



United Nations Human
Rights Council
(UNHRC)



Topic:
Addressing Human
Rights Violations
Committed During the
Russian and Ukrainian
War; Providing Solutions
on the Modern Use of
Weapons Compared to
the Geneva Conventions



Committee: UNHRC

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Moderator: Isabella Abrego Esparza

Written By: Isabella Abrego Esparza

I. Quorum

-Australia

-Japan

-Spain

-Belgium

-Mexico

-Turkey

-Brazil

-Netherlands

-Ukraine

-Canada

-Norway

-United Arab Emirates

-China

-Poland

-United Kingdom

-France

-Qatar

-United States

-Germany

-Russia

-Vietnam

-India

-Saudi Arabia

-Italy

-South Africa



II. Committee Background

The UNHRC, also known as the United Nations Human Rights Council, was created on March 15, 2006. This council was created in order to replace the UN Commission on Human Rights. This is due to the fact that the commission lost all credibility due to being politicized. The UNHRC was created by the UN General Assembly or as it is better known as the GA. This establishment was also part of the UN reform effort by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The council only has 3 sessions per year, a typical session includes, the briefing of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in which in the sessions they discuss human rights issues and current situations.

The UNHRC helps discuss human rights with UN officials and to adapt resolutions during regular sessions that express the will of the international community for human rights issues. The UNHRC consists of different systems in order to address the broad and all of the complex nature of human rights. Some systems include the Universal Periodic Review, Advisory Committee, Special Procedures, and the Complaint Procedure. During the 3 yearly sessions the UNHRC acts as an international forum in order to debate the human rights issues and also to conduct a Universal Periodic Review. The Council is made up of 47 members who are elected directly and individually by 193 UN regional groups; these elections take place every single year. The council holds crisis meetings or also known as special sessions to help make up urgent solutions. 36 crisis meetings have been held up till this date.

The UNHRC has helped a large number of people, including refugees and displaced individuals who are protected by the UN Refugee Agency or UNHCR. The council also provides technical assistance to governments in order to help improve human rights through the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Over the past 20 years the UNHRC has been seen as an anchor of hope and as a source of protection for all victims; Human Rights Defenders, victims and survivor communities have played a very important role in mobilizing the UNHRC engagement. They address their concerns of the risk factors of atrocity crimes with the Member States in order to help encourage the compliance with international human rights standards and obligations.

III. History of Topic

The Russian and Ukraine war started in February 2014, this was due to the fact that disguised Russian Troops invaded and took control of the Ukrainian autonomous republic of Crimea. The conflict started to expand in April 2014, since Russians and local proxies seized a territory in



Ukraine. Over 8 years passed and Russia decided to launch a full-scale invasion on Ukraine on February 24 2022. This led to the largest war in Europe after World War II. A few months before this attack Western Intelligence had warned that the attack was going to happen. The reasoning for Russia's attack was due to all the tension Russia and Ukraine had over the last 8 years, so Putin saw this as a threat to Russia's influence. Similarly his invasion is also seen as an attempt to reassert Russian Influence over Ukraine. During winter and spring of the years 2023 and 2024, Russia launched offensives which were ineffective and the front lines remained static throughout all that time. Missiles and drone campaigns were sent by Russia to Ukrainian cities.

Even though Ukraine's defenses were extremely effective, the death count for civilians got higher every day. When the war had started the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights registered that more than 10,000 civilians were killed and 18,500 were hurt. Nevertheless The U.S Defense Department stated that approximately 40,000 civilians were also killed. An estimated 8 million people had fled Ukraine, and about more than one-third of the population was displaced because of this war. The Russian Military transferred 1.6 million Ukrainian Citizens to their territory; furthermore it remained clear that Russia committed a war crime under the Fourth Geneva Convention, the article that states the violation that they committed is under the 13th article, which states that all prisoners of war must be humanely treated. In March 2023 ICC or the International Criminal Court had an arrest warrant for the Russian President Putin, they held him responsible for the war crimes that were committed especially the deportation and the transfer of 1.6 million Ukrainian Citizens that included children to the Russian Federation.

