

# DISCRIMINATION IN THE EDUCATIONAL SPHERE BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON THE TERRITORY OF THE TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED CRIMEAN PENINSULA



Regional  
Center For  
Human Rights

**TRANSITION**  
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The Russian Federation occupied the territory of the Crimean peninsula and extended it in its legislation to its territory in violation of international law. One of the most common laws is the Federal Law «On Education in the Russian Federation», according to which Russian academic standards and educational materials certified by the Russian government only can be used in the educational process on the territory of Crimea, no alternative provided for in this regard.

The victims of Russian educational policy are children, who are least protected against the influence of Russian propaganda, such as educational standards, programs and concepts designed to shape a «pan-Russian civic identity» in students, to foster a sense of patriotism, and to encourage them to join the Russian military. Educational materials contain narratives of propaganda that reflect the content of these standards and programs. In particular, the narratives can be clearly identified in the textbooks for the following subjects:

- **“The World Around Us” (1st-4th grades);**
- **“Social Studies” (5th-11th grades);**
- **“Basics of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics (4th grade);**
- **“Basics of Life Safety” (5th-11th grades);**
- **“Geography” (5th-11th grades).**

The results of the analysis of the textbooks on the above subjects identified several groups of narratives. Altogether they are aimed at assimilating Ukrainian children in order to facilitate the integration of the occupied territory into the Russian Federation and to prevent the de-occupation and further reintegration of Crimea.

Among these narratives, the following are worthy of highlighting:

**Russian ethnicity is the basis of the unity of the Russian multinational people.**

This group of narratives is aimed at supporting the idea that the Russian people play an important role in the creation and development of the Russian state, as well as fostering a sense of patriotism and pride in the Russian Federation among children from occupied Crimea.

**Performing military duty in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation is a “sacred duty” of Russian citizens.**

Textbooks contain numerous calls to join the Russian army after graduation. For the purpose of encouragement, the textbooks include a variety of examples of heroic deeds performed by soldiers in armed conflicts.

**Self-sacrifice is the highest manifestation of “sacred duty”.**

Russian textbooks are permeated with the narrative of the need for self-sacrifice for the sake of the Motherland as a manifestation of patriotism and love for Russia.

**Colonization of territories is the essence of the Russian Federation’s existence.**

This group of narratives contains statements that directly or indirectly foster a positive attitude among children from the occupied Crimea toward expanding borders by forcibly conquering the lands of other states.

**There are constant “interethnic conflicts” in the “CIS countries” and the “former USSR countries”.**

Children are taught that the Russian Federation has the right to propagate its language and culture in the territories of states that were formerly part of the USSR. The textbooks condemn the desire of other nations to exist separately from Russia, which is supposedly a manifestation of nationalism that should be dealt with by force.

## **NATO and the United States are a global threat.**

Children from the occupied Crimea are taught that «Western countries» have hostile intentions towards Russia, which can be stopped only by the Russian armed forces.

### **Violation of international law**

The implementation of the Russian educational policy in the occupied Crimea by the Russian Federation constitutes a violation of international human rights law, in particular the right of the child to preserve their own identity, as provided for in Article 8 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Article is fundamental to the realization of all other rights of the child. This right is further elaborated in Article 29 of the said Convention, which requires that education be directed to foster respect for, inter alia, the child's cultural identity, language and national values of the country of origin.

Such Russian policy is also contrary to international humanitarian law, in particular the principle of status quo ante bellum (maintenance of the state of the territory as much as possible as it existed prior to the occupation). It ignores the provisions of the Geneva Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, namely the prohibition of discrimination (Article 27), the obligation of the Occupying Power to ensure the proper and continuous education of children by persons of their nationality, language and religion (Article 50), and the prohibition to compel protected persons to serve in the armed forces of the Occupying Power (Article 51), in particular through propaganda which aims at securing voluntary enlistment in the armed forces of the Occupying Power. These provisions apply inseparably from international human rights law, and therefore constitute comprehensive requirements for the Russian Federation in the occupied territory.

The actions of Russian officials and its agents to introduce and implement the Russian educational policy in the occupied

territory of Crimea may have elements of international crimes under the Rome Statute of the ICC, namely war crimes: compelling a protected person to serve in the armed forces of a hostile Power, taking part in the operations of war directed against their own country, and outrages upon personal dignity. In addition, such acts may constitute a crime against humanity – discriminatory persecution and serve as evidence of genocidal intent or even as an independent act of genocide under Article 6(e) of the Rome Statute of the ICC.

### **Bodies responsible for implementing Russian policy in the field of school education**

At the federal level, the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation (until 2018, Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation), in particular its Departments for General Education, Protection of the Rights of the Child, Digital Transformation and Big Data, and the Legal Department, is primarily responsible for the illegal implementation of Russian educational policy in the occupied Crimea. In addition, the Scientific and Methodological Council on Textbooks, which provides opinions on the inclusion of textbooks in the federal list, and the Council on Federal State Educational Standards for General Education and Vocational Education, which conducts an examination of educational standards, are also responsible.

At the local level in Crimea, the responsible bodies are the “Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea” (“General Education Department and Quality Assessment”, “Mother Tongue Education Sector” of the “Administration of General Education”) and the “Department of Education and Science of the City of Sevastopol” (“Division of General Education”, “Division for Monitoring of Education Quality Assessment, Analysis and Forecast” of the “Department of State Policy in the Field of Educational Quality Assessment”).

The full text  
of the analytical report



