United Nations Human Rights Council 59th Session

Item 10 – ID on oral presentation of HC on Ukraine (res. 53/30) and interim report of SG on human rights in Crimea (GA res. 79/184)

Joint oral statement

3 July 2025

Mr. President,

Lawyers for Lawyers, Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, Front Line Defenders, and the Council of Bars and Law Societies in Europe remain deeply concerned about the ongoing persecution of lawyers in occupied Crimea.

Those representing Crimean Tatars, Ukrainians, and civil society actors in politically sensitive cases are systematically harassed, threatened, and prosecuted. Their homes and offices are raided, access to clients and case materials obstructed, and their licenses revoked — effectively preventing them from defending political prisoners.

Bar associations under the occupying authorities no longer function independently. Disciplinary bodies are routinely weaponized to interfere with lawyers' work, often at the direct request of the Russian Ministry of Justice.

These politically motivated proceedings lack due process and gravely violate international standards on the independence of the legal profession. This has led to the disbarment of lawyers **Lilia Hemedzhy**, **Rustem Kyamilev**, **Nazim Sheikhmambetov**, and **Aleksey Ladin** — all targeted for their legitimate work.

Such harassment, along with arbitrary sanctions like fines, administrative detention, and unlawful surveillance, has deterred other lawyers from taking up certain cases — making access to independent legal representation virtually impossible, as reflected in the UN Secretary-General's report.

We urge this Council to call for independent review of all disbarment cases in Crimea and other occupied territories of Ukraine, demand reinstatement of unjustly revoked licenses, and publicly condemn the misuse of legal tools to punish lawyers and human rights defenders.

Thank you.

This statement was delivered by:

Tara Fiechter,
Programme officer, Lawyers for Lawyers
t.fiechter@lawyersforlawyers.nl