



# General Assembly

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**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for  
Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner  
and the Secretary-General**

**Technical assistance and capacity-building**

### **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 interim report, the Secretary-General describes the progress made in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 80/223, including options and recommendations for improving its implementation.



## 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 80/223, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit an interim report to the Human Rights Council at its sixty-second session. In the same resolution, the Secretary-General was requested to submit a report on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution to the General Assembly at its eighty-first session.

2. In its resolution 68/262 and other relevant resolutions, including resolution 80/223, 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 are referred to as “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”. 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. The present is the fourteenth report of the Secretary-General on the human rights situation in the territories of Ukraine temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation. The report is focused on the period from 1 July to 31 December 2025, but it includes older cases documented during the reporting period when they are relevant for illustrating patterns of violations.

## II. Methodology

4. In its resolution 80/223, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to seek ways and means 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 16 January 2026, 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 with previous, similar requests, OHCHR had, as at 17 April 2026, not received an answer 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 and survivors 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.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Regulations Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague Regulations) of 1907, art. 43.

7. During the reporting period, the Russian Federation continued to impose its own political, legal, administrative, law enforcement and judicial systems in the territories of Ukraine that it temporarily occupies.

8. In addition, several legislative measures adopted by the Russian Federation had effects in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including a law concerning the conscription process, amendments to the educational programmes of the Russian Federation further restricting Ukrainian-language education, and a law on the nationalization of property in Ukraine deemed “abandoned” by the occupying Power.<sup>2</sup>

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

9. International humanitarian law prohibits compelling the inhabitants of an occupied territory to swear allegiance to a hostile Power.<sup>3</sup>

10. Since the start of the temporary occupation of Crimea in 2014 and certain areas of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia Oblasts in 2022, the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation have exerted pressure on residents in these temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to obtain Russian citizenship. This entails swearing allegiance to the Russian Federation. These efforts included restricting the access of people without Russian citizenship to essential medicines and healthcare, social protection, public sector employment, public education and freedom of movement.<sup>4</sup> The efforts to compel the population to obtain Russian citizenship continued during the reporting period. On 10 September 2025, a deadline expired for Ukrainian citizens in the Russian Federation and the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to acquire Russian citizenship, legalize their presence according to Russian legalisation, or leave.<sup>5</sup> The occupying authorities also required residents to re-register for mobile services using Russian passports by 1 November 2025.<sup>6</sup>

## **C. Transfers of civilians**

11. Under international humanitarian law, individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from an occupied territory to the territory of the occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited regardless of their motive. Nevertheless, the occupying Power may undertake total or partial evacuation of a given area if the security of the population or imperative military reasons so demand. This prohibition also applies to deportations and forcible transfers that take place indirectly through the commission of violations of international humanitarian law or human rights law

<sup>2</sup> Russian Federation, Federal Law No. 412-FZ of 4 November 2025 on Amendments to the Federal Law on Military Duty and Military Service and article 11 of the Federal Law on Alternative Civilian Service; Russian Federation, Order of the Ministry of Education No. 729 of 8 October 2025 on amendments to certain orders of the Ministry of Education concerning federal educational programmes for primary, basic and secondary general education; and Russian Federation, Federal Constitutional Law No. 4-FKZ of 15 December 2025 on Amendments to Certain Federal Constitutional Laws.

<sup>3</sup> Hague Regulations, art. 45.

<sup>4</sup> OHCHR, “Human rights situation during the Russian occupation of territory of Ukraine and its aftermath, 24 February 2022–31 December 2023”, March 2024, paras. 115–122.

<sup>5</sup> Russian Federation, Presidential Decree No. 159 of 20 March 2025.

<sup>6</sup> Russian Federation, Federal Law No. 126-FZ of 7 July 2003 on Communications restricts telecom services to identified subscribers, with penalties established under article 13.29.1 of the Code of Administrative Offences, effective from 1 September 2025.

with the effect to cause the population to leave.<sup>7</sup> This prohibition further applies to protected persons accused of offences, who, if convicted following fair proceedings, should serve their sentences in occupied territory.<sup>8</sup>

12. The occupying authorities of the Russian Federation transferred protected persons from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to territory controlled by the Government of Ukraine, deported them to the Russian Federation or third countries, and implemented policies and practices that forced people to leave.<sup>9</sup> The Russian authorities have also prevented many people displaced from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine from returning. Those who opposed or were perceived as opposing the occupation have been specifically targeted.<sup>10</sup>

