



Organization: Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada
Item: Item 2, Interactive Dialogue on the High Commissioner's Annual Report
Date: 14 June 2022
Speaker: Brian Samuels

Oral Statement to the 50th Session of the UN Human Rights Council from Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC), International Service for Human Rights, the International Bar Association Human Rights Institute, NGOs in special consultative status. OVD-Info, NGO without consultative status, also shares the views expressed in this statement.

Unlawful suppression of dissent in Russia is a root cause of aggression and atrocity crimes in Ukraine

Mr. President,

This is a joint statement. The Russian Federation's systematic suppression of truthful information within Russia is an attempt to facilitate and conceal its suspected atrocities in Ukraine.¹

Russian authorities have closed down sources of accurate information by shuttering Russian human rights organizations and independent media and through judicial harassment, arbitrary detention, and ill-treatment of peaceful protestors, independent journalists, and human rights defenders. Russia also denies those charged with offences their right to independent courts and effective legal representation. Atrocity crimes in Ukraine are shielded by impunity for these rights violations.²

Prevention of continued Russian atrocities in Ukraine requires that people within Russia are assured their right to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.³ The UN Framework for prevention of atrocities also requires an independent judiciary⁴ and a legal profession free to advocate clients' rights without hindrance.⁵

We urge the Council to curb impunity for current and future violations by immediately creating a Special Rapporteur to document and address the human rights situation in Russia. We also ask that the Council urge Russia to unconditionally release and withdraw charges against all those detained or charged with offences regarding anti-war opinion, expression, or peaceful assembly and to ensure access to lawyers and fair trials for all those charged with offences.

Thank you, Mr. President.

¹ Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, International Bar Association, International Service for Human Rights, and endorsed by OVD-info, "Russia: Suppression of dissent facilitates aggression and atrocity crimes in Ukraine," Joint written statement, A/HRC/50/NGO/40, June 2022, available at <http://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?Open&DS=A/HRC/50/NGO/40&Lang=E> or <https://wp.me/p7Dx25-5nN>.

² United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, *Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes: A tool for prevention*, UN, 2014, available at: https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/about-us/Doc.3_Framework%20of%20Analysis%20for%20Atrocity%20Crimes_EN.pdf.

³ Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 22 June 2020, Prevention of genocide, A/HRC/43/29., available at: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/43/29>.

⁴ Supra note 2, page 12.

⁵ United Nations, Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, 7 September 1990, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/roleoflawyers.aspx>.