It was very obvious that Russia had just committed a violation against human rights during the war. There was a court's grand chamber that was held between May 11 2014 and September 16 2022 in which they revealed that there was evidence that Russia committed acts of sexual violence, acts of torture including beatings, stranglings, and electric shocks. The Civilians were forced to be part of a mock execution in which they electrocuted parts of the body. Some of the many violations that Russia committed are, unlawful and arbitrary detention of civilians, Destruction, looting, expropriation of property, suppression of Ukrainian language in schools, and also that Russian soldiers raped women as a strategy to dehumanise and degrade the Ukrainian population.

During the Russian and Ukrainian war we could see the use of weapons; as expected, the Russian military used highly advanced weapons. In the course of this war we could notice that the use of drones to spy on the Ukrainian military and population was common, nevertheless similar technology was used in World War I with the observation balloons. Thanks to the strategic advantage the use of drones to create remote strikes brought, it was common for the Russian military to use them. Many anti-tank missiles were being used by Ukraine; these anti-tank missiles destroyed about 3000 Russian tanks. Ukraine used air defenses belonging to



France, Germany, Italy, Norway, and Sweden; these countries aided and supported Ukraine throughout the war. Russia's most effective way to end the war was with the use of strategic bombings directed towards Ukraine, which specifically damaged soldiers.

IV. Topic Information

Human Rights are essential especially during wars, because they are very crucial for the human dignity and foundation for freedom, justice, and peace for all. During wars it is important for the countries to obey human rights standards, but due to the chaotic nature of conflict many countries violate these guidelines. Some violations include genocide, ethnic cleansing, child soldiers, sexual violence, and the denial for humanitarian aid. Violating the basic humanitarian rights can frequently lead to long-term trauma and social disruption. The international humanitarian law states that when there is an armed conflict, soldiers and military officials must never violate human rights or furthermore commit crimes against humanity, including war crimes.

Throughout the Russian and Ukrainian war many international humanitarian laws were broken mainly by the Russian Federation. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights documented that Ukrainians were continuously tortured, in addition the UNHRC also found out that the Ukrainian prisoners were experiencing sexual violence. Also it is alleged that Russian troops have executed sixteen surrendering Ukrainian soldiers. Last year it was found that this torture and the detention of Ukrainian Civillians was still continous. The GAalso known as the General Assembly ordered Russia to remove its forces from Ukraine completely, all these resolutions failed to end this war,war which has taken thousands of innocent Ukranian and Russian lives, this conflict has almost escalated into a nuclear confrontation.The fourth Geneva Convention prohibits any kind of unlawful violence, cruel treatment, and torture. In addition, the Moscow Mechanism report revealed that Russia had detained thousands of Ukrainian civilians.

Nevertheless the war hasn't ended, it is still continuous, and is about to approach its four year mark. Russia has attacked Ukraine with 101 drones overnight. According to the Ukraine air force, from all of those drones 90 were shot down and others were neutralized. Five drones hit four locations in Ukraine and drone debris fell in Ukrainian territory in 5 other locations. The Russian president Putin, has been found testing missiles, and according to the international humanitarian law missiles are allowed in armed conflicts, with the expectation that it doesn't carry a forbidden weapon, it doesn't cause unnecessary suffering, and that it isn't a ballistic missile. And while neither Russia nor Ukraine have violated any current missile laws and guidelines the Russian Federation has sent various missile strikes to Ukraine



The Geneva Conventions are international agreements that were concluded in Geneva between the years 1864 and 1949. The Geneva Convention is very close to other organizations such as the Red Cross. The Red Cross helps offer protection, assistance, messages to family members, and help to look for missing people during all armed conflicts. Therefore countries are obligated to let the Red Cross visit the prisoners. The founder of the Red Cross is Henri Duant, he stood by 2 ideals to help establish a relief society in all countries in order to promote tranquility during times of conflict. This was due to the fact that during wars, civilians had the tendency to be afraid or uneasy, so this helped a high amount of civilians during war times. His second idea was to create an international agreement to protect the war wounded. These ideas led him to create the International Committee for the Relief of the Wounded or what is now known as the Red Cross.

This led to the creation of the Geneva Convention. Today the Geneva Convention and their Additional Protocols have formed the international humanitarian law. Even though the Geneva Conventions were adopted until 1949, they have still been in use until this day. During 1977 two Additional Protocols were added and in 2005 a third protocol was added too which was recognised as an additional emblem. Therefore this law helps regulate conduct during an armed conflict and also helps put limits in order to help protect the people who aren't partaking in the war not only this but they help the wounded, sick, shipwrecked soldiers and all of the prisoners of war. Furthermore for those who commit grave breaches are pursued and deported, regardless of their nationality and ethnicity.

