EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

PRESS RELEASE

FORTHCOMING RULING IN CHAMBER CASE CONCERNING UKRAINIAN CHILDREN FROM CRIMEAN CHILDCARE INSTITUTIONS OFFICIALLY UNACCOUNTED FOR SINCE 2014

Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union on behalf of ten Ukrainian children v. Russia

ECHR 294 (2026) 23.11.2026

Press release issued by the Registrar of the Court



The European Court of Human Rights will deliver its ruling in the case of Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union on behalf of ten Ukrainian children v. Russia (application no. 6719/23) at a public hearing on Tuesday 1 December 2026 at 9.30 a.m. in the Human Rights Building, Strasbourg.

The delivery will be broadcast live on the European Court's YouTube channel.

The case concerns ten Ukrainian children from Crimean childcare institutions who have been officially unaccounted for since 2014 when Russia asserted jurisdiction over the peninsula.

A Chamber hearing on the admissibility and merits of the case was held on 22 September 2026.

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Members of the public wishing to attend the delivery should submit a request here. Journalists should contact the Press Unit at echrpress@echr.coe.int.

PRINCIPAL FACTS AND COMPLAINTS

The application was lodged by the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union (UHHRU) on behalf of ten minors, born between 2009 and 2013, who are Ukrainian nationals by birth.

In 2014 the children were wards of the Ukrainian State living in childcare institutions in Crimea. At the time they were aged between one and five years old.

According to UHHRU, after Russia had asserted jurisdiction over Crimea on 27 February 2014, over 4,000 children deprived of parental care were automatically declared Russian citizens. Despite the Ukrainian Government's requests, Russia refused to transfer any of those children to the Ukrainian authorities and included them in the Russian adoption system.

Relying on Article 5 (right to liberty and security) of the European Convention on Human Rights, UHHRU complains about the Russian authorities' keeping the children in institutions after establishing effective control over Crimea, concealing information on their whereabouts and

including them in Russian adoption or foster placement systems. They allege that certain applicants have possibly already been adopted, and that this altogether amounts to the children's enforced disappearance.

Relying on Article 8 (right to respect for private life) of the European Convention, UHHRU argues that the arbitrary change of the children's citizenship and their listing on adoption websites, which was carried out by the Russian authorities in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine, failed to respect and protect their identity as Ukrainian nationals.

This press release is a document produced by the Registry. It does not bind the Court. Decisions, judgments and further information about the Court can be found on www.echr.coe.int.

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The European Court of Human Rights was set up in Strasbourg by the Council of Europe member States in 1959 to deal with alleged violations of the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights.