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HUMAN RIGHTS LAW NETWORK



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## **INCLO member condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine and join calls for an immediate ceasefire**

The undersigned member organizations of the International Network of Civil Liberties Organizations (INCLO) stand with the global civil society in bluntly condemning the massive violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights perpetrated by Russia against Ukraine. We join the international human rights community in calling for an immediate ceasefire and for the protection of the civilian population and of those fleeing Ukraine. We are also alarmed by the violation of the rights to freedom of expression, assembly and access to information in Russia.

### Ukraine

As INCLO members, we raise our collective voice to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine, its violation of international law and the war crimes and human rights violations being committed against the people in Ukraine. In these urgent times, we believe that protecting the Ukrainian civilian population and ensuring that evacuation routes are kept open is of supreme importance.

Russia's invasion of a sovereign state's territory violates fundamental principles of international law and qualifies under the criteria of aggression as a fundamental offence against international criminal law. The escalation of violence since the start of the invasion has yielded profuse evidence of alleged war crimes committed against Ukrainian civilians. We insist that international human rights law and international humanitarian law still stand throughout the entirety of the Ukrainian territory, occupied or not. We are also extremely concerned for the more than 3 million refugees that have fled Ukraine. We call on the international community to double its efforts to stop this war and to use all means at its disposal to assist Ukraine in its reconstruction.

### Russia

We are also alarmed by Russia's fierce repression against dissent, protest, independent journalism and internet access. Since the beginning of the invasion, Putin's government has ordered the arrest of over 13,800 protesters. Moscow has also banned Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and restricted access to overseas Tik Tok accounts. Independent media has been blocked with journalists fleeing the country to avoid prosecution and new legislation was put in place to punish the use of the term "war" with up to 15 years in prison. Foreign mainstream media has been muffled and certain contents of BBC Russia and Deutsche

Wells have become unavailable, while local media must choose between censorship or closing. Internet access must be guaranteed in Ukraine and Russia for violations to be documented and information to circulate. Russian INCLIO member organization Agora is currently involved in the legal defence of anti-war protesters, journalists and citizens prosecuted for posting content deemed critical of the government on social media. It also provides psychological support and assistance to people in Russia and Russian refugees abroad.

Preventing public assembly and prohibiting people from voicing their opinion amounts to violations of basic rights guaranteed by Russian law and by the international human rights treaties signed by Russia. As expressed by the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association Clément Voule, “respect for rights to freedom of association, assembly, expression and participation, as well as a free press and an enabling environment for NGOs, are essential conditions for peace and to end conflict”.

Signatories:

Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights

Dejusticia (Colombia)

Human Rights Law Network (India)

Human Rights Law Centre (Australia)

Hungarian Civil Liberties Union

Irish Council for Civil Liberties

Kenya Human Rights Commission

KontraS (Indonesia)

Legal Resources Centre (South Africa)