



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by Institute for Human Rights, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[30 May 2023]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



## **Violence against Women and Children in Ukraine in the Context of War**

Following the agenda of the 53rd Session of the Human Rights Council, the Institute for Human Rights would like to draw an attention of the Council to a deplorable situation with massive human rights violations against the most vulnerable group of people - women and children in particular, happening on the territory of Ukraine in result of Russian invasion.

Institute for Human Rights highly welcomes the Report of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on the activities of the United Nations trust fund in support of actions to eliminate violence against women (A/HRC/53/18) and the Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences (A/HRC/53/36), acknowledging the immense work of UN human rights mechanisms in the field of human rights protection around the world.

Regretfully, violence against women and children continues to be one of the most accurate problem, especially during the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Since the beginning of the war, numerous international reports have been constituting breaches of a number of binding human rights obligations by the Russian Federation. Multiple intergovernmental institutions and international organizations have been emphasizing on the gross burden on women and children, including to conflict-related sexual violence, human trafficking, deprivation of liberty, enforced disappearance, abduction and other forms of ill-treatment.

According to the Report A/HRC/53/18, war in Ukraine resulted in massive displacement, while women and children are the most affected victims. As of May 23, UNHCR official web portal presents the most recent data on refugee situation in Ukraine, estimating the number of people recorded across Europe of more than 8 million. Additionally, as the war impacts are worldwide, the war in Ukraine leads to exposure of many vulnerable women and girls to hunger as well as drives global crises.

The international armed conflict, launched by the Russian Federation on 24 February 2022, has led to an enormous range of human sufferings, affecting civilian population of Ukraine. In the context of Russian invasion of Ukraine, women and girls are facing an increasing threat of sexual and gender-based violence, additionally to already alarmingly dangerous environment. According to the latest report of the Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, that covers the period from 1 August 2022 to 31 January 2023, conflict-related sexual violence against women took place in a context of deprivation of liberty and was used as a form of torture and ill-treatment. Women and girls are subjected to unjustified strip searches and rape. The Prosecutor General's Office in Ukraine, as for the beginning of 2023, has already initiated investigations of at least 12 criminal proceeding of crimes against the sexual freedom and sexual integrity of children, committed by servicemen of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine.

Continuous destruction of civilian objects and refusal of humanitarian access, as well as the arbitrary injuring of women and girls lead to irreversible effects for the victims and deprive people of Ukraine of timely medical help. Women and girls in the frontline and occupied regions of Ukraine do not have a proper access to medical assistance, in particular to services for the protection of sexual and reproductive health and rights. As the free access to emergency contraception as well as safe and legal conditions for abortion in Ukraine is crucial for women who have been raped by Russian aggressors, women and girls in Ukraine are highly exposed to the severe health risks.

Moreover, Institute for Human Rights is gravely concerned about the fact that children in Ukraine are subjected to arbitrary detention, enforced deportation, abduction and enforced adoption. During the reporting period, the Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine revealed cases of forced transfers and deportations of children in breach of Geneva Convention IV. The Ukrainian governmental online database platform "Children of war", based on country's official victims records, states that at least 19 484 children were illegally deported to the territory of the Russian Federation.

Notwithstanding the most recent report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, established by the United Nations Human Rights Council in February 2022, that clearly enshrines that forced transfers and deportations of children were documented along with other multiple breaches of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, the Russian Federation continues to illegally transfer Ukrainian children to the temporarily occupied regions of Ukraine or directly to the territory of the Russian Federation. A complete disregard of the Russian Federation to the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1948 Genocide Convention, 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention is of particular concern to the Institute for Human Rights. In line with 2009 UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, stipulating that 'maintaining the child as close as possible to his/her habitual place of residence, in order to facilitate contact and potential reintegration with his/her family and to minimize disruption of his/her educational, cultural and social life', the Institute for Human Rights strongly condemns the massive deportation and forcible transfer of children of Ukraine to the territory of the Russian Federation.

Thus, the Institute for Human Rights would like to call upon the UN Member States to facilitate legitimate assistance and protection to the women and children affected by the war in Ukraine through all possible UN Treaty Bodies and human rights protection mechanisms, as well as ensure that perpetrators of crimes against women and children in armed conflicts will be brought to justice in line with international standards.

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