



ASSOCIATION OF REINTEGRATION  
OF CRIMEA

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*To UN Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment*

**Russian Aggression in Ukraine and Sustainable Development Goals**

Our Association of Reintegration of Crimea (ARC)<sup>1</sup>, is non-governmental expert and human rights organisation, with activities devoted to Crimea's issues. ARC's expert researches are related with human rights of Crimean residents and ethnic groups, including social, ecologic and economic rights. Since 2020 we sent more than 50 submissions and proposals to UN human rights' strictures, major part of them were published in the UN web-sources<sup>2</sup>

On 2021 Our Association submitted to the UN the proposals on two Crimea-related natural objects to the researchathon on sacrifice zones and human rights proposed by the UN Special Rapporteur on Toxics and Human Rights and UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment, for their forthcoming report on toxic-free environments in which to live, work, study and play to be discussed in UN on 2022. UN rapporteurs intend to highlight the egregious problem of places that are being subjected to severe toxic pollution<sup>3</sup>.

Since 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2022 Russia committed broad and open military aggression to all Ukraine's territory against Ukrainian mainland from own territory, and from the Russia-occupied Crimea, Belarus, Black and Azov seas.

Due last two monthes Russia occupied some territories of Donetsk, Kharkiv, Kherson, Luhansk, Mykolaiv, Zaporizhzhya regions and active hostilities were in Chernigiv, Kyiv, Sumy, Zhitomir regions of Ukraine. Strong fights are going near cities of Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, Mariupol and others with total population more than 10 millions persons near the frontline.

In last eight weeks Russia-controlled troops and mercenaries committed in Ukraine, during this operation, gross violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights' law already, including broad crimes against property, social and cultural rights and again environment<sup>4567891011</sup>.

All war crimes, committed by Russian invaders during ongoing hostilities, are connected with absolutely clear Russia's war targets in maximal destruction the civil infrastructure, including objects, essential for sustainable development and ecologic systems<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.journal-officiel.gouv.fr/associations/detail-annonce/associations\\_b/20210005/1348](https://www.journal-officiel.gouv.fr/associations/detail-annonce/associations_b/20210005/1348)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/OlderPersons/OlderWomen/submissions-csos/Association-reintegration-Crimea.docx>

<sup>3</sup> <https://arc.construction/19284>

<sup>4</sup> <https://sofrep.com/news/russian-soldiers-gang-raped-ukrainian-woman-as-her-child-was-crying-in-the-next-room/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/182/182-20220307-PRE-01-00-EN.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-60888528>

<sup>7</sup> <https://hromadske.radio/en/news/2022/03/09/members-of-the-wagner-group-have-been-killed-in-ukraine>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60547807>

<sup>9</sup> <https://arc.construction/26892>

<sup>10</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1113652>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/03/ukraine-apparent-war-crimes-russia-controlled-areas>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2022/ukraine-before-after-destruction-photos/>

As major of Kharkiv stated in 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 2022 Russian troops destroyed more than 1290 apartment buildings in this one-million city, most of them were multi-floor ones<sup>13</sup>. Up to this date 90% of apartment building in Mariupol, city with 400 thousands inhabitants, are destroyed<sup>14</sup> Among 3300 multi-storey residential buildings in Mykolaiv 400 were destroyed partially and 60 - totally<sup>15</sup>; those data are proved by UNOSAT maps<sup>16</sup>.

So thousands of Ukrainians, including persons with disabilities lost their houses and save access to medical and social services due to Russian aggression and related hostilities. The World Health Organization said that since February 24 to May 6, 306 attacks had taken place on health facilities in Ukraine in contravention of international humanitarian law and human rights law<sup>17</sup>.

Our Association and other expert structures have already reported on the numerous and profound negative consequences for the Black Sea marine ecology associated with the active military activities of the Russian Black Sea Fleet. In particular, they pointed to the mass death of seabirds in the bays of Sevastopol, which was associated with dangerous runoff from military installations, and on the mass death of dolphins due to damage to their echolocation systems by the constant mass hydroacoustic and mine-explosive activity of the Russian invaders' naval ships<sup>18</sup>.

Russian invaders are massively setting fire to Kherson forests near Oleshky, Hola Pristan, and the Kinburn Peninsula, apparently seeking to fight "Ukrainian saboteurs", and those invader's illegal activities has already led to an environmental catastrophe<sup>19</sup>.

Due to gross violation the human rights Ukraine filed an application with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 25 February 2022<sup>20</sup> and to the European Court of Human Rights<sup>21</sup>. Russian government refused to execute the demand of the ECtHR and the order of ICJ to immediately suspend the military operations that it commenced on 24 February 2022.<sup>22</sup>

On March 16 2022, Russia was excluded from the Council of Europe and refused officially to execute the demands of European Convention on Human Rights<sup>23</sup>, which guarantee the right to receive and disseminate the information. UN Human Rights Council (HRC) adopted its resolution 49/1 on 4 March 2022 where it expressed grave concern at the documented harm to the enjoyment of many human rights, resulting from the aggression against Ukraine by Russia<sup>24</sup>.

