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**Submission by:** Front Line Defenders – The International Foundation for the  
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Front Line Defenders ([www.frontlinedefenders.org](http://www.frontlinedefenders.org)) is an international NGO based in Ireland with special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). Founded in 2001, Front Line Defenders has particular expertise on the issue of security and protection of human rights defenders and works to promote the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders) adopted by General Assembly resolution 53/144 of 9 December 1998.

The following submission has been prepared by Front Line Defenders – The International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders with the information received from independent human rights defenders in Russia and de-facto Russia-occupied territories of Ukraine.

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## [1] Introduction

[1.1] This submission focuses on the restrictions, threats, and challenges faced by human rights defenders (HRDs) in Russia since the country's 3rd UPR in May 2018.

[1.2] During the 2018 UPR cycle, the Russian Federation received and accepted three recommendations concerning effective protection of HRDs, human rights journalists and lawyers<sup>1</sup> Front Line Defenders finds that these recommendations have not been sufficiently implemented by the Russian Federation.

## [2] Extensive use of the “foreign agents” law

[2.1] Despite 3<sup>rd</sup> Cycle Recommendations<sup>2</sup> the Russian Authorities continued to use the discriminatory “foreign agents” set of laws<sup>3</sup> to target HRDs, human rights lawyers and journalists, and their respective human rights organizations (HROs). Since 2018, the Russian Federation has expanded the set of “foreign agents” laws, which now target not only organizations and media, but also private individuals and so-called “affiliated persons.” Since 2012, Russia included more than 200 HRDs, human rights lawyers, journalists, and their respective HROs in various lists of “foreign agents.”<sup>4</sup>

[2.2] Since 2021, the “foreign agents” law has been systemically used by the Russian authorities to shut down HROs, including the most prominent ones, like Human Rights Center “Memorial,” The International Historical and Human Rights Society “Memorial,” Charitable Foundation for Legal and Social Support “Sphere,” and Russia-based organization “Justice Initiative.”<sup>5</sup> Russian authorities followed a similar pattern of attacks: first an unplanned review of HROs’ activities through the Ministry of Justice of Russian Federation (MoJ), a procedure that the “foreign agents” law allows; then they revealed so-called “fatal violations,” which became the basis for shutting down the organization.

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1 A/HRC/39/13/, 147.127, (Norway), A/HRC/39/13/, 147.179,(France), and A/HRC/39/13/,147.163, (Botswana).

2 A/HRC/39/13/,147.64, (Canada), A/HRC/39/13/, 147.63, (Australia), A/HRC/39/13/, 147.67, (United States), A/HRC/39/13/, 147.184, (Estonia), A/HRC/39/13/, 147.183, (Czechia), A/HRC/39/13/, 147.180, (Luxembourg), A/HRC/39/13/, 147.188, (Ireland), and A/HRC/39/13/, 147.61, (Spain).

3 Since 2012, Russian Federation has continuously introduced a set of laws against so-called “foreign agents.” In 2012, Russian Federation introduced a Federal Law #121-FZ (27.07.2012) “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation Regarding the Regulation of the Activities of Non-Commercial Organizations Performing the Functions of a Foreign Agent.” In 2017, Russian Federation introduced a Federal Law #327-FZ (25.11.17) “On Amendments to Articles 10.4 and 15.3 of the Federal Law “On Information, Information Technologies and Information Protection” and Article 6 of the Law of the Russian Federation “On Mass Media” introduced a legal category of a mass media-foreign agent. In 2019, Russian Federation introduced a Federal Law #426-FZ (2.12.2019) “On Amendments to the Law of the Russian Federation “On the Mass Media” and the Federal Law “On Information, Information Technologies and Information Protection” that allowed the state to list private individuals as mass media-foreign agent. In 2020, Russian Federation introduced a Federal Law #481-FZ (12.30.2020) “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation in Part of Establishing Additional Measures to Counter Threats to National Security” introducing a concept of private individual-foreign agent as well as allowed to label unregistered organizations as foreign agents. In 2022, Russian Federation introduced a Federal Law #225-FZ (14.07.2022) “On control over the activities of persons under foreign influence,” summarizing all the norms of the previously existing legislation on foreign agents, creating a unified registry of foreign agents, introducing a notion of “persons affiliated with foreign agents,” as well as expanding the scope of reasons for labeling person/organization a foreign agent.

