



CRIMEAN  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
GROUP

# PARALLEL SUBMISSION DISCRIMINATION AND STIGMATIZATION OF UKRAINIANS IN THE TERRITORIES CONTROLLED EFFECTIVELY BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION (OCCUPIED TERRITORIES OF UKRAINE)

*regarding the issue of Non-discrimination (art. 2 (2))*

**To the Committee on Economic, Social  
and Cultural Rights (CESCR)**

Prepared by the Crimean Human Rights Group  
(Civil Society Organisation, Ukraine)  
in cooperation with Liudmyla Opryshko,  
a media lawyer of the Human Rights  
Platform NGO

**e-mail:**  
[crimeahrg@gmail.com](mailto:crimeahrg@gmail.com)

**website:**  
[crimeahrg.org](http://crimeahrg.org)



**CRIMEAN  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
GROUP**

The **CRIMEAN HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP (CHRG)** is a public non-profit organization of the Crimean human rights defenders and journalists, aimed at promoting the observance and protection of human rights in Crimea by attracting wide attention to problems of human rights and international humanitarian law in the territory of the Crimean peninsula, and the search for and development of mechanisms for the protection of human rights in Crimea.

CHRG has been documenting human rights violations, crimes against humanity, war crimes in the occupied Crimea, since 2014.

**C**ONNECT WITH US:





# PARALLEL SUBMISSION DISCRIMINATION AND STIGMATIZATION OF UKRAINIANS IN THE TERRITORIES CONTROLLED EFFECTIVELY BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION (OCCUPIED TERRITORIES OF UKRAINE)

*regarding the issue of Non-discrimination (art. 2 (2))*

**To the Committee on Economic, Social  
and Cultural Rights (CESCR)**

Prepared by the **Crimean Human Rights Group**  
(Civil Society Organisation, Ukraine)  
in cooperation with **Liudmyla Opryshko**,  
a media lawyer of the Human Rights Platform NGO

## **RESUME:**

The submission describes a role of Russian propaganda in inciting discrimination, hatred and violence against Ukrainians including those living in the territories effectively controlled by the Russian Federation (occupied territories of Ukraine). The submission highlights incitements to genocide of Ukrainians, aggressive war, crimes against humanity and war crimes, i.e. the most aggressive forms of discriminatory statements encouraging enmity, violence towards Ukrainians and justify them, that are consistently spread in the Russian information space. The submission points out that the Russian Federation has been consciously and purposefully carrying on this policy in violation of Article 2 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. This is, inter alia, illustrated by provisions of “Strategy for Counteracting Extremism in Russian Federation” approved by the Edict of President of Russia on December 28, 2024.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1. To apply the procedure of early warning and immediate response to stop propaganda of discrimination and incitement to discrimination, enmity and violence against Ukrainians by the Russian Federation and to prevent such actions in the future;**
- 2. To make a public statement condemning the Russian racial discrimination policy regarding Ukrainians;**
- 3. To intensify monitoring mechanisms for keeping a close watch on state and state-supported information campaigns inciting discrimination, enmity or violence.**



## **INTRODUCTION:**

Since 2014, the Crimean Human Rights Group has been monitoring the Russian media space to find out statements inciting to discrimination and violence against Ukrainians. In 2024 we analyzed in the information spread in the Russian media and by individual speakers with more than 50,000 subscribers in Telegram messenger or on Youtube and Rutube video hosting platform channel<sup>1</sup>.

The studies we carried out demonstrate that the number of discriminatory messages regarding Ukrainians (both as ethnic and/or national group) has been more and more increasing in the Russia's information space.

The system-based spreading, a wide audience coverage, multiple repetition of these statements constantly circulating in the Russian information space allows for the conclusion that discrimination of Ukrainians is purposefully propagandized. These includes incitement to genocide, committing crimes against humanity that jeopardize the fundamental human rights, including the right to life, ban on torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment as well as right to liberty and security of person, right to freedom of opinion and expression.

This information impact is a most strong backed by Russia's actions to limit significantly, almost to ban, independent media activity, to ban communicating true facts and opposite thoughts contradicting the official information, in the media<sup>2</sup>.

## **RACIAL DISCRIMINATION OF UKRAINIANS AND INCITEMENT TO IT IN THE RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA CONTEXT:**

The Russian Federation has been carrying out information policy aimed at demonization and dehumanization of Ukrainians, justification of violence and brutality against them, has been calling to eliminate them or encouraging or justifying such actions. This is proved by communicating consistently such messages in the Russian media including on Internet and, in particular, the platforms offering a joint access to video and information, on various websites, etc. Most of such media and information communication channels, particularly those with a wide audience, are owned by the State or state financed or state controlled in other ways.

In addition, the speakers who spread such content are usually governmental officials, representatives of different power branches, as well as writers, philosophers, scientists, political experts, religious figures, that is, leaders of thoughts who have impact on public life and are in particular confidence of Russia's inhabitants.

