

Dear High Commissioner Bachelet,

I am writing you today with some urgency to express profound concern about the escalating situation in Ukraine. The United States is gravely concerned that a further Russian invasion of Ukraine would produce widespread human suffering. In light of OHCHR's important mandate and its reporting presence in Ukraine, we wish to share this information with you as an early warning that a further Russian invasion of Ukraine may create a human rights catastrophe.

We are deeply concerned about Russia's continuing human rights abuses in the parts of Ukraine it already occupies and have every reason to believe those concerns will multiply following a new military offensive. I would like to bring to your attention disturbing information recently obtained by the United States that indicates that human rights violations and abuses in the aftermath of a further invasion are being planned. These acts, which in past Russian operations have included targeted killings, kidnappings/forced disappearances, unjust detentions, and the use of torture, would likely target those who oppose Russian actions, including Russian and Belarusian dissidents in exile in Ukraine, journalists and anti-corruption activists, and vulnerable populations such as religious and ethnic minorities and LGBTQI+ persons. Specifically, we have credible information that indicates Russian forces are creating lists of identified Ukrainians to be killed or sent to camps following a military occupation. We also have credible information that Russian forces will likely use lethal measures to disperse peaceful protests or otherwise counter peaceful exercises of perceived resistance from civilian populations.

As the United States explores every opportunity to push Russia toward de-escalation and diplomacy, Secretary of State Antony Blinken raised these concerns to the Security Council on February 17, 2022. In particular, he stated that the United States has information that indicates Russia will target specific groups of Ukrainians. At the Human Rights Council, the United States raised concerns about Russia's plans during the debate on your Office's periodic report on the situation in Ukraine on December 15, 2021.

We understand that in carrying out its mission to work for the protection of all human rights for all people OHCHR prioritizes addressing the most pressing human rights violations and abuses, particularly those that put life in imminent peril. OHCHR plays a leadership role in the international community on human rights crises, including focusing attention on those who are most at risk and vulnerable. We share this information with you in support of OHCHR's important mission. Please do not hesitate to contact me for any additional information.

Regards,

Ambassador Bathsheba Nell Crocker
U.S. Representative to the Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations in
Geneva