_ua/11554

[20] <https://isw.pub/OccupationUpdate061725>