



Human Rights
Institute

Organization: Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada

Item 4: General debate on the human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Date: 26 September 2022

Speaker: Joseph Doyle

Oral Statement to the 51st Session of the UN Human Rights Council from Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC), the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI), International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), and Lawyers for Lawyers (L4L), NGOs in special consultative status. OVD-Info, NGO without consultative status, also shares the views expressed in this statement.

Russian Federation: Widespread, systematic attacks on lawyers and human rights defenders facilitate the unlawful war in Ukraine

Mr. President,

This is a joint statement by Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, the International Service for Human Rights, and Lawyers for Lawyers, endorsed by OVD-Info.

We are alarmed by mounting reports of Russia's widespread violation of its international law obligations,¹ including attacks against lawyers and other human rights defenders through arbitrary detention, ill-treatment and torture, silencing of independent reporting, and State-sponsored disinformation and misinformation. Russian authorities' unlawful intimidation and silencing of legitimate activities of human rights defenders systematically undermines the rule of law and facilitates Russia's unlawful war and atrocity crimes in Ukraine.

We call on the Council to insist that Russia:

- unconditionally release and withdraw charges against all those charged or detained on offences related to peaceful anti-war opinion, expression, or assembly, or the legitimate activities of lawyers and defenders;
- repeal repressive legislation, including laws on "foreign agents" and "undesirable organizations;" and
- ensure fair trials including unfettered access to effective legal representation.

We call on the Members of this Council to vote in support of a Resolution establishing a Special Rapporteur to monitor and report to the Council with recommendations on human rights in Russia.

Thank you.

¹ OHCHR, “Russia: UN expert alarmed at continued targeting of human rights defenders,” 14 September 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/09/russia-un-expert-alarmed-continued-targeting-human-rights-defenders>; OHCHR, Russia: UN experts condemn civil society shutdown, 13 July 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/07/russia-un-experts-condemn-civil-society-shutdown>.