



HOUSE OF LORDS

International Relations and Defence Committee

Corrected oral evidence: Ukraine

Wednesday 26 March 2025

10.30 am

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Members present: Lord De Mauley (The Chair); Baroness Blackstone; Lord Bruce of Bennachie; Baroness Coussins; Lord Grocott; Lord Houghton of Richmond; Baroness Morris of Bolton; Lord Soames of Fletching.

Evidence Session No. 1

Heard in Public

Questions 1 - 7

Witnesses

I: Daria Zarivna, Adviser to the Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, and Operations Director, Bring Kids Back UA; Mariana Betsa, Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister; Mykola Kuleba, Founder and Lead of Save Ukraine.

Examination of witnesses

Daria Zarivna, Mariana Betsa and Mykola Kuleba.

Q1 **The Chair:** Welcome. Thank you very much for coming to see us. We will focus this session on the forcible removal of about 20,000 Ukrainian children to Russia or Russian occupied territories and the wider human rights and humanitarian situation in Ukraine.

The session will be streamed live on the Parliament website and a transcript will be taken. Once that transcript is available, we will send you a copy and you can make small corrections if necessary. We are never long on time in these sessions, so I will launch straight into questioning. Maybe after my first question you could introduce yourselves and then answer.

The big question for us is to ask you to describe what you know of the experience of these children and the work of Bring Kids Back. Daria is not yet here but I believe you will be able to start to address that question. What progress has been made in returning these children to their parents or guardians? Perhaps you could also talk about how you make contact with the other side.

Mykola Kuleba: Thank you. I am the former Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights, for seven years under both President Zelensky and President Poroshenko. Now I run Save Ukraine, the largest organisation returning kidnapped or stolen children from Russia and occupied territories. We bring hundreds of those children back to Ukraine. It is like a special operation. We build underground railroads to search for, locate and identify children, especially orphans who have been stolen. We return orphans who have been hidden in occupied territories by caregivers, even from Russian foster families. Together with us is one such orphan. A young adult now, she was separated from her brother in occupation and sent to Russia. Her brother was sent to a Russian foster family. We helped her to find her brother so that she could take him back to Ukraine, but when she met her younger brother, who was 11 years old, he refused to go and told her, "I don't want to come back to Ukraine because a Ukrainian Nazi will kill me".

Some 1.6 million Ukrainian children have been stolen through two invasions, 2014 and 2022, because they were in occupied territories. Half of them were forcibly transferred to Russia. In Ukraine, we do not know how many of them were unaccompanied minors. You might hear the number 20,000 kids identified as stolen but we have no access to those children. They are Ukrainian children.

First of all, Ukraine needs to know where our kids are. In Russia, Maria Lvova-Belova, who received a warrant order from the International Criminal Court, stated a year and a half ago that there are 744,000 Ukrainian children registered in Russia—about half of those I told you about who were transferred—but the Ukrainian authorities were not provided with any more information, which is a war crime. International

law clearly tells us that aggressors should provide that information. We know from returns that many of these kids lost their parents through them being arrested or killed, or they have disappeared.

We do not even know how many thousands of young adults fighting now with us as Russian soldiers were Ukrainian children. We know there are tens of thousands. How many of them died on battlefields as Russian soldiers—for nothing? How many of them are now active soldiers? From the kids we have returned, we know that all children from 16 receive draft notices for the Russian army. We have a lot of calls to our hotline from these kids, begging us to save them. The last two cases were two orphans, 18 years old, who were forcibly taken to Russian trenches, dressed in Russian uniform with a weapon and forced to fight against us. They begged on the phone, "Please help us. We want to escape". We are now trying to find them. We provide special operations.

You asked about possible ways to return these kids. To be honest, we have no official mechanism to return them. Putin and Russia refused this and we cannot receive any information, even from negotiations. As my colleague might continue, we had some success with Qatar, but only with some 40 or 50 kids of the 1.6 million. That is very few kids.

The Chair: Ms Betsa, do you want to add anything?

Mariana Betsa: Distinguished colleagues, good morning. I am very honoured to be here as part of Ukraine's delegation and as a participant in President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky's initiative, Bring Kids Back UA, which unites government and non-governmental sectors. Our main priority is to identify and return every deported child back home to Ukraine.

