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Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In the present report, the Secretary-General describes the progress made in the implementation of General Assembly resolution [79/184](#) and provides options and recommendations for improving its implementation.

* [A/80/150](#).



I. Introduction

1. The present report of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [79/184](#), in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its eightieth session.

2. In its resolution [68/262](#) and other relevant resolutions, including resolution [79/184](#), the General Assembly reaffirmed its commitment to the territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. In the present report, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (hereinafter “Crimea”) and certain areas of Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts, Ukraine, temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation, are referred to as “temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine”, in line with General Assembly resolution [79/184](#). The organs and officials of the Russian Federation established in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine are referred to as the “occupying authorities of the Russian Federation”.

3. This is the thirteenth report of the Secretary-General on the human rights situation in the territories of Ukraine temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation. It focuses on the period from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, but also includes earlier cases documented during the reporting period that illustrate patterns of violations.

II. Methodology

4. In its resolution [79/184](#), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to seek ways and means, including through consultations with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and relevant regional organizations, to ensure safe and unfettered access to Crimea and other territories of Ukraine temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation by established regional and international human rights monitoring mechanisms, in particular the human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, to enable them to carry out their mandates. In accordance with that resolution, on 26 February 2025, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) transmitted a note verbale to the Russian Federation, seeking its cooperation to conduct a mission in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. As at 1 July 2025, OHCHR had not received any response from the Russian Federation to its request.

5. Unless otherwise specified, the information in the present report was collected and verified by OHCHR. Findings are based on information collected from sources that are assessed as credible and reliable, according to OHCHR methodology. Information is included where the “reasonable grounds to believe” standard of proof has been met. The report is based primarily on direct interviews with victims of alleged human rights violations in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, which have been verified using other sources, including interviews with relatives of victims, witnesses, human rights defenders, lawyers and representatives of civil society, along with information obtained from court documents, official records, the analysis of relevant legislation and open sources.

III. Conduct of the Russian Federation as occupying Power

A. Respecting the laws in force

6. International humanitarian law requires an occupying Power to take all the measures in its power to restore and ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety, while respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country.¹ During the reporting period, the Russian Federation continued to impose its own political, legal, administrative, law enforcement and judicial systems in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.²

B. Prohibition on compelling the population of an occupied territory to swear allegiance

7. International humanitarian law prohibits compelling the inhabitants of occupied territory to swear allegiance to the hostile Power.³ The inhabitants of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine are required, either explicitly or through indirect forms of pressure, to procure the citizenship of the Russian Federation – which includes swearing the citizenship oath of the Russian Federation.⁴

8. During the reporting period, the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation adopted several laws and decrees that increased the pressure on residents in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to obtain Russian citizenship. For example, in March 2025, the President of the Russian Federation signed a decree that requires Ukrainian citizens to leave the Russian Federation or the territories of Ukraine that it temporarily occupies of their own accord by 10 September 2025 or to legalize their stay according to Russian legislation.⁵ Obtaining residence documents for the purpose of employment in the temporarily occupied territories requires Ukrainian citizens to prove their knowledge of the Russian language, history and basic laws through examination.⁶ The decree also removed previous provisions that in principle allowed Ukrainians to access free medical care as permanent residents.

9. Other laws adopted during the reporting period restrict access for people without Russian citizenship to social benefits and education. As from 1 January 2025, residents in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine must hold Russian citizenship to receive pensions.⁷ Children without Russian citizenship must prove

¹ Regulations respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land of 1907 (Hague Regulations), art. 43.

² See OHCHR, “Human rights situation during the Russian occupation of territory of Ukraine and its aftermath, 24 February 2022–31 December 2023”, 20 March 2024.

³ Hague Regulations, art. 45.

⁴ On the requirement to take the citizenship oath for inhabitants of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, see for example, Federal Constitutional Law No. 5-FKZ of 4 October 2022 on the accession of the Donetsk People’s Republic to the Russian Federation and the establishment of a new constituent entity of the Russian Federation, the Donetsk People’s Republic, available at <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202210050005?pageSize=100&index=1> (accessed on 1 August 2025, available only within the Russian Federation). See also Hague Regulations, art. 45.

⁵ Decree of the President of the Russian Federation, 20 March 2025, No. 159, available at <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202503200022>.

⁶ See article 15.1 of the Russian Federal Law No. 115 of 25 July 2002 on the legal status of foreign citizens in the Russian Federation, available at <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/18669/page/19> (accessed on 16 May 2025).

