UNHRC BACKGROUND GUIDE

AMBMUN'27

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Dear Delegates,

It is with great pleasure to welcome you all to the 4th edition of AMBMUN, where you will be representing your nations in the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). As delegates, you are stepping into a committee tasked with addressing one of the most pressing humanitarian challenges of our time, where the consequences of war extend far beyond the battlefield.

This year's UNHRC topic is on the escalation of civilian infrastructure warfare in Ukraine and the violations of human rights in the war. From the demolition of hospitals and power stations to the interruption of health care service, the topic poses a vital question of what is the obligation of the international community towards protecting the civilians from the cost of war. The committee will discuss various issues related to warfare and public health, protection of civilians and medical professionals, and the role of international organizations in taking into consideration humanitarian requirements.

This guide is your starting point, but the real work begins with your research, your arguments, and the solutions you bring to the table. We encourage you to look beyond your country's official position, challenge different perspectives, and come prepared to defend your stance with credible evidence and meaningful proposals. Most importantly, remember that a successful debate is not just about proving a point, but about working towards solutions.

We look forward to hearing your perspectives, witnessing engaging debates, and seeing what you bring to the committee. Best of luck, and we cannot wait to welcome you to AMBMUN 27!

Warm regards,

Delara Darwish & Jad Omran

Committee Background

The UN Human Rights Council is an intergovernmental body of the United Nations and focuses on the promotion and protection of human rights at an international level. This council ensures the investigation of any violation of human rights, takes action against any violation of human rights, and prevents any kind of discrimination. Also, this committee ensures the protection of the vulnerable sections of society, the investigation of any human right crisis, and accountability of any infringement.

In relation to the ongoing situation in Ukraine with regard to the war, it becomes essential that the UN Human Rights Council takes action on the matter of the violation of human rights in that particular region due to the attacks on the infrastructure of that region including hospitals, schools, homes of civilians and the denial of basic human rights to them. Therefore, as a delegate, your responsibility is to resolve the matter of the violation of human rights in the conflict of Ukraine.

Topic Overview

Topic: The Escalation of Civilian Infrastructure Warfare in Ukraine and the Violations of Human Rights in the War.

The ongoing war in Ukraine can be considered one of the toughest situations of humanitarian and human rights crises around the globe. The conflict began in 2014 after the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the fighting that took place in eastern Ukraine, which eventually turned into an outright war when Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Ever since then, millions of people have been affected by the threat to their security, human rights, and even their needs.

Civilians' infrastructure – from hospitals and schools to households, power lines, water facilities, etc. – has been severely damaged during the war. The destruction of one type of services affects other types of services because lack of electricity makes hospitals unable to operate, the destruction of water facilities creates the risk to health of civilians, and destroyed roads prevent humanitarian assistance from reaching the civilian population. From October 2025 to March 2026, the UN has documented 423 attacks on electricity infrastructure and 74 strikes on heating facilities (OHCHR, 2026).

Healthcare has also been severely affected. Hospitals, ambulances, medical supplies, and healthcare workers have repeatedly been targeted or caught in attacks. The World Health Organization documented at least 2,881 attacks on healthcare since the full-scale invasion, with incidents increasing by nearly 20% in 2025 compared with 2024. These attacks have caused deaths, injuries, and interruptions to essential medical treatment (WHO, 2026).

The number of casualties continues to increase. Up until 31 January 2026, the UN had counted at least 15,000 deaths and 41,000 wounded civilians from February 2022 onwards. What is more, 2025 was the most deadly year for civilians since the start of the full-scale invasion, with at least 2,526 deaths and 12,162 injured civilians recorded that year. There have been also many

displacements, with children and elderly people being under threat of harm to their safety, education and basic needs (OHCHR, 2026; UNHCR, 2026).

In addition to destroying infrastructure, UN reports indicate a number of human rights violations, including such things as torture, sexual assault, execution and maltreatment of the prisoners of war. Violations of human rights have been confirmed both in relation to the Ukrainian detainees held by the Russian side and torture and ill-treatment of the Russian prisoners of war held by the Ukrainian authorities (OHCHR, 2025; OHCHR, 2026).

The international humanitarian laws, including the Geneva Conventions and its Additional Protocols, have set out specific provisions that are intended to safeguard civilians during an armed conflict. It is mandatory for the parties to make a distinction between combatants and civilians, proportionality, and take all necessary precautions for the safety of the civilians. Hospitals and medical establishments also have been accorded special protection. Any deliberate targeting of civilians and objects is a war crime as long as all legal requirements are fulfilled (ICRC, 1949; ICRC, 1977; Rome Statute, 1998).

The UN Human Rights Council plays an important role in this regard as far as investigation is concerned. The UN Human Rights Council Resolution 49/1 of March 2022 has created an Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine. The Commission is mandated to investigate the alleged violations, preserve evidence, and help identify those responsible. The mandate of the Commission was extended in March 2026 (UN Human Rights Council, 2022; 2026).

