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To UN Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights

**Russian Aggression in Ukraine,
Sanctions and Social and Educational Rights**

Our Association of Reintegration of Crimea (ARC), is non-governmental expert and human rights organization, with activities devoted to Crimea's issues. We informed Special Rapporteur in 2020 and later, that illegal occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea by Russia since 2014, and next Russian large scale aggression against Ukraine, changed the situation in the region¹ and started the relevant sanctions policy for protection global order an human rights against international crimes, including genocide and aggression²³⁴.

Russia's intervention, aggression and attempted annexation of the Crimea and Ukraine's mainland regions, were the grounds for the unilateral sanctions imposed by the Ukraine, by European Union and by some third states, including Japan, Switzerland, United States etc. After Russia's large-scale aggression in Ukraine started in February, 2022 we informed Special Rapporteur regarding sanctions' development on this issue⁵.

Russia-controlled troops and mercenaries committed in Ukraine, during this invasion, gross violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights' law already, including broad crimes against property, social and cultural rights and environment, attacks on medics, teachers, journalists, social, medical, educational infrastructures⁶⁷⁸⁹¹⁰¹¹¹².

Unilateral sanctions against Russia, Northern Korea and Belarus are the only effective tool to make influence on its economic system and politic regime in modern conditions, limiting the Russia's criminal acts against Ukrainian people.

Now the unilateral sanctions of various UN member states established against Russia and Russia-controlled structures in Ukraine, has strong human rights impact as they limit

¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/UCM/ReportHRC48/NGOs/submission-association-of-reintegration-of-crimea.pdf>

² <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/ucm/cfis/79th-ga/subm-2024-79th-session-cso-association-reintegration-crimea.pdf>

³ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/ucm/cfis/monitoring-impact-assessment/subm-2024-57th-session-cso-association-reintegration-crimea-1.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/ucm/cfis/monitoring-impact-assessment/subm-2024-57th-session-cso-association-reintegration-crimea-2.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/ucm/cfis/secondary-sanctions/2022-09-14/submission-HRC-51-ARC.pdf>

⁶ <https://sofrep.com/news/russian-soldiers-gang-raped-ukrainian-woman-as-her-child-was-crying-in-the-next-room/>

⁷ <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/182/182-20220307-PRE-01-00-EN.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-60888528>

⁹ <https://hromadske.radio/en/news/2022/03/09/members-of-the-wagner-group-have-been-killed-in-ukraine>

¹⁰ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60547807>

¹¹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1113652>

¹² <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/03/ukraine-apparent-war-crimes-russia-controlled-areas>

Russian economy and, correspondently, Russian troops and Russian mercenaries in committing new broad-scale human right violations, war crimes and genocide against Ukrainian population, including Russia's genocidal attempts.

Such example allows us to send such proposals to issues of sanctions and social, cultural and educational rights.

A. Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on Economic, Labor, and Social Rights

Unilateral sanctions against Russia, Northern Korea and Belarus are the strong tool of support of defense and protection the economic, labor, and social rights of Ukrainian citizens.

Exactly the unilateral sanctions against Russia, Northern Korea and Belarus minimize the practical possibilities to make missile and drone attacks against Ukrainian hospitals, social institutions and commercial enterprises.

All war crimes, committed by Russian invaders during ongoing hostilities, are connected with absolutely clear Russia's war targets in maximal destruction the civil infrastructure, including social and economic objects, essential for civil population of Ukraine¹³.

As major of Kharkiv stated in 31st of March, 2022 Russian troops destroyed more than 1290 apartment buildings in this one-million city, most of them were multi-floor ones¹⁴. Among 3300 multi-storey residential buildings in Mykolaiv 400 were destroyed partially and 60 – totally in first year of war¹⁵; such data was proved by UNOSAT maps¹⁶.

So thousands of Ukrainians, including social vulnerable persons lost their houses and save access to social services, due to Russian aggression and related hostilities. Russian attacks against Ukrainian non-combatants, including social personnel and against Ukrainian civil infrastructure have features of state terrorism and made strong negative influence on realization the basic rights, including labor and social ones.

B. Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on Educational Rights

Unilateral sanctions against Russia, Northern Korea and Belarus are the strong tool of support of defense and protection the educational rights of Ukrainian citizens.

Exactly the unilateral sanctions against Russia, Northern Korea and Belarus minimize the practical possibilities to make missile and drone attacks against Ukrainian schools and universities.

During Russian large scale aggression 3798 of Ukrainian education institutions have suffered bombing and shelling, and 365 of them have been destroyed completely by Russian attacks¹⁷.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that over 3,800 schools have been impacted in total, underscoring the severe strain on Ukraine's educational system. This shows that the damage goes beyond physical infrastructure – it also affects the mental health of Ukrainian children who are displaced and living under constant threat of Russian genocidal attacks¹⁸.

Also unilateral sanctions against Russia and Belarus are the strong tool of countering the deportation of Ukrainian youth, countering the illegal indoctrination and militarization of those youth instead of school in camps located in Crimes, Russia and Belarus.

¹³ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2022/ukraine-before-after-destruction-photos/>

¹⁴ <https://nv.ua/kharkiv/harkov-obstrelly-skolko-domov-razrusheno-dannye-31-marta-novosti-harkova-50229919.html>

¹⁵ <https://www.liga.net/politics/interview/mer-aleksandr-senkevich-rakety-do-nas-doletayut-za-tri-minuty-pod-pritselom-ves-nikolaev>

¹⁶ <https://unitar.org/maps/map/3540>

¹⁷ <https://saveschools.in.ua/en/>

¹⁸ <https://www.nrc.no/feature/2024/the-hidden-casualties-of-war-how-attacks-on-schools-in-ukraine-are-affecting-children>

Our Association stress again that the general situation with the monitoring of human rights in specific national situations must take into account that the main form of assessment the effectiveness of sanctions, must reflect the level of violation the demands of international law by state, which is the object of sanction policy, before and after the relevant sanctions were imposed or changed.

The main criteria may be the quantity of people, whose rights were violated by regime (government) which is the object of sanction policy, before and after sanctions started; by level of punitive and military bodies' potential in such state before and after sanctions started etc. So in above stressed examples sanctions are effective tool of defense the Ukrainians' social, educational and other rights, if the limit the Russia's possibilities to commit next crimes against humanity and genocidal acts in Ukraine.

Key international bodies in that area are UN structures and some specialized agencies like OSCE and UN bodies must be the key actor in the relevant monitoring policy and producing analyses on those issues, but their impartiality must be guaranteed by multinational expert presentation in such international body.

Methodology of issuing the recommendations regarding sanction policy and producing analyses on those issues must include the issues of international crimes and other key violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, committed by the government, that is the object of unilateral sanctions.

Reflection of such issues may be in the reports and opinions of UN conventional institutions and human rights bodies or in decisions of regional organizations. Such additional evaluation can be added, as social and educational rights of indigenous peoples, ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities and groups; also as right to life and other fundamental rights, level of tortures, illegal arrests, enforced disappearances in researched state or territory.

Our Association believes that a special framework on the sanctions policy in situations of armed conflicts, attempted annexation, committing international crimes of aggression, war crimes and crimes against humanity, as in happen now in the Crimea and in other Russia-occupied Ukrainian territories, must be reflected in new reports, such UN Special Rapporteur's activities may be a starting point for improvement of the situation.

The Special Rapporteur's visit to Ukraine would contribute to collection of information, and would enable the Rapporteur to make a first-hand impression of the situation with unilateral coercive measures in the region.

28th March, 2025

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