⁷ Decree No. 679 by the Donetsk occupying authorities, 12 December 2024; Decree No. 147-I by the Luhansk occupying authorities, 3 April 2025; Decree No. 139-u by the Kherson occupying authorities, 19 December 2024; Decree No. 310-u by the Zaporizhzhia occupying authorities, 13 September 2024.

their knowledge of the Russian language before being admitted to educational institutions.⁸

10. These and similar measures, which appear to be discriminatory, forced many residents of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to either obtain Russian citizenship or leave. Residents who had recently left these territories cited as reasons for their departure – also documented in past reports – difficulties in gaining access to medical assistance, receiving a salary, buying and selling property, paying for electricity and obtaining car insurance. Many of those who had acquired Russian citizenship said that they did so because they had no other viable option. On 5 March 2025, the Russian Minister of the Interior announced that “the mass passportization process has been completed” and that 3.5 million people in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine had obtained Russian passports.⁹

C. Transfers of civilians

11. Under international humanitarian law, individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, unless the security of the population or imperative military reasons so demand.¹⁰ This prohibition also applies to protected persons accused of offences, who should be detained and, if convicted following proceedings respecting fair trial guarantees, serve their sentences in occupied territory.¹¹

12. Recently released Ukrainian prisoners of war reported that both prisoners of war and civilian detainees were transported in large groups from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to detention facilities in the Russian Federation several thousand kilometres away, starting in late 2024. OHCHR documented the deportation of at least 15 civilian men and 2 women detained from the occupied territories of Ukraine to detention facilities in the Russian Federation during the reporting period. Other reports indicate that, in March 2025, the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation transferred a detained Ukrainian staff member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to a prison colony in the Russian Federation. He was convicted on “high treason” charges following a trial that raised concerns about fair trial violations.¹²

13. The exact number and fate of children who were transferred within the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine or deported to the Russian Federation, mainly in 2022, has remained unclear.¹³ The Russian Federation has not provided detailed information about the children concerned to the Central Tracing Agency of

⁸ Russian Federal law No. 544-FZ, 28 December 2024, available at <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202412280045>.

⁹ See <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/1012090> (accessed on 16 May 2025).

¹⁰ Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention), art. 49.

¹¹ Ibid., art. 76.

¹² OHCHR, “Treatment of prisoners of war and update on the human rights situation, 1 June to 31 August 2024”, 1 October 2024, para. 110.

¹³ In his annual report for 2024, the Ukrainian Parliamentary Commissioner for Human Rights reported that 19,546 children had been transferred within the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine or deported to the Russian Federation. OHCHR verified that around 200 children – almost all from institutions – were transferred individually or in groups within the occupied territories or to the Russian Federation, mainly in 2022. See OHCHR, “The impact of the armed conflict and occupation on children’s rights in Ukraine, 24 February 2022–31 December 2024”, March 2025.

the International Committee of the Red Cross, which has prevented systematic efforts to trace and return them.¹⁴

14. International humanitarian law also prohibits the occupying Power from transferring parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.¹⁵ During the reporting period, the Russian Federation continued to encourage its own citizens to move to the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine by offering socioeconomic incentives.¹⁶ Since 2022, a State programme has provided for a broad range of tax incentives for businesses and entrepreneurs, as well as financial benefits for specific categories of professionals. Teachers, doctors and cultural workers from the Russian Federation are eligible to receive bonuses on top of their salaries if they commit to stay in the temporarily occupied territories for at least five years.¹⁷

D. Prohibition on the forced conscription of inhabitants of the occupied territory

15. Under international humanitarian law, the occupying Power may not compel protected persons to serve in its own armed forces, nor may it exercise any pressure or use propaganda that aims at securing voluntary enlistment.¹⁸

16. In October 2024 and in April 2025, the Russian Federation conducted annual military conscription campaigns, including in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. Information about the number of people conscripted in the temporarily occupied territories was not publicly available at the time of writing. However, it was highlighted in Russian media that people from the occupied areas of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson Oblasts were conscripted during these campaigns, and they were shown swearing an oath of allegiance and beginning their basic training in the Russian Federation.¹⁹

17. During the 2024–2025 school year, the Russian Ministry of Education introduced new mandatory school subjects with military training, including in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. Russian-appointed officials continued expanding “cadet classes” in public schools for children as young as six years old with the stated aim to prepare them for entry into law enforcement and the military. In addition, the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation organized and endorsed recreational activities to promote military training and future military service for children. Since the beginning of the school year in September 2024, the “Movement of the Firsts”, sponsored by the occupying authorities, held a tournament game called “Zarnitsa 2.0”, which involved children in simulated military activities.²⁰

18. The occupying authorities of the Russian Federation also provided additional financial incentives for residents of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to join the Russian armed forces. In addition to a one-time payment of 400,000 roubles (approximately \$3,500) offered to all eligible Russian citizens and foreigners signing

¹⁴ See OHCHR, “The impact of the armed conflict and occupation on children’s rights in Ukraine, 24 February 2022–31 December 2024”.