4 For a unified list of foreign agents (version updates on March 31, 2023) see <https://minjust.gov.ru/uploaded/files/reestr-inostrannyih-agentov-31-03-2023.pdf>

5 Front Line Defenders, Russia's Courts order the closure of Russia's International Memorial and Human Rights Center “Memorial,” January 24, 2022, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/prosecutors-general-office-moves-permanently-shut-down-both-international-memorial-and-human>.

[2.3] Russian Authorities also systemically fined HRDs and HROs for their failure to comply with the “foreign agents” law, specifically with the provision that stipulates that all the public information circulated by so-called foreign agents needs to be labelled as such. In December 2022, HRO “Sakharov Center” was found guilty of systemically violating the “foreign agent law” and fined them in the amount of RUR 5,000,000.<sup>6</sup> Under the same pretext Russian authorities fined HRD and lawyer Ivan Pavlov in November 2023 RUR 10,000.<sup>7</sup> In 2020 the authorities also repeatedly fined HRO “Public Verdict” for a total amount of RUR 1,000,000.<sup>8</sup> Since 2019, Human Rights Center “Memorial,” The International Historical and Human Rights Society “Memorial,” and its representatives were collectively fined for violating the “foreign agents law” to the amount of RUR 6,500,000.<sup>9</sup>

[2.4] The Russian authorities persecute those HRDs and organizations that fail to pay the fines. In 2020, HRD Semyon Simonov was indicted for failure to pay a fine of RUR 300,000, as ordered by the Khostinsky District Court of Sochi in February 2017 against the Southern Human Rights Center for failing to register as a “foreign agent.”<sup>10</sup>

[2.5] The Russian authorities continued to target HROs through “foreign agents” laws even after they shut down their activities. In September 2022, the Soviet District Court of the city of Nizhnii Novgorod fined<sup>11</sup> HRD Sergey Babinets for violating the foreign agents law through the currently shut down HRO “Committee against Torture (CAT).” According to the MoJ, Sergey Babinets violated the “foreign agent law” as a the former chairperson of the CAT. The HRD was found guilty for the lack of “foreign agent” label on some of its online publications published by CAT before being shut down and ordered him to pay a fine of RUR 100,000.

### [3] Freedom of assembly

[3.1] Aside from systemic targeting of HRDs within the framework of the foreign agents law, Russian authorities used other types of judicial harassment to suppress the rights of HRDs in Russia, including their right of freedom of association. Despite the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle recommendations to boost the space for civil society and foster freedom of association,<sup>12</sup> the Russian Federation continued to shut down independent HROs.

[3.2] In November 2019, Moscow City Court ruled in favour of the MoJ’s request to liquidate the Centre for Support of Indigenous Peoples of the North (CSIPN).<sup>13</sup> The MoJ requested the liquidation of CSIPN on the basis that the organisation’s charter does not comply with recent amendments to legislation on non-profit organisations. The CSIPN was also charged with having failed to submit reports to the MoJ, and for listing an invalid address. The Moscow City Court refused to give the CSIPN more time to make the necessary changes and avoid liquidation.

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6 Sakharov Center, On Fines, December 23, 2022, <https://www.sakharov-center.ru/blog>.

7 OVD-info, Attorney Ivan Pavlov fined for the lack of foreign agent label. February 2, 2023, <https://ovd.news/express-news/2023/02/20/advokata-ivana-pavlova-oshtrafovali-iz-za-otsutstviya-markirovki-inoagenta>.

8 Public Verdict, Public Verdict fined for RUR 400,000. The full amount of fines received by the Fund is now more than RUR 1,000,000, March 2, 2020, <https://publicverdict.org/topics/news/12656.html>.

9 DW, Memorial and Intenational Memorial paid 6,5 million rubles in fines. November 18, 2021, <https://www.dw.com/ru/memorial-i-mezhdunarodnyj-memorial-vyplatili-65-mln-rublej-shtrafov/a-59855403>.

10 Front Line Defenders, Semyon Simonov indicted in relation to the “foreign agents” law, June 24, 2020, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/semyon-simonov-indicted-relation-foreign-agents-law>.

