Resolution on the torture and criminal prosecution of Ukrainian minors Tihran Ohannisian and Mykyta Khanhanov by the Russian Federation

2023/2735(RSP) - 15/06/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 425 votes to 3, with 15 abstentions, a resolution on the torture and criminal prosecution of Ukrainian minors Tihran Ohannisian and Mykyta Khanhanov by the Russian Federation.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA, ECR, The Left and Members.

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. They face up to 20 years' imprisonment and have not received proper legal assistance.

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

Russia is condemned for its 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'. Parliament also condemned 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.

In this regard, the Commission and the Council are called on to adopt an EU-Ukraine child protection package for children fleeing or affected by the war.

Moreover, Parliament demanded the immediate termination of the proceedings and dismissal of all charges against Ohannisian and Khanhanov and their immediate release. It also called for those behind the prosecution to be added to the EU sanctions list.

The resolution also stressed 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.

Lastly, Parliament asked for the release of all Ukrainian citizens unlawfully detained by Russia.