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ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE

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Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Russian Federation

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PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT

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The SR introduces her latest [report](#) on the human rights situation in the Russian Federation. Over the past year, the SR has observed an [alarming trajectory](#) of widening discrimination, the consolidation of authoritarian rule, and intensifying repression, with prosecutions under the rubric of ‘national security’ legislation, a central instrument of coercive rule in Russia. The authorities are deliberately using the law, the judiciary and law enforcement institutions as a [political weapon](#) to suppress civil and political rights and freedoms. This strategy is implemented, pursued and sustained by coercion, detention, and torture, and it is carried out on a scale that is both widespread and systematic.

The report looks at the [core instruments](#) used to restrict fundamental rights - freedom of expression, freedom of association, the right to peaceful assembly, and to participate in public affairs. In practice, these tools are used to crush civic space, silence the media, dismantle the



legal profession, eliminate political opposition, suppress culture, erase historical memory, distort historical truth, and stifle the diversity of voices and identities across Russian society. Such targeting is not incidental. It is coordinated and central to **State policy** and used to manufacture what are referred to as internal and external ‘enemies of the motherland’, against whom they justify repression at home and aggression abroad. This strategy deepens discrimination, normalizes violence, and emboldens impunity.

During the year 2025, Russian authorities have sharpened the laws on so-called ‘**foreign agents**’ and ‘undesirable organizations’. targeting human rights defenders, civil society, and independent media. These laws are not just restrictive regulations. They are systematic tools of political repression, unique in the ways they combine heavy administrative burdens, criminal penalties, social stigma, financial strangulation, and isolation.

Today, **1,040 individuals and organizations** are labelled as ‘foreign agents’. Once so designated, organizations and individuals are banned from providing education, stripped of income, blocked from media, fined heavily, and even held liable for activities abroad. Non-compliance leads to liquidation or prison, for example, the systematic dismantling of the Nobel Peace Prize-affiliated Memorial network. In 2025, Memorial’s website was blocked through Russia’s central censorship body, *Roskomnadzor*, while one of its leading defenders, Sergey Davidis, was charged *in absentia* with ‘justifying terrorism’.

In 2025, Russia uses this framework against groups engaging with the United Nations, exploiting the ‘**foreign agents**’ label as grounds to prevent or cancel their ECOSOC accreditation, effectively excluding independent Russian voices from United Nations deliberations. By mid-2025, 46 new organizations had been designated and banned as ‘undesirable’, bringing the total to 245, including human rights groups, educational initiatives, independent reporters - all silenced, including the Indigenous Fund Batani, targeted in reprisal for engaging with UN mechanisms. Association with these groups is itself criminalized. Grigory Melkonyants, Co-Chair of the election monitor Golos, received five years in prison. At least 12 others remain imprisoned on the same charges.

The Russian Federation is now the third-largest jailer of journalists in the world, with **50 media professionals currently behind bars**, including 29 Ukrainians. In the past year alone, 89 criminal cases have been opened, some resulting in heavy sentences of up to 12 years, including *in absentia* trials against journalists and media workers in exile. Yet it is essential to recognize that human rights defenders, civil society, and independent media refuse to be silenced. Inside Russia, they continue to function under constant threat, closely cooperating with colleagues in exile. But sustaining this work is harder than ever. Survival and sustained resistance to repression now depend on comprehensive and committed support from member states, including funding and flexible assistance to exiled organizations and their family members, while also ensuring **protection from refoulement**, with torture and arbitrary detention awaiting those sent back.

Laws targeting the so-called ‘fake news’ and ‘discrediting the army’, charges adopted hastily in March 2022, became and remain primary tools to crush **anti-war dissent**. By 2025, while prosecutions slowed, it is not a sign of easing, but of fear and self-censorship taking deeper and deeper root, along with an equal and steady increase in laws that weaponize and strive to



legitimize charges of counter-terrorism and extremism. The most common charges include ‘calling for terrorist activity’ or ‘justifying terrorism’. These prosecutions rarely assess any real public danger. Instead, courts focus on the political message ascribed to the accused. In April 2025, former deputy Alexei Gorinov’s additional three-year sentence for so-called ‘justifying terrorism’ was upheld on appeal - coming into force on top of the seven years he was already serving for ‘fake news’ about the army, simply for condemning the killing of Ukrainian children.

The crackdown has also suffocated **culture and literature**. In July 2025, well-known and respected novelist Boris Akunin was sentenced in absentia to 14 years in prison on charges of ‘justifying terrorism’, ‘facilitating terrorist activity’, and violating ‘foreign agent’ laws. His real crime was dissenting against the war and supporting Ukraine. The books of the only living Nobel Prize laureate for literature, who writes in Russian, Svetlana Alexievich, are banned from Russian school curricula and she is branded as ‘enemy’ of Russia, Russian culture and a ‘Russophobe’.

Extremism-related charges are being systematically applied against the late **Alexei Navalny**’s organizations. Supporters are even accused of using ‘extremist symbols’ associated with Mr. Navalny’s name and photos. At least 13 individuals remain imprisoned, including journalist Olga Komleva, who was sentenced in 2025 to 12 years’ imprisonment for alleged involvement with Navalny’s campaign offices and for ‘fake news’ about the Russian army. The crackdown has even reached lawyers themselves. Three of Navalny’s legal defenders were sentenced in January. In Kaliningrad, lawyer Maria Bontsler was detained on spurious charges, denied counsel of her choice, and forced into a sham process for defending clients accused on politically-motivated grounds.

Additionally, the abuse of extremism laws now targets **minorities**, with a rise in the number of prosecutions against LGBT individuals and those running LGBT-friendly spaces. In 2025, coordinated raids hit publishing houses accused of distributing LGBT literature, with staff prosecuted for ‘extremist activities’. This expansion of repression extends online. New laws mandate restrictions on access to ‘extremist materials’ listed in the Ministry of Justice’s Federal List of Extremist Materials by monitoring and prosecuting simple online searches and criminalizing the use of VPNs to circumvent blocks.

Torture remains systematic and widespread, with 258 cases documented alone in 2024-2025, including the use of punitive psychiatry as a political tool. Journalist Maria Ponomarenko was sentenced to one additional year and ten months in prison and ordered to undergo compulsory psychiatric treatment upon release, to punish her for maintaining an anti-war stance even in prison. Particularly shocking is the role of **doctors and medical personnel** in the heinous and gruesome torture of Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilian detainees which the SR has personally documented first-hand from a number of victims and witnesses.

Ukrainian victims’ testimonies expose not only extreme overcrowding and starvation, but use of electric shocks, rape and sexualized violence, and killings in detention. By May 2025, at least 206 **Ukrainian prisoners of war** had died in Russian captivity, their bodies showing signs of torture, as the body of 27-year-old Ukrainian investigative journalist and human rights defender, Victoria Roschnyna, who was killed in Russian detention. In public testimony before the military court in Rostov-on-Don, civilian detainee, Natalia Vlasova, described being subjected to electric shocks



and gang-raped repeatedly by 15 armed men, followed by the use of a metal file to file her teeth down. The court failed to investigate the torture and sentenced her to 18 years and two months' imprisonment under Russian 'terrorism'-related charges.

