



HUMAN RIGHTS HOUSE
FOUNDATION

36th SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
26 September 2017

Item 10
Interactive Dialogue on HC oral update on Ukraine

Human Rights House Foundation statement

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Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

We thank the High Commissioner for his update and the continued reporting of the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine.

We begin by calling on Ukraine to withdraw the draft legislation that requires NGOs and individual entrepreneurs as well as enterprises, institutions and organisations providing them with services, to file additional reports to tax authorities¹.

These new measures indicate a growing pattern of the Presidential Administration to control Ukraine's civil society. These legislative steps come right after the previously adopted legislation targeting human rights defenders working against corruption².

We are concerned that the aim of these measures is to discourage and put an illegitimate and unjustified pressure on Ukraine's civil society, thereby preventing it from carrying out its work properly, free from any hindrances. We are also concerned that these legislative steps serve as a tool to sanction NGOs working on sensitive issues involving the state, as it enables the authorities to remove the non-profit status from those that do not comply with the requirements.

Mr Chairperson.

HRHF welcomes the dedicated thematic report of OHCHR on the human rights situation in Crimea.

We note that while Ukraine does not have the possibility to fully defend the rights and interests of citizens in Crimea the government must still ensure human rights and freedoms of all people within the territories under its control.

¹ Human Rights House Foundation: "Draft laws burden Ukrainian NGOs"

<http://humanrightshouse.org/Articles/22724.html>

² <http://humanrightshouse.org/Articles/22387.html>

The underlying responsibility for the current human rights situation in Crimea lies with the local *de facto* authorities and with the Russian Federation as the occupying power.

The *de facto* authorities in Crimea continue to be party to a range of human rights violations, including on freedom of association and assembly. As underlined by the OHCHR in its report, “The space for public manifestation of Ukrainian culture and identity has shrunk significantly”³. More broadly, the *de facto* authorities use anti-extremism and anti-terrorism laws to criminalise non-violent behaviour, suppress dissent, and exploit judicial and law enforcement systems as instruments to clamp down on opposition voices⁴.

The *de facto* authorities continue a crackdown against human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists including through creating mandatory re-registration requirements to NGOs and media outlets in Crimea, thereby monopolizing an authorization process⁵. As part of their effort to limit the spreading of information about human rights violations, they target those monitoring the situation and reporting about it to the outside world. Meanwhile they repeatedly impede access of the UN Human rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine to Crimea.⁶

It is disturbing that the reports of the Monitoring Mission are similar session after session, there is no improvement and the veil of opacity surrounding Crimea is worsening the situation.

Thank you.

³ Report on the situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol Page 3 § 17 available at http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/Crimea2014_2017_EN.pdf

⁴ Report on the situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol Page 2 §8 available at http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/Crimea2014_2017_EN.pdf

⁵ Idem

⁶ Report on the situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol Page 1§1.