



28 March 2025

Excellencies, Dear Permanent Representatives of UN member states,

Re: Support UN Human Rights Council draft resolution L.22 which renews the mandate of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine

In the context of the 58th session of the UN Human Rights Council, we are writing to urge your delegation to support the adoption of the Human Rights Council draft resolution L.22, which renews the mandate of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine (COI).

In the year since the last renewal of the COI's mandate, violations of international human rights and humanitarian law have continued unabated in the war in Ukraine, causing immense suffering to civilians. Some of these violations are potential war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Since February 2022, more than 12,000 Ukrainian civilians have been killed and close to 29,000 have been injured. At least 6.7 million people have fled Ukraine and millions more have been internally displaced. Russian forces have committed a litany of violations of international humanitarian law, including indiscriminate and disproportionate bombing and shelling of civilian areas that hit homes and healthcare and educational facilities, some of which may amount to war crimes. A wave of strikes in July 2024 on multiple cities killed at least 44 civilians, and injured at least 196, according to Ukrainian authorities. The attacks also caused significant damage to vital civilian infrastructure, [including the Okhmatdyt children's hospital](#) in Kyiv, the country's largest children's hospital. OHCHR [found](#) that the strike "was likely due to a direct hit from a missile" and destroyed the building housing the toxicology department and significantly damaged its cardiology center. [Human Rights Watch](#) and [others](#) called for the strike on Okhmatdyt to be investigated as a war crime.

Russia's repeated attacks on Ukraine's [energy grid](#) throughout the war caused country-wide blackouts, leaving millions without electricity, water, and heat. Attacks on Ukraine's energy and other critical infrastructure appeared aimed at terrorizing civilians and making their life unsustainable, which is a potential war crime. In areas of Ukraine that they occupy, Russian forces have also committed probable war crimes and crimes against humanity. These include [torture](#) and [killings of civilians](#), [sexual violence](#), [unlawful detention of civilians](#) and

enforced disappearances, [forcible transfers](#) and unlawful deportations of Ukrainians and [looting](#) of cultural property.

In Crimea, and other Russian-occupied Ukrainian territories, Russian forces have maintained a chilling atmosphere of fear, ruthlessly retaliating against those perceived to oppose the occupation. In Mariupol, [devastated by the war](#) and currently under occupation, they have hidden vital evidence by literally building over crime scenes and have rebuilt the city in Russia's image. Russian authorities have [imposed](#) Russian legal regulations in occupied areas, in violation of international humanitarian law. They suppress the Ukrainian language and [education curriculum](#) and impose Russia's state-sanctioned version of history. They [pressure](#) Ukrainian civilians to [obtain Russian passports](#) or become foreigners in their own country, including by a [decree](#) signed by President Vladimir Putin on March 20, 2025. Such [pressure](#) includes intimidation, threats of arbitrary detention, revocation of property rights, and restrictions on access to medical services, social benefits, freedom of movement, and employment. They [conscript](#) Ukrainian civilians in [occupied areas](#) or otherwise try to forcibly enlist them in the Russian military, which is a war crime.

In its latest report [A/HRC/58/67](#), the COI found that Russian authorities committed the crimes of torture and enforced disappearances as part of a widespread and systematic attack against the civilian population, in areas of Ukraine that came under Russian control, and in the Russian Federation, and amount to crimes against humanity. They were perpetrated pursuant to a coordinated state policy and targeted categories of persons that Russian authorities perceived as a threat to their military objectives in Ukraine. This is in addition to the previous finding of the COI that Russian authorities have committed torture as a crime against humanity. The COI concluded: *“Three years of armed conflict have had a devastating impact on the civilian population. Victims have often suffered from a complex combination of violations and crimes, as well as from hardships owing to prolonged armed conflict. Many have endured deprivation of liberty, physical violence, and inhuman treatment; disappearance, death, or separation from loved ones; loss or destruction of homes; and, consequently, limitations of their basic rights to housing, food, education, and health.”*

In addition to the findings on violations against civilians, the COI also examined 32 incidents in which Russian forces killed or wounded 101 surrendering or captured Ukrainian soldiers, with an increase of such incidents since late 2023. As of November 2024, Ukrainian authorities were conducting 52 criminal investigations into the extrajudicial execution of 196 Ukrainian POWs since 2022. The COI “previously reported about incidents in which Ukrainian armed forces shot at surrendering or captured Russian soldiers in 2022”. The current report stated that the COI is not aware of further allegations. The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) “verified the execution of 26 Russian POWs, all but one of which took place in 2022 and early 2023. The COI “documented incidents in which Russian armed forces fired at injured Ukrainian soldiers” and in which “Ukrainian armed forces targeted injured Russian soldiers.” Killing or wounding injured soldiers is a war crime, as is executing captured or surrendering soldiers.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights also just released a devastating report on [‘The impact of the armed conflict and occupation on children’s rights in Ukraine’](#). In

presenting the report, the UN [High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) said: “*The ongoing hostilities and occupation of parts of Ukraine by the Russian Federation have caused large-scale human rights violations and inflicted unimaginable suffering on millions of children. Their rights have been undermined in every aspect of life, leaving deep scars, both physical and psychosocial.*” The report recommends the international community “*Support all accountability mechanisms, including the International Criminal Court, investigating human rights violations and abuses against children amounting to breaches of international criminal law.*”

The Ukraine COI’s mandate is crucial to ensure that all allegations of violations of international human rights and humanitarian law by all parties in Ukraine are investigated and that evidence is collected and preserved and those responsible are identified and ultimately, held accountable.

We urge your delegation to support the adoption of Human Rights Council draft resolution L.22, to renew the mandate of the COI, and ensure the COI can continue its vital work to investigate and document the vast numbers of violations and abuses that are continuing to occur in Ukraine and so that victims and survivors can one day see justice. By renewing the COI mandate, the Human Rights Council will send a strong message that there will be no impunity for the crimes committed in Ukraine.

Sincerely,

CIVICUS

Human Rights House Foundation

Human Rights Watch

International Bar Association’s Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)

World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)