¹⁵ Fourth Geneva Convention, art. 49.

¹⁶ See <http://government.ru/rugovclassifier/908/events/>.

¹⁷ For example, medical workers are required to work for at least 5 years in their new location. See <https://xn--h1alcedd.xn--d1aqf.xn--p1ai/instructions/kak-vospolzovatsya-programmoy-zemskiy-doktor/> (accessed on 16 May 2025).

¹⁸ Fourth Geneva Convention, art. 51.

¹⁹ See <https://iz.ru/1792019/2024-11-16/prizyvniki-iz-novykh-regionov-vpervye-otpravilis-na-srochnuii-sluzhbu-v-riady-vs-rf> (accessed on 16 May 2025).

²⁰ For more information on Zarnitsa 2.0, see <https://зарница.будьдвижении.рф/> (accessed on 16 May 2025, accessible only within the Russian Federation).

a contract with the Russian armed forces between 1 August and 31 December 2024,²¹ the occupying authorities in Crimea offered 400,000 roubles or, for residents of Sevastopol, 500,000 roubles (some \$4,400) for joining the Russian armed forces during the same period.²²

IV. Right to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security

19. OHCHR continued to document cases of extrajudicial executions, deaths in custody, arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment, including sexual violence and enforced disappearances in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. Under international human rights law and international humanitarian law, torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as well as enforced disappearance, arbitrary deprivation of life and arbitrary detention are absolutely prohibited.²³

20. Between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025, OHCHR interviewed 57 former civilian detainees (31 men and 26 women), 10 of whom were released during the reporting period, and collected additional information on cases of detention from a variety of other sources. Fifty-two of the released detainees (30 men and 22 women) described acts that could amount to torture or ill-treatment during their detention, including during interrogation, and inhumane conditions of detention. The main acts included severe beatings, kicks, electric shocks to various body parts, sexual violence, degradation, humiliation and threats of violence. For example, one man held in administrative detention for alleged curfew violations in Zaporizhzhia Oblast between August and December 2024 reported being subjected to electric shocks during the initial interrogation, with wires connected to his nipples and genitalia.

21. Interviewees also shared accounts of sexual violence in detention. Twelve women and nine men interviewed by OHCHR during the reporting period described different forms of sexual violence, including rape, attempted rape, genital mutilation, beatings and electric shocks to genitals, degrading treatment of a sexual nature, forced nudity, beatings and electric shocks while nude, being forced to use the toilet or shower in front of members of the opposite sex, and threats of rape, castration or other forms of sexual violence. OHCHR found that sexual violence was used to intimidate, extract information and humiliate. Of the 12 women and 9 men interviewed, 6 women and 1 man recounted acts of sexual violence that occurred during the reporting period, including electric shocks to the genitals, forced nudity and, in the case of the women, being forced to shower or to use toilet facilities in the presence of men.

22. OHCHR also documented dire conditions of detention, such as insufficient access to, or quality of food, restrictions on access to toilets, limited hygiene and unsanitary, hot or cold or otherwise inadequate living quarters and a lack of adequate medical assistance. In one case, a woman detainee who had been transferred to an official detention facility in the Russian Federation, where she was held from October

²¹ Decree No. 644 of the President of the Russian Federation dated 31 July 2024.

²² Decree No. 196-U by the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation in Crimea dated 2 August 2024.

²³ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, arts. 6, 7 and 9; Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (Third Geneva Convention), art. 13; Fourth Geneva Convention, arts. 27 and 32; Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), art. 75(2).

2023 to September 2024, described being confined in a dilapidated cell infested with cockroaches and mice, lacking ventilation, and exposed to extreme heat in the summer and persistent cold in the winter.

23. The widespread use of methods that would amount to torture and ill-treatment, dire conditions of detention, and lack of medical treatment have contributed to deaths in custody. OHCHR documented that at least three people (two men and one woman) detained in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine died in custody during the reporting period. For example, in September 2024, Viktoriia Roshchyna, a Ukrainian journalist who had disappeared in August 2023 while reporting from the occupied areas of Zaporizhzhia Oblast, died in custody in the Russian Federation, according to information her family received from Russian officials. Ukrainian authorities reported that the Russian authorities returned her body in February 2025 and that it bore signs of torture. At no point prior to her reported death did the Russian authorities provide her family with information about her health, conditions of detention, or the formal charges laid against her. In another case, in February 2025, a Crimean Tatar man died in detention after being deported to the Russian Federation from Crimea while serving an 8-year sentence for participation in an organization designated as “terrorist”. Before his death, the man told his family that he had been subjected to beatings while in detention and had developed diabetes and pulmonary oedema. Since February 2022, OHCHR has documented that at least 27 civilian men and 7 civilian women detained by the Russian authorities in the context of the armed conflict in Ukraine died in custody due to torture or inhumane conditions, including insufficient provision of medical care.

