

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 55th SESSION

Interactive dialogue on the High Commissioner's oral report on Ukraine

02 April 2024

Mr. Volker Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, reported data and figures concerning the violations in *occupied Crimea and occupied Ukrainian territory* by the Russian Federation. Since February 2022, Russian armed forces have committed widespread violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including unlawful killings, torture, enforced disappearances, and arbitrary detention. They have targeted people perceived as posing a security threat to the occupation, a scope which has widened over time to include anyone perceived as “pro-Ukrainian.” The Russian Federation has shut down Ukrainian internet, mobile networks, TV, and radio, with traffic rerouted through Russian networks enabling restriction of information flow and censorship of pro-Ukrainian voices. Russian occupying authorities have quashed peaceful protests, restricted free expression, imposed strict controls over residents’ movements, and pillaged homes and businesses.

He stressed that these violations have taken place in the context of generalized impunity. The cumulative effect of these actions has been to create a pervasive climate of fear, which has allowed the Russian Federation to solidify its control.

Following its illegal annexation of areas of *Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia regions* in September 2022, the Russian Federation imposed its systems of law, governance, and administration, in breach of international humanitarian law governing situations of occupation. This has profoundly impacted people’s everyday lives, covering everything from criminal justice to business and property, to taxes and social services. People living under occupation have been forced to undertake compulsory work for the Russian occupying authorities or to serve in the occupying army. People in occupied territory have also been pressured to vote in Russian elections. Many policies particularly impact, or target, children and their education.

He reported the brutal treatment of prisoners of war, including harsh prison conditions, without enough food and warmth, which in some cases might amount to torture and ill-treatment. He called on the Russian Federation to cease its armed attacks and the occupation, as well as violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

Russian Federation did not take the floor.

Ukraine (Country concerned) affirmed that blatant crimes against the residents of Crimea, including Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars confirm Russia's disregard for the UN Charter, international human rights, and humanitarian law as well as orders of the International Court of Justice and numerous UN General Assembly resolutions. It reported that Russian occupying authorities on the peninsula have consistently suppressed freedom of expression, including for members of minority cultures and identities, and severely curtailed the freedom of religion for minority groups. By torturing, arbitrarily detaining civilians, by abducting and indoctrinating Ukrainian children, Russia openly and shamefully commits war crimes and crimes against humanity. Russia continues its nuclear terror and ecocide, depriving the people of Ukraine of their right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment and exposing the entire world to a nuclear threat. Finally, it called on the UN Member States to decisively condemn Russian terrorist attacks and to join international efforts in implementing the principles of the Ukrainian Peace Formula.

Interactive dialogue

36 country delegations took the floor during the interactive dialogue. **The majority of the countries** condemned Russia's temporary occupation of Crimea and parts of Donetsk, Luhansk, and the regions as well as the lawful position of Russian citizenship, legal and administrative systems, and the holding of so-called elections. **Among others, the EU, Liechtenstein, Malta, North Macedonia, Argentina, and Poland** condemned systematic violations of international law perpetrated by the Russian Federations, including summary executions of civilians, widespread and systematic torture, and various types of detention, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and arbitrary detention of civilians.

Venezuela, DPRK, Syrian Arab Republic stressed that the politicization and double standards do not contribute in any way to the protection of human rights around the world and they do not offer any advantage for vulnerable groups or persons. The Council should uphold the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity, and non-selectivity and play a positive role in promoting constructive dialogue among the countries concerned, added **China**.

Nicaragua, Belarus, and the Russian Federation focused on Ukrainian crimes ignored by the Council. It mentioned the destruction by Ukraine, including repression or summary executions, forced disappearances, arbitrary detentions, torture, the cancellation of elections, and the usurpation of power.

The majority of NGOs reported the situation of human rights on the peninsula has drastically deteriorated, since Russia launched its full-scale war against Ukraine in February 2022. They also reported that the UN Monitoring Mission in Ukraine identifies the ways in which new restrictive legislation passed in Russia, is being used to target civil society in Crimea and in the newly occupied territories of Ukraine. Russia keeps Ukrainian prisoners of war and innocent civilians in inhumane conditions, added the **Human Rights Research League**, including torture and sexual violence. **ICJ** underlined the necessity and urgency of guaranteeing the independence of the judiciary and fair trial rights in respect of armed conflict-related crimes, regardless of the perpetrators' nationality, in accordance with international law.

UNICEF, CAP, and Human Rights Without Frontiers raised concern over the situation of children.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (36 country delegations):

Lithuania (on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries), Netherlands (on behalf of Benelux Countries), EU, Georgia, Liechtenstein, Albania, Argentina, Austria, Belarus, Croatia, Czechia, France, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Nicaragua, North Macedonia, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Sovereign Order of Malta, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Poland, Germany, United States of America, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Syrian Arab Republic, China, Bulgaria, Republic of Moldova, Eritrea.

NHRIs and NGOs that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (10):

Conscience and Peace Tax International (CPTI), Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience, Human Rights House Foundation, Human Rights Research League, Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety, International Commission of Jurists, Public Organization "Public Advocacy", The Next Century Foundation, Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, VšĮ "Žmogaus teisių apsauga", World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations.

International Organization: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

To watch the full meeting refer to [UN Web TV](#).