Justice and accountability inside Russia are virtually unattainable. Since the SR's last report, the authorities have taken steps to withdraw from the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture, shielding perpetrators of such heinous crimes. Efforts directed at accountability must therefore mobilize international frameworks, including the exercise of universal jurisdiction to prosecute perpetrators of torture and other crimes.

The SR deeply regrets the Russian Federation's continued non-recognition of her mandate and urges immediate steps to rescind repressive laws, end politically-motivated prosecutions, release all those arbitrarily detained, and ensure accountability for torture and other human rights violations. Because the victims of such brutalities deserve nothing less. The SR remains confident that we can all help to see justice being done.

REPLIES AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

Referring to **Zimbabwe's** statement, the SR agrees that the respect and the protection of human rights are an important responsibility of each country and each government. This is exactly what she hopes to see in Russia, that the Russian government respects and protects the rights of own people and its own civil society that is now under such a tremendous attack and assault, on the path to be dismantled and destroyed. On **Venezuela's** comment that the SR's mandate is doomed to fail, the SR wish there was no need to have a mandate on the Russian Federation. That is actually the dream of the SR, to become jobless. On that day, she will be happy to see all the political prisoners released from Russia and nobody anymore would have been sentenced on fabricated charges, tortured and ill-treated for their anti-war stance or for freedom of expression.

On how to help the **Russian civil society**, the SR notes that they are attending this meeting in presence and states can seize this opportunity to ask them directly how to support. The ones inside the country are always working with the ones in exile. They are together. They are one civil society. The SR believes it is extremely important to help the **exiled activists** in all countries of the world to have calm and respectful conditions to do their human rights work without fear that they could be deported back to Russia, without fear that the principle of non-refoulement could be violated. States shall not apply blanket policies on visa regimes for or sanctions towards Russian citizens. It is equally important that the **human rights defenders** have access to visas, that they are able to come and speak. The SR is in favour of keeping open the channels of communication with the Russian society at all levels, the government and the authorities.

At the same time, the SR believes that torturers and those who master-minded killings and tortures of journalists and despicable brutalities against the Ukrainian detainees, civilian detainees and prisoners of war in Russia, need to be punished in a court of law. They need to face **accountability**. It is really difficult to see how the courts and the whole system in the Russian Federation which has been so politicized is able to deliver justice to the victims within Russia. Unfortunately, Russia is not a member any longer not only of the European Convention on Human Rights and intends to withdraw from the European Convention on the Prevention of Torture, but the prohibition of torture is absolute.



For the SR is paramount to keep **open the channels of dialogue** with the Russian civil society and the Russian people in all possible means because otherwise they will be left only with the propaganda of their government and in isolation. She encourages member states to ensure not only visas for the Russian human rights defenders, but also stipends allowing Russian students to continue to study in foreign universities. The SR further encourages states to use the avenues of universal jurisdiction and their own legal systems to come up with ways of holding to account torturers, war criminals, and masterminds of the repression against the Russian human rights movement. A strategy to achieve this could be conceived together.

VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AS CONCERNED COUNTRY

The delegation of the **Russian Federation** is not present.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

Regional and Cross-Regional Groups

The **European Union** voices concern over the findings that torture is used as a state-sanctioned tool for repression. The EU calls Russia to abolish its repressive legislation to ensure a safe and enabling online and offline environment and to comply with the human rights obligations. Russia must ensure safeguards against arbitrary detention and forced disappearance, torture and other ill treatment and sexual and gender-based violence. The EU reiterates its strong call for the immediate and unconditional release of all those arbitrarily detained including political prisoners, human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists. Further calling on Russia to end its political misuse of the judiciary and law enforcement, the EU expresses its deep concern about the closed civic space including the continuing systematic crackdown on civil society and citizens with dissenting voices in Russia. The Russian Federation must ensure accountability for all human rights violations and end discrimination on all grounds. Urging the authorities to cooperate fully with the UN, the EU calls on Russia to immediately stop its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and all violations of international humanitarian and human rights law on Ukrainian territory including the temporarily occupied regions of Ukraine.

Iceland on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries strongly supports the continuation of the SR's mandate and expresses grave concern over the worsening human rights situation in the Russian Federation and the further expansive use of repressive tools. Fundamental freedoms are being dismantled with human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists and others facing intimidation, harassment and persecution. The growing repression of persons with violations due to the sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics is also very concerning. The Nordic-Baltic countries condemn in the strongest terms Russia's relentless attacks against Ukraine deliberately terrorizing the Ukrainian people. Massive air strikes and the targeting of civilian infrastructure including energy systems constitutes grave violations of international law. The Nordic-Baltic countries strongly condemn the forcible transfer of tens of thousands of Ukrainian children by Russia. They must be immediately returned. Reports of widespread executions, torture and ill-treatment of Ukrainian prisoners of war are disturbing. The Nordic-Baltic countries call on the Russian Federation to cease its war of aggression against Ukraine to end its repression and to uphold its international human rights obligations.



State Delegations

Albania is concerned by the documented case of torture, ill-treatment and detention of political prisoners. The lack of judicial independence and the criminalization of dissent undermine the rule of law and compromise the protection of human rights. Albania is deeply concerned by the misuse of the foreign agents and undesirable organization laws which aim to silence civil society journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders. The report documents serious human rights violations in the context of the war of aggression against Ukraine including cases of torture, enforcing disappearances and ill-treatment of Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilians. This abuses illustrate the link between internal repression and external aggression. Albania regrets the Russian Federation's lack of cooperation with international human rights protection mechanism. Finally, Albania supports the renewal of SR's mandate considering it's essential to ensure the victims are not silenced and that the international community remains informed about the reality of the human rights situation in Russia.

Australia qualifies as damning the findings in the SR's report and they show the extent of President Putin's continued contempt for human rights within the Russian Federation, including in the context of Russia's illegal and immoral war on Ukraine. Appalled by reports of continued widespread and systematic torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment by Russia against Ukrainian civilians and prisoners of war, Australia calls on Russia to comply with its obligations under international humanitarian law, including with respect to prisoners of war and forcibly transferred Ukrainian children and to immediately cease its aggression against Ukraine. Australia is deeply troubled by Russia's ongoing crackdown on civil society, human rights defenders, opposition voices and minority groups, including LGBTQIA+ people. It is further concerned by Russia's continued censorship and control of independent voices, including through ongoing intimidation and increasing restriction on Internet freedoms. Russia's application of extremism legislation and foreign agent and undesirable organization laws denies Russians their human rights, including rights to freedoms of expression and association.

