



Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada
Item 5: General Debate
24 September 2026
Speaker: Catherine Morris

Joint Oral Statement to the 63rd Session of the UN Human Rights Council from Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC), the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, NGOs in special consultative status, with endorsement by Judges for Judges, NGO without consultative status.

Protection of human rights as a foundational pillar of the United Nations

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, and the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, with endorsement by Judges for Judges, stress the urgent need to protect human rights as one of the UN's three core pillars, recognized by the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* as the "foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world" to be "protected by the rule of law."

Yet, the UN human rights bodies set up to protect rights and the rule of law are being systemically obstructed by powerful States.

China misuses membership in the Human Rights Council and other UN bodies to undermine the universality of human rights while systematically persecuting dissenters and minorities, and arbitrarily detaining and torturing lawyers and human rights defenders.

Russia systematically violates the UN Charter and international human rights law, attacking dissenters, lawyers, and defenders, and unlawfully criminalizing International Criminal Court judges.

The United States has violated the UN Charter, withdrawn funding and cooperation from UN bodies including the Council, and has unlawfully sanctioned ICC officials and judges and those cooperating with the Court. Sanctions against a Special Rapporteur violate the *Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations*.

We urge all Council members and observer States to take the urgent steps needed to ensure funding and protection of UN human rights bodies, the International Criminal Court, and the jurists, defenders, and victims who cooperate with them.

Thank you.