On 8 March 2022 UN human rights experts called on Russia to immediately end its invasion of Ukraine to avoid further bloodshed; experts recalled that intentional attacks against civilian objects amount to war crimes<sup>25</sup>. In other UN experts' statements the negative impact of Russia's aggression on persons with disabilities and older persons was condemned<sup>26</sup>, and relevant risks for women's right to life were pointed<sup>2728</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://nv.ua/kharkiv/harkov-obstrely-skolko-domov-razrusheno-dannye-31-marta-novosti-harkova-50229919.html>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2022/03/31/7336102/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.liga.net/politics/interview/mer-aleksandr-senkevich-rakety-do-nas-doletayut-za-tri-minuty-pod-pritselom-ves-nikolaev>

<sup>16</sup> <https://unitar.org/maps/map/3540>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/russia-ukraine-war/128m-people-displaced-in-ukraine-since-russia-launched-war-un-human-rights-experts/2580552>

<sup>18</sup> <https://arc.construction/31004>

<sup>19</sup> <https://arc.construction/30970>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.icj-cij.org/en/case/182>

<sup>21</sup> <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng-press?i=003-7282553-9922068>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/182/182-20220316-ORD-01-00-EN.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> <https://arc.construction/26897>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session49/Pages/ResDecStat.aspx>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=28231&LangID=E>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=28200&LangID=E>

UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, Dr. Balakrishnan Rajagopal, expressed on 9th of March the grave concerns about the serious violations of the right to adequate housing in Ukraine after Russian forces invaded the country, that also has direct influence to the rights of the persons with disabilities.

UN official stated that indiscriminate use of weapons such as cluster munitions, multiple launch rocket systems, tactical missile systems and artillery systems have been reported in multiple areas of Ukraine including in and around the cities of Chernihiv, Kyiv, Kherson, Mariupol, Okhtyrka, Zhytomyr and several others. Many homes, civilian infrastructure including fuel depots, water and power stations are under attack or threat of attack. UN Rapporteur pointed regarding Russia's invasion that "directly or indirectly, the aggression will have a massive toll on the access to and habitability of housing in Ukraine"<sup>29</sup>.

UN General Assembly in its resolution ES-11/1 on 2 March 2022 recognized that the military operations of Russia inside the sovereign territory of Ukraine are on a scale that the international community has not seen in Europe in decades and that urgent action is needed to save this generation from the scourge of war. In article 9 of this resolution UN General Assembly demanded that all parties to allow safe and unfettered passage to destinations outside of Ukraine and to facilitate the rapid, safe and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance for those in need in Ukraine, to protect civilians, including persons in vulnerable situations, and to respect human rights<sup>30</sup>.

UN General Assembly in its resolution ES-11/2 on 24 March 2022, articles 5 and 8, demanded again full respect for and protection of objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population and civilian infrastructure that is critical to the delivery of essential services in armed conflict; stressed that the sieges of cities in Ukraine further aggravate the humanitarian situation for the civilian population and hamper evacuation efforts, and therefore demands to put an end to these sieges<sup>31</sup>. On 7 April 2022 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution ES-11/3<sup>32</sup> calling for Russia to be suspended from the Human Rights Council<sup>33</sup>.

There are no peacekeeping missions in Ukraine; as such initiatives were blocked by the Russian government. Activities of UN Monitoring Mission in Ukraine are extremely low now and OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine de-facto stopped its activities since 7th of March;<sup>34</sup> later Russia blocked the prolongation such Mission's activities.

The UN Human Rights Council adopted on 12th of May a resolution on the deteriorating human rights situation in Ukraine stemming from the Russian aggression, in which the Council reiterated its demand for an immediate cessation of military hostilities against Ukraine and requested the Independent International Commission of Inquiry to conduct an inquiry, consistent with its mandate and international standards, and in coordination with other national and international mechanisms.

UN Human Rights Council pointed that Russia should immediately cease its aggression, withdraw all its forces from the whole territory of Ukraine, and provide international human rights and humanitarian institutions with unhindered, immediate and safe access to persons transferred from conflict-affected areas of Ukraine<sup>35</sup>.

All Ukraine's attempts for the peace-building, including peace talks and negotiations with

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=28201&LangID=E>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/05/ukraine-millions-displaced-traumatised-and-urgently-need-help-say-experts>

<sup>29</sup> <https://arc.construction/26902>

<sup>30</sup> <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3959039?ln=ru>

<sup>31</sup> <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3966630?ln=en>

<sup>32</sup> <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3967950?ln=ru>

<sup>33</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1115782>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.osce.org/ru/special-monitoring-mission-to-ukraine/513430>

<sup>35</sup> <https://arc.construction/31039>

Russian government were unsuccessful and Russia rejects all peace propositions and it refuses to execute the demands of ICJ and ECtHR orders to stop the aggression and hostilities that are directly pointed against right to adequate housing.

*Regarding the questionnaire pointed by the Special Rapporteur (its points 5-9) we want to add that Ukraine had lost since February 2022, due to Russia's ongoing aggression, more than 600 billions dollars of gross national wealth. So future investments to restart Ukraine's realisation the SDGs will demand the comparable amount. As Russian aggression is not stopped it is exactly the main barrier to progress towards achieving the relevant SDGs for Ukraine. All effective Ukraine's steps to implement the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment may be possible only after end of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and de-occupation of all Russia-controlled territories of Ukraine.*

Our Association believes that next urgent, immediate steps of the UN Special Rapporteur on protection the SDGs realization in Ukraine, in condition of ongoing interstate conflict and hostilities, must be done, including all observation procedures and **visit to Ukraine**.

We hope that above-pointed special statements of the UN experts and rapporteurs regarding situation in Ukraine must be supported by next UN HRC's and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' official positions. Our Association believes that urgent, immediate steps of the UN OHCHR bodies must be done; monitoring procedure, mentioned in UN HRC resolution 49/1, must be enforced immediately.

Such UN steps must counteract the gross human rights violations committed by the Russian troops in Ukraine; such UN steps must include the activities of the Human Rights Council and in the framework of High Commissioner for Human Rights' and Human Rights Council's mandates.

13<sup>th</sup> of May, 2022

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