Austria notes that, since the full scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, Russian authorities have intensified the use of criminal prosecution, long-term imprisonment, intimidation, torture and ill-treatment to silence opposition to the war against Ukraine and the further escalated repression within the Russian Federation itself. These measures have had a particularly severe impact on vulnerable groups especially women, LGBT persons, national and ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, religious groups and migrants. Austria is deeply concerned that the past year was marked by further consolidation and expansion of repressive tools, in particular the use of national security legislation to silence dissent and restrict civic space. Austria urges the Russian Federation to repeal restrictive legislation on foreign agents and undesirable organizations and to stop using the court system for political purposes to silence civil society and persecute persons expressing dissenting opinions. Austria reiterates its call on the Russian Federation to respect, protect and fulfill human rights in compliance with its obligations under international human rights law and to cooperate with Special Procedures and other international human rights mechanisms. In closing, Austria reaffirms its continued support for the SR and calls on all Council members to support the resolution extending her mandate.



Belarus states that the promotion by the SR and the countries supporting her of arguments aimed solely at discrediting the Russian authorities does not convey any constructive messages and forces Belarus to once again conclude that the mandate holder is biased and that this human rights mechanism as a whole is politically motivated. It seems that the SR, in line with the expectations of her sponsors, is exercising his authority over the Russian authorities according to the principle of ‘the worse, the better,’ deliberately and purposefully distorting the situation and ignoring the significant efforts made by the authorities in the field of social, economic, cultural and other rights. This is evidenced, for example, by the results of Russia’s recent successful presentation of reports to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). The examples of the SR’s work, as well as the majority of country mandates that do not enjoy the support of the countries concerned, once again force us to draw attention to the problems of rampant politicisation and selectivity, leading to the rapid degradation of the system of international cooperation in the field of human rights.

Belgium thanks the SR for her crucial report which again exposes the worsening human rights situation. Belgium remains concerned at the relentless crackdown on civil society human rights defenders, independent media and journalists. The systematic suppression of dissent through foreign agents legislation, the abuse of counter-terrorism and extremism laws and politicization of judiciary shows a state that fears its own citizens and governs through intimidation and terror. The report documents arbitrary detention, torture and coerced confessions and growing prosecution of lawyers defending political prisoners, minorities, women, human rights defenders and LGBTIQ+ persons. Independent visits to places of detention have ceased. The withdrawal from the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture would remove the last safeguard and signal the normalization of torture as state policy. Addressing Russia’s internal repression is not only a matter of human rights but also essential for regional and international stability. Belgium urges the Russian authorities to release all political prisoners, repeal repressive legislation and cooperate fully with independent monitoring mechanism, including the SR. Lastly, it asks what further stakes can be taken to protect the detainees and support human rights defenders in the face of this deliberate message of impunity.

Bulgaria welcomes the SR’s report reflecting the widespread and grave human rights violations and abuses committed by the Russian Federation. Thanking the SR for her in-depth research and dedicated work and strongly supporting the renewal of her mandate, Bulgaria is deeply concerned that Russia’s illegal, unjustified and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine entails escalating and systemic deterioration of the human rights situation in the country, especially for media workers, journalists, human rights defenders and persons in vulnerable situations related to their identity, in particular Ukrainian civilians. Bulgaria is deeply worried about the misuse of national security legislation to impose restrictions on and suppress the freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and association. Bulgaria adds its voice to those condemning the widespread use of criminal prosecution, arbitrary arrests, long-term detentions, torture and ill treatment in places of detention and all forms of inhuman or degrading treatment of political opponents and representatives of the civil society opposing the war. Calling on the Russian authorities to fully cooperate with UN human rights mechanisms, Bulgaria joins others in calling for the immediate and unconditional return of all Ukrainian civilians unlawfully held in detention in the Russian Federation, in particular illegally



deported and forcibly displaced Ukrainian children regardless of the status or outcome of any peace talks.

Canada is alarmed about the significant deterioration of the human rights situation in Russia over the past year. Russia continues to repress its population including by regularly adding new restrictions on freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and media freedom. Moreover, the Russian government has found new ways to instill fear through expansion of the foreign agent law which has become stricter resulting in increased intimidation and repression against critics of the Kremlin. As well, the prohibition of the so-called international LGBT movement has enabled the government to restrict public expression of LGBTQI+ identities. To further control opposing voices, Russia has carried out abhorrent acts of transnational repression. It has employed legal persecution and digital threats to silence these voices. This intimidation and violence must end. Russia's systematic violations of human rights also extend to the temporary occupied territories of Ukraine perpetrated against soldiers and civilians. Russia's unlawful deportation of thousands of Ukrainian children continues to be of deep concern. In closing, Canada asks the SR to recommend concrete mechanisms or strategies to support civil society, protect marginalized groups and hold Russian authorities accountable within the UN system and beyond.

Croatia thanks the SR for her comprehensive report which details the strategy of Russian authorities to wipe out any dissent through political targeting of journalists, human rights defenders, lawyers, opposition figures and anti-war activists. It is clear that the authorities have dismantled institutional independence bringing the judiciary, legislator and law enforcement under direct political control. Using the education system for ideological indoctrination of children and students with mandatory patriotic and pro-war content is truly concerning. Croatia is appalled by the reports of widespread torture and ill-treatment of Ukrainian prisoners of war who are exposed to starvation beatings, electrical shocks, forced nudity, sexual humanization and rape. Equally alarming are the findings of torture and ill treatment used to enforce discipline on Russian deserters refusing to participate in the war of aggression against Ukraine. Moreover, Croatia sincerely regrets the absence of domestic violence legislation which leaves women and girls without any legal protection with the number of reported incidents nearly doubled since the beginning of the war. To conclude, Croatia asks the SR to elaborate on her call for the creation of an international mechanism for the return of all reported Ukrainian civilians, including children.

Czechia strongly support the SR's work and the renewal of her mandate. Russia's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine continues to bring immense suffering and systematic violations of human rights. Czechia calls for the immediate release of all unlawfully detained Ukrainian civilians and safe return of Ukrainian children deported to Russia. At home, Russia has dismantled civil society organizations through labelling them as foreign agents, extremists or undesirable. NGOs are liquidated, media silenced, and human rights defenders prosecuted. Peaceful critics of the war face intimidation and prison sentences. Czechia remains alarmed by the severe prosecution of journalists. Twelve years prison sentence for Olga Komleva illustrates the high risk faced by those reporting the truth. Such practices violate principles of freedom of expression and freedom of the media. Meanwhile, minorities, especially LGBTQ+, persons face growing discrimination and hostility. Czechia calls on Russia to uphold its international obligations, release all unjustly imprisoned and respect the fundamental rights of every individual.



Eritrea reiterates its longstanding and principled position on country-specific mandates. In the specific case of the Russian Federation, this exercise characterizes the weaponization of human rights for geopolitical purposes. It is not a genuine concern for human dignity that animates this mandate, but rather the pursuit of narrow political agendas aimed at undermining a sovereign state and constraining its independent policy choices. Eritrea reaffirms its solidarity with the Russian Federation and rejects this unwarranted and politicized scrutiny. Russia as a sovereign nation with legitimate security concerns and a founding member of the United Nations merits respect and engagement, not stigmatization. The Council should never be transformed into a tribunal of power politics nor into a platform for selective condemnation of states that refuse to yield to external dictates. Eritrea reiterates its call for the discontinuation of this mandate and urges the Council to redirect its resources toward addressing this matter in a balanced, constructive and depoliticized manner.