13. During the reporting period, the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation directly deported to Georgia dozens of Ukrainian citizens who had completed their prison sentences but had refused to obtain Russian citizenship. Some of these persons had served their prison sentences in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. Others had served their sentences in the Russian Federation, having been deported there from detention facilities located in Kherson, Zaporizhzhia and Mykolaiv Oblasts of Ukraine. For example, on 8 July 2025, the occupying authorities deported to Georgia one woman released from a penal colony in Melitopol, in the temporarily occupied part of Zaporizhzhia Oblast of Ukraine. She had refused to obtain Russian citizenship. She told OHCHR that she had observed dozens of other released prisoners being deported at the border.

14. OHCHR interviewed 89 people (29 men and 60 women) who had left the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine in the reporting period. Among the reasons that they cited for leaving were threats and intimidation by the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation, including searches of homes and, in some cases, detention, for holding pro-Ukrainian views; denial of medical care, treatment and medication for chronic or serious conditions; and loss of employment, pensions and other social benefits related to the absence of a Russian personal identification number.

15. Russian authorities also continued to prevent people from returning to the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. In August 2025, for example, a Russian court in Moscow upheld the decision of the Federal Security Service, at the border, to deny entry to a Ukrainian woman and her minor son at the Sheremetyevo airport, the only possible entry point for them to return to their home in the temporarily occupied part of Zaporizhzhia Oblast. The refusal relied on an assessment of social media activity and perceived pro-Ukrainian views. OHCHR reviewed 35 court decisions concerning similar entry bans imposed for reasons including the presence of images of Ukrainian flags or symbols on mobile phones or social media.

16. In July 2025, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that no legal basis could be identified for the transfer of children from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to the Russian Federation, nor did such transfers appear to qualify as lawful evacuations. The Court held that the Russian Federation must release or safely return persons unlawfully deprived of their liberty who remained in its custody, including deported children.<sup>11</sup> In its resolution ES-11/9, adopted in December 2025, the General Assembly “urges the Russian Federation to cease, without delay, any further practice of forcible transfer, deportation,

<sup>7</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Commentary of 2025 on Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, commentary to art. 49, paras. 3171 and 3172, available at <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gciv-1949>.

<sup>8</sup> Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention), art. 76.

<sup>9</sup> OHCHR, “Forced displacement from territory of Ukraine occupied by the Russian Federation: forcible transfer and deportation, barriers to return, and the rights of internally displaced persons, 24 February 2022–31 December 2025”, March 2026, paras. 23–29.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 57–60.

<sup>11</sup> See European Court of Human Rights, *Ukraine and the Netherlands v. Russia*, Applications No. 8019/16, No. 43800/14, No. 28525/20 and No. 11055/22, Judgment, 9 July 2025. Since 24 February 2022, OHCHR has collected information about the transfer of some 200 children from Donetsk, Kharkiv, Kherson and Kyiv Oblasts to other oblasts in Russian-occupied territory in Ukraine, to the Russian Federation, or to Belarus.

separation from families and legal guardians, change of personal status, including through citizenship, adoption or placement in foster families, and indoctrination of Ukrainian children” (para. 2). According to the Ukrainian State-led initiative “Bring Kids Back”, since the start of the full-scale invasion, 1,972 children have returned to Ukraine, including 7 in December 2025.<sup>12</sup>

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

17. Under international humanitarian law, the occupying Power may not compel protected persons to serve in its armed forces or exert any pressure or use any propaganda that aims at securing voluntary enlistment.<sup>13</sup>

18. Since October 2023, the Russian authorities have conducted biannual conscription campaigns in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. For the first time, in October 2025, men aged 18 to 30 from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine received digital conscription notices, which increased the ability of the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation to force protected persons into military service, including through enforcement at border crossings. In December 2025, a presidential decree extended the biannual campaigns to a yearlong process, exposing residents in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to an ongoing threat of conscription.<sup>14</sup>

19. The occupying authorities of the Russian Federation continued to require men in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to register for military service, exposing them to conscription or mobilization into the armed forces of the occupying Power. In one case, a 21-year-old man reported leaving the temporarily occupied part of Kherson Oblast of Ukraine in October 2025 after being summoned to the military registration office.

