

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL ELECTIONS

2021 CANDIDATE

RUSSIA

Status - Seeking Election

Previous Terms - 2007-09; 2010-12; 2014-16

Key measures Russia should commit to implement as a Human Rights Council member

The following measures were developed jointly by the International Service for Human Rights and Human Rights House Foundation.

Human rights defenders and civic space:

NGOs, human rights defenders, activists and journalists are under severe threat in Russia, where they continue to be persecuted, harassed and branded as foreign agents or undesirable organizations, fined, and intimidated, including through police raids and arrests. Participants of peaceful public events and protests continue to be arbitrarily detained and criminally prosecuted. The International Movement Memorial and Human Rights Centre Memorial face judicial persecution due to lack of notification of foreign agent status in each social media publication.

We urge Russia to cease the repression of NGOs, human rights defenders, activists and journalists. We urge Russia to repeal or review the provisions on "foreign agents" NGOs and related norms according to the recommendations made by the UN treaty bodies, the Venice Commission and the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, to bring them in line with the state's international obligations with respect to freedom of association. We urge Russia to cease the arbitrary detention and criminal prosecution of participants in peaceful public events and protests. We urge Russia to drop all charges against the International Movement Memorial and Human Rights Centre Memorial, and their directors, as well as other human rights organisations. We also urge Russia to release Memorial researcher and activist Yuriy Dmitriev and other political prisoners.

Cooperation with UN mechanisms:

We urge Russia to issue a standing invitation to UN Special Procedures, to consistently respond positively to country visit requests, and to substantively reply to communications received from Special Procedures.

Prisons

We urge Russia to allow unfettered access to prison and detention facilities to international observers, including as the de facto occupying authorities in Crimea, as requested by the UN Monitoring Mission in Ukraine.

Crimea

In Crimea, which has been under Russian control since 2014, the de facto authorities systematically persecute the Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians. We call on Russia to comply with the decision of International Court of Justice (ICJ) on provisional measures and to repeal the ban of the Crimean Tatar self-governance body (Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People), to release human rights activist Server Mustafayev and all Crimean political prisoners, and to effectively investigate the enforced disappearance of Crimean Tatar activist Ervin Ibrahimov, as well as all cases of enforced

disappearances since 2014.

Migrants

Russia has a large migrant population yet a number of policies and practices seriously violate migrants' fundamental rights. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia continues to arrest migrants and to carry out deportations, including of women and children. We call on Russia to release migrants from detention during the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure their access to healthcare and social protection.

Gender

On July 18, 2019, Russia's Ministry of Labor and Social Protection issued an order shortening the list of professions in which women's employment is restricted (Order of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Russian Federation No. 512, On Approval of the List of Industries, Jobs and Positions with Harmful and (or) Dangerous Working Conditions, in Which the Use of Women's Labor Is Restricted, July 18, 2019.) The ministerial order, which will take effect on January 1, 2021, lists 21 industries and 100 occupations in which women's participation is restricted. However, women are still restricted from more than 320 jobs and positions, among them prestigious and well-paid positions. We call on Russia to lift restrictions on employment for women, to ensure access to the labour market for women without any limitations and to effectively inform women and girls about new labour opportunities.

Minorities

Russia has hundreds of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. The representatives of minorities face discrimination in labor and violations of their economic, social and cultural rights, and many do not have possibilities to use their language in education and in the public sphere. Indigenous peoples are especially affected in terms of use of their land and resources, and in their rights to a healthy environment and to preserve their traditional way of life. Roma face structural discrimination: forced evictions, pogroms, economic and social exclusion, segregation in all spheres including education.

We call on Russia to adopt anti-discrimination legislation and an action plan on vulnerable groups, to stop violating the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples, and to promote usage of minorities' languages in the public sphere and education. We also call on Russia to stop persecuting Jehovah's Witnesses and stop the unlawful prosecution of its members and affiliates.

LGBTI+

The rights of LGBTI+ people in Russia are continuously violated by homophobic legislation banning so called 'homosexual propaganda'. LGBTI+ people in the Northern Caucasus face persecution, detention, torture and even murder. We call on Russia to repeal the 'homosexual propaganda' law and to take immediate measures to protect LGBTI+ people in the Northern Caucasus and other regions.

Russia's actions in Syria

Accountability for violations of International Humanitarian Law amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity:

- Russia should ensure independent, impartial and effective investigations are conducted into credible allegations of violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) amounting to war crimes by its armed forces, such as the attack against the displacement compound in Hass, on August 16th, 2019 and other incidents identified by the United Nations International and Independent Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (the COI), and publicly report on the findings of such investigations.
- Russia should ensure independent, impartial and effective investigations are conducted into credible allegations of violations of IHL by its Russian-backed 25th Special Forces Division, led by General Suheil al-Hassan, including during the recent military recapture of Maarat- al-Numan, and publicly report on the findings of such investigations.
- Russia should ensure independent, impartial and effective investigations are conducted into credible allegations

of violations of IHL by Russian individuals who are members of the mercenary group Wagner Group and publicly report on the findings of such investigations.

- Russia should rejoin the deconfliction mechanism aimed at protecting hospitals and other protected sites in Syria from being hit by the warring parties.
- Russia should provide accurate public information on all strikes carried out, including detailed information on location, target, delivery system, and weapons used and report in a detailed, timely, public and transparent manner on strikes resulting in civilian deaths or injury and damage to civilian property and infrastructure.
- Russia should adhere to the Accountability Coherence and Transparency (ACT) Code of Conduct refraining from voting against resolutions aimed at preventing or ending serious crimes under international law, and refrain from actions in the UN Security Council that block attempts to investigate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure or to ensure unhindered access for impartial humanitarian relief.

Halt committing violations of International Humanitarian Law:

- Russia should comply with its obligations under international humanitarian law and cease attacks on civilians and civilian objects, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2286 (2016), and in particular against medical facilities, personnel, and transport.
- Russia should halt the targeting of schools and educational facilities, and enforce special protection regulations granted to schools, education personnel and students; and endorse and implement the Safe School Declaration.

Halt aiding and abetting war crimes and violations of International Humanitarian Law:

- Russia should stop providing equipment, military training, and other forms of material support to its Russian-backed 25th Special Forces Division, led by General Suheil al-Hassan, being aware that they are likely to be used in serious violations of international law.
- Russia should stop providing weapons and other forms of material support to the Syrian government, being aware that the Syrian government is likely to use them in a serious violation of international law.

Political negotiations process:

- Russia must urge the Syrian government to unconditionally release those who are arbitrarily detained and stop any future detention. Within the Astana Working Group on Detentions and Abductions in the Syrian Conflict, Russia should put pressure on the Syrian government to disclose the names and locations of people who were arbitrarily detained, subjected to enforced disappearance and abducted and provide answers to the families in a manner that respects the rights of victims and their families and their security.