Georgia thanks the SR for the report which once again sheds light on the human rights situation in the Russian Federation. Once more, Georgia stresses that the same pattern of Russia's legal actions are applied in the occupied regions of Georgia, which is attested by the decisions of the ECtHR and ICC that they are occupied by and are under the effective control of the Russian Federation. The list of violations in both regions remains long and alarming. The population is subjected to discrimination and gross human rights abuses including violations of the right to live, the health and property, torture and ill-treatment, arbitrary detentions and kidnappings and severe restrictions of freedom of movement and the right to receive education in the native Georgian language. These grave violations are not isolated incidents but rather form part of Russia's deliberate strategy aimed at forcing Georgians out of the occupied regions. This amounts to a continued policy of ethnic cleansing. Full responsibility for all these violations rests with the Russian Federation, the power exercising effective control on the ground.

Germany expresses support for the mandate and the SR's personal work. Yet against the SR depicts gruelling details of a dire human rights situation that has only deteriorated since the SR's last update. The systematic crackdown on members of Russian civil society inside and outside of Russia continues unabated. The judicial system is being distorted and law enforcement is used to persecute so-called terrorists and terrorist organizations, a term arbitrarily used by the Russian government to denigrate independent media, national minorities, indigenous peoples and their organizations, cultural and religious figures, human rights defenders, Nobel Peace Prize winners and all the others who do not agree with government propaganda or who oppose its war of aggression against Ukraine. Germany is also deeply concerned about the threats lawyers face. They risk their lives for fully doing their job, namely defending those arbitrarily arrested and detained and fabricated accusations, be they Russians or Ukrainian prisoners of war or other foreigners. According to Germany, the SR has proven to be an important lifeline for Russian civil society.

Iran emphasizes the importance of respecting of the sovereignty, territory integrity and independence of all states including the Russian Federation. Iran believes that the promotion and protection of human rights should be carried out in a manner consistent with international law and that constructive dialogue and cooperation are essential in addressing human rights concerns. Iran reiterates its principled position that country specific mandates are counterproductive, selective and often driven by political consideration. Such mechanism not



only undermine the credibility of the UNHRC, but also fail to genuinely contribute to the promotion of human rights on the ground. In this regard, Iran asserts that the most effective way forward is through genuine dialogue, capacity building and cooperation based on mutual respects. Politization and interference must be avoided if we are to ensure that human rights are advanced in an objective, fair and sustainable manner.

Ireland notes that as Russia continues its illegal and unjustified full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the already grave human rights situation within the Russian Federation continues to deteriorate. Ireland shares the SR's concern regarding the widespread and systematic violations of human rights and oppressive restrictions on civil society. Ireland opposes the Russian government's restrictions on civil and political rights and its suppression of independent voices, including through the use of arbitrary detention. Further, Ireland is concerned that the Russian government's increasing control of Internet infrastructure and its application technologies as well as legislation intended to suppress dissenting views. Ireland condemns the widespread use of torture and forced disappearances and cruel, degrading treatment and punishment as tools for systematic oppression within the Russian Federation and territories of Ukraine temporarily occupied by Russia. Ireland rejects the Russian authority's designation of civil society organizations, journalists, LGBTQ+ persons and persons in vulnerable situations as extremist. These actions are intended to instil fear and tighten the government's control. Ireland further deplores the use of violence and threats against human rights defenders and anti-war advocates as a means to stifle criticism of the government and its policies. In closing, Ireland asks what could be done to support civil society in the Russian Federation.

Italy remains gravely concerned by the systematic dismantling of civic space in Russia and its negative trend. Dissent is being erased through censorship, politically motivated prosecution and the misuse of legislation about so-called foreign agent and undesirable. Public institutions have been turned into tools of repression and war. Italy strongly condemns the widespread use of torture and ill treatment including against Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilian detainees and is deeply troubled by reports of medical personnel participating in such practices. Also noting with alarm the targeting of vulnerable groups who face aggravated discrimination, Italy calls on Russia to end repression and release all those arbitrarily detained, repeal repressive legislation, ensure accountability for perpetrators of torture and grant independent monitor success to all place of detention. Italy retains its full support for the SR's mandate, accountability, justice and the unconditional release of Ukrainian civilian detainees, prisoners of war, deported children and Russian political prisoner must remain central to any peace effort. In light of the pervasive use of torture and repression, Italy asks the SR which avenues she considers as the most effective to strengthen accountability and support victims.

Japan appreciates the SR's presentation and remains concerned by the deteriorating human rights situation in the Russian Federation. Once again, Japan voices its concern over the fact that civic space continues to shrink in the country. Japan reiterates its previous call on the Russian authorities to comply with all of Russia's obligations under international human rights law, including the ICCPR and the UNCAT, and to respect fundamental rights such as the rights to freedom of expression and of peaceful assembly. Japan believes that universal values such as human rights, freedom, democracy and the rule of law should be respected in every country



regardless of culture, tradition or political or economic systems. The promotion and protection of human rights is a basic responsibility of all countries.

Kyrgyzstan deeply regrets the incident where the citizens of Kyrgyzstan were beaten and humiliated at the bathhouse during the mass raid as documented in the SR's report. The disproportionate use of force against Kyrgyz citizens is unacceptable. Kyrgyzstan has conveyed official communications to the Russian authorities and engaged in dialogue at various levels with respect to the matter under consideration. Kyrgyzstan remains committed to strengthening cooperation on the orderly regulation and legalization of migration processes in full accordance with the treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union. Kyrgyzstan's clear priority is to prevent the recurrence of such incidents; to ensure humane and lawful treatment of Kyrgyz workers; and to safeguard the dignity, rights and legitimate interests of Kyrgyz citizens in Russia.

Liechtenstein thanks the DR for her report on the human rights situation in the Russian Federation and supports the continuation of her valuable work. In Russia, dissent continues to be crushed with an iron fist. Its stranglehold on society has become even tighter as censorship and politically motivated prosecutions expand. Under the guise of national security, journalists and opposition figures are being imprisoned and framed as so-called foreign agents and undesirables. The asphyxiation at what remains of a free media landscape, even the use of VPNs has recently been made an aggravating circumstance in criminal proceedings. With that, utilizing one of the last remaining ways to access free information could lead to harsh prison sentences. Liechtenstein urges the Russian Federation to repeal all legislation that stifles freedom of expression and assembly and to restore digital freedoms and the right to privacy. It also renews its call to the authorities to cooperate with the SR and all relevant UN bodies to protect and strengthen the human rights situation in Russia. Finally, Liechtenstein condemns Russia's airspace violations against Estonia and Poland as clear breaches of sovereignty and international law, particularly the UN charter, threatening regional stability and security as well as the enjoyment of human rights.

