



Human Rights
Institute

Organization: Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada
Item: Item 10: General Debate
Date: 6 October 2022
Speaker: Brian Samuels

Oral Statement to the 51st Session of the UN Human Rights Council from Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC) and the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, NGOs in special consultative status

Ukraine: Russia must halt attacks on lawyers and defenders in Russian-held areas of Ukraine

Mr. President,

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada and the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, remain alarmed about the situation in Ukraine.

During Russia's unlawful invasion of Ukraine, lawyers and human rights defenders in Russian-held areas of Ukraine have been subjected to threats, attacks, judicial harassment, arbitrary detention, and enforced disappearance.¹ In Crimea, vague, ill-defined legislation has been misused to criminalize lawyers and others perceived as critical of Russia or its armed forces.²

We call on Russia to respect international human rights and humanitarian law, and to unconditionally release and withdraw charges against those detained for performing their professional duties as lawyers or exercising their rights, including peaceful assembly and freedom of expression.

We condemn Russia's forcible military mobilization of persons in Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine, and within Russia, including peaceful anti-war protestors.

We urge all States to cooperate with the Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, including its work with the OHCHR and the Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU), and including its investigation of root causes in Russia of aggression and atrocity crimes against persons in or from Ukraine.

We urge all Members of this Council to support the Resolution to establish a Special Rapporteur to monitor, report, and make recommendations on human rights in Russia.

Thank you.

¹ “Human Rights Council Holds Interactive Dialogue with the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances ...” 20 September 2022 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/09/human-rights-council-holds-interactive-dialogue-working-group-enforced-or>; Front Line Defenders (Ukraine), accessed September 2022, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/location/ukraine>; OHCHR, press briefing, 9 September 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2022/09/press-briefing-situation-ukraine-matilda-bogner>. In Crimea, vague, ill-defined legislation has been misused to criminalize lawyers and others perceived as critical of Russia or its armed forces.

² OHCHR, press briefing, 9 September 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2022/09/press-briefing-situation-ukraine-matilda-bogner>