The Geneva Conventions is made up of 4 conventions and 3 Additional Protocols. Within the first and the second convention it states that belligerents must always protect the sick and wounded including medical staff, ambulances, and all hospitals. During these two conventions everyone should be given shelter and also cared for by the party who holds power over them. In the third Geneva Convention it shows all the rules on how to treat the prisoners of the war. The fourth and final convention states that all civilians are protected when in hands of the enemy, it doesn't matter if they're in their own or in inhabited territory. The first Additional Protocol which was in 1977, prohibits attacks against civilians and civilian objects and it absolutely restricts any type of methods of warfare. The Second protocol supplements Article 3 which can be associated with the Fourth Geneva Convention, it is also the sole provision to non-international armed conflicts. The final Protocol provides an additional emblem in the form of a red crystal. Since January 2007 it is possible to use the emblem as an alternative to the Red Cross. These emblems are recognised by the Geneva Convention for helping to identify persons and objects to special protection.



V. Current Issues

USA

With all of the human rights violations that were committed in the Russian and Ukrainian war; the United States (US) has supported Ukraine publicly. Even though Russia and the USA are not allies they still hold an abnormal and complex relationship, this relationship is defined by cooperation and competition. Even though they were allies in World War II, the USA has been supporting Ukraine to a great extent. According to the US Department of State, the President Donald Trump of the United States, said that the US will use everything in their power in hopes to end this armed conflict between Ukraine and Russia. On March 11, 2025 the Ukrainian delegation decided to accept the US proposal to cease immediately.

To this date the US has supported Ukraine with \$66.9 billion in all military assistance since Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Nevertheless the military assistance wasn't the only thing that the US provided to Ukraine, they also helped Ukraine with foreign aid, and Ukraine became the top recipient of the US foreign aid. Even though President Trump wanted to help Ukraine he still froze all military aid that was being sent to aid Ukraine, but then he decided to lift the freeze after a short amount of time. This dynamic has been very familiar with the administration of the US, this is due to the fact that in July 2025 the White House stated that they would freeze the delivery of weapons for Ukraine, but a week later they still resumed the delivery. At the same time Trump announced a plan to send aid to Ukraine that involved NATO allies paying for the weapons that were being sent.

Russia

On October 27, 2025, Russia committed a horrible crime against Ukrainian civilians, what Russia did was absolutely unforgettable; they murdered, deported, and tortured a large number of Ukrainian civilians. Russia hasn't just targeted civilians but also they targeted ambulances, houses, buildings. Russia has now about 20% of Ukraine even though they have over four thousand square kilometers of territory. The president of Russia-Putin- February 24, 2022 he stated that he was going to begin with a full-scale land, sea, and air invasion. In a UN report stated the fact that Russia was committing war crimes, this meant that Russia violated the International Humanitarian Law.

Russia's reputation has changed dramatically after the war with Ukraine started. This is due to the fact that Russia committed war crimes and violations against the international Humanitarian Law against innocent Ukrainian civilians. Russia's role in the middle east has been negatively impacted, since they created an alliance with Syria and Iran. This created tension between Israel



and other states. Furthermore, Russia, after sending drones that were being set to bomb Ukraine, posted controversial videos showing drone operators celebrating these attacks, and carefully choosing their targets, which worsened public perception and sparked controversies regarding the humanity of the attackers and the people of Russia in general. Most of these posts are accompanied by threatening language in order to warn Ukraine to flee.

Ukraine

In the course of the first year of the war over 8.000 Ukrainian civilians were killed, this resulted in one of the fastest population movements ever since World War II forcing millions of Ukrainian civilians to flee their homes. 6 million people were displaced within Ukraine and another 8 million civilians fled the country as refugees. In total, one-third of Ukrainians have lost their homes during only the first year of this war.

The war completely destroyed all farmland and infrastructure which prompted Ukraine to experience a grave food crisis. With all of this taken into account, the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) got invited to visit Ukraine. This visit immediately sparked an emergency response operation. Since March 2022, they've delivered an estimated 1.3million meals through food and cash assistance. In addition to Russia closing off the Ukrainian ports of the Black Sea, this is very critical since the black sea is one of the most important areas for grain and agricultural production. This caused the U.N. to make a deal with Turkiye in order to open all grain exports.