24. During the reporting period, OHCHR documented several cases of Ukrainian civilians detained in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine under circumstances that may amount to arbitrary deprivation of liberty, for example, when the persons were held in unofficial places of detention.

25. Relatives of detained civilians continued to report that, despite their numerous appeals to the Russian authorities, information about the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones remained lacking. Many cases of detention could qualify as enforced disappearances. Family members interviewed by OHCHR, many of whom are women searching for detained male relatives, described enduring severe emotional distress and related health problems due to the prolonged silence and uncertainty. For example, the relatives of a teenage boy arrested in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine in 2025 spent three weeks attempting to obtain information about him before the police told them that he was alive and facing high treason charges. According to the family, the police, however, did not reveal his whereabouts or any information about his treatment and conditions of detention, which remained unknown as at June 2025.

26. OHCHR also documented numerous likely infringements of due process and fair trial rights. For example, 34 civilian detainees (17 men and 17 women) interviewed during the reporting period, including 3 men and 7 women who were convicted, provided credible and reliable accounts of being tortured during interrogations, including to extract forced confessions and other testimonies or information.

27. The authorities of the Russian Federation also continued to hold Ukrainian prisoners of war in multiple facilities in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine during the reporting period. Almost all of the prisoners of war captured by the Russian armed forces during the reporting period and interviewed by OHCHR provided consistent accounts of being subject to torture or ill-treatment during evacuation, short periods of internment in makeshift places, or interrogations in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

V. Fundamental freedoms and religion

A. Freedom of opinion and expression

28. During the reporting period, the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation continued to prosecute individuals for the exercise of their right to freedom of opinion and expression. Restrictions on the right to freedom of expression are only permissible if they are provided by law and are necessary for respecting the rights or reputations of others, protecting national security, public order, public health or morals.²⁴ Displaying Ukrainian symbols, criticizing the Russian armed forces, or expressing dissenting opinions that do not amount to incitement to hostility or violence are generally a legitimate exercise of freedom of expression.

29. Drawing on article 20.3 (1) of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Russian Federation, which prohibits “extremist” activities or the display of “Nazi” symbols, the occupying authorities continued to issue fines to residents for posting Ukrainian-related content on social media, such as the Ukrainian coat of arms or Ukrainian songs. Publicly available court records analysed by OHCHR show that Russian-appointed Crimean courts fined 131 people (71 men and 60 women) during the reporting period for posting Ukrainian-related content under this provision. For example, in November 2024, a man was sentenced to seven days of administrative detention for posting on his personal social media account an image of the Ukrainian coat of arms with the Ukrainian flag in the background.

30. Other than in Crimea, Russian-appointed court records in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine are not publicly available, which impedes an assessment of the scope of such prosecutions. However, in one case documented by OHCHR during the reporting period, the occupying authorities detained a woman in Melitopol (Zaporizhzhia Oblast) in February 2024 for taking pictures with pro-Ukrainian symbols and found her guilty of disseminating “extremist materials”.

31. The Russian authorities also took further measures targeting the expression of Ukrainian nationalism and identity, including by Ukrainians residing in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. On 28 December 2024, the Russian Federation adopted a State strategy on countering extremism that characterizes “Ukrainian nationalism” as a form of extremism and describes “extremism in Ukraine” as a threat to national security.²⁵ A Russian State-funded 10-hour online course “Prevention of the spread of neo-Nazism ideology among children and youth” instructed educators to treat Ukrainian symbols and the expression of pro-Ukrainian sympathies among children as indicators that they might engage in illegal activity.²⁶

32. The occupying authorities in Crimea also held 506 people (316 women and 190 men) liable for the administrative offence of “discrediting the Russian armed forces”, and convicted two men of a related criminal offence.²⁷ In the majority of cases, Crimean residents were sanctioned, inter alia, for referring to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation as an “attack”, “aggression”, or “war” (as opposed to the expression “special military operation” used by the Russian Federation), calling for an end to the war, criticizing Russian military activities or the

²⁴ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 19 (3).

²⁵ Decree No. 1124 of the President of the Russian Federation dated 28 December 2024, annex, paras. 6, 14, and 20–24.

²⁶ The course is available at <https://akademiya.znanierussia.ru/course/profilaktika-ideologii-neonacizma-sredi-detej-i-molodezhi/>.

²⁷ Code of Administrative Offences of the Russian Federation, art. 20.3.3. If the offence is repeated, it could lead to criminal liability under arts. 207.3 and 280.3 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation.

