

(European Parliament resolution on the torture and criminal prosecution of Ukrainian minors Tihran Ohannisian and Mykyta Khanhanov by the Russian Federation)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC),
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia and Ukraine,
 - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on May 24, 2023, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation charged, Tihran Ohannisian and Mykyta Khanhanov, born in 2006, with allegedly planning sabotage on the railway in Berdyansk; whereas they are facing arrest up to 20 years imprisonment under Article 281 of the Russian Criminal Code and do not receive proper legal help;
- B. whereas the prosecution of Ohannisian and Khanhanov, followed several months of brutal interrogation by the Russian authorities, which started on 30 September 2022, using beatings and electric shock torture, along with demands for confessions of these minors and harassment of their families;
- C. whereas there are numerous reports indicating that Russian authorities are continuing their repression against Ukrainian children with them being the most vulnerable victims of Russia’s war of aggression;
- D. whereas according to the “Children of War platform” of Ukraine, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has resulted in the death of at least 488 Ukrainian children, also reported by UNICEF, with more than 1016 injured, over 19500 deported to Russia and 3924 reported missing; whereas this was also evidenced in the recent report of the OSCE Moscow Mechanism;
1. Demands the immediate end of the proceedings against and dismissal of charges against Ohannisian and Khanhanov and allow them to leave; calls upon International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to facilitate their safe return to the territory controlled by the Ukrainian government; calls on the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children to investigate this case; calls for those responsible for the prosecution to be added to the EU sanctions list; calls for the release of all Ukrainian citizens unlawfully detained by Russia;
 2. Condemns Russia’s actions deliberately targeting Ukrainian children, including their forcible transfer within Ukraine’s territory temporarily occupied by Russia and/or their unlawful deportations to Russia and Belarus, illegal adoptions, as well as attempts to impose a so-called “re-education”; reiterates its call on the Commission and the Council to adopt an EU-Ukraine Child Protection Package for children fleeing or affected by the war;
 3. Condemns the targeting of children in situations of armed conflict, their persecution and torture, and direct attacks on objects protected under international law, including places such as schools and hospitals;

4. Calls on the Commission and the VP/HR to intensify efforts to prevent and end grave violations against children affected by armed conflict; stresses the importance of advancing the Child Rights and Armed Conflicts agenda in the EU external action, and counter-terrorism and security policies, integrating it in CSDP operations, security sector reforms and mediation;
5. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the VP/HR, the Office of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, the ICRC, the Government of the Russian Federation and the authorities in Belarus.