20. Russian law enforcement authorities continued applying pressure on detained Ukrainians, including those detained for minor offences such as traffic violations, to sign contracts with the Russian armed forces. In one case, a Ukrainian man from the temporarily occupied areas of Kherson Oblast of Ukraine joined the Russian army in exchange for having a 12-year prison sentence commuted. He was subsequently captured by Ukrainian forces and interviewed by OHCHR as a prisoner of war.

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

21. International human rights law and international humanitarian law prohibit torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, enforced disappearance, arbitrary deprivation of life and arbitrary detention. These protections also apply during occupation.<sup>15</sup>

22. OHCHR documented that, during the reporting period, Russian armed forces carried out extrajudicial executions of three civilians (two men and one woman). Since 24 February

<sup>12</sup> For additional information, see OHCHR, “The impact of the armed conflict and occupation on children’s rights in Ukraine, 24 February 2022–31 December 2024”, March 2025.

<sup>13</sup> Fourth Geneva Convention, art. 51.

<sup>14</sup> Russian Federation, Presidential Decree No. 998 of 29 December 2025.

<sup>15</sup> 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; and 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).

2022, OHCHR has documented that Russian armed forces have carried out extrajudicial executions of 182 civilians (148 men, 27 women, 5 boys and 2 girls) in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.<sup>16</sup>

23. OHCHR interviewed 62 Ukrainian civilian detainees (59 men and 3 women) who were released during the reporting period. Findings from these interviews were in line with previous findings by OHCHR that civilian detainees from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine have been subjected to widespread and systematic acts that could amount to torture and ill-treatment, including frequent use of sexual violence.<sup>17</sup>

24. More than 92 per cent of the interviewees provided detailed accounts of having been subjected to torture or ill-treatment during detention. Sixty-two per cent reported witnessing torture or ill-treatment of other detainees. Frequently described methods of torture and ill-treatment included beatings with batons, sticks and other objects, being kicked, electric shocks to various body parts, threats of violence, dog attacks, sleep deprivation and humiliation.

25. Of the 62 civilian detainees interviewed, 30 (29 men and 1 woman) also reported acts of sexual violence, including electric shocks and beatings to genitals, electric shocks and beatings while naked, forced nudity, being forced to use the toilet or shower in front of members of the opposite sex, and threats of rape, the rape of a loved one, and castration. In addition, OHCHR verified in the reporting period 13 cases of sexual violence, against 12 women and 1 girl, that had occurred before the reporting period in residential areas where Russian armed forces were stationed.

26. The released detainees also described inhumane and degrading conditions of detention, including insufficient access to food or the provision of food of inadequate quality, restrictions on access to toilets, limited hygiene, unsanitary conditions, and exposure to excessive heat or cold. One Ukrainian detainee held in multiple detention facilities in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine reported poor nutrition, limited water and non-functioning utilities, as well as mould-covered beds, broken sewerage systems, lack of heating and walls covered in ice.

27. Several detainees from the occupied territories with serious medical conditions remain in detention, including human rights activists Tofik Abdulhaziev, Amet Suleimanov, Servet Gaziiev, Lenur Khalilov, Oleksandr Sizikov and Yashar Sheikhametov, raising concerns about their health and well-being. Mr. Khalilov was released in August 2025 on humanitarian grounds due to advanced-stage cancer. However, a Russian court overturned the release following a prosecutor's appeal and ordered his return to prison in October 2025.

28. OHCHR documented that at least 39 Ukrainian civilians (30 men and 9 women) have died in the custody of the Russian authorities since 24 February 2022 as a result of acts that potentially qualify as torture, ill-treatment and denial of adequate medical assistance, including treatment for torture-related injuries.

29. Relatives continued to report recurrent difficulties in obtaining information about the fate and whereabouts of their civilian family members who had been detained by the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation, raising serious concerns of enforced disappearance. As of October 2025, one woman had no information about the whereabouts of her husband, apprehended by the Russian armed forces in Zaporizhzhia Oblast of Ukraine in 2022. In another case, the occupying authorities in Crimea concealed the fate and whereabouts of a man detained in March 2024 for 19 months until his family discovered that he had been held in pretrial detention. The practice of incommunicado detention makes efforts to track and find missing persons particularly difficult.