President of the Russian Federation, or making references to the suffering of civilians or the occupation of Crimea in social media posts and comments in reaction to other users' content, or in oral statements made in public places. In one case, a court fined a man 30,000 roubles (\$372) in December 2024 for "discrediting the Russian armed forces" because he asked others to pray for Odesa, Kherson, Mykolaiv and Chernihiv in a post on social media. In another case, a court fined a woman 30,000 roubles (\$372) in December 2024 for calling for the respect of the territorial integrity of and justice for Ukraine in a post on social media.

33. During entry and exit from the temporarily occupied territories, as well as during stops on the street or at checkpoints, which are common occurrences in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation subjected residents to invasive inspections of their electronic devices, including private communications on social media platforms. Interlocutors also told OHCHR that they were afraid to express their opinions, even in private conversations with family or friends, including over the phone, due to possible electronic surveillance.

34. International human rights law establishes and protects the right not to be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence, or to unlawful attacks on honour and reputation.²⁸

35. Media in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine remained severely restricted. On 11 February 2025, the Russian-appointed governor of the occupied areas of Kherson Oblast signed a decree prohibiting the purchase and use of "unlicensed" satellite TV equipment for receiving foreign television broadcasts. The stated purpose of the decree was to "prevent the spread of false information".²⁹ One witness reported to OHCHR that Russian armed forces had carried out inspections of her house to determine whether she was watching Ukrainian television stations or using satellite dishes capable of receiving them. Access to Ukrainian websites and media remained restricted.

36. During the reporting period, the Russian Federation initiated new proceedings against the Crimean Tatar newspaper "Qirim" (Crimea) and its editor-in-chief. On 27 August 2024, following two convictions for "discrediting the Russian armed forces" in June of that year, a Russian-appointed magistrates' court in Simferopol fined the newspaper 250,000 roubles (\$2,197) under art. 13.15 (9) of the Russian Code of Administrative Offences ("dissemination of unreliable socially significant information under the guise of reliable messages") for having referenced the 2023 report of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine (A/HRC/53/64). In November 2024, the newspaper and the editor-in-chief were prosecuted anew under art. 13.15 (2.1) of the Russian Code of Administrative Offences ("abuse of freedom of information").

B. Freedom of religion

37. The occupying authorities of the Russian Federation continued to restrict the right to freedom of religion and belief for certain religious communities in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

²⁸ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 17.

²⁹ Decree of the "governor" of the temporarily occupied Kherson Oblast, 11 February 2025, <https://khogov.ru/documents/ukaz-gubernatora-hersonskoj-oblasti-ot-11-02-2025-%E2%84%96-17-u-o-zaprete-ispolzovaniya-na-territorii-hersonskoj-oblasti-komplektov-sputnikovogo-televideniya-ne-prednaznachennyh-dlya-raboty-v/>.

38. With the imposition of Russian legislation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, religious organizations were required to register with the Russian authorities in accordance with Russian law. While the Orthodox Church of Ukraine and the Jehovah's Witnesses religious group had been registered in Crimea, as well as in the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia Oblasts of Ukraine before the occupation, no religious organizations from these denominations have been registered under Russian law.³⁰ Without registration, individuals and communities can be held liable for practicing or demonstrating their religion, which may amount to a violation of their right to publicly manifest their beliefs and participate in religious ceremonies.³¹

39. In July and August 2024, the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation destroyed the "Hresto-vozdvizhenska" chapel of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in Yevpatoriia, Crimea. The occupying authorities had attempted to demolish the chapel since 2019, arguing that it did not possess the necessary construction documents. OHCHR verified that the church had been demolished. The chapel had been built by the local congregation before the Russian occupation of Crimea in 2014 and had all required documentation, according to a representative of the religious community.

40. All congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses remained banned as "extremist organizations".³² During the reporting period, OHCHR documented two new criminal cases filed against Jehovah's Witnesses from Crimea (one man and one woman). They were both arrested on the basis of their membership of Jehovah's Witnesses and charged with "extremist activities" for conducting or participating in worship gatherings. In addition, on 3 October 2024, the Russian-appointed Supreme Court in Crimea replaced the six-year suspended sentence of two Jehovah's Witnesses from Krasnogvardiyske with a sentence of six years in a penal colony in the Russian Federation. The two men were convicted in July 2024 for "organizing the activities of an extremist organization".

41. Some Muslim communities were also targeted. On 21 October 2024, OHCHR documented that the Russian-appointed Supreme Court of Crimea had removed the Muslim independent religious community "Alushta" from the Russian register of religious organizations upon a petition of the Russian-appointed Ministry of Justice in Crimea, which claimed that the community had disseminated "extremist materials". The legal prosecution against this religious community began in 2023, when, after a search of its facility, the community was fined 100,000 roubles (\$879) for the possession of religious books considered "extremist materials". OHCHR has also documented that the occupying authorities arrested at least five Crimean Tatar men on suspicion of membership in the Islamist organization Hizb ut-Tahrir and charged them with organizing and participating in a terrorist organization. Hizb ut-Tahrir is designated as a terrorist organization under Russian law, but not under Ukrainian law.