The combination of traditional and new media to spread hate and violence against Ukrainians has a cumulative effect and intensifies the negative impact. In addition, offering constant access to such content on the internet and the opportunity to comment on it "adds fuel to the fire" and "fans the flames" of hatred towards Ukrainians.

<sup>1</sup> Information War Crimes: analytical information report on spreading incitement to genocide of Ukrainians and calls for aggressive warfare against Ukraine through the Russian language information resources covering the armed conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine on a regular basis (February 2022 – February 2024): [https://crimeahrg.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/chrg\\_information-war-crimes.pdf](https://crimeahrg.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/chrg_information-war-crimes.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> For more detail, see submission of Crimean Human Rights Group on request to submit information for the study of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee on disinformation impact on exercising and enjoying human rights (HRC Resolution 55/10) at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/advisorycommittee/cfi-disinformation/subm-impact-disinformation-enjoyment-cso-crimean-hr-group.pdf>



The Russian information space is saturated with narratives that Ukrainians must be partially or completely exterminated, and that the Ukrainian nation (the political nation and Ukrainians as a whole) must be eliminated, the Ukrainian state and its representatives must be liquidated, civil infrastructure, power facilities, and Ukrainian cities must be destroyed, nuclear and/or chemical weapons must be used against Ukrainians, and Ukrainian civilians who do not support Russia must be killed and/or persecuted, etc.

Widely spread **incitements to genocide of Ukrainians** are of particular danger. For instance, on April 22, 2023, while speaking at Basic Combat Training educational event held by the Russian military historical community, Dmitriy Puchkov, a Russian writer, blogger and TV presenter, answering the question “**Does the Ukrainian nation have the right to exist?**”, claimed, “*I think that all this Nazi scum must be ruthlessly massacred! It is useless to re-educate them! That they are buried there on industrial scale, is beneficial for them, and for us, too. This is a kind of attitude I have.*” A video of the speech with this message reached almost 3 million views on YouTube as of July 2025<sup>3</sup>.

The abovementioned could be completed with calls for persecuting or executing Ukrainian POWs by establishing “courts martial” in the Russia occupied territories of Ukraine. This may be illustrated by the statement of Sergey Karnaukhov in Solovyev LIVE Show of March 29, 2022 who, inter alia, supported the establishment of relevant courts martial. For instance, he said, “*Neither Donetsk nor Lugansk are part of any European unions, they have no moratoriums on the death penalty. Moreover, Donetsk and Lugansk, in our times, in the 21st century, in 2022, have every right to choose the punishment that corresponds to the severity of the crime committed. No shootings, only the gallows, because this trash should hang in the squares. As medieval as it may sound, they must be punished for what they have done. I hope the military tribunals will be like that.*”<sup>4</sup>

Other examples of hate narratives regarding Ukrainians that are consistently spread in the Russian media space, may be found in “Combatting Russian Propagandists” database<sup>5</sup>.

Thus, the Russian Federation has been using traditional and new media to spread hate speech against Ukrainians, creating an atmosphere of hatred and inciting violence against Ukrainians. It supports and legitimizes such violent acts as morally justified. These Russia’s actions are in direct violation of its obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Support of racial discrimination and incitement to hatred regarding Ukrainians in the Russia’s official policy papers:

Inciting discrimination against Ukrainians has become part of Russian State policy. This is evidenced not only by the regular dissemination of relevant statements and materials in State-owned and State-supported media, as mentioned above, but also by strategy policy papers of the Russian Federation.

For example, on December 28, 2024, the Russian President signed an edict approving the “Strategy for Countering Extremism in the Russian Federation” (hereinafter referred to as the Strategy)<sup>6</sup>. This document declares Ukraine, which is a victim of Russia’s unprovoked armed aggression,<sup>7</sup> a source

<sup>3</sup> Talk Show POINT BLANK with Dmitriy Puchkov (22 March 2023), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rt1h\\_Tnhv5o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rt1h_Tnhv5o)

<sup>4</sup> Solovyev LIVE Show (29 March 2022) <https://rutube.ru/video/7518a86b2b7cb310f86a6b36dc0ba937/>

<sup>5</sup> Examples of calls for persecuting or executing Ukrainian POWs <https://surli.cc/bhrrbi>

<sup>6</sup> Edict of President of Russian Federation “On approving the Strategy for Countering Extremism in the Russian Federation” dated 28 December 2024 No 1124 <http://kremlin.ru/acts/news/76020>

<sup>7</sup> UN GA Resolution “Aggression against Ukraine” dated 2 March 2022, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3965290?ln=en&v=pdf>





of “extremism” to be eliminated<sup>8</sup>. In this regard, it is important to note that the Venice Commission<sup>9</sup> has already drawn attention to the fact that the definitions of the terms “extremism,” “extremist organizations,” and “extremist materials” in Russian legislation are **too loose and inaccurate**, allowing excessive freedom of action in their interpretation and application and **leading to arbitrariness**.