Russia commits genocide on an industrial scale. Russia commits war crimes on an industrial scale. Its deportation of Ukrainian children started with the occupation of Crimea in 2014. Of course, the scale of it grew in 2022 after the full-scale invasion. So far, we have identified almost 20,000 Ukrainian children who were forcibly deported by Russia to Russian territory, in grave breach of international law. Of course, the true figure is much higher because up to 1.6 million Ukrainian kids are under Russia's control in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Then there is what Russia does to these children. First is separation from their families and deportation to Russia. Then there is russification. Russia imposes Russian education and alters their names and personal data. Many of them at 17 or 18 are already enrolled in military service. They are actually sent to fight against Ukraine. This is a massive crime that Russia commits without any responsibility so far.

Our main idea right now is to identify our kids and return them. This should be a priority for any negotiations and peace talks. It should be one of the central points. It is for Ukraine a matter of principle that every child should be reunited with their family, and of course Russia should take responsibility for each crime it commits.

Q2 **Baroness Blackstone:** Could you tell the committee what you would like the international community to do? Indeed, perhaps you could set out what it is doing at the moment. What more would you like it do? What, in particular, would you like the UK to do to help secure the return of those forcibly removed children?

Mariana Betsa: First, we are extremely grateful to the UK for your steadfast and unwavering support in the face of Russian aggression. It is truly unprecedented. The UK remains one of the strongest and staunchest allies of Ukraine, providing political, diplomatic, financial, humanitarian and security assistance. Your leadership in ensuring accountability, championing justice and defending Ukraine's sovereignty and integrity has been truly remarkable.

The issue of the return of Ukrainian children is definitely a top priority for our President and the Government of Ukraine. It is a human dimension of this conflict. How many children were deported? The war started in 2014. For 11 years, Ukrainian cities have been bombed, attacked, shelled and erased from the map. Look at Mariupol, Bakhmut and Avdiivka; there are no cities there; they have been erased from the map. This is what Russia wants to do with Ukraine. If Ukraine cannot be subjugated, Russia wants to destroy it—as a country and as a nation. What it does to Ukrainian children in the temporarily occupied territories, and in Russia to those who are deported, is to erase their identity. It is like cultural genocide.

We need to redouble our diplomatic and political efforts to safeguard that, first, every child is brought back home and reunited with their family. Secondly, Russia must take responsibility for this. We have the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children, set up on the initiative of Ukraine and Canada, and now Norway as chair; 41 countries and international organisations have joined the coalition. It is a very important multilateral forum for diplomatic efforts to make Russia return our children. We definitely have a number of mediators who support Ukrainian diplomatic endeavours, but so far we have managed to return only 1,243 Ukrainian children. At least 20,000 Ukrainian children are still in the territory of Russia, and, of course, roughly 1.6 million in the temporarily occupied territories.

When speaking about deported children, what is needed? First, we need to safeguard that Russia abides by international law. It constantly violates international humanitarian law, the Geneva conventions and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We need to pressure Russia to comply with international law. Secondly, we need to pressure Russia to facilitate international access to the children in Russia and the temporarily occupied territories. Thirdly, sanctions should be imposed on each war criminal responsible for these heinous crimes. Fourthly, of course the central point of any negotiations or peace talks should be the return of Ukrainian children. As stated by the Ukrainian delegation in Saudi Arabia at the beginning of March and again a few days ago, and reflected in the press release from the White House, this issue is constantly discussed by the President of Ukraine, the Head of the Office, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and all stakeholders in our negotiations

with the US and other international partners. We need more efforts to return Ukrainian children. There will be no justice served if children are not returned.

The fifth element is accountability. That should not drift away somehow. It is crucial that we bring Russia to justice before the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice and the special international tribunal for the crime of aggression that will be set up very soon, and I am grateful for the UK's contribution to that process. It is important that every war criminal responsible for genocide, aggression, crimes against humanity and crimes against peace—war crimes—is brought to justice. This is a complex issue. It is a longer-term perspective but we need to do everything possible now. This is not only a legal imperative but a moral imperative. What I try to say as Deputy Foreign Minister, for example in my negotiations with different countries in the global South, is that it is also an issue of humanity. It is a humanitarian issue. We need all efforts, especially from countries that could exert pressure on Russia to return our children.