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<sup>16</sup> This includes areas that came under the control of the Russian armed forces but were later returned to the control of Ukrainian authorities.

<sup>17</sup> OHCHR, "[Treatment of civilians deprived of their liberty in the context of the armed attack by the Russian Federation against Ukraine](#)", September 2025, para. 78.

## V. Fundamental freedoms

### A. Freedom of expression

30. 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.

31. The occupying authorities of the Russian Federation imposed fines ranging from 30,000 to 300,000 Russian roubles (approximately \$360 to \$3,600) in 211 cases (against 147 women and 64 men), using provisions of Russian legislation banning the dissemination of false information about the armed forces and State authorities of the Russian Federation and “public actions directed at discrediting” the Russian armed forces.<sup>18</sup> Residents were fined for expressing anti-war views, speaking out against the occupation or criticizing the Government of the Russian Federation, expressing pro-Ukrainian views or showing support for the Ukrainian armed forces.<sup>19</sup> Court records show that people were prosecuted for content found on their phones during checkpoint searches, including songs by Ukrainian artists and images of the State symbols of Ukraine or the colours of the flag of Ukraine. Russian-appointed courts issued numerous convictions in absentia, while most defendants who appeared in court pleaded guilty to obtain reduced sentences. Two women were sentenced by Russian-appointed courts, one to one year and eight months of forced labour and the other to five and a half years’ imprisonment, for expressing opinions critical of the Russian authorities and the war.

32. Treason charges were also brought against persons perceived as expressing pro-Ukrainian views. In August 2025, the Southern District Military Court in Rostov-on-Don, in the Russian Federation, sentenced a 49-year-old woman from the temporarily occupied part of Zaporizhzhia Oblast of Ukraine to 15 years of imprisonment on “treason” charges for painting pro-Ukrainian graffiti.

33. Expressions of identities linked to Ukraine or of dissent were also sanctioned under broadly worded administrative offences concerning the “propaganda or public display of Nazi paraphernalia or symbols” and the expression of disrespect towards the Russian State.<sup>20</sup> Russian-appointed courts in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine issued 30 guilty verdicts (against 19 men and 11 women) under these provisions for such acts as the display of Ukrainian national symbols, and imposed fines ranging from 1,000 to 95,000 Russian roubles (approximately \$12 to \$1,100) or administrative arrest for up to 14 days.

34. Russian-appointed courts in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine also prosecuted individuals on “extremism”-related charges. In December 2025, a man from Crimea was sentenced to three years in prison for comments that he had made on social media about the conduct of the Russian Federation in the war.

### B. Freedom of religion

35. The occupying authorities of the Russian Federation restricted the right to freedom of religion or belief in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, with Jehovah’s Witnesses among the most affected. OHCHR documented two new prosecutions targeting Jehovah’s Witnesses on “extremism”-related charges in Crimea.<sup>21</sup> On 16 October 2025, the European

<sup>18</sup> Russian Federation, Code of Administrative Offences (Federal Law No. 195-FZ of 30 December 2001, as subsequently amended), art. 20.3.3. See also Russian Federation, Criminal Code (Federal Law No. 63-FZ of 13 June 1996, as subsequently amended), arts. 207.3 and 280.3.

<sup>19</sup> Most of the decisions analysed by OHCHR were issued in Crimea and temporarily occupied parts of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson Oblasts of Ukraine where court documents are publicly available.

<sup>20</sup> Russian Federation, Code of Administrative Offences, arts. 20.3 (1) and 20.1 (3). See also Russian Federation, Criminal Code, art. 354.1.

<sup>21</sup> Information from other temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine was not available.

Court of Human Rights ruled that the criminalization of the peaceful religious activities of Jehovah's Witnesses under "extremism" charges was unlawful.<sup>22</sup>

36. The occupying authorities of the Russian Federation also targeted individuals believed to be affiliated with Hizb ut-Tahrir, an Islamic organization included in the list of "terrorist organizations" in the Russian Federation, but whose activities are legal in Ukraine. In October 2025, the occupying authorities charged four Crimean Tatar women with membership of Hizb ut-Tahrir. Their husbands had already been serving sentences on similar charges.