Even with all the measures taken up until now, there are several other issues that should be resolved, such as security of the civilian infrastructure, provision of access to humanitarian agencies, prevention of further human rights abuses, and punishing the culprits. Hence, the delegates should consider practical actions rather than condemnation alone.

Ultimately, the war in Ukraine not only represents a military or territorial confrontation but also a humanitarian challenge to the civilian population and basic human rights. The role of the United Nations Human Rights Council is to find a way out of the problem that will be effective in an international context.

Previous Actions

The international community has made several significant steps in order to deal with humanitarian impacts of the war in Ukraine, namely destruction of infrastructure, violations of IHL, and attacks on critical infrastructure. The above mentioned measures include condemnation of aggression, protection of civilians, investigations, collection of evidence, and delivery of humanitarian assistance. However, even though these measures have been undertaken, the ongoing destruction of the civilian infrastructure highlights the difficulty of implementation of international resolutions in practice.

The Resolution 68/262, Territorial Integrity of Ukraine, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 27 March 2014, reaffirms the sovereignty and internationally recognized borders of Ukraine after the annexation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia. The said resolution emphasizes the stance of the international community that territorial boundaries cannot be changed by means of aggression (United Nations General Assembly, 2014).

In the aftermath of Russia's unprovoked war of aggression starting in February 2022, the General Assembly adopted on 2 March 2022 the resolution entitled Aggression against Ukraine (Resolution ES-11/1). This resolution condemned the invasion, demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops, and stressed again that all parties have the obligation to comply with international humanitarian law and to ensure the safety of civilians. Another resolution, Humanitarian Consequences of the Aggression against Ukraine (Resolution ES-11/2), was adopted on 24 March 2022 (United Nations General Assembly, 2022a, 2022b).

One of the most significant actions taken specifically by the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) was the adoption of Resolution 49/1 on 4 March 2022. This established the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, with a mandate to investigate alleged human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law. The Commission was also tasked with collecting, analysing, and preserving evidence that could support future legal proceedings and help identify those responsible (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2022).

Another important measure was UN Security Council Resolution 2286, unanimously adopted on 3 May 2016. Although not specific to Ukraine, it strongly condemned attacks against hospitals, medical personnel, and humanitarian workers. It called on all parties to armed conflicts to respect international law, protect medical facilities, and investigate attacks to ensure accountability (United Nations Security Council, 2016).

Moreover, the World Health Organization (WHO) has established its own Surveillance System for Attacks on Healthcare (SSA) to monitor and verify attacks against hospitals, doctors, ambulances, and other healthcare institutions. According to the World Health Organization report of 8 May 2026, the organization verified more than 3,000 attacks on healthcare in Ukraine during the full-scale invasion (World Health Organization, 2026).

In addition, humanitarian organizations have made significant contributions to rebuilding the infrastructure of Ukraine. Thus, during 2025, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) provided assistance to 69 hospitals and 29 health care facilities. In addition, ICRC ensured the improved access of over 1.9 million people to water, sewage systems, heating, and power through assistance to utility companies (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2026).

Despite all these efforts, the problem continues. According to a report issued by OHCHR on 29 June 2026, there have been multiple attacks against the energy infrastructure of Ukraine during the winter of 2025-2026. These attacks have resulted in power cuts across the country and have affected millions of civilians along with their access to clean drinking water and health care (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2026).

Ultimately, the international community has put in place various resolutions, investigation processes, monitoring systems, and humanitarian programs; yet none of these have stopped the violations. In other words, the task that the UNHRC faces is not to acknowledge the violations, but rather to enhance accountability, civilian protection, humanitarian access, and prevention of these violations.

Country Matrix

USA - United Kingdom - China - France - Russia - Germany - Croatia- Belgium- Canada - Denmark - Bulgaria - Latvia - Estonia - South Africa - Slovenia - Spain - Norway - Portugal - Sweden - Slovakia - Poland - Ukraine - Czechia - Senegal - Netherlands

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Questions to Be Answered in Your Resolution

1. What measures can the UNHRC implement to prevent attacks on civilian infrastructure and ensure the protection of civilians under international humanitarian law?

2. How can the international community establish effective accountability mechanisms to investigate attacks on civilian infrastructure and prosecute those responsible for human rights violations?

3. What solutions can be introduced to ensure continued humanitarian assistance and restore essential services, including electricity, clean water, healthcare, and education, in conflict-affected areas?

4. How can the United Nations and regional organizations cooperate to prevent further escalation, protect civilian populations, and support the long-term reconstruction of Ukraine?

Starter Resources

1. UN Report on Ukraine – OHCHR

2. UN Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine

3. Attacks on Ukraine's Energy Infrastructure – OHCHR

4. Rules of War – ICRC

5. Ukraine Humanitarian Response – UN OCHA

6. Ukraine – UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission

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