



Organization: Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada  
Item 4: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation  
Date: 23 September 2024  
Speaker: Stephen Marcus

**Oral Statement to the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council from Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC) and the International Bar Association in special consultative status, and endorsed by OVD-Info and Memorial Human Rights Defence Centre, NGOs without consultative status**

**Continued deterioration of human rights in the Russian Federation**

Mr. President,

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada and the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, with the endorsement by OVD-Info and the Memorial Human Rights Defence Centre, concur with the Special Rapporteur that "[t]here is no longer any safe space for civic action or political opposition."<sup>1</sup>

The rationale for the Special Rapporteur's work is even stronger than it was when the Council created the mandate two years ago.<sup>2</sup> Russia has increased its repression of peaceful dissent, anti-war advocacy, legitimate journalism, and human rights and legal advocacy.<sup>3</sup>

We join the Special Rapporteur in welcoming Russia's recent release of several persons from arbitrary detention, including human rights defender, Oleg Orlov, but we urge Russia to immediately release more than 1,300 persons still arbitrarily detained<sup>4</sup> and to repeal all laws that impair freedom of expression, including the laws against "fake" news, "discrediting" Russian armed forces, and "extremism."

We are alarmed by the April 2024 law that undermines the independence of lawyers and fair trial rights, places lawyers under control of the Ministry of Justice, and limits lawyers' access to persons detained in police stations.<sup>5</sup>

We urge the Human Rights Council to renew the mandate of the Special Rapporteur with a strong resolution that provides adequate scope and resources to wholly fulfil the mandate.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> Situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, A/HRC/57/59, 13 September 2024, para 137, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session57/advance-versions/a-hrc-57-59-aev.docx>; Also see the Special Rapporteur’s press releases at [https://www.ohchr.org/en/latest?field\\_content\\_category\\_target\\_id%5B158%5D=158&field\\_content\\_category\\_target\\_id%5B162%5D=162&field\\_content\\_category\\_target\\_id%5B161%5D=161&field\\_content\\_category\\_target\\_id%5B159%5D=159&field\\_entity\\_target\\_id%5B8246%5D=8246](https://www.ohchr.org/en/latest?field_content_category_target_id%5B158%5D=158&field_content_category_target_id%5B162%5D=162&field_content_category_target_id%5B161%5D=161&field_content_category_target_id%5B159%5D=159&field_entity_target_id%5B8246%5D=8246).

<sup>2</sup> Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, A/HRC/RES/51/25, 7 October 2022, <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/51/25>.

<sup>3</sup> INGOs urge states to support renewal of UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Russia, 10 September 2024, <https://humanrightshouse.org/statements/hrc57-ingos-urge-states-to-support-renewal-of-un-special-rapporteur-on-human-rights-in-russia/>; Update on Human Rights in the Russian Federation and the Continuing Need for a Special Rapporteur on Russia, Human Rights Watch 28 August 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/08/28/update-human-rights-russian-federation-and-continuing-need-special-rapporteur>

<sup>4</sup> In 2024, more than 10,000 people have been prosecuted on administrative charges for criticizing Russia’s war against Ukraine. Hundreds have been criminally prosecuted on spurious charges of “false information,” “discreditation” of Russian armed forces, or “extremism.” *ibid*, HRW. See the database of OVD-Info at: [https://en.ovdinfo.org/politpressing?\\_gl=1\\*wsfqa\\*\\_gcl\\_aw\\*R0NMLjE3MjQ3NTU2NjAuQ2p3S0NBanc4clcyQmhBZ0Vpd0FvUk81cktVUU55TW0xNC0zSzRQdFdJalRFN1pOd3Vyalh5aH1LOHINUXICQ1pBWF9nekZ3OTJTSFRob0NKLWdRQXZEX0J3RQ..\\*\\_ga\\*MTkxNTIyNzcyOS4xNjkyNzgxNzY2\\*\\_ga\\_J7DH9NKJ0R\\*MTcyNjQ4MzU3MC4zMDAuMC4xNzI2NDgzNTcwLjYwLjAuMA](https://en.ovdinfo.org/politpressing?_gl=1*wsfqa*_gcl_aw*R0NMLjE3MjQ3NTU2NjAuQ2p3S0NBanc4clcyQmhBZ0Vpd0FvUk81cktVUU55TW0xNC0zSzRQdFdJalRFN1pOd3Vyalh5aH1LOHINUXICQ1pBWF9nekZ3OTJTSFRob0NKLWdRQXZEX0J3RQ..*_ga*MTkxNTIyNzcyOS4xNjkyNzgxNzY2*_ga_J7DH9NKJ0R*MTcyNjQ4MzU3MC4zMDAuMC4xNzI2NDgzNTcwLjYwLjAuMA).

<sup>5</sup> Recent Amendments to Russian Advocacy Law: Tightening Legal Regulations and Potential Impact on Human Rights, 15 April 2024, <https://defendlawyers.wordpress.com/2024/04/15/recent-amendments-to-russian-advocacy-law-tightening-legal-regulations-and-potential-impact-on-human-rights/>. See the Communication of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation and the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, OL RUS 1/2024, 14 March, concerning the draft law, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=28826>; See overviews of the law (Russian language) as adopted in April 2024: <https://www.advgazeta.ru/novosti/prinyaty-kompleksnye-popravki-v-zakon-ob-advokature/>, <https://pravo.ru/story/251608/>, and <https://fparf.ru/news/fpa/prinyaty-kompleksnye-popravki-v-zakon-ob-advokature/>.