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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:**

- **The Russian-created water crisis is worsening and creating unsanitary living conditions in several parts of occupied Ukraine. Occupation officials continue to posture themselves as effectively managing the crisis while continuing to blame Ukraine for causing water shortages.**
- **Russian occupation administrations continue to send Ukrainian children to Russian summer camps and educational programs in order to indoctrinate and russify them.**
- **Russia continues to co-opt the education system in occupied Ukraine**

**The Russian-created water crisis is worsening and creating unsanitary living conditions in several parts of occupied Ukraine.** Ukrainian Mariupol Mayoral Advisor Petro Andryushchenko stated on July 22 that the Khanzenkivske Reservoir on the Krynka River, the main source of drinking water for occupied Donetsk Oblast, is empty and dry.[1] The Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) administration noted on July 21 that the Don-Donbas Canal aqueduct, which provides occupied Donetsk Oblast with a third of its water supply, is reaching critically low water levels.[2] Russian newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* reported on July 21 that occupied Donetsk Oblast is on the brink of water collapse and is only getting 30 percent of its needed water supply.[3] *Komsomolskaya Pravda* also reported on July 21 that an unspecified "accident" on the Berdovsky water pipeline caused a suspension of centralized water supply to occupied Berdyansk, Zaporizhia Oblast.[4] The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on July 21 that Russia destroyed the water system during its occupation of occupied Donetsk Oblast and never built a new one, meaning that many areas of occupied Donetsk Oblast only receive water for a few hours every three days.[5] Damage

to water infrastructure also appears to be impacting parts of occupied Zaporizhia Oblast. The lack of access to water is forcing residents of occupied Ukraine to resort to extreme and unsanitary means to adapt. Oleg Tsyarov, a former Ukrainian politician who lives in occupied Crimea due to his pro-Russian activities, stated on July 21 that it is common for people in occupied Donetsk Oblast to put a plastic bag in the toilet and throw it out after use because the water shortages have made it impossible to flush toilets.[6] Unsanitary conditions may lead to a health crisis in occupied areas.

**Occupation officials continue to posture themselves as effectively managing the water crisis while continuing to blame Ukraine for causing water shortages.** DNR Head Denis Pushilin claimed on July 19 that his administration is beginning to empty the Krynka River to fill water reservoirs and will install an additional 166 water barrels in occupied Donetsk City to facilitate water supply.[7] *Komsomolskaya Pravda* reported on July 21 that the occupation administration will increase water delivery volume in the Kirovskiy and Petrovskiy raions in Donetsk City.[8] Zaporizhia Oblast occupation head Yevgeny Balitsky claimed on July 22 that a pipeline from the Lunacharsky water intake wells will transport 5,000 cubic meters of water a day to the Berdyansk treatment plant, and claimed that major repairs to four water pipelines in Berdyansk will solve the water shortage.[9] Mariupol occupation head Anton Koltsov claimed on July 21 that he set up a headquarters in occupied Mariupol to “solve” the water supply issue.[10] Occupation officials are focusing their responses to the water shortage on claims that they are taking concrete steps to remedy it, while blaming Ukraine for its genesis. The DNR administration claimed on July 22 that Ukrainian forces are responsible for a “water blockade” that caused water shortages, which weather and environmental conditions, such as a dry summer and an almost snowless winter, have aggravated.[11] ISW previously assessed that the water crisis is a direct result of the Russian occupation and Russian military actions.[12] Not only is Russia propagating this crisis due to its occupation of Ukraine, it is continuously failing to adhere to its international legal responsibilities as a belligerent occupying power to safeguard the health of the population it occupies and remedy the situation as quickly and effectively as possible.

**Russian occupation administrations continue to send Ukrainian children to Russian summer camps and educational programs in order to indoctrinate and Russify them.** *Komsomolskaya Pravda*’s occupied Zaporizhia Oblast service published a story on July 19 detailing how occupation officials are sending children from occupied Zaporizhia Oblast to various summer camps and programs in occupied Ukraine and in Russia.[13] *Komsomolskaya Pravda* reported that 250 children from occupied Melitopol have already attended the Yunost camp in Arkhangelsk Oblast, and a total of 300 children will attend the Zvezdny camp in occupied Yevpatoria, Crimea. Children from occupied Zaporizhia Oblast will also continue to attend the Avangard military sports center in five two-week-long shifts of around 100-150 children per shift.[14] The Avangard military sports camp directly supports Russian efforts to militarize Ukrainian children through activities such as drone operation and combat training, and has a stated goal of creating a “spirit of love for the motherland (Russia)” among attendees.[15] ISW has reported on previous incidents of Russian authorities sending Ukrainian children to Avangard for military training.[16] The Berdyansk occupation administration additionally reported on July 23 that a group of 39 children from occupied

Berdyansk arrived in Tver Oblast to participate in the “Hello, Tver Oblast” program.[17] The children will stay at the Computeria camp in Yamok, Tver Oblast, and participate in excursions around Tver Oblast for 10 days.[18]

*Komsomolskaya Pravda* also reported on July 19 that 55 students from occupied Zaporizhia Oblast are attending “University Shifts” programs at Chuvashia State University in Cherboksary, Chuvash Republic. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*’s occupied Kherson Oblast service reported on July 19 that 49 Ukrainian children from occupied Oleshky, Holoprystan, and Skadovsk raions are attending a “University Shifts” program at Lipetsk State Pedagogical University, which will last two weeks.[19] ISW previously assessed that “University Shifts” is intended to expose Ukrainian teenagers to Russian values, traditions, and culture, and to encourage Ukrainian students to study in Russia.[20] ISW previously assessed that tens of thousands of Ukrainian children will attend these summer camps and “University Shifts” in summer 2025, and that Russia’s goal with these programs is to Russify Ukrainian children and set multigenerational conditions for the integration of occupied Ukrainian territories into Russia through the indoctrination of Ukrainian youth.[21]

**Russia continues to co-opt the education system in occupied Ukraine.** Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR) Minister of Education and Science Oleg Trofimov stated on July 22 that the DNR has ordered a new collection of history textbooks for students in grades 5-9.[22] Schools in occupied Ukraine will start using the new textbooks in September at the start of the new school year. Trofimov noted that a team of Russian authors is working at the federal level on a different set of textbooks on the “history of Donbas and Novorossiia” for students in occupied Ukraine. The new textbooks are intended to present students with the Kremlin-approved version of Ukrainian history and the Kremlin-sanctioned view that occupied areas of Ukraine are “historically Russian territories.”[23] Kremlin newswire *RIA Novosti* reported on July 22 that it had reviewed Russian Ministry of Education documents that show that schools will begin teaching on “Spiritual and Moral Culture of Russia” in schools in the 2026-2027 school year, which will also likely apply in occupied Ukraine, as Russia has overhauled the education system in occupied areas.[24] ISW has reported at length on Russia’s cooptation of the school system in occupied Ukraine.[25]

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