C/2024/485

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Torture and criminal prosecution of Ukrainian minors Tihran Ohannisian and Mykyta Khanhanov by the Russian Federation

European Parliament resolution of 15 June 2023 on the torture and criminal prosecution of Ukrainian minors Tihran Ohannisian and Mykyta Khanhanov by the Russian Federation (2023/2735(RSP))

(C/2024/485)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child,

— having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia and Ukraine,

— having regard to Rules 144(5) and 132(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas on 24 May 2023, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation charged Tihran Ohannisian and Mykyta Khanhanov, born in 2006, with allegedly planning sabotage on the Berdiansk railway; whereas they face up to 20 years' imprisonment under Article 281 of the Russian Criminal Code and have not received proper legal assistance;

B. whereas Ohannisian and Khanhanov's prosecution followed months of brutal interrogation by the Russian authorities, which started on 30 September 2022 and included subjecting these minors to beatings and electroshock torture aimed at eliciting confessions, along with harassment of their families;

C. whereas numerous reports indicate that the Russian authorities continue to oppress Ukrainian children, the most vulnerable victims of Russia's war of aggression;

D. whereas, according to Ukraine's Children of War platform, at least 488 Ukrainian children have died as a result of Russia's invasion, as also reported by UNICEF, with at least 1 016 injured, around 19 500 deported to Russia and 3 924 reported missing; whereas the recent Moscow Mechanism report corroborated this phenomenon;

1. Demands the immediate termination of the proceedings and dismissal of all charges against Ohannisian and Khanhanov and their immediate release; calls on the International Committee of the Red Cross to facilitate their safe return to Ukraine-controlled territory; calls on the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children to investigate; calls for those behind 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 deliberate targeting of Ukrainian children through measures including forcible transfers within Ukrainian territory temporarily occupied by Russia, unlawful deportations to Russia and Belarus, illegal adoptions and attempts to impose '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, persecution and torture of children in situations of armed conflict and direct attacks on objects protected under international law, including schools and hospitals;

4. Calls on the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to intensify efforts to prevent and end grave violations against children affected by armed conflict; stresses the importance of advancing the children and armed conflict agenda in the EU's external action and counterterrorism and security policies, and of integrating it into common security and defence policy operations, security sector reforms and mediation;

5. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Office of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Government of the Russian Federation and the Belarusian authorities.