Luxembourg notes that the SR's report illustrates a deterioration of the human rights situation in Russia and deplores the fact that the Russian authorities are pursuing a deliberate strategy of silencing all those who challenge the Russian government's policies. Lawyers, journalists and human rights defenders continue to be targeted and arbitrarily detained. Today, even selling a book has become a crime in Russia. Russian society lives under widespread censorship and there is no longer any recourse to an independent judiciary. The situation is even more critical for women, LGBTQ+ people, minorities, indigenous peoples, religious groups and migrants. While their voices are being silenced in Russia, it is the responsibility of the UNHRC to ensure that the Council continues to hear them. Thanking the SR for continuing to be the voice of victims of serious human rights violations in Russia, Luxembourg notes that the number and severity of violations continue to increase. Hence, the SR's mandate remains all the more relevant. In closing, Luxembourg asks how states could support the SR in fulfilling her mandate and documenting all serious human rights violations.

Mali commends the Russian Federation for its continued commitment to human rights and congratulates it on ratifying numerous international and regional conventions and adopting various national legal texts in this area. Mali appreciates the countless advances made by the



Government of the Russian Federation in promoting the protection of human rights, particularly the strengthening of Russian citizens' rights to freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of religious belief, freedom of artistic, literary, scientific and technical creation, and academic freedom. Mali welcomes the efforts made by the Russian Federation in the prevention and fight against terrorism and violent extremism, and the multifaceted support provided to various states to combat this scourge, which is and remains the main factor in human rights violations in many parts of the world, including the Sahel. In conclusion, Mali will continue to oppose the politicisation of human rights and the policy of double standards maintained and supported by certain states with institutional mandates without the consent of the states concerned.

Malta remains deeply concerned on the human rights situation in the Russian Federation. As the SR's report highlights, civic space continues to be restricted and human rights defenders and organizations continue to face significant challenges including legislative measures such as designations as for an agent or undesirable as well as threats of harassment and physical harm. Sexual and gender based violence continues to pervade all aspects of personal, civil and professional life. The report also documents the widespread use of torture and ill-treatment of persons in detention, particularly those held arbitrarily. Malta reminds the Russian Federation of its obligations under international human rights law and humanitarian law which continue to apply fully including with respect to Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilian civilians in detention. Malta urges the Russian Federation to grant the SR immediate, full and unrestricted access to its territory so that the important mandate of this office can be carried out effectively.

Montenegro remains deeply concerned by the worst and human rights situation in the Russian Federation where the authorities are entrenching repression to silence dissent and extinguish civic space. The state policy harms society, fuels aggression abroad and embeds impunity. The Russian authorities have dismantled the institutional independence, subordinating the judiciary, legislature and law enforcement to political control and converting them into instruments of repression and war. An overly broad legislation is systematically instrumentalized to impose censorship, prosecute critics and expand abusive foreign agents and undesirable persons regimes. Civil society, journalists, human rights defenders, opposition leaders and activists are portrayed as enemies of the state and criminalized. They face harassment, torture and lengthy prison sentences while civic space is systematically shattered. This campaign has also normalized identity based discrimination and violence targeting women, ethnic and national minorities, LGBT persons and other vulnerable groups. Recalling that Russia remains bound by its international obligations including the full implementation of European Court of Human Rights rulings, Montenegro urges the authorities to cooperate fully without selectivity with the UN human rights mechanisms and to end reprisal against those who engage with them. Lastly, it reiterates its call on Russia to immediately cease its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and all violations of international humanitarian and human rights law arising from it.

The **Netherlands** thanks the SR for her extensive and valuable work. Last year's report described a widespread state sponsored system of grave human rights violations by the Russian authorities. The new report shows that the situation has not only persisted but further deteriorated marked by a seismic decline. The seismic decline reflects a deliberate strategy by the Russian authorities to eradicate dissent and purposely dismantle what remains of civic space in the country. This



includes the further instrumentalization of the legislative system and the legal system to criminalize and suppress dissenting voices. The Netherlands urges Russia to cease dismantling the independence of the judiciary and to end its use as a tool for oppression. Furthermore, it calls on Russia to immediately and unconditionally release all those arbitrarily detained and to end the criminalization, prosecution, imprisonment, ill-treatment and torture of dissenting voices. The Netherlands asks to the SR how could the international community most effectively contribute to protecting dissenting voices targeted by the Russian authorities while ensuring accountability for ongoing violations.

New Zealand is deeply concerned about the serious and deteriorating human rights situation in Russia. The Russian authorities exercise state power in arbitrary and increasingly harsh ways to curtail civil and political liberties, particularly freedom of speech and the right to peaceful protest. The extensive control that the Russian authorities have extended over the Internet is also troubling. This includes Internet shutdowns and the introduction of penalties for people intentionally searching for online material deemed extremist by the state. Migrants, too, are subject to draconian surveillance measures such as mandatory geo location tracking which are being extended to foreigners in general from September next year. New Zealand is deeply concerned by the widespread use of torture, particularly within the prison system. State sanctioned violence against Ukrainian prisoners of war is also pervasive and a clear violation of international law. New Zealand is also concerned at the continued persecution and use of violence against the Russian LGBTQI+ community, particularly by the local authorities in Chechnya. Finally, New Zealand would welcome the SR's advice on how the international community can provide meaningful support to civil society and human rights defenders within the Russian Federation who are increasingly isolated from the outside world.

Poland is deeply alarmed by the steady decline in Russia's already dire human rights record. The Russian authorities continue to strengthen their oppressive grip over the society by fostering pervasive climate of fear and weaponizing law to silence dissent. Torture and ill-treatment remain widespread and systematic in detention facilities. Quite shockingly, the report highlights involvement of health professionals in condoning and participating in acts of torture especially against Ukrainian detainees. There is a clear link between repression at home and aggression abroad. The Russian leadership exploits the full scale invasion of Ukraine as a mobilizing force to justify repression and concentration of power. This is one of the reasons why the Russian Federation keeps sabotaging efforts towards peace. Just two weeks ago in a clear sign of escalation, Russia has deliberately violated Polish airspace with the incursion of 19 military drones. Stressing that evidence-gathering for documenting human rights violation is key to ensuring accountability, Poland thanks the SR for her important work and expresses its full support for her mandate.

Portugal describes the SR's findings as very concerning. Civil society space is shrinking at an alarming rate with legislation on so-called foreign agents and undesirable organizations being deliberately used to silence independent voices, restrict media freedom and criminalize peaceful dissent. Reports of arbitrary detention, torture and ill treatment are extremely serious and the absence of effective investigations and accountability remain troubling. Portugal is alarmed by the discrimination and repression against vulnerable groups including national and ethnic minorities, LGBTI persons and human rights defenders. The findings on the North Caucasus



further highlight the urgent need for action. Portugal urges Russia to end persecution of civil society; bring its laws and practices into full compliance with international human rights obligations; and ensure accountability. Portugal strongly supports the renewal of this mandate and calls on Russia to cooperate fully with the SR and other international mechanisms. Lastly, the country asks the SR how to best support efforts to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence in the Russian Federation.

