



The Law Society
of England and Wales



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Human Rights
Institute

Organization: Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada
Item: Item 4: General Debate
Date: 21 March 2022
Speaker: Brian Samuels

Oral Statement to the 49th Session of the UN Human Rights Council from Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, the Law Society of England and Wales, the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, and Lawyers for Lawyers, organizations in special consultative status

Russian Federation: Flagrant violations of international law

Mr. President,

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, the Law Society of England and Wales, the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, and Lawyers for Lawyers condemn the Russian Federation's flagrant violations of international law. There are numerous allegations that Russia's leadership has committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ukraine.¹

Within Russia, authorities are violating rights to freedom of expression,² association, and peaceful assembly.³ Since Russia's unlawful invasion of Ukraine, thousands of peaceful anti-war demonstrators have been arbitrarily detained in Russia, with numerous reports of torture and ill-treatment,⁴ and denial of detainees' access to lawyers.⁵

In 2021, Russia shut down the human rights and legal aid organization, Memorial, on spurious grounds.⁶ The legal "Team 29" closed its doors after unfair trials against its lawyers and clients, including lawyer Ivan Pavlov.⁷ Lawyers are increasingly falsely labelled as "foreign agents" by Russian authorities. Three lawyers from Chechnya were physically attacked by officials while providing legal assistance to their clients.⁸

Russia's government persists in flouting the rule of law, including the UN Charter. We urge the Council to ensure that all its members uphold General Assembly Resolution 60/251, requiring all members of this Council "to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights."⁹

Thank you, Mr. President.

References

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- ² Russia: Authorities block Amnesty International's Russian-language website, Amnesty International, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/03/russia-authorities-block-amnesty-internationals-russian-language-website/>.
- ³ Russian Federation: Illegal invasion of Ukraine is no excuse for clampdown on peaceful protest at home, International Commission of Jurists, 2 March 2022, <https://www.icj.org/russian-federation-illegal-invasion-of-ukraine-is-no-excuse-for-clampdown-on-peaceful-protest-at-home/>.
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- ⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁶ Front Line Defenders, Human rights defenders Sergey Babinets, Oleg Khabibrakhmanov and woman human rights attorney Natalia Dobronravova attacked, mother of human rights defender Abubakar Yangulbaev abducted, 24 January 2022, available at: <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/hrds-sergey-babinets-oleg-khabibrakhmanov-and-whrd-attorney-natalia-dobronravova-attacked>.
- ⁷ Russian Federation: Authorities must cease harassment of lawyer Ivan Pavlov, Joint statement Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE); the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI), the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Lawyers for Lawyers (L4L), Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC), and UIA-IROL (the Institute for the Rule of Law of the International Association of Lawyers), December 2021, <https://www.lrwc.org/russian-federation-authorities-must-cease-harassment-of-lawyer-ivan-pavlov-joint-statement/>; Russia: Judicial harassment of lawyer Ivan Pavlov, Lawyers for Lawyers and Lawyers Rights Watch Canada, 6 March 2021, <https://www.lrwc.org/russia-judicial-harassment-of-lawyer-ivan-pavlov-joint-statement/>.
- ⁸ Front Line Defenders, 'Human rights defenders Sergey Babinets, Oleg Khabibrakhmanov and woman human rights attorney Natalia Dobronravova attacked, mother of human rights defender Abubakar Yangulbaev abducted', 24 January 2022, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/hrds-sergey-babinets-oleg-khabibrakhmanov-and-whrd-attorney-natalia-dobronravova-attacked>.
- ⁹ UN General Assembly, *Human Rights Council : resolution / adopted by the General Assembly*, 3 April 2006, A/RES/60/251, https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/a.res.60.251_en.pdf.