11 Front Line Defenders, Human rights defender Sergey Babinets fined RUR 100,000 (approximately EUR 2000), September 21, 2022, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/human-rights-defender-sergey-babinets-foreign-agent-fine-kept-force#case-update-id-15418>.

12 A/HRC/39/13/147.181, (Republic of Korea), A/HRC/39/13/147.163 (Botswana).

13 Front Line Defenders, Centre for Support of Indigenous Peoples of the North forcibly closed down, November 8, 2019, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/centre-support-indigenous-peoples-north-forcibly-closed-down>.

[3.3] In January 2023, the MoJ carried out an unplanned investigation into the activities of the SOVA Centre for Information and Analysis (Sova Centre) and in March 2023, the MoJ filed a motion to permanently shut it down, citing the fact that the organisation, registered in Moscow, organised events outside of the area in which they are legally allowed to operate, constituting a cause for liquidation.<sup>14</sup>

[3.4] In January 2023, the Moscow City Court moved to shut down the oldest human rights organisation in Russia “Moscow Helsinki Group,” citing a similar argument as in the case of Sova Centre: engaging in activities (specifically, court monitoring activities) across Russia, despite being registered as a regional organisation.<sup>15</sup> In January 2023, the MoJ filed a motion to shut down the most prominent human rights organisation in Mari El, “Person and the Law” using a similar argumentation.<sup>16</sup>

#### [4] War-time censorship laws

[4.1] Since February 24, 2022, the date of the Russian Federation’s full-scale invasion in Ukraine, Russian state introduced a set of new laws<sup>17</sup> that criminalize and ultimately censor anti-war statements. Despite 3<sup>rd</sup> Cycle Recommendations concerning freedom of speech, and, specifically, freedom of speech for HRDs and journalists,<sup>18</sup> the Russian Federation not only engaged in further restricting freedom of speech, but also disproportionately used newly introduced censorship laws against HRDs, lawyers and journalists.

[4.2] Since March 2022, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Ingushetia initiated three criminal cases against WHRD and journalist Isabella Evloeva, who is the editor-in-chief of the media outlet Fortanga.<sup>19</sup> The charges are related to Fortanga’s publication of so-called deliberately false information about Russia’s war crimes in Bucha, Russian military attack on the Kremenchug Shopping Mall, and Isabella Evloeva’s personal blog post condemning the war. The WHRD is being charged with public dissemination of deliberately false information about the Russian armed forces.

[4.3] In June 2022, the Russian Authorities placed HRD and lawyer Dmitry Talantov<sup>20</sup> in pre-trial detention, charging him with public dissemination of “deliberately false information” about the actions of the Russian Armed Forces, calling it a criminal offence.<sup>21</sup> The charge is related to Dmitry Talantov’s Facebook posts from April 2022, which conveyed his strong anti-war sentiments.

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14 Front Line Defenders, Ministry of Justice moves to shut down “Sova” Center, March 24, 2023, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/ministry-justice-moves-shut-down-sova-center>.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 On March 4, 2023, Russian Federation introduces two war-time censorship laws. **Article 20.3.3., Code of Administrative Offenses of the Russian Federation** criminalizes “public actions aimed at discrediting the use of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation for the purpose of protecting the interests of the Russian Federation and its citizens, maintaining international peace and security or exercising their powers by state bodies of the Russian Federation for these purposes, assisting volunteer formations, organizations or individuals in the performance of tasks, assigned to the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.” **Article 207.3., Criminal Code of the Russian Federation** criminalizes “public dissemination of deliberately false information about the use of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, the performance by state bodies of the Russian Federation of their powers, the provision of assistance by volunteer formations, organizations or individuals in the performance of tasks assigned to the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.”

18 A/HRC/39/13/147.181, (Republic of Korea), and A/HRC/39/13/147.159, (Switzerland).

19 Front Line Defenders, Woman human rights defender & journalist Isabella Evloeva’s parents’ apartment raided, June 8, 2022, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/third-criminal-case-initiated-against-woman-human-rights-defender-isabella-evloeva#case-update-id-15063>.

20 Front Line Defenders, Aggravated Charges against human rights lawyer Dmitry Talantov, September 22, 2022, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/human-rights-lawyer-dmitry-talantovs-pre-trial-detention-extended>.