Baroness Blackstone: Can I press you on one thing? You did not say anything specifically about what the UK is currently doing and what more you would like it to do. In what sphere do you think the UK's influence would be most helpful?

Mariana Betsa: Absolutely. First, the UK is a partner in the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children. We definitely want to recharge that international coalition to facilitate access by international organisations to the children in the occupied territories and in Russia. Secondly, the UK is a partner who could help us keep this issue on the global agenda diplomatically. The issue of children should be central in the UN, OSCE and different bilateral talks. It should be a central point of any international efforts.

Thirdly, the UK is a member of the UN Security Council and we are very grateful for your contribution in the United Nations on the issue of the return of Ukrainian children—in particular, the very important resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, adopted on 24 February this year in New York, with the great help of the UK and many European allies. It was dedicated to the third anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion. A separate paragraph was dedicated to the return of Ukrainian children. In diplomatic efforts, it is extremely important that this issue is on the agenda.

Fourthly, there is the issue of return, rehabilitation and reintegration of Ukrainian children, where we definitely count on UK support. It may be technical, financial or other support. It is needed because the process of their return and reintegration is very complex, especially for the children who were very severely brainwashed by Russian officials in Russia. This support is definitely needed for us, definitely needed for Bring Kids Back UA organisation, and we very much count on your support.

Daria Zarivna: May I jump in here? I am chief operating officer of the Bring Kids Back UA initiative, which was launched by President Zelensky in May 2023. I want to add to and complement what Mariana said.

First, we have a task force, a joint group of the most prominent British and worldwide international legal experts, co-chaired by Baroness Helena Kennedy, who is with us today, and by the Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, Andriy Yermak. This task force has already produced important, expert white papers on reintegration and the tactics Russia uses for the deportation of Ukrainian children. It is a very important part of what I guess we can call the support of Great Britain. Also, there is its partnership in the fund for a resilient Ukraine, which supports Bring Kids Back UA through different activities. We are very thankful for this support and it should be prolonged.

Q3 **Lord Bruce of Bennachie:** I would like to ask a quick supplementary. USAID had a programme assisting in locating these children. That has closed. Would there be a benefit in the UK and/or other organisations taking up that programme, if it were possible? Would it be more beneficial to work with, for example, Save Ukraine or others on the ground, but, more to the point, to do the actual detailed technical work? You made absolutely clear the importance of the big political, diplomatic role for the UK, which we understand and appreciate. Would there be value in the UK being involved in the detail or is that better covered by other people?

Mykola Kuleba: You can play your unique role, as you did in World War II saving the lives of Jewish Polish kids. From the 15,000 Jewish kids you saved, eight are Nobel laureates. It is the same with Ukrainian children who could be located, identified and returned. You have the technical tools and the opportunity to help us locate, identify and return them, and build a database of these children. We know how many years we need before we are able to return these kids to their relatives and their homeland. That is why we need three main things for returning children: to rescue them, and provide rehabilitation and reintegration.

For example, we have a unique deprogramming programme because many of them have been brainwashed. They believe that they are fighting against the West. If you are able to ask young adults who were Ukrainian schoolchildren about this war, they will clearly answer, "We are fighting against the West. We learned this in our new schools". One orphan girl who had been stolen, when we rescued and returned her, told us how, before the occupation of territories in the Kherson region, a Russian soldier told her, "It is not Ukrainian soldiers coming. It is British soldiers together with American soldiers and they will rape all girls". She ran away with Russian soldiers. We saved her from captivity in a Russian orphanage where, after several months, she understood that it had been a lie. We returned her to her mother.

We are losing thousands of children every day through Russian propaganda and brainwashing. It takes a monumental effort to reach every child and tell them the truth. We have some successful efforts and

technologies but they are a little drop in the ocean. We need to scale this programme to help more children know the truth and return them from Russian captivity.

Q4 **Baroness Morris of Bolton:** Thank you very much for joining us and sharing with us the appalling treatment of Ukraine's children. What happens will be deeply traumatic to the children and their families. You already touched on the main challenges in reintegrating the children and mentioned some of the things you are doing. What are the main challenges? What help will you need?