C. Lawyers, human rights defenders and representatives of civil society

42. The occupying authorities of the Russian Federation detained and prosecuted at least two human rights defenders and lawyers for what appear to be professional activities.

³⁰ OHCHR reviewed data on registered religious organizations from the Russian Ministry of Justice, available at <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/pages/reestr-nekommercheskih-organizacij/> (accessible only within the Russian Federation).

³¹ See International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 18.

³² A/HRC/44/21, para. 35.

43. In November 2024, the occupying authorities detained a Crimean Tatar lawyer for 10 days under charges of “public display of Nazi or extremist symbols” for reposting on social media a picture containing the Ukrainian coat of arms and fined him 50,000 roubles (\$439) for “discrediting the Russian armed forces”. He and another lawyer with whom he shared a house appeared to have been targeted for their professional activities. During a search of their house, law enforcement officers examined documents that would ordinarily be protected by attorney-client privilege and seized seals and documents containing information on the criminal cases against their clients. OHCHR previously documented that the occupying authorities had unlawfully disbarred the lawyer and warned him not to engage in illegal activities in July 2022.³³

44. During the reporting period, the occupying authorities also disbarred another human rights lawyer residing in Crimea, citing a court decision holding him liable for violating the Russian Code of Administrative Offences for condemning the use of cluster munitions and depicting the Ukrainian coat of arms in social media posts.³⁴

45. In the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, interlocutors told OHCHR that finding independent and competent legal representation was nearly impossible. Lawyers have refused to take on cases involving individuals suspected of criticizing the Russian occupation or helping the Ukrainian armed forces, fearing that they themselves might face intimidation, harassment and reprisals. Russian lawyers based in the Russian Federation told OHCHR that they had declined to take on cases from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, either out of concern for their safety or to avoid being perceived as condoning the occupation of Ukrainian territories. Intimidation of lawyers for the lawful exercise of their professional activities not only undermines the integrity of the legal profession, but also the right to a fair trial.

VI. Economic, social and cultural rights

A. Right to education

46. Under international human rights law, States have an obligation to provide education that does not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.³⁵ According to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, this education should also be “culturally appropriate”³⁶ and “[respect] the child’s own cultural identity, language and values”.³⁷ International humanitarian law also requires an occupying Power, with the cooperation of the national and local authorities, to facilitate the proper working of all institutions devoted to the care and education of children, and it may not, in any case, change their personal status, or enlist them in formations or organizations subordinate to it.³⁸

³³ A/HRC/59/CRP.1, para. 45.

³⁴ OHCHR, “Report on the Human Rights Situation in Ukraine, 1 August to 30 November 2023”, 12 December 2023, para. 60.

³⁵ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, art. 2; Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 2.

³⁶ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, general comments No. 21 (2009), para. 26 and No. 13 (1999), para. 6.

³⁷ Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 29; Committee on the Rights of the Child, general comment No. 1 (2001), para. 4; Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, general comment No. 21, para. 15. See also Committee on the Rights of the Child, general comment No. 1, para. 9.

³⁸ Fourth Geneva Convention, article 50.

47. The Russian authorities continued to impose the Russian State curriculum in the temporarily occupied territories where they conduct instruction in the Russian language only.³⁹

48. The occupying authorities of the Russian Federation further intensified efforts to instil Russian “patriotism” in children through educational and recreational activities, including by enlisting them in State-affiliated youth groups.⁴⁰ The introduction of new compulsory military subjects in schools had the stated aim of preparing children for military or civil service in Russian state institutions.⁴¹ The “Strategy of State Cultural Policy until 2030”, adopted in September 2024 as a guide for the development and funding of State programmes, listed as its “most important task” the integration of “the new constituent entities of the Russian Federation [...] into the Russian cultural-humanitarian space”.⁴² The law on youth policy was subsequently amended to define and prioritize patriotic education for State youth programmes.⁴³ A law on child rights was also amended to require all educational activities during school holidays, including summer camps, to “develop a sense of patriotism in children”.⁴⁴

49. Families who allowed their children to follow the Ukrainian curriculum in online classes or refused to send their children to public schools described facing pressure from the occupying authorities. For example, parents who left the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine during the reporting period reported that the occupying authorities had threatened to deprive them of their parental rights if they did not send their children to the local public schools.