The strategy defines the goals, objectives, and directions of Russia’s national policy, as well as the achieved and expected results in countering extremism. It also addresses issues related to military actions in Ukraine, which are referred to here as a “special military operation.” Achievements in countering extremism include a ban on the public display of “extremist attributes or symbols” introduced into the laws; enforced liability for encroachment on the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation, actions aimed at discrediting the use of Russian armed forces to protect its interests, the dissemination of false information about the use of its armed forces, as well as calls for sanctions against it<sup>10</sup>.

The Strategy demonizes “Ukrainian nationalism”, which is mentioned in the same breath with extremism and neo-Nazism. It sets the task of countering “extremism,” in particular in the occupied part of Ukraine (the occupied parts of the Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson regions), which Russia considers “new subjects of the Russian Federation.” Law enforcement agencies are responsible for preventing the production, storage, and distribution of “extremist materials, symbols, and attributes of extremist organizations,”<sup>11</sup>, which, due to the aforementioned terminological defects, means **everything Ukrainian**. For example, Ukrainian symbols are considered extremist. Even the combination of the colors of the Ukrainian flag in everyday life (in bouquets of flowers, curtains on windows, on shoes, etc.) is considered a manifestation of extremism<sup>12</sup>.

This area of activity is complemented by tasks in the field of state youth policy, which should shape a **pan-Russian civic identity**, and in the field of culture, which is obliged to **strengthen pan-Russian cultural space** and counteract the ideas of fascism and neo-Nazism, which include the “activities of Ukrainian right-wing extremist groups”. It was also tasked to **integrate socially and culturally** the population of the so-called “Donetsk People’s Republic,” the “Lugansk People’s Republic” and the occupied parts of the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions into Russian society, and to fulfill state orders for creating objects of literature and art aimed at promoting “**pan-Russian civic identity and the idea of the historical unity of the peoples of Russia**.”<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Strategy for Countering Extremism in the Russian Federation approved by Edict of Russian President of 28 December 2024 No 1124, Clause 13 <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/ru/wrfx0TxRABr2gXaBbzJ6ShAZ5Na8CDWp.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., clauses 28-49, 74-77 of Opinion on the Federal Law on Combating Extremist Activity of the Russian Federation adopted by the Venice Commission at its 91st Plenary Session (Venice, 15-16 June 2012) <https://www.coe.int/en/web/venice-commission/-/opinion-on-the-federal-law-on-combating-extremist-activity-of-the-russian-federation-adopted-by-the-venice-commission-at-its-91st-plenary-session-venice-15-16-june-2012-1>

<sup>10</sup> Strategy for Countering Extremism in the Russian Federation approved by Edict of Russian President of 28 December 2024 No 1124, Clauses 49, 51, 57

<sup>11</sup> Strategy for Countering Extremism in the Russian Federation approved by Edict of Russian President of 28 December 2024 No 1124, Clause 36.2

<sup>12</sup> Id., and “Man Was Arrested in Moscow for Sneakers Color. They Were Considered “Political Agitation Tool”. MSK1. RU, 21 April 2022, <https://msk1.ru/text/gorod/2022/04/21/71274899/>, “MinJustice Declared Phrase “Glory to Ukraine” to be “Nazi”, RBK, 18 January 2024, <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/18/01/2024/65a979d09a794762ae43e844>

<sup>13</sup> Strategy for Countering Extremism in the Russian Federation approved by Edict of Russian President of 28 December 2024 No 1124, Clauses 36.6, 36.7, 13



Thus, the Strategy clearly presents the focus of Russia's policy. On the one hand, it creates a basis for demonizing Ukrainians and dehumanizing them by labelling them as extremists. This is an attempted way to erase Ukrainian identity or marginalize it. On the other hand, the Strategy defines the package of governmental measures aimed at the forced shaping of an "pan-Russian identity."

## CONCLUSION:

Propaganda inciting hatred against Ukrainians has reached alarming scales and forms in Russia. Violence and brutality against Ukrainians are encouraged and justified at the official level. All this adversely affects human rights, as documented in reports and statements by international organizations, Ukrainian law enforcement agencies, and non-governmental organizations. In particular, the report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine presents new findings on torture, sexual violence, attacks with explosive weapons affecting civilians and civil objects, as well as attacks on energy infrastructure<sup>14</sup>.

In the light of this, Russia's policy of discrimination against Ukrainians and its propaganda of hatred and violence against them must be condemned immediately at the international level, as it has created and continues to create a backdrop for other human rights violations in Ukraine, legitimizing and justifying violence against Ukrainians.

<sup>14</sup> Report of Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine dated 25 October 2024, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/79/549>