Mykola Kuleba: We asked questions of more than 600 kids who have been stolen and rescued, together with our partners and the Bring Kids Back initiative. I will give you some numbers: 40% of all boys rescued over the past year received a draft notice for the Russian army or had friends who did; 25% of all rescued children or their classmates were forced to march, handle weapons and shoot. Every fifth rescued child had a gun pointed at them at home during searches by the Russian army and 70% of children were forcibly made to listen to Russian military personnel or security service officers at school, urging students to sign contracts with the Ministry of Defence.

I can send you all this information—we have a lot of it—so that you better understand the trauma of these children. We can help them overcome that trauma. It depends on the age of the child and the circumstances, but the biggest issue is the generational trauma. We had this after the Second World War and will have it again now if we are not able to rescue these children and help them.

Q5 **Baroness Coussins:** You mentioned earlier that this topic has been raised in the context of negotiations, and President Zelensky has raised it a number of times. We do not often see references to the issue in the media coverage generally. What discussions, if any, are currently going on and between whom to make the issue a higher priority in the context of the current immediate ceasefire negotiations? Is it possible to raise the profile of this issue?

Daria Zarivna: First, I have to softly disagree with you. If you look at the joint media statements of the Ukrainian and US delegations from the first meeting in Jeddah in Saudi Arabia two weeks ago and from the recent one that finished yesterday, both have a part about illegally deported Ukrainian children and, in a general, broader context, about the whole humanitarian dimension of the partial or full-scale ceasefire. You will find there mention prisoners of war, civil detainees and Ukrainian illegally deported children. The Ukrainian delegation strongly stated that this is a principal question for us and the question of illegally deported children should not be politicised. It should be a part of the negotiations, but these questions should not turn into bargaining chips. Children should be released unconditionally, without any additional conditions. Even in the case of prisoners of war, we talk about the exchange all-to-all. When it comes to children, there are no conditions. We stated that clearly and brought it directly to the US delegation. They agreed with that. This is

what we included in both joint media statements of the Ukrainian and American delegations.

Mariana Betsa: I absolutely echo what Daria said. This is a central issue for any talks between Ukraine and our US colleagues. It is also central in talks with all our European allies. One goal while we are here is to raise awareness and put this aspect of the war very high on the agenda. That is why we are meeting here with you. We are also meeting with the media and different stakeholders. We need a more focused approach to the return of Ukrainian children. They should be released unconditionally. This is a weapon. Russia takes these children as weapons and weaponises the issue. It instrumentalises the issue in its very aggressive policy towards Ukraine. Our position is clear: any negotiations should be, first, nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine; secondly, nothing about Europe without Europe; thirdly, no territorial compromises; fourthly, all children as well as prisoners of war and illegally detained persons, should be returned to Ukraine; and, fifthly, Russia should bear responsibility for its crimes.

The issue of responsibility is crucial. As we can see, it takes time to establish a special tribunal on, for example, the crime of aggression. It takes time to have legal proceedings at the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice, but it should be done. We cannot just turn our eyes away from the genocide Russia commits on an industrial scale. Therefore, we are making a number of diplomatic visits from Bring Kids Back UA, from government, plus representatives of the initiative of the President of Ukraine, travelling to different countries to advocate for this issue and raise awareness among ordinary people. The issue of children is the issue of humanity. Every child should be reunited with their parents.

Daria Zarivna: Also important is that during the negotiations in Saudi Arabia we suggested looking at this question from a broader angle. Normally in media or in public communications, the number of 20,000 illegally deported children is used and discussed. In general, we should speak about the 1.6 million Ukrainian children staying in the temporarily occupied territories, being militarised and suffering indoctrination. That is what we should talk about—not only the illegally deported children but the whole number of children.

Q6 **Lord Alderdice:** Picking up on your last comment on the whole question of children, how have Ukrainian children more broadly been affected by the war so far, not just illegally deported or stolen children? What are the main challenges that Ukraine faces in trying to protect your children from harm and provide them with aid, particularly near the front line but not only there?

Mykola Kuleba: If I understand you right, let me draw you a picture of the situation with the child population in Ukraine. In 11 years, we have lost 50% of the child population. I told you there are about 20% in occupied territories and in Russia, and there are about 30% all over the

globe. For now, we have a death and birth rate of 3:1, where three die to every one born.