The **Republic of Moldova** thanks the SR for her report which concluded that the situation has steadily deteriorated. As indicated in the report, freedom of expression, assembly and association continues to be repressed, a finding echoed also by the European Court of Human Rights. Repression against journalists as shown in the report of the reporters without borders is also seriously worrying. The number of individuals and organizations designated as foreign agents and undesirable is deeply troubling. The crackdown on dissent and criminalization of pro-Ukraine support by using extremists and terrorist charges remain of concern. Prosecution on politically motivated grounds continue to target human rights defenders and civic activists. Moldova is appalled by the documented cases of torture and ill treatment in the Russian Federation also of the Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilian detainees, including by medical personnel. All those responsible must be held accountable. Once again, Moldova calls on the Russian Federation to engage fully and meaningfully with the international human rights mechanism, including in the mandate of the Special Rapporteur and fully execute the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. Supporting the renewal of the SR's mandate, Moldova reiterates its condemnation of the brutal war of aggression against Ukraine and calls on Russian authorities immediately and unconditionally release all Ukrainian civilian detainees and unlawfully transferred children.

Romania notes with concern that the human rights and fundamental freedoms crisis in Russia is deepening. The authorities continue to suppress civil society and political opposition with relentless determination. This is accompanied by a pervasive climate of impunity and a severe lack of accountability for violations and repression of dissent. The authorities continue to expand the legal tools used to silence dissent, branding opposition voices as undesirable foreign agents or prosecuting them under broad extremism or terrorism laws with politically motivated cases constantly increasing. Detention conditions are worsening including deteriorating prison oversight and complicity of medical personnel and acts of torture with denial of medical care and torture as most frequent causes of death in custody as the SR's report highlights. Romania calls on Russia to reengage constructively with the international human rights system to cooperate with the SR's mandate and to take concrete steps to fulfill its international human rights obligations. Romania is concerned by Russia's plans to withdraw from European Convention for Prevention of Torture and recalls that the prohibition of torture is a norm of international law binding on all states at all times regardless of whether they are parties to a specific international instrument or not.

Slovakia highly values the SR's work and expresses concern over the ongoing human rights violations in the Russian Federation such as the restrictive legislation against political opponents, reprisal against freedom of association or peaceful assembly and the targeting of anti-war criticism in Russia. Instead of establishing a dialogue with representatives of various structures of the society and implementing the recommendations of the UN Special Procedures,



Russia continues to impose restrictions, digital surveillance, limitations on access to information, Internet shutdowns, censorship, spread of propaganda and attacks on opinion leaders in order to legitimize its aggression against Ukraine. Organizations or individuals who call for an end to the war against Ukraine or advocate a different view on so-called sensitive issues in Russia face penalties, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. However, Slovakia believes that the SR's mandate must serve as an independent voice of the international community to return Russia back to the path of respecting human rights. Slovakia calls on the Russian Federation to grant the SR unfettered access to its territory and to enable genuine dialogue and cooperation to further respect, protect and fulfill human rights in the country.

Slovenia thanks the SR for her report which documents how state-sponsored nationalist ideology in the Russian Federation has normalized identity-based discrimination and violence and how it encourages the systematic violation of human rights. Commending her dedicated work and expressing full support for her mandate, Slovenia is particularly concerned that women and girls, LGBTI persons, Indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, migrants and asylum seekers are increasingly stigmatized, marginalized and exposed to harassment and violence without access to effective remedies. Furthermore, the systematic arbitrary detention and ill-treatment of political prisoners is a matter of deep concern and constitutes a clear violation of international human rights law. The institutionalized discrimination undermines equality, erodes social cohesion and deepens vulnerabilities of the most marginalized groups in civil society. In light of the systematic nature of this ideology, Slovenia asks what avenues remain open for the international community to counter such normalization of exclusion and to support those most at risk.

South Sudan, acquainted with the content of the SR's report, is of the view that to come up with credible and authoritative account of conditions inside a given state requires practical visits supported by the country concerned to provide the balance necessary for sound and practical recommendations. The UNHRC is the beacon for promotion and protection of human rights through genuine dialogue and cooperation. In order to achieve that, South Sudan urges the UNHRC to continue to play the positive role of full compliance with the purposes and the principles of the United Nations charter devoid of any negative influences. To conclude, South Sudan comments Russia for the noble progress it has made in promoting human rights, particularly in areas of social welfare and access to education among others.

Spain thanks the SR for her report, which confirms the increase and consolidation of the use of repressive tools, notably the adoption of legislative measures to silence dissent and restrict civic space. The international community cannot become accustomed to this; it cannot normalise the fact that the states concerned leave the UNHCR's room when issues that concern them are being discussed. Their desire to manipulate the UNHRC is evident when they deny the possibility of dialogue. Since the large-scale invasion of Ukraine, the authorities of the Russian Federation have intensified the instrumentalization of their criminal legislation, multiplying long-term imprisonment and the use of intimidation tactics, torture and other inhuman and degrading treatment with the clear aim of silencing all internal opposition to the war and causing an excessive erosion of human rights in Russia. Spain condemns the violations of human rights and international humanitarian law being committed by the Russian Federation on its territory and



also on Ukrainian territory. Spain calls on Russia to implement the recommendations by the SR without further delay. Russia must be held accountable before the courts for the crimes committed. The aggressor cannot go unpunished.

Sudan has taken note of the changes in the human rights situation in the Russian Federation, which is one of the pivotal and founding members of the United Nations system. There is no doubt that it recognises the centrality of human rights in the United Nations system of governing references, and Sudan encourages it to continue its efforts to promote the protection of human rights. The UNHRC was established to promote dialogue on human rights and freedoms, encourage constructive debate, and support measures to promote and protect human rights. Sudan has consistently called for and emphasised the importance of the consent and cooperation of the country concerned as a guarantee for the implementation of the mandates and the achievement of their objectives. Sudan is also convinced that the primary responsibility for promoting and protecting human rights in any country lies with the country itself, which is responsible for formulating its policies and plans, including those relating to human rights, and that the wisdom and will of the people of the country concerned are the decisive factor and the basis for the structure of human rights policies. The following are the effects of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict on human rights. Sudan calls for a resolution to the crisis through diplomatic and peaceful means in a manner that preserves bloodshed and achieves security and stability in the entire region and the world.

Switzerland notes the continuing deterioration of the human rights situation in Russia over the past year as outlined in the SR's report and expresses support for the renewal of her mandate. There is now a structural system of human rights violations serving to repress civil society, dissenting opinions and political opposition. Torture is used as a tool of systematic oppression. Switzerland is very concerned about the devastating effect of these measures. The impunity that accompanies them seriously violates civil rights, including the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, as well as the protection of physical integrity. Switzerland also condemns the continued expansion of lists that arbitrarily and inconsistently with the principle of equality designate individuals and organisations as undesirable extremists or foreign agents with the aim of decimating civil society. Lastly, Switzerland calls the Russian Federation to bring its legislation into line with its international obligations and to cease its relentless attacks on human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Ukraine stresses that the SR's findings are a stark reminder of Russia's trajectory, rather than its repression at home that mirrors the brutality of its external aggression. The Kremlin's suffocation of freedoms goes hand in hand with its criminal war of aggression against Ukraine. Over the past years, Russian authorities have pursued a deliberate strategy to crack down the dissent. Through censorship, politically motivated persecutions and repressive laws on foreign agents and undesirables, civic space has been destroyed. Journalists, human rights defenders, opposition figures and activists have been imprisoned, tortured, silenced, making Russia one of the largest jailer of media professionals. Thousands of Ukrainian civilians remain forcibly disappeared in Russian detention, subjected to torture, incommunicado confinement and denial of medical care. At least 206 Ukrainian prisoners of war have died in captivity from torture and neglect. The ICRC has been denied access to unlawfully detained Ukrainian civilians, including journalists. The murder of journalist Victoria Roschina illustrates the regime's brutality. At the same time, tens



of thousands of Ukrainian children have been unlawfully deported to Russia and their fate remains unknown. Domestic repressions in Russia fuels its aggression beyond its borders. These crimes must face international justice.