B. Property rights

50. Under international humanitarian law, private property must be respected and cannot be confiscated by the occupying Power.⁴⁵

51. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has stated that land plays an essential role in the realization of a range of rights under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.⁴⁶

52. During the reporting period, the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation multiplied efforts to expropriate “abandoned” private property, using laws adopted in

³⁹ Unlike in previous years, the Russian Federation has not published information regarding the availability and accessibility of Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar language classes and schools in Crimea for 2024. In its judgment of January 2024, the International Court of Justice found that the way in which the Russian Federation had implemented its educational system in Crimea after 2014 with regard to school education in the Ukrainian language had violated its obligations under articles 2 (1) (a) and 5 (e) (v) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. See *Application of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Ukraine v. Russian Federation)*, Judgment, 31 January 2024 (2024/8), paras. 358–370. The Court’s findings relied in part on the decrease in the number of children who received education in the Ukrainian language after the Russian Federation occupied Crimea. See [A/79/258](#), para. 57.

⁴⁰ OHCHR, “The impact of the armed conflict and occupation on children’s rights in Ukraine, 24 February 2022–31 December 2024”, March 2025, paras. 104–108.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, paras. 95–108.

⁴² Order No. 2501-p of the Government of the Russian Federation dated 11 September 2024, annex, p. 16.

⁴³ Russian Federation Law No. 550-FZ dated 28 December 2024.

⁴⁴ Russian Federation Law No. 543-FZ dated 28 December 2024.

⁴⁵ Hague Regulations, arts. 46 and 56.

⁴⁶ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, general comment No. 26 (2022), para. 1.

2023 and 2024.⁴⁷ The occupying authorities posted notifications concerning at least 24,870 potentially abandoned properties, both on doors and via official websites. Many of these properties are owned by individuals who fled to territory controlled by Ukraine. The highest numbers of properties receiving such notifications were in Donetsk Oblast (nearly 18,000). In Mariupol alone, over 12,191 apartments were listed as potentially “abandoned” between December 2024 and June 2025. In total, OHCHR has documented the listing of at least 29,697 properties as potentially abandoned since the relevant laws were adopted.

53. The publication of a notice that a private property is potentially “abandoned” triggers a 30-day period for the owner to confirm ownership or risk having the property transferred to the local council. However, it was difficult or impossible for many individuals to comply with the requirements for confirming ownership. The requirement for property owners to present themselves in person to confirm ownership posed significant logistical and security challenges for those residing outside the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. Several individuals interviewed by OHCHR stated they would not return due to fears of being detained for their actual or perceived pro-Ukrainian views or connections to members of the Ukrainian armed forces. The requirement to present a passport of the Russian Federation also prevented Ukrainians without Russian citizenship from confirming ownership of their property.⁴⁸

54. In cases where owners are unable or unwilling to confirm ownership, a Russian-appointed court in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine can transfer ownership of the property to local authorities. OHCHR is not aware of any publicly available records indicating the number of properties that have been transferred to local authorities. The occupying authorities announced their intention to use expropriated properties to accommodate “incoming specialists” from the Russian Federation.⁴⁹

55. In Crimea, courts of the occupying authorities continued to “order” persons without Russian citizenship, including Ukrainian citizens, to relinquish land ownership, relying on a 2020 decree that declared significant parts of Crimea a “border territory” and restricted land ownership in those areas to citizens of the Russian Federation.⁵⁰ For example, in December 2024, a Russian-appointed court in Sevastopol ordered a Ukrainian citizen to relinquish ownership of his property because he did not hold Russian citizenship.

56. Additionally, the occupying authorities continued granting land plots in Crimea to the armed or auxiliary forces of the Russian Federation. For example, the Russian-appointed mayor of Sevastopol announced in November 2024 that 549 Russian military servicepersons had received land plots.⁵¹ In the rest of Crimea, by the end of 2024, over 4,400 land plots had been re-allocated to Russian military servicepersons. After May 2024, the re-allocation of land plots increased by 248 per cent.⁵²

⁴⁷ Previously reported in A/79/258, para. 62.

⁴⁸ The requirement to present a passport of the Russian Federation is explicit in legislation and instructions in Zaporizhzhia Oblast. See, for example, instructions on the official site of the occupying authorities in Zaporizhzhia Oblast: https://zo.gov.ru/news/show_group/vyyavlennoe_besxozhajnoe_imushchestvo. OHCHR has also documented that this requirement is in practice in other oblasts.

⁴⁹ Available at: <https://t.me/mizozap/2359> (accessed on 19 May 2025).

⁵⁰ Available at <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202003200021?index=4&rangeSize=1>.

⁵¹ See the statement of the Russian-appointed head of Sevastopol, available at <https://t.me/razvozhaev/8878> (accessed on 22 July 2025).