37. Religious groups and individuals in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine continued to be prosecuted under broadly defined proselytizing charges.<sup>23</sup> Fourteen new court cases concerning proselytizing-related offences occurred in the reporting period, involving one religious organization and 13 individuals (10 men and 3 women), including 4 Protestants, 5 Muslims and 1 Jew. In three cases, the individual's religion was not identified.<sup>24</sup>

38. Individuals and religious groups were prosecuted primarily for leading Muslim prayers for local congregations without official authorization and/or without formal registration of the mosque as belonging to a religious organization recognized under Russian law. Sanctions included fines of between 3,000 and 20,000 Russian roubles (approximately \$35 and \$240) for individuals and up to 30,000 Russian roubles (approximately \$360) for religious organizations.

### C. Human rights defenders and representatives of civil society

39. The occupying authorities of the Russian Federation continued to intimidate and harass human rights defenders, lawyers, local activists, journalists and community leaders in Crimea to obstruct their professional activities and public expression.

40. On 10 December 2025, officers from the Centre for Countering Extremism of the Russian Federation searched the office of seven prominent Crimean Tatar lawyers, citing allegations of terrorism-related offences and tax evasion.<sup>25</sup> The lawyers represent Crimean Tatars accused of Hizb ut-Tahrir affiliation and other Ukrainian citizens charged by the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation in Crimea with crimes against State security. They had previously faced searches, interrogations, short-term detention, fines and, in some cases, disbarment.

41. On 26 November 2025, law enforcement officers detained a 74-year-old Crimean Tatar historian and civic activist in Crimea for several hours and fined him 2,000 Russian roubles (approximately \$26) for a video published in 2020, in which he had called for an international tribunal to address the forced deportation of Crimean Tatars and other communities from Crimea in 1944.

### D. Right to privacy

42. People who left the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine during the reporting period told OHCHR that the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation maintained a pervasive system to control the private lives and communications of residents. The authorities regularly checked the contents of mobile phones at checkpoints, school administrations checked children's phones for software used to access Ukrainian education online, and law enforcement representatives conducted frequent home visits to individuals suspected of holding pro-Ukrainian views. One woman from Kherson Oblast recounted to OHCHR how two armed men in camouflage uniforms and balaclavas had come to her house in

<sup>22</sup> European Court of Human Rights, *Markin and Others v. Russia*, Applications Nos. 20519/18 and 13 others, Judgment, 16 October 2025.

<sup>23</sup> A protected manifestation of religion subject to the strict and narrow limitations permitted under article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

<sup>24</sup> In addition, OHCHR documented nine prosecutions that took place in January to June 2025.

<sup>25</sup> Russian Federation, Criminal Code, arts. 205.5, 205.1 and 199, concerning organization of the activities of a terrorist organization, facilitating terrorist activity, and tax evasion, respectively.

September 2025, demanded to inspect the contents of her phone, interrogated her about whom she had been in contact with, and threatened her with physical violence and prison sentences. Another woman who had left the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine in December 2025 recounted six searches at her home over a six-month period in 2024.

43. In August 2025, the Russian Federation passed legislation that required all new mobile and digital devices to have, pre-installed, a government-supported digital application, starting on 1 September 2025.<sup>26</sup> OHCHR documented that the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation compelled residents in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, in particular workers in the healthcare and education sectors, to install the application under threat of administrative and other consequences.<sup>27</sup> Those interviewed widely believed that the authorities would use the application to monitor their activities, including their private communications.

44. Under international human rights law, no one may be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with their privacy, family, home or correspondence, including digital communications.<sup>28</sup> Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks. Under international humanitarian law, protected persons are entitled, in all circumstances, to respect for their person, their honour and their family rights.<sup>29</sup> Measures of control and security in regard to protected persons are limited to those as may be necessary as a result of the war.<sup>30</sup>

## VI. Economic, cultural and social rights

### A. Right to education

45. International humanitarian law requires an occupying Power, with the cooperation of the national and local authorities, to facilitate the proper functioning of all institutions devoted to the care and education of children.<sup>31</sup> According to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the form and substance of education have to be acceptable (e.g. relevant, culturally appropriate and of good quality).<sup>32</sup> Under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, education is to be directed to developing respect for the child's own cultural identity, language and values.<sup>33</sup> Under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, States Parties undertake to guarantee that the rights enshrined in the Covenant, including the right to education, may be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.<sup>34</sup>

46. Since the 2022/23 school year, the Russian authorities have imposed the Russian State curriculum in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, suppressed the teaching of the

<sup>26</sup> Russian Federation, Federal Law No. 156-FZ of 24 June 2025 on the Creation of a Multifunctional Information Exchange Service and on Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation.