This war has also affected all Ukrainian civillia's mental health, since they may live in constant stress and anxiety. For example Anna, a single mother of 3 children, has stated she experiences grave anxiety every single time she hears an air raid siren go off. She fears for her children who are still in school since she doesn't know when a missile could hit. She wishes for only quietness. Since Anna is unemployed, she can still provide for her children thanks to the cash assistance that the U.N. World Food Programme provides. At least a quarter of Ukraine's population is living in poverty thanks to the war, the closer that the families live to the frontlines the more difficult it is to find basic humanitarian necessities. The heavy bombardment has damaged all of Ukraine's infrastructure, often cutting off electricity, water, and fuel. In addition to about 6.5-8.5% of Ukraine's farmland has been abandoned,all of the fields are completely littered with landmines. One in four small-scale farmers are estimated to have scaled back all agricultural work due to the war.

Belarus

The relationship between Russia and Belarus is very unique and also at the same time very



complex. The foundation of this relationship is their shared history, language, cultural affinity, and strategic partnership. In 1991 Belarus became an independent country after being part of the Soviet Union, ever since the country has maintained economic and political ties with Russia. Even though Belarus borders three NATO member states it has remained under Moscow's influence. Belarus plays a very important role in this war due to sharing 700 miles of border with Ukraine, and in winter of 2022 Russian troops have gathered in Belarus under the guise of joint training. Russian forces have been coming to Belarus then to Kyiv, reports say that Russian missiles have been launched from Belarus according to The Wall Street Journal.

The U.S. and the United Kingdom have stated sanctions against Belarus, it is very important to have in mind that Belarus has been under various sanctions. Therefore diplomatic ties between Belarus and the U.S. have been strained. In comments that Putin has made, he has said that Ukraine isn't a legitimate nation separate from Russia and in there he has mentioned Belarus and Kulakevich. Belarus and Russia coordinate their foreign policies very effectively, at the same time they have set up regional military forces that coordinate their air defence system. In 1999 Belarus and Russia signed an agreement to define goals like: ensure peaceful and democratic development in order to establish economic and custom areas and proper framework to ensure a sustainable economic development, pursue the agreed foreign, defence and social policies, to ensure security and fight against crime.

VI. UN Actions

The UN has provided emergency aid and assistance for all the individuals that are in Ukraine, particularly women, children, elderly people, and people with disabilities. The UN estimated that 12 million people who are in Ukraine will need relief and protection, while more than 4 million Ukrainian refugees may need all protection and assistance. On March 1 2022, the UN and humanitarian partners launched Flash Appeals, in order for \$1.7 billion to be delivered immediately to all of Ukraine and the refugees in the neighboring countries. This plan requires \$1.1 billion to meet all humanitarian needs for more than 6 million Ukrainians. Furthermore the UN has previously requested \$551 million to help all the Ukrainians who have fled, the countries that were asked to cooperate with this were Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Moldova.

Many different committees have helped Ukraine. UNICEF is supporting Ukraine, they help provide health, nutrition, HIV prevention, education, safe drinking water, and sanitation for all children and their families who are affected by this armed conflict. They also work with the Government and partners in order to still help all the Ukrainian children who are in need of basic



humanitarian necessities. UNESCO has been implementing emergency and medium-term measures in order to help ensure education, protect cultural sites, support artists, and also assist all media professionals. UNESCO has gathered more than US \$74 million, with the complete support of state members and other partners. WHO has also contributed to Ukraine by working with them and also with neighboring countries, this has delivered medical supplies, coordinating the deployment of medical teams, and also they have been working with health authorities to help minimize disruptions during the delivery of critical healthcare. Nonetheless UNICEF, UNESCO, and WHO aren't the only committees that have helped Ukraine, some other committees include: IAEA, OCHA, UNFPA, UNHCR, and UN World Food Programme have contributed a large amount of humanitarian needs and protection to all of the Ukrainian civilians.