The **United Kingdom** describes the report's findings are stark and damning, highlighting a seismic decline in the human rights situation, repression at home and aggression abroad. The Kremlin claims to be acting for the benefit of the Russian people but crushes dissent, persecutes minorities and uses repressive legislation to consolidate a climate of fear, all to serve its own interests. Russia must release all political prisoners including those who have bravely opposed the invasion of Ukraine. The SR highlights that in the first half of the year 20 to 30% of all those in pretrial detention were political prisoners. Civil society activists, human rights defenders and journalists are serving lengthy prison sentences. Lawyers are also increasingly targeted for simply representing their clients. The SR's report illustrates how torture is widespread within the judicial system with at least 258 cases documented in 2024-2025. The Russian state's record on gender-based violence remains appalling. A relentless dissent into lawlessness has allowed honour killings with impunity in the North Caucasus. Convicts have been released to fight in Ukraine who have committed domestic violence on their return. LGBT+ people remain acutely vulnerable to persecution, particularly again in the North Caucasus. Jehovah's witnesses are imprisoned simply for practicing their faith.

Venezuela reiterates its unequivocal rejection of the imposition of mandates against specific countries. These practices, which are clearly at odds with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, politicise the work of the UNHRC, constitute interference in internal affairs and violate the principles of impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity. This mandate, which does not have the endorsement of the country concerned, will not contribute in any way to the cause of human rights and is therefore doomed to failure. It will simply be yet another interventionist mechanism created for political purposes to harass the Russian government and squander the scarce resources of the United Nations. Venezuela will continue to demand an end to this selective practice based on double standards, which seriously compromises the credibility of the UNHRC. Finally, Venezuela congratulates Russia on its institutional progress in the field of human rights and its ongoing cooperation in this area.

Zimbabwe once again notes that the SR's report is an outcome of a fundamentally flawed process that falls far short on the Council's core principles of cooperation and genuine dialogue aimed at strengthening the capacity of Member States to comply with their human rights obligations. It should be recalled that it is the primary responsibility of the state to promote, protect and safeguard the human rights of its citizens. The selective monitoring of human rights situations through mandates not supported by the country concerned therefore ignores the state's role, fails to provide the balance necessary for the formulation of sound and practical recommendations and brings into question the effectiveness of these costly mandates. Calling for genuine dialogue and cooperation with the Russian Federation under a framework that is acceptable to all parties, Zimbabwe further condemns the imposition of unilateral cohesive measures on the Russian Federation whose tool on the ordinary Russians and transboundary impact on other regions of the world has been very devastating.



Non-Governmental Organizations

The **International Bar Association**, the Law Society of England and Wales, Lawyers for Lawyers and Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada thank the SR for her vital work. The Associations condemn ongoing systematic targeting of lawyers in Russia including judicial harassment, arbitrary disciplinary actions, disbarment and criminal charges. Lawyers defending the rule of law are routinely branded as foreign agents simply for performing their legal duties. They are subject to severe pressure including criminal prosecution and harsh punishment. Noting that the sentencing was based on an unfair trial of the three lawyers who represented Alexey Navalny, the Associations urge Russia to release them unconditionally and end any further persecution and prosecution of all lawyers. The Associations remain extremely concerned that the law and advocacy and legal profession that expands the Minister of Justice oversight of legal profession through the centralized administrative control including the power to impose disciplinary sanctions. They also join the SR's concern over Russia's plans to end its cooperation with the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture because limiting external scrutiny of places of detention while targeting those lawyers defending due process for those deprived of their liberty creates enabling conditions where torture occurs with impunity. Given the imperative to maintain rigorous monitoring over Russia, the Associations urge the UNHRC to renew the SR's mandate.

The **Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety (IRFS)** expresses concern over the recent escalation of mass repressions against Azerbaijani migrants in Russia which began after Russian military force shot down an Azerbaijani airline passenger plane in December 2024. Instead of ensuring accountability and compensation, the Russian authorities launched a campaign of prosecution against Azerbaijani migrants. In Yekaterinburg, during mass detentions, two brothers, Huseyn and Ziyaddin Safarov, were brutally tortured to death. Their bodies showed clear signs of torture, with broken bones and severe injuries, including the cutting of their genitals. Yet authorities cynically claimed they had died of 'heart problems'. Their lawyer, Shahin Shikhlinsky, and his son Mutvaly, were also detained on politically fabricated charges. Since the start of Russia's war against Ukraine, migrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus have faced systemic repression, coercion, and forced recruitment into the Russian army. Human rights defender Bahrom Khamroev was sentenced to nearly 14 years and currently held under torturous conditions in a colony beyond the Arctic Circle, where Alexei Navalny was killed. Political prisoner Aleksei Gorinov, convicted twice for criticizing the war against Ukraine, likewise remains in punitive isolation in Altai despite urgent UN calls for his release. IRSF urges the Russian Federation to end these repressions and immediately release all political prisoners.

The **International Federation for Human Rights Leagues** jointly with the Memorial - Human Rights Defense Centre, the International Federation for Human Rights and the World Organisation Against Torture thank the SR for her informative report. Year after year, report after report, the Federation sees how the human rights situation in Russia is steadily deteriorating. There are more and more political prisoners behind bars, awaiting torture and inhuman treatment. Of particular concern is the fate of Ukrainian military and civilian detainees and Russians who protested against the war in Ukraine. In January 2025, a mission of Russian human rights defenders visited Ukraine and collected evidence of international crimes committed by Russian occupation forces. The accounts of former Ukrainian prisoners of war about the conditions of detention in Russian prisons go beyond anything that human rights defenders who



have been dealing with the problem of torture for many years, have encountered before the start of the full-scale invasion. Many Ukrainians and Russians who opposed the war remain in Russian prisons. Many of them may not live to see the end of their sentences. The FIDH urges that their fate not be forgotten in any discussions of prisoner and detainee exchanges. Grateful for the SR for her unwavering support of the Leagues' initiatives, the organizations call for the renewal of her mandate.