21 As per part 2 of the Article 207.3 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation.

[4.4] In March 2023, Russian law enforcement authorities launched a criminal case against HRD Oleg Orlov for a facebook post from November 2022, charging him with repeated “public actions aimed at discrediting the use of Russian Federation armed forces to protect the interests of the Russian Federation,” now criminal offence.<sup>22,23</sup> The authorities placed the HRD under a travel restriction for an unidentified period of time. Since the introduction of the discreditation laws, Oleg Orlov had already been charged two additional times: in March and in May 2022, when he was charged with “discreditation” for protesting against the war.

## **[5] HRDs in the North Caucasus**

[5.1] On 31 August 2021, the European Court of Human Rights ruled on the case concerning the murder of prominent WHRD Natalia Estemirova on 15 July 2009, stating that Russia failed to properly investigate her murder.<sup>24</sup> During the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR Cycle, the Russian Federation accepted recommendations concerning the Chechen Republic, including concerning the protection of HRDs.<sup>25</sup> However, the Russian authorities continuously fail to ensure the protection of HRDs, human rights journalists and lawyers, who are being targeted for their peaceful and legitimate human rights work. The authorities didn’t investigate crimes committed against HRDs that systemically occur in the North Caucasus region.

[5.2] In January 2019, HRD Igor Kochetkov<sup>26</sup> received online threats for his human rights work to protect LGBTQ persons in the Chechen Republic. In a Youtube video, a blogger, Ali Baskhanov threatened and insulted Igor Kochetkov. HRD reported the death threats to the police and to the Investigative Committee, yet, the authorities didn’t carry out any substantial investigation into the threats. In May 2019, seven unknown individuals raided the apartment of one of the volunteers of the “Sphere” Foundation and also posed death threats to HRD David Isteev,<sup>27</sup> who leads the work of the “Sphere” Foundation on LGBTI rights in Chechnya. The Foundation filed a report to the police in relation to the raid and the threats made against its members, yet no investigation was carried out.

[5.3] In February 2020, a group of more than fifteen unknown individuals, violently attacked WHRD and lawyer Marina Dubrovina and WHRD and journalist Elena Milashina in the lobby of the Continent hotel in Grozny.<sup>28</sup> During a medical examination, Elena was diagnosed with soft tissue injuries on the head, as well as bruises and scratches on the shoulders and neck. Marina was denied medical examination by a neurosurgeon in Grozny, who said that she looked fine. When Marina returned to her hometown she was diagnosed with concussion of the brain. Both WHRDs reported the attack to law enforcement bodies in Chechnya, yet no investigation was carried out.

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22 Front Line Defenders, Human rights defender Oleg Orlov faces criminal charges on “discreditation of the Russian army,” March 24, 2023, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/human-rights-defender-oleg-orlov-faces-criminal-charges-discreditation-russian-army>.

23 As per part 1 of the Article 280.3 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation

24 Front Line Defenders, European Court of Human Rights fails to hold the Russian authorities accountable for the killing of woman human rights defender Natalia Estemirova, September 13, 2021, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/european-court-human-rights-fails-hold-russian-authorities-accountable-killing-woman-human>.

25 A/HRC/39/13/, 147.128, (Lithuania), A/HRC/39/13/ 147.179 (France).

26 Front Line Defenders, Death threats sent to LGBT rights defender, Igor Kochetkov, January 31, 2019, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/death-threats-sent-lgbt-rights-defender-igor-kochetkov>.

27 Front Line Defenders, Russian LGBT Network volunteer and staff member threatened by unknown individuals, May 27, 2019, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/russian-lgbt-network-volunteer-and-staff-member-threatened-unknown-individuals>.

28 Front Line Defenders, Human rights lawyer Marina Dubrovina and journalist Elena Milashina violently attacked, February 10, 2020, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/lawyer-marina-dubrovina-and-journalist-elena-milashina-violently-attacked>.