<sup>27</sup> The occupying authorities of Donetsk Oblast announced that, as of December 2025, over 50,000 teachers and pupils were registered on the MAX platform.

<sup>28</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 17; and Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 16 (1988), para. 8.

<sup>29</sup> Fourth Geneva Convention, art. 27.

<sup>30</sup> Hague Regulations, art. 46; and Fourth Geneva Convention, art. 27.

<sup>31</sup> Fourth Geneva Convention, art. 50.

<sup>32</sup> Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, general comments No. 13 (1999), para. 6; and No. 21 (2009), para. 26.

<sup>33</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 29; and Committee on the Rights of the Child, general comment No. 1 (2001), para. 4.

<sup>34</sup> International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, art. 2; and Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 2.

Ukrainian language and introduced militarized subjects as part of formal schooling and extracurricular activities.<sup>35</sup> These measures continued during the reporting period.

47. In the lead-up to the 2025/26 school year, the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation pressured families in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to send their children to schools following the Russian State curriculum. School administrations and local officials questioned parents whose children did not attend schools that followed the Russian curriculum, including children continuing their education through Ukrainian online schools. For example, a man from Kherson Oblast told OHCHR that, in June 2025, representatives of the occupying authorities had come to his home and warned him that failure to enrol his children in local schools could result in penalties, including fines, involvement of child protection services, loss of parental rights or the placement of his children in educational or recreational camps operated by the occupying authorities.

48. Parents reported having to conceal their children's continued education under the Ukrainian curriculum, limit their children's interactions outside the home or avoid contact with local institutions in order to reduce the risk of adverse consequences. Children pursuing Ukrainian education through remote learning faced additional obstacles, including security risks related to the ongoing hostilities, disruptions to connectivity and prolonged isolation.

49. During the same school year, the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation intensified efforts to promote Russian State narratives through education. Parents and children reported that school curricula included poems, songs and other materials glorifying the Russian Federation, its armed forces and the war. The subject "Conversations about important things", previously taught to schoolchildren aged 7 and older, was being piloted in preschools in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine during the reporting period. According to the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, these lessons are for the protection and strengthening of Russian spiritual values and the development of students' value-based attitude towards their homeland.<sup>36</sup>

50. The occupying authorities of the Russian Federation took additional measures to suppress the use of the Ukrainian language in education. In December 2025, the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation removed Ukrainian from the list of languages offered in primary, basic and secondary general education, meaning that the Ukrainian language is no longer taught in schools in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.<sup>37</sup>

51. Actions to instil Russian State narratives in children in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine extended to extracurricular and recreational settings, including camps and programmes organized in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and in the Russian Federation. Activities within these settings included ceremonies, ideological instruction and military-style elements. The Russian authorities announced that 85,000 children from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine had attended such camps in 2025. The occupying authorities of the Russian Federation also organized several "patriotic-military" competitions and programmes for children from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> See OHCHR, "The impact of the armed conflict and occupation on children's rights in Ukraine, 24 February 2022–31 December 2024", March 2025.

<sup>36</sup> See <https://xn--80ahcf0akkl0a.xn--p1ai/v-novom-uchebnom-godu-nachnetsya-aprobaciya-proekta-razgovory-o-vazhnom-v-detskikh-sadakh/> (in Russian).

<sup>37</sup> Russian Federation, Order of the Ministry of Education No. 729 of 8 October 2025.

<sup>38</sup> OHCHR, "Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine, 1 June 2025–30 November 2025", December 2025, paras. 93 and 94.

## B. Cultural heritage and expression of identities linked to Ukraine

52. International human rights law and international humanitarian law protect the cultural rights of people in an occupied territory, including respect for honour, family rights, manners and customs, as well as the protection of cultural property.<sup>39</sup>

53. Since the start of the occupation, the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation have implemented a range of policies and practices that have suppressed the use of the Ukrainian language and Ukrainian national and cultural symbols and have destroyed or removed objects related to Ukrainian cultural heritage. In its State Strategy for Countering Extremism, the Russian Federation framed the expression of Ukrainian identities, including the use of Ukrainian national symbols, patriotic songs and historical commemorations, such as of the Holodomor, as “extremist” activities.<sup>40</sup>

54. In addition to removing the Ukrainian language from the educational programme, the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation continued to replace signs in the Ukrainian language with Russian-language signs, in some cases citing a law of the Russian Federation adopted in June 2025, known as “the law on the protection of the Russian language”. The occupying authorities in Kakhovka, in the temporarily occupied part of Kherson Oblast of Ukraine, announced in September 2025 that they would replace over 10,000 Ukrainian street signs in the city and nearby villages with Russian-language signs.