The UN General Assembly has done an Emergency Special Session for Ukraine, they did this special session in order to discuss the invasion that Russia had done to Ukraine on February 24, 2022. UN members, especially Africa, Asia, and Latin America should use this special session to condemn Russia's aggression and de-escalate the armed conflict. The war has been increasing the possibilities of a technological war, a drone war. This is due to the fact that drones are responsible for one third of the civilian fatalities. During the year of 2025 30% deaths of Ukrainians have increased compared to the year 2024. WHO has documented 364 attacks that have impacted the healthcare facilities in Ukraine from January and October 2025. The airstrikes that Russia sends have left Ukrainian civilians-including children- without homes, water, power, or basic services. Additionally, the near proximity of winter is alarming for communities without homes, specifically those in the frontlines since they are at grave risk.

VII. Conclusion

The UNHRC, helps discuss all humanitarian rights with the UN in order to adapt resolutions that assist the will of the international community for humanitarian rights. This committee has been seen as a source of hope for all victims. The Russia and Ukrainian war began when Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. Ukraine's defenses were very effective but still that didn't prevent the thousands of civilians that were killed. A large number of Ukrainian civilians fled the country. The other part of the population was displaced, and 1.6 million Ukrainians were transferred by the Russian military to their territory. With all of this taken into account Russia had just committed a crime under a Geneva Convention, so the ICC issued an arrest warrant for the Russian President.

Human rights are crucial especially during wars, since they represent human dignity and the foundation for freedom, justice, and peace for all individuals. Due to all of the chaos in wars



many countries don't follow these rules, some of these violations include genocide, child soldiers, and many more. Throughout the course of this war it was very noticeable that many laws were broken by the Russian Federation, this led the GA to order Russia to remove all forces from Ukraine. The country of Ukraine has been suffering for almost 4 years now. Even with the help of a large number of international organizations, Ukraine has not been able to mitigate its internal problem regarding human rights violations committed by Russian soldiers, the lack of basic necessities, and constant fear by Ukrainian civilians. Seeing the severity of the issue, the committee of the UNHRC urges the immediate attention of the international community regarding the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

VII. Guiding Questions

- How can the international community strengthen accountability mechanisms to address and prevent ongoing human rights violations committed during the Russia–Ukraine conflict?
- In what ways should the UNHRC and member states update or reinforce international humanitarian law to regulate the modern use of weapons — such as drones, missiles, and cyberwarfare — to ensure compliance with the Geneva Conventions?
- How can the UN Human Rights Council ensure accountability for the human rights violations committed during the Russian–Ukrainian war, especially those classified as war crimes under the Geneva Conventions?
- What specific mechanisms or reforms could strengthen the UNHRC’s ability to enforce compliance with international humanitarian law during ongoing armed conflicts?
- How can the international community better protect civilians in modern warfare—particularly against the misuse of drones, missile strikes, and other remote technologies—while respecting the Geneva Conventions.
- In what ways can states enhance monitoring and documentation of human rights abuses in conflict zones, and how should this evidence be used in international courts such as the ICC?
- What role should humanitarian organizations like the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and UN agencies play in ensuring humane treatment of prisoners of war and displaced civilians in Ukraine?
- How can nations balance the legitimate use of self-defense weapons with the prohibition of “unnecessary suffering” and “indiscriminate attacks” as defined in the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions?
- What diplomatic, legal, or economic actions can the UNHRC recommend to deter future violations of international humanitarian law by state actors, such as the Russian Federation?



- How can emerging technologies—such as autonomous weapons systems and cyber warfare—be regulated under the Geneva Conventions to prevent future human rights violations in conflicts like the one in Ukraine? How can the United Nations improve coordination between member states to ensure timely humanitarian aid access for civilians trapped in high-risk areas of Ukraine?
- In what ways can the UNHRC support rehabilitation programs for victims of torture, sexual violence, and forced displacement resulting from the conflict?
- How should the international community respond when state-controlled media spreads propaganda that incites violence, dehumanization, or justification of human rights abuses during war?
- What measures can be taken to protect vulnerable populations—such as children, elderly civilians, and persons with disabilities—from targeted war tactics and forced transfers? How can sanctions, diplomatic actions, or peace negotiations be structured to prevent further escalation and ensure compliance with international humanitarian law by all parties involved?
- How can the United Nations improve coordination between member states to ensure timely humanitarian aid access for civilians trapped in high-risk areas of Ukraine?

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