It is Putin's strategy to totally erase Ukrainian identity. I grew up in the Soviet Union. I know what it means when every day you listen to propaganda about how you should grow up and fight against the West. Ukrainian children have the same experience in Russia and the occupied territories; every child must go to a new school in the occupied territories and Russia, and listen to Russian propaganda. It is about children's development—about their brains. It is very hard for a child. Many of them were hugely brainwashed. Many of them believed that Russia had a powerful and great empire, that Russia is a victim and that the West is the aggressor. They learn that in their schools. In that way, Putin is growing these children as soldiers for future war. You may have heard that, 10 days ago, Macron stated that soon, in five years, Putin will have 3 million active soldiers. That is because every school has special military movements for children. They march and they handle weapons, everything—

Lord Alderdice: To interrupt you for a second, I understand what you are saying, but that is about the children who have been taken and who are outside. I am asking about the care for the children who are still within. I understand about those who have come to this country and so on. I am asking about the children who are still in your own territory and at your own schools with all the difficulties they have. We had experience of that here in the Second World War—what you did for children, what worked and so on. It is care of the children who are still within your bailiwick and how you are managing with that.

Mariana Betsa: Yes, it is a very valid question. Thank you so much. Indeed, the mental trauma on each child is enormous. Imagine it. Every day Ukrainian children spend hours in bomb shelters at schools, in the kindergartens and anywhere else. It is terrible. Every day, Russia attacks our peaceful civilians. Every day, Russia kills children. Just recently, on Saturday night, a child was killed in her bed. It was a child who ran from the war from the Zaporizhzhia region and tried to find refuge in Kyiv and was killed along with her father in her bed.

The issue of children within Ukraine is crucial for our Government. First, we have lots of children who are IDPs. They moved from eastern regions and from southern regions to other regions, so one category is their reintegration in other regions and their rehabilitation in other regions. For every child living in war conditions for three years—or, in fact, for 11 years—the first issue is mental and psychological support. We are trying to provide it, but it is never enough because every day everyone is affected. Even we diplomats are not immune. Hearing air sirens and bomb attacks daily has an effect on everyone.

Secondly, the issue of education is crucial. We have so many children internally displaced. We also have many children who are temporarily displaced outside Ukraine. Before the war, there were 7 million Ukrainian children in Ukraine. A large number of Ukrainian children moved with

their parents abroad trying to seek refuge from the war. The issue of education for those who stay abroad and for those Ukrainian children who are inside is also critical. For two years, we had only online education. Now it is basically offline. We need to make sure that every school has a bomb shelter. It is now a prerogative of the Government that every school is protected and every child, even in the very harsh reality of war, gets proper-quality education.

The issue of their socialisation and full reintegration is important, because the war definitely affects our normal routine in life. There are a number of challenging issues. For IDPs, housing is also an issue, because their houses were bombed and destroyed and they moved to other countries. Employment is an issue. There are a number of issues that are interlinked and intertwined because they affect not only children but their parents. We are trying to take care of this, but, of course, any support from outside is hugely welcome. We encourage you to help us not only identify and return deported children but to do whatever is possible from the UK side to support our children inside in terms of psychological support. The issue of reintegration would be highly appreciated.

Daria Zarivna: I would like to add to and complement Mariana's speech. While we talk here in safety, another Russian missile could be targeting another child's bedroom. There is the very dramatic story of Mariyka Troyanivska, a girl who was 14 years old. Her family bought an apartment to give her an opportunity to have a separate bedroom, which she had been dreaming about. Then she died. She was just sitting near the window and the Shahed drone was the last thing she saw.

In general, 599 children have been killed since the start of the full-scale invasion, and 1,772 children have been injured as a result of missile attacks. All in all, every week, at least 60 Ukrainian children are killed or injured by missile attacks.

I can give you my personal example. My child is 14 years old. Every night when Shahed drones start to attack the city, she needs to go to the toilet, the bathroom, or, if there are missiles, we go to the parking lot. Every night, you need to spend the whole night either in the bathroom or the parking lot. In the morning, you need to go to school, and you have to accomplish tests and all that stuff. The mothers need to go to work. This continues every day and every night. There is a lot to be done. It is something that continues and does not stop.