[5.4] In June 2021, unknown men together with police officers raided a women's shelter for gender-based violence survivors in Makhachkala; WHRDs Svetlana Anokhina and Maysarat Kilyaskhanova, who were present at the time of the raid, were reportedly beaten, accused of resiting the police, and detained together with 3 other women.<sup>29</sup> The WHRDs were subsequently released and reported the attack to the law enforcement authorities in Dagestan, yet no investigation was carried out.<sup>30</sup>

[5.5] In January 2022, Chechen law enforcement officers physically attacked HRDs and lawyers Sergey Babinets and Oleg Khabibrakhmanov and WHRD and lawyer Natalia Dobronravova, while they were providing legal assistance for their clients in Nizhnii Novgorod.<sup>31</sup> HRDs reported the attack to the law enforcement authorities, yet no investigation was carried out.

## [6] HRDs in the Russia-occupied territories of Ukraine

[6.1] In the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR cycle the Russian Federation categorically rejected the references in some of the recommendations to the “annexation” or “occupation” of Crimea<sup>32</sup> despite numerous recommendations mentioning the de-facto illegal occupation and systemic human rights violations in the peninsula that occurred since 2014.<sup>33</sup> Recurrent recommendations concerned Russia’s criminalization of Hizb ut-Tahrir<sup>34</sup> and the use of “anti-terrorist” laws to target HRDs, who are Crimean Tatars, with persecution and long-term prison sentences. Front Line Defenders confirms that HRDs in Crimea continued to be targeted throughout the current UPR cycle. In November 2019, a Court in Rostov-on-Don sentenced HRD Emir-Usein Kuku to twelve years in a strict-regime correctional colony.<sup>35</sup> The lawyers working on his case emphasise that there is no evidence that the HRD was involved in any terrorist or violent activities and that the charges were built purely on the basis that the HRD attended religious gatherings and read religious literature. In September 2020, HRD Server Mustafayev was sentenced by the same court to fourteen years in a strict-regime correctional colony.<sup>36</sup> Server Mustafayev was detained in May 2018 and was charged with “membership of a terrorist organisation” and “planning to violently seize state power.”

[6.2] Since the illegal occupation of Crimea in 2014, Russian Authorities systemically targeted Crimean **human rights lawyers** with judicial harassment. In December 2018, HRD and lawyer

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29 Front Line Defenders, Women human rights defenders Svetlana Anokhina and Maysarat Kilyaskhanova attacked and detained during raid on women's shelter for survivors of gender-based violence, June 17, 2021, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/women-human-rights-defenders-svetlana-anokhina-and-maysarat-kilyaskhanova-attacked-and-detained>.

30 Caucasian Knot, Human Rights Defenders request to punish the law enforcement officials after they broke into the shelter to abduct Taramova, June 17, 2021, <https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/365047/>.

31 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, January 24, 2022, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/hrds-sergey-babinets-oleg-khabibrakhmanov-and-whrd-attorney-natalia-dobronravova-attacked>.

32 A/HRC/39/13, para 136.

33 A/HRC/39/13, 147.309, (Ukraine), A/HRC/39/13, 147.132, (United States of America), A/HRC/39/13, 147.136, (Czechia), A/HRC/39/13, 147.174 (Slovakia), and A/HRC/39/13, 148.2, (Lithuania).

34 Russian Federation criminalizes membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami and considers the activities of Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami as terrorist since 2003; Ukraine doesn’t criminalise Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami. De-facto occupation allows the Russian authorities to persecute Crimean Tatars, who vocally opposed the occupation, suggesting that they are members of what Russia considers a terrorist organization.

35 Front Line Defenders, Emir-Usein Kuku sentenced to twelve years in strict-regime correctional colony, November 13, 2019. <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/emir-usein-kuku-sentenced-twelve-years-strict-regime-correctional-colony>.

36 Front Line Defenders, Server Mustafayev sentenced to fourteen years in strict-regime correctional colony, September 23, 2020, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/arrest-server-mustafayev>.