55. On 25 November 2025, the Russian authorities adopted a Strategy for State National Policy that describes measures taken since 2023 to integrate Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson Oblasts of Ukraine into the “legal, social, economic, educational, cultural and information space of the Russian Federation”. Citing the need to strengthen “all-Russian civic identity”, the strategy mandates measures targeting 2.56 million residents of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine in Russian State initiatives.<sup>41</sup>

56. The occupying authorities of the Russian Federation also continued archaeological activities without the consent of Ukraine and interference with cultural heritage in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, particularly in Crimea. Archaeological excavations continued at the ancient settlement and necropolis of Artezian, at burial sites in Opushky, in the area of Tauric Chersonese, and at the Khan’s Palace in Bakhchysarai. These activities resulted in damage to cultural artefacts and the removal of cultural artefacts to the Russian Federation.

57. The occupying authorities of the Russian Federation in some areas of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine forced people to remove their satellite antennas and to replace them with equipment that provides access only to pro-Russian television channels.<sup>42</sup> Russian telecommunications authorities require Internet service providers in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to block users from accessing Ukrainian websites, further limiting access to Ukrainian culture and information.<sup>43</sup>

58. People who left the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine told OHCHR that fear of prosecution forced people to conceal their use of the Ukrainian language, limit cultural practices, including observance of religion and holidays according to Ukrainian traditions, forego the enjoyment of Ukrainian music, literature and other cultural content, and avoid Ukrainian symbols and content, even in private settings.

<sup>39</sup> Fourth Geneva Convention, art. 27; ICRC, *Commentary: IV Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War*, ed. by Jean S. Pictet (Geneva, 1958), commentary to art. 27; Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, art. 5 (1); and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, art. 15 (a).

<sup>40</sup> Russian Federation, Presidential Decree No. 1124 of 28 December 2024, annex, paras. 13, 36 and 58.

<sup>41</sup> OHCHR, “Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine, 1 June 2025–30 November 2025”, December 2025, para. 104.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 101.

<sup>43</sup> OHCHR, “Human rights situation during the Russian occupation of territory of Ukraine and its aftermath”, March 2024, para. 51.

### C. Property rights

59. Under international humanitarian law, an occupying Power must respect private property and cannot confiscate it, except in limited circumstances.<sup>44</sup> Property left behind by displaced persons should be protected against arbitrary and illegal expropriation, occupation or use.<sup>45</sup> The confiscation of residential property is also an obstacle for refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their homes.<sup>46</sup>

60. The occupying authorities of the Russian Federation continued to confiscate residential property in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, using Russian legislation, which allows a court to declare property abandoned and eventually transfer ownership to the occupying authorities if the owner does not appear in person at the hearing.<sup>47</sup> The occupying authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts have published documents showing they have registered at least 5,557 properties as “abandoned”.

61. Many of these residences are owned by Ukrainians who fled occupation and are unable to assert their ownership rights due to security risks and logistical challenges preventing them from returning and due to the requirement to have Russian citizenship to register property. The Russian Federation requires Ukrainian citizens to enter territory that it controls, including the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, only through the Sheremetyevo airport in Moscow, where they are subjected to questioning and inspections, including of their phones. Ukrainians displaced from the occupied territories told OHCHR that they feared that, if they attempted to enter the Russian Federation, they would be detained for their actual or perceived pro-Ukrainian views or connections to members of the Ukrainian armed forces.

### D. Access to water

62. Under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, the occupying Power is obliged to ensure public health and the basic needs of the population, including the right to water.<sup>48</sup>

63. In the temporarily occupied areas of Donetsk Oblast, the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation introduced water rationing in July 2025 due to severe shortages. Residents in the cities of Donetsk and Makiivka told OHCHR that they received running water for only a few hours a day, at most every three days. On the days when water was available, residents reported low pressure, discolouration and a foul smell. Some families were forced to leave their homes because they were unable to meet their daily needs, such as washing and bathing.

