

Yevhen Mezhevyi

Yevhen Mezhevyi is a single Ukrainian father originally from Mariupol, Ukraine, and a former soldier in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. In April 2022, during Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Mezhevyi was captured and held as a prisoner of war for 45 days in a Russian penal colony in the Donetsk region. During the same period, his three children — Matvii, Svyatoslava, and Oleksandra — were separated from him and forcibly deported to Russia.

After his unexplained release in mid-June 2022, Mezhevyi learned that his children had been transported to the Polyany children's sanatorium near Moscow, where they were at risk of being adopted in Russia. With the help of volunteers, Mezhevyi raised funds for a trip to Moscow and, after negotiations with authorities from Donetsk and Russia, including a written appeal addressed to President Vladimir Putin, he was able to reunite with his children on June 21, 2022.

Currently, Mezhevyi lives with his family in Riga, Latvia, trying to rebuild their lives after the traumas of war. The experiences they endured have left deep scars, especially on his daughter Svyatoslava, who is showing symptoms of post-traumatic stress.