Emil Kurbedinov<sup>37</sup> was sentenced to five days of administrative detention under Article 20.3 of the Administrative Code of the Russian Federation for “propaganda for extremist organisations” for his personal Facebook post on Hizb ut-Tahrir dated 2013. Since October 2021, HRD and lawyer Edem Semedlyaev was subjected to mistreatment and harrassment, including 12-days detention, and repeated fines for his human rights work.<sup>38</sup>

[6.3] In July 2022, the Russian Bar Association disbarred HRDs and lawyers Lilia Hemedzhy, Rustem Kyamilev and Nazim Sheikhmambetov.<sup>39</sup> MoJ investigated their work looking specifically for any minor violations. Lilia Hemedzhy previously received verbal threats in the form of warnings. In 2022, Nazim Sheikhmambetov was arrested at a court hearing while representing his colleague Edem Semedlyaev, and was sentenced to 8 days administrative arrest.<sup>40</sup> HRDs and lawyers Ayder Azamatov and Emine Avamileva, were detained a day after Nazim Sheikhmambetov and sentenced to eight and five days each.<sup>41</sup>

[6.4] Since February 24, 2022, the Russian military targeted HRDs, journalists, and humanitarian volunteers both on the **newly-occupied territories in Ukraine and in Crimea with persecution, abductions, enforced disappearances, and torture**. Overall, the Russian military have abducted, disappeared, and unlawfully detained at least 386 volunteers, activists, and HRDs.<sup>42</sup> In March 2022, two Ukrainian HRDs and journalists, Oleh Baturin and Serhii Tsyhipa<sup>43</sup> were disappeared in Kakhovka, Kherson region by the Russian military for their reporting on human rights violations, committed by the Russian military. Oleh Baturin was subjected to torture and ill-treatment and was released after eight days in captivity; the whereabouts of Serhii Tsyhipa remains unknown. Also in March 2022, Ukrainian HRD and journalist Dmytro Khyliuk was abducted and forcibly disappeared by the Russian military forces.<sup>44</sup> In May 2022, the Russian military abducted WHRD and a humanitarian volunteer Iryna Horobtsova.<sup>45</sup> Since then, there has been no official information about Iryna Horobtsova’s whereabouts. In total, 51 Ukrainian HRDs and humanitarian volunteers were killed because of their human rights work as a result of Russia’s full scale invasion of Ukraine.<sup>46</sup>

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37 Front Line Defenders, Administrative detention of human rights lawyer Emil Kurbedinov, December 7, 2018, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/administrative-detention-human-rights-lawyer-emil-kurbedinov>.

38 Front Line Defenders, Prominent human rights lawyer Edem Semedlyaev sentenced to 12 days of administrative detention and fined, November 18, 2021, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/prominent-human-rights-lawyer-edem-semedlyaev-sentenced-12-days-administrative-detention-and>; Front Line Defenders, Human rights lawyer Edem Semedlyaev charged and fined, May 30, 2022, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/human-rights-lawyer-edem-semedlyaev-charged-and-fined>.

39 Front Line Defenders, Statement – Crimea (Ukraine): Human Rights Lawyers Lilia Hemedzhy, Rustem Kyamilev and Nazim Sheikhmambetov disbarred, August 17, 2022, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/statement-report/crimea-ukraine-human-rights-lawyers-disbarred>.

40 Front Line Defenders, Crimea (Ukraine): Crackdown on Crimean Lawyers, June 9, 2022, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/statement-report/crimea-ukraine-crackdown-crimean-lawyers>.

41 Ibid.

42 Front Line Defenders, Ukraine: Russia should determine the whereabouts of and release WHRD Iryna Horobtsova and other civilian victims of enforced disappearances in Russian-occupied territories, December 23, 2022, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/statement-report/ukraine-russia-should-determine-whereabouts-and-release-whrd-iryna-horobtsova-and>.

43 Front Line Defenders, Oleh Baturin released from captivity, March 20, 2022, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/oleh-baturin-released-captivity>.

44 Front Line Defenders, Ukraine: Russia should determine the whereabouts of and release WHRD Iryna Horobtsova and other civilian victims of enforced disappearances in Russian-occupied territories, December 23, 2022, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/statement-report/ukraine-russia-should-determine-whereabouts-and-release-whrd-iryna-horobtsova-and>.

45 Ibid.

46 see Front Line Defenders' Global Analysis 2022 Report at [www.frontlinedefenders.org](http://www.frontlinedefenders.org)

[6.5] In April 2022, WHRD and journalist Iryna Danylovyeh was forcibly disappeared in Koktebel.<sup>47</sup> Her whereabouts remained unknown for 13 days after her abduction, until she was located in the pre-trial detention centre in Simferopol. In December 2022, the WHRD was sentenced to 7 years of prison time and fined for RUR 50,000, ruling that Iryna Danylovyeh is guilty of “illegal acquisition, transfer, sale, storage, transportation, shipment or carrying of explosives or explosive devices.”<sup>48</sup> The Russian authorities have systemically deprived her of medical support; at the time of this submission, the WHRD is on dry hunger strike, demanding independent medical support.