War Resisters International (WRI) thanks the SR for her report which reports violation of the rights to freedom of expression assembly association which have been also found by the ECtHR. Over 1,000 individuals organizations have been designated as foreign agents. One of these is our colleague, a young lawyer assisting consensual objectors to military service. As previously reported and also presented last week during WRI's event, there is a lack of implementation of the constitutional right to consensual objection to military service. This also affects military personnel such as soldiers trying to resign, men forcibly mobilized and reservists. A systematic practice of humiliation and torture in war zones of soldiers attempting to refuse has also been reported. Since August 2024, many are coerced into signing military contracts. There is thus an extremely dangerous risk of deployment of conscripts to war and vulnerable groups are still forcibly recruited for the war. WRI is greatly concerned by the current case of a Russian 21-year-old consensual objector who fled the country by train passing through Lithuania when he has been victim of public smear campaign and does eventually apply for asylum in Finland where he is under risk of being returned to Lithuania then possibly deported to Russia. WRI strongly reiterates the SR's recommendation to all member states to uphold the human rights of Russian citizens in need of protection within their jurisdiction by respecting the principle of non-refoulement with regard to all torture survivors and asylum seekers, in particular human rights defenders, anti-war activists, journalists, consensual objectors to military service and individuals who have refused forced mobilization to the war of aggression in Ukraine.

Human Rights House Foundation denounces that legislation in Russia continues to destroy what exists of civil society. Since April, foreign agent status now applies to anyone cooperating with international institutions, including the International Criminal Court. The undesirable organizations law has facilitated the closure of the Independent Election Monitor GOLOS, after its co-chair was sentenced to five years. Lawyers including Maria Boncler face years in prison simply for their professional work and Alexei Gorinov has now spent more than two months in a punitive isolation cell and torture-like conditions. Even more concerning, prosecutions for crimes relating to terrorism and extremism against civil society have accelerated. Sentences of more than ten years have become routine, including for symbolic acts such as a small donation to humanitarian causes in Ukraine or anti-war posts on social media. Memorial now recognizes over 1,000 political prisoners in Russia, many subjected to denial of medical care, fabricated disciplinary measures and prolonged solitary confinement. Therefore, the SR's mandate remains indispensable and the Foundation strongly supports its renewal.

The **International Center Against Censorship** welcomes the SR's report, which rightly highlights a seismic decline in the human rights situation. The Russian Federation continues to tighten its control over the right of freedom of expression online and to entrench its digital iron curtain. The introduction of the new messaging app, Max, combined with recent restrictions on widely used messaging services, telegram and WhatsApp, marks a dangerous escalation of digital repression.



These steps effectively sever safe and secure communications for over 100 million users of messaging platforms in the country, isolating them further from their families, colleagues and the international community. The Center is equally concerned with the crackdowns on VPNs, one of the last tools enabling people in Russia to bypass censorship and access independent information. By targeting VPNs, the authorities aim to eliminate one of the last avenues of digital freedom. These developments are part of Russia's broader pursuit of so-called digital sovereignty, an effort to replace global platforms with state-controlled applications integrated into government services. Such measures represent not digital sovereignty but digital isolation. Standing in solidarity with all of those in Russia who continue to defend their fundamental rights against escalating government control, the Center urges states to support Russian civil society including independent media and human rights defenders in their continued fight against this digital repression.

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute and the Law Society of England and Wales with endorsement by OVD Info and Memorial - Human Rights Defense Center concur with the SR that human rights in Russia are facing seismic decline. Russia has escalated its repression of lawyers who face discipline, disbarment, prosecution or imprisonment for carrying out their professional duties. The resulting denial of independent lawyers of choice contributes to unfair trials in courts that lack independence. Dozens of lawyers and human rights defenders are among Russia's 1,656 arbitrarily detained persons. Among them is lawyer Maria Boncler who is being prosecuted for her professional legal work in cases involving politically motivated charges. A proposed law on advocacy in the legal profession would expand Ministry of Justice oversight of lawyers further threatening their independence. Laws on foreign agents and undesirable organizations are used to curtail lawyers and defenders' freedom of expression and association. Those charged with violating these over broad laws may be subjected to trials in absentia and transnational repression of people living outside Russia. It is clear that the continued work of the SR is essential. The Associations urge the UNHRC to adopt a strong resolution to renew the mandate.

Conscience and Peace Tax International (CPTI) points out that desertion has become one of the main avenues for those seeking to avoid participating in the Ukraine war. Applications from conscripts to perform alternative civilian service are now being rejected wholesale in some areas, notably Moscow. Meanwhile, under the mobilization decree, contract soldiers are forcibly retained in their units even after the expiry of their contracts and the torture which you report of those who seek discharge is widely publicized in order to discourage others. CPTI remains exercised by the plight of the thousands who have left Russia following desertion or in order to avoid mobilization. Russians who have opposed the attack on Ukraine by political means or through the media have generally received sympathetic treatment as refugees. Not so those who have done so by directly refusing to participate. On 27 August 2025, for instance, a Russian deserter was returned by the USA. Like others he will face unfair trial, cruel inhuman or degrading treatment in detention and continued persecution as a political opponent of the government. CPTI calls on states to respect the SR's recommendation on the observance of the principle of non-refoulement of conscientious objectors, noting as you observe that this is increasingly deserters and that they do everything within their power to facilitate their freedom of movement.



Human Rights Watch agrees with the SR that the situation has continued to deteriorate. The Russian government seeks to intimidate its critics into silence, especially those who take a stance against its war in Ukraine, independent reporters, writers, independent lawyers and peaceful political opposition supporters. As of August of this year, Russia's political prisoners list maintained by the memorial human rights group recorded over 1,000 individuals, up by over 300 people from a year ago. Since August 2024, authorities banned 67 organizations as undesirable and the courts have imposed at least 185 penalties for participating in the activities of undesirable groups, including against prominent media outlets. 641 persons have been criminally prosecuted on bogus charges of false information or discreditation of Russian armed forces since the start of the full scale invasion of Ukraine. In total, 1,181 persons at least have faced criminal prosecution for opposing Russia's war and 336 people remain imprisoned. Authorities censor online information about Russia's war in Ukraine, blocking more than 25,000 websites on such grounds. A new law penalizes people for intentionally searching for extremist materials online. Based on Russia's Supreme Court ruling outlawing the international LGBT movement as an extremist group.

Baptist World Alliance draws attention to the continued egregious violations of human rights in the Russian Federation including in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. The Russian Federation persists in demonstrating contempt for the rights of religious minorities. Pastors have been subjected to persecution including fines and imprisonment for sermons opposing the war in Ukraine on religious grounds. Religious organizations have experienced repressive state control through laws requiring registration. Jehovah's Witnesses endure a total ban since the government classified them as extremists. The precarious situation of children in the temporarily occupied Ukraine is a grave concern. Tens of thousands of children, many from orphanages, have been abducted and placed in state-run facilities across the Russian Federation. Indoctrination and militarization of children within the territories of Ukraine is profoundly disturbing. The Alliance calls on the Russian Federation to return to the internationally recognized borders which existed prior to its 2014 war of aggression against Ukraine. It calls on Russia to make every effort to return Ukrainian children who have been abducted and suggest the need for international monitoring to help track and facilitate their psychological well-being and safe return home. The Alliance encourages the SR to continue making every effort to ensure freedom of religion or belief for all across the Russian Federation and in the territories that the military temporarily occupy.

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