⁵² A/79/258, para. 64.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

57. The present report highlights allegations of serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law by the Russian Federation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. It contains findings that are consistent with the 12 previous reports that I have presented since 2018. The Russian authorities have generally not investigated or prosecuted the alleged violations identified in previous reports, partly due to the Russian legislation effectively granting immunity to perpetrators of human rights violations committed in the context of the armed conflict in Ukraine.

58. The continuing lack of mutually acceptable terms to ensure meaningful access by regional and international human rights monitoring mechanisms to the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine prevents comprehensive first-hand monitoring and reporting in the interests of all parties. I urge the Russian Federation to make every effort to ensure unfettered access by OHCHR and other international and regional human rights monitoring mechanisms to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol and certain areas of Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts, Ukraine, temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation, to enable the effective implementation of the relevant General Assembly resolutions. I continue to offer my good offices to pursue discussions with all relevant actors, including the Russian Federation, in relation to access for OHCHR to the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, and in relation to any potential violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law that may have occurred therein, and to convey the concerns raised by the General Assembly in its resolution [79/184](#).

59. I urge Ukraine to continue to cooperate fully with OHCHR, including on the issue of access.

60. I call upon the Russian Federation to fully uphold its obligations under international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, international human rights law and international humanitarian law. In particular, the Russian authorities must respect the laws in force in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, and they are urged to roll back any legal and administrative changes they have made that are inconsistent with international humanitarian law. Ukrainian citizens must not be compelled or pressured to acquire Russian citizenship, and basic services must be made available to all residents without any discrimination based on citizenship or any other ground. I urge the Russian Federation to end the conscription of inhabitants of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine into its armed forces.

61. The Russian authorities must comply fully with the absolute prohibition of torture and other forms of ill-treatment, sexual violence, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances, and ensure the independent, impartial, prompt and effective investigation of all allegations of torture, ill-treatment, sexual violence, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrest and detention, and other violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. The Russian Federation has the obligation to ensure that the rights of persons deprived of liberty in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine are fully respected. Civilian detainees should be released as soon as the lawful reason for their detention ceases to exist, and their protection against refoulement must be ensured.

62. I welcome the exchanges of prisoners of war and return of remains that took place during the reporting period. I commend the efforts of all involved and urge the parties to increase the scope and pace of these exchanges.

63. I urge the Russian Federation to ensure that the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, association, thought, conscience and religion can be freely exercised by

all individuals and groups living in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine without discrimination on any grounds or unjustified interference. Consistent with international human rights law, individuals must be able to peacefully express their opinions even if their opinions may be considered critical of the Russian authorities, the occupation, and the war in Ukraine without fear of retaliation, imprisonment or other sanctions. Individuals should not be subjected to any arbitrary or unlawful interference with their privacy and family.

64. No individual should be charged or detained simply for practising their religion, including in the forms of collective worship and proselytizing, in accordance with international human rights law. Religious groups in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine should enjoy access to their places of worship and be able to gather freely for prayer and other religious practices.

65. I urge the Russian Federation to immediately cease the deportation of protected persons from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including detainees. The Russian Federation should ensure that all protected persons previously transferred within or deported from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine are allowed to return to their homes.

66. I urge the Russian Federation to provide full information about Ukrainian children forcibly transferred within the occupied territory or deported to the Russian Federation, including those in institutional care and those placed within Russian families, to the Central Tracing Agency; and to refrain from making any changes to their personal status, including nationality, which may impede efforts at tracing them, and at facilitating their repatriation and reunification with their families. I also urge the Russian Federation to abolish the simplified procedure allowing guardians to apply for Russian citizenship on behalf of Ukrainian children.

67. I urge the Russian Federation to cease all measures that effectively compel Ukrainian children to swear allegiance to the Russian Federation, dismantle military training and educational programmes aimed at securing future enlistment of children in the Russian armed forces, and end the enlistment of children in formations or organizations subordinate to the Russian Federation, such as those providing patriotic-military education. The Russian Federation should restore access to education following the Ukrainian State curriculum, both in-person and online.

68. The Russian Federation must immediately cease its confiscation of private property in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and rescind the requirement to be a Russian citizen to own, buy or sell property. I also urge it to restore the property rights of all owners deprived of their titles as a result of confiscation processes carried out by the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation in the temporarily occupied territory.

69. I appeal to the Russian Federation to prevent, investigate and prosecute all alleged violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed by its forces or authorities, including allegations of conflict-related sexual violence, to hold perpetrators to account and ensure due reparations for victims and survivors, according to a gender-sensitive approach.

70. I call upon all Member States to continue supporting the work of the United Nations to ensure respect for international human rights law and international humanitarian law. It remains essential for Member States to renew discussions to facilitate unimpeded access to the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine by international and regional human rights monitoring mechanisms.