[6.6] Despite accepting a recommendation regarding international human rights monitoring in Crimea,<sup>49</sup> the Russian Authorities prevented access to Ukrainian human rights groups focused on monitoring human rights violations in de-facto occupied Crimea. The Russian Federation listed the two most prominent human rights groups operating in Crimea as undesirable: Crimean Human Rights Group in May 2022 and Crimea-SOS in April 2023,<sup>50</sup> preventing them from operating on the territory of the Russian Federation, including Russia-occupied territories and criminalizing Russian citizens, including those forced into Russian citizenship, for engaging in the work of such groups.<sup>51</sup>

## **[7] Recommendations:**

### **[7.1] To the Russian Federation:**

1. Repeal the set of “foreign agents laws” as they are discriminatory in nature and disproportionately target HRDs, human rights lawyers, journalists, and their organizations restricting their right to freedom of association;
2. Repeal the new set of war-time censorship laws, as they disproportionately target HRDs, human rights lawyers and journalists, and their organizations, restricting their right to freedom of speech;
3. Establish a national mechanism to protect HRDs, human rights lawyers and journalists that complies with international human rights standards;
4. Ensure that all crimes committed against HRDs, journalists and lawyers, are promptly investigated with respect to international human rights standards in an effective, transparent, and prompt manner;
5. Ensure that all crimes committed against HRDs, journalists and lawyers, are promptly investigated with respect to international human rights standards in an effective, transparent, and prompt manner;
6. Refrain from any acts of intimidation and reprisals against HRDs, human rights lawyers and journalists, and protect them from killings, physical attacks, abduction, arbitrary arrests and

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47 Front Line Defenders, Woman human rights defender Irina Danilovich started a dry hunger strike after the Russian authorities’ refusal to provide her medical assistance, March 23, 2023, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/woman-human-rights-defender-irina-danilovich-started-dry-hunger-strike-after-russian>.

48 A violation, envisioned by the Article 222.1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation.

49 A/HRC/39/13, 147.40, (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland).

50 According to the Article 3.1 of the Federal law #272-FZ (28.12.2012) “On measures of influence on persons involved in violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms, rights and freedoms of citizens of the Russian Federation” activities “of a foreign or international non-governmental organization that poses a threat to the foundations of the constitutional order of the Russian Federation, the defense capability of the country or the security of the state [...] can be deemed undesirable on the territory of the Russian Federation.”

51 For a full list of undesirable organizations (update March 31, 2023) see: <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/documents/7756/>.



- detentions, judicial or administrative harassment;
7. Fully implement the adopted UPR recommendations on HRDs, human rights lawyers and journalists in a transparent and participatory manner with full involvement of HRDs at all levels;
  8. Publicly recognise the positive and legitimate role played by HRDs, human rights lawyers and journalists.

**[7.2] To the Russian authorities on all de-facto occupied territories of Ukraine:**

1. Immediately release all human rights defenders, humanitarian volunteers, human rights lawyers, and journalists arbitrarily deprived of their liberty without delay and in conditions of safety;
2. Ensure that all persons deprived of their liberty both at the pre-trial and trial stages benefit from all legal guarantees, including equal treatment before the law, the right not to be arbitrarily detained, the presumption of innocence, and the prohibition from self-incrimination;
3. Guarantee fair trial proceedings and independent judicial-making in the cases involving human rights defenders, humanitarian volunteers, journalists, and lawyers;
4. Carry out effective, independent, transparent and timely investigations and proceedings against the perpetrators of all allegations of ill-treatment, torture, abductions, disappearances and killings of human rights defenders, humanitarian volunteers, journalists, and lawyers;
5. Ensure the respect of the rights to freedom of expression, media, association and assembly, as well as the right for a fair trial;
6. Ensure direct and unfettered access to the Crimean peninsula and other territories de-facto occupied by the Russian Federation by established regional and international human rights monitoring mechanisms to enable them to carry out their mandate in full conformity with General Assembly resolution 68/262.