Q7 **Lord Grocott:** Thanks very much for the information you have given us. I would be interested to hear a little bit more about children who have been abducted, a very small proportion of whom, as I understand it, have since been reunited with their families. Can you tell us a little more about that, and in particular what processes there are for replicating that? How did that occur? What contacts are there with those who know the whereabouts of the children who remain abducted? What do we know about the conditions that they are in? You described very graphically how some of the boys have ended up fighting against Ukraine, having been indoctrinated by Russia. What can we learn from the small proportion of

abducted children who are now back in Ukraine with their parents?

Mykola Kuleba: They experience huge trauma being separated from their relatives. We have a special rehabilitation programme for up to six months in our hope and healing centres with trauma therapists and sometimes psychiatrists. The main issue is rebuilding their relationship with their relatives and their families.

Lord Grocott: I am sorry to interrupt, but I am particularly interested in the first instance, before they get to the stage of being back and being rehabilitated and reunited. What was the mechanism that rescued them from the abduction that had taken place?

Mykola Kuleba: We have special investigative teams working with our intelligence services and special services just to identify the kids, and then we communicate with them through social media or directly, but it is very hard because these kids are really afraid to communicate with anyone. That is why we try to find their friends and their relatives who can help us to build communication. These kids have been threatened in their schools or by Russian soldiers or the FSB that they could be arrested just for the intention to leave the territory. That is why the process of communication could last months or sometimes a year before the child will agree to leave the area.

I cannot tell you how we extract children or take children from the territory because it is confidential. We can privately talk about this and I can tell you about it. The main problem is that they have no trust in anyone; they do not trust adults because they are really afraid that they could be arrested and tortured. We have a lot of stories of even children being tortured with electricity or something else. All kids in occupied territories know that if they try to do something they could be stopped on the street by Russian soldiers, who might find something on their phone; they have to show everything on their phone. If they are not dressed properly, or even if they have yellow colour on their T-shirt, they could be arrested. The children experience all this under occupation. It is about those kids who have been rescued. We have that evidence. We document everything, together with law enforcement.

Lord Grocott: What is it that distinguishes those children who you are able to identify and those who presumably you have not? I am just trying to learn what we can deduce from the successes, if that is the right word, of getting some children back and reintegrating them with their motherland. Why are you able to help some but not the vast majority? Is there a distinguishing factor? Is it where they have been sent?

Mariana Betsa: If I may, sir, yes, it is an important question. The issue of extraction of the children from Russia is confidential, but we are working closely with government officers and competent law enforcement authorities as well as the NGO sector, because it is an important stakeholder in this process.

Why is it difficult to bring children back to Ukraine in general? First and foremost, it is because of unverified official statements that are circulating in public. It is very difficult to verify the data because we do not have access to the occupied territories. We do not have access to the deported children in Russia, so it is very difficult to verify information. The lack of data access is crucial, because that is an impediment to the return of our children. If we verify the information and we take necessary steps, we are able to extract them. If we do not have direct access and direct data, it is much more difficult. Russia uses false Russian documentation. Russia changes their names and their data, and it is very difficult to find them. Many programmes make children transit via Russia, and then they may even turn up in the EU. We do not have exact information about whether they are still in Russia or whether they have already crossed the border with the European Union.

There are different challenges that Ukraine faces in getting information. The critical issue is to get verified information regarding the deported children from Russia. We do not have any access to them at government level. No international organisation has access to the children in the occupied territories. No international organisation has access in Russia. Basically, this is a very complicated and complex operation. Each child is truly a unique operation in terms of their rescue. The UK contribution could be important in terms of investigating, in terms of exerting pressure on Russia to allow international monitoring and international access to these children, and in terms of verifying information. Any contribution that could lead us to the children would be extremely crucial for their return.

Daria Zarivna: It is important to underline that one additional tool we have, apart from the rescue missions, is mediation. Currently, we have a few countries that are engaged as mediators in the process of returning illegally deported children—Qatar and the Vatican. During the ministerial conference in Montreal on the humanitarian dimension of the war, we also started to work with South Africa as a mediator, but the process does not move as fast as we would like it to. Where Great Britain could step in and help would be to engage with the existing mediators or with EU mediators, because that too is a way to bring children back.

The Chair: Thank you very much indeed. That brings the public section of our discussion to an end. We would very much like to keep you, if we may, for 10 minutes just to have a private discussion. Thank you for the work that you are doing for your country and for your children. We are supremely aware that you are on the front line. Thank you very much.