**New report by UN Human Rights shows the shocking toll of the war in Ukraine**

KYIV, 29 June 2022 – The armed attack of the Russian Federation on Ukraine has led to a grave deterioration of the human rights situation in the country with thousands of civilians killed and injured, massive destruction to civilian infrastructure and housing, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance, torture and ill-treatment, and conflict-related sexual violence, says the new UN Human Rights report issued today.

The report is based on findings by the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) and covers the period from 24 February until 15 May 2022.

“*The daily killing of civilians, the torture, disappearances and other violations must stop, If the hostilities will not stop, then the absolute minimum required is to fully respect international humanitarian and human rights law and commit to protecting every civilian woman, man and child and those hors de combat,*” said Matilda Bogner, Head of HRMMU at the presentation of the report today.

The report documents that many of the means and methods of warfare have been in breach of international humanitarian law (IHL) rules governing the conduct of hostilities. In particular, the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, which are aimed at avoiding, or at the very least, minimizing civilian casualties and damage to civilian objects, were not respected in numerous instances by Russian armed forces; and on a lower scale by Ukrainian armed forces.

The report documents unlawful killings, including summary executions of civilians that occurred in more than 30 settlements in Kyiv, Chernihiv, Kharkiv and Sumy regions that were committed by Russian armed forces while they controlled these areas in late February and March. As of 15 May, HRMMU had received information about more than 300 such killings. This figure may increase as new evidence becomes available. In Bucha alone, HRMMU documented that at least 50 civilians were killed by Russian armed forces while it was under their control. Cases of torture and ill-treatment of civilians are also highlighted in the report.

The report documents violations of IHL and international human rights law, to varying degrees, by both parties in relation to their treatment of prisoners of war and persons *hors de combat*, namely cases of extrajudicial execution, torture and ill-treatment, denial of medical assistance, exposure to public curiosity, and violations in relation to the conditions of their internment. While HRMMU enjoys unimpeded access to places of internment of prisoners of war in territory controlled by the Government of Ukraine, the report calls for unimpeded confidential access for OHCHR and other independent international monitors to be granted by all parties to the conflict, in particular Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups.

“*I stress that the prohibition of torture and arbitrary deprivation of life is absolute and applies all the time to all persons, regardless of whether they are civilians or combatants*,” Ms Bogner said. “*Perpetrators must be held to account and victims and their relatives must enjoy their rights to remedy and truth*,” she added.

The armed attack has also been marred by conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). HRMMU has received numerous allegations and has been able to verify 23 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, including cases of rape, gang rape, torture, forced public stripping, and threats of sexual violence. The majority of cases were committed in areas controlled by Russian armed forces, but there were also cases committed in Government controlled areas.

“*Due to active hostilities, insecurity, mass displacement and stigma, victims of CRSV are often not able or willing to speak to others or register a complaint with law enforcement authorities. Understanding the full scale of sexual violence in this context may take years,” Ms Bogner said.*

The report also documents 248 cases of arbitrary detention of representatives of local authorities, journalists, civil society activists and other civilians, many of which may amount to enforced disappearance, attributed to Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups. Among those cases, six victims, one woman and five men, were eventually found dead. It also documented 12 cases which may amount to enforced disappearance by Ukrainian law enforcement bodies, of people suspected of providing support to Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups.

The report confirms allegations of forced conscription of men by Russian-affiliated armed groups in Donetsk and Luhansk. OHCHR recalls that forcing civilians to serve in the armed forces of a hostile power is a grave breach of IHL. Men who have been forcibly recruited should not face criminal prosecution by Ukrainian authorities for mere participation in hostilities.

Freedoms of opinion, expression, peaceful assembly and association have been drastically affected since the beginning of the armed attack. HRMMU is alarmed at the security risks faced by journalists and media workers in Ukraine. The report documents 17 cases of deaths of journalists, media workers and bloggers during hostilities, and 14 more cases of injured journalists. Moreover, many human rights defenders have not been able to perform their human rights work due to the ongoing hostilities and large-scale displacement. This has in turn deprived groups in vulnerable situations of invaluable support. In Crimea, the report documented 41 cases of prosecution of Crimean residents for “discrediting” or “calling for obstruction” of Russian armed forces. Multiple media outlets, previously accessible in Crimea, have also been blocked since 24 February 2022, which has seriously restricted the right to freedom of expression on the peninsula.

The report also provides details on the impact of hostilities on the rights of people in situations of vulnerability, including IDPs, Roma, persons with disabilities, and older persons.

The report includes detailed recommendations to the parties and the international community. “*The parties should ensure timely and effective investigations into all allegations of violations, including torture, ill-treatment, arbitrary detention and sexual violence, and ensure that perpetrators are duly prosecuted*,” Ms Bogner concluded.

HRMMU seeks first-hand information concerning international humanitarian law and human rights violations, and encourages victims and witnesses to contact:

* E-mail: ohchr-hrmmu@un.org
* HRMMU on Facebook: write to us on Facebook messenger [Моніторингова місія ООН з прав людини / UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission](https://www.facebook.com/UNHumanRightsUkraine/?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZXaeeJdYR_7fNYljsh_en0-_wxygABMfxmGiEWluORtFQ9Upw-Tf64nJwyXETIygUfzntmRaEWzs41MXX5gjSpvc2vNLrRsMW-DPoSFQdZzJYoHjDKSVueu3sAZF8e8ch3sQp27mX_cE_z0V5r5r9VHfVEhlozNhiqZV_lvEe2g5AjL1r2mTgn_6UKybJYnKfc&__tn__=kK-R)
* HRMMU on Telegram: ohchr\_hrmmu (only messages, calls disabled)
* HRMMU on Viber: +380503746708 (only messages, calls disabled)

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The full text of the report is available in [English](https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/situation-human-rights-ukraine-context-armed-attack-russian-federation) and will become available in [Ukrainian](https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/situation-human-rights-ukraine-context-armed-attack-russian-federation) and [Russian](https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/situation-human-rights-ukraine-context-armed-attack-russian-federation) soon.

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