64. A comparison of satellite imagery before and after the start of the occupation showed a significant reduction in the water surface area of local reservoirs, with the Volyntsiivske Reservoir in Donetsk Oblast of Ukraine shrinking by over 90 per cent.<sup>49</sup> The loss of the water supply is attributed mainly to the destruction of the Siverskyi Donets–Donbas water canal during the hostilities, which was the main water supply for most of Donetsk Oblast.

<sup>44</sup> Hague Regulations, arts. 46 and 56. See also ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law Database, rule 51.

<sup>45</sup> Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, principle 21.

<sup>46</sup> Principles on housing and property restitution for refugees and displaced persons (Pinheiro principles), principle 10.

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

<sup>48</sup> Fourth Geneva Convention, art. 56.

<sup>49</sup> Satellite analysis of water reservoirs in Donetsk Oblast by the United Nations Satellite Centre of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research compared satellite images between September 2021 and September 2025.

## VII. Conclusions and recommendations

65. The present report highlights serious concerns of continuing alleged violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law by the Russian Federation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. It describes patterns identified in the 13 previous reports that I have presented since 2018. The alleged violations identified in previous reports have largely not been investigated or prosecuted.

66. The continued lack of response from the Russian Federation to OHCHR requests for access to the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, in disregard of General Assembly resolution 80/223, is regrettable. Such access is important to ensure comprehensive first-hand monitoring and reporting in order to promote and protect the rights of the inhabitants of the temporarily occupied territories. I urge the Russian Federation to make every effort to ensure unfettered access by OHCHR and other international and regional human rights monitoring mechanisms, in line with General Assembly resolution 80/223. I also encourage Ukraine to continue to cooperate fully with OHCHR, including on the issue of access.

67. I reiterate my previous recommendations to the Russian authorities and 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, throughout the territory of Ukraine that it temporarily occupies. In particular, the Russian authorities must respect the laws in force and roll back any legal and administrative changes made that are inconsistent with international human rights and 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 protected persons into its armed forces.

68. The Russian authorities must comply fully with the prohibition of torture or other forms of ill-treatment, sexual violence, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance, and ensure the independent, impartial, prompt and effective investigation of all allegations of gross violations of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law. The Russian Federation has the obligation to ensure that the rights of persons deprived of liberty are fully respected.

69. I urge the Russian Federation to ensure that the freedoms of expression and opinion, 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. Individuals must be able to peacefully express opinions that 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. No individual should be criminally charged or detained simply for practising their religion, including in the forms of collective worship and proselytizing. Religious groups should enjoy access to their places of worship and be able to gather freely for prayer and other religious practices.

70. I urge the Russian Federation to immediately cease any forcible transfers and deportations of protected persons from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including of children and civilians deprived of liberty. The Russian Federation should ensure that all protected persons previously forcibly transferred within or deported from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine are allowed to return.

71. I urge the Russian Federation to provide full information about Ukrainian children forcibly transferred within the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine or deported to the Russian Federation, including those in institutional care and those placed with Russian families, to the Central Tracing Agency of the International Committee of the Red Cross; and to refrain from making any changes to their personal

status, including nationality, and to facilitate their reunification with their families in line with General Assembly resolution ES-11/9. I also urge the Russian Federation to abolish the simplified procedure allowing guardians to apply for Russian citizenship on behalf of Ukrainian children.

72. I urge the Russian Federation to cease all measures that effectively compel children in temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to swear allegiance to the Russian Federation, dismantle military training and educational programmes aimed at securing the 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, ensure the availability of education in the Ukrainian language, and guarantee that instruction in, and learning of, the Crimean Tatar language satisfy the demand for such education options.

73. The Russian Federation must immediately cease its confiscation of private property in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, rescind the requirement to be a Russian citizen to own, buy or sell property and respect the legislation on property in place before the beginning of the occupation. I also urge it to restore the property rights of all legal owners deprived of their titles as a result of “nationalization” and confiscation processes.

74. 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, including allegations of conflict-related sexual violence, to hold perpetrators to account and to ensure due reparations for victims and survivors, according to a gender-sensitive approach.

75. 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.

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