



Amnesty International

Group 524

March 2022



No March Meeting Crisis In Ukraine

Welcome

I hope all are well and have made it through what hopefully has been the last snowstorm of the winter here. This month's focus is the human rights crisis in Ukraine.

Amnesty's Ukraine Crisis Campaign

Amnesty has set up a page on their website to coordinate actions and information concerning Ukraine. <https://www.amnestyusa.org/UkraineCrisis/>

Amnesty's Statement on Military Interventions

Amnesty International does not usually take positions on particular military actions but focuses on the human rights abuses. This time Amnesty has made its position clear on page 2.

Ukraine Action

A model letter to the Russian Ambassador is on page 3. Additional copies may be sent to the three other Consulates which are shown on page 4.

Latest Press Releases

Amnesty's statements concerning war crimes investigations and Russian language media crackdowns are on pages 5 and 6.

Amnesty International Group 524

Meeting Schedule: Third Tuesday of the month, at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Location: Providence Heights

9000 Babcock Blvd., Allison Park, PA 15101



Contact John Belch (joheb@aol.com or 412-766-1894) for more information on material in this mailing, or visit the Amnesty USA web site (www.amnestyusa.org) and Group 39's Amnesty Pittsburgh web site (www.amnestypgh.org).



Amnesty's Statement on Military Interventions

On military interventions: Generally, Amnesty does not publicly take a position on particular military interventions, focusing instead on documenting and condemning human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law (the laws of war) and demanding accountability for war crimes and other serious violations. However, Amnesty may, in exceptional situations, oppose military interventions which are particularly likely to lead to human rights abuses. In order to do so, a decision must be taken by our International Board following consultation with our national sections. We have just completed this process. After hearing from the leaders of our national sections, the International Board decided that Amnesty International opposes Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

RUSSIA: STOP YOUR WAR ON UKRAINE

The government of Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a manifest violation of the United Nations Charter and an act of aggression that is a crime under international law. All those involved in this crime must be held accountable and the war must end immediately. Indiscriminate attacks violate international humanitarian law (the laws of war) and can constitute war crimes. Tell Russian authorities—including President Vladimir Putin, Minister of Defense General Sergey Shoigu and Russian Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Antonov—that the government of Russia must stop its war on Ukraine, stop attacking civilians and civilian objects in Ukraine, stop violating the human rights of peaceful protesters, and comply with its obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law.

Group 524
March 2022



Anatoly Antonov

Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the United States of America
2650 Wisconsin Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20007

Dear Ambassador Antonov,

I am writing to call on you to respect international law, protect civilians, and stop the Russian government's war on Ukraine.

Since the Russian invasion began on February 24, Amnesty International has been documenting the escalation in violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including the killing and injuring of civilians resulting from indiscriminate attacks on civilian areas and infrastructure.

Strikes on protected objects such as hospitals and schools, the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects, such as ballistic missiles and artillery in civilian areas, and the use of banned indiscriminate weapons such as cluster bombs, may constitute war crimes. All perpetrators must be held to account.

The Russian Federation is acting in clear breach of its obligations under international law. Its actions are blatantly against the rules and principles on which the UN was founded. And it is abusing its position as a permanent member of the UN Security Council to shield itself from accountability.

The world is watching your actions. I urge you to respect international law, protect civilians and stop the war against Ukraine. The continuation of the use of ballistic missiles, cluster munitions, and other inaccurate explosive weapons causing civilian deaths and injuries is inexcusable.

Please – think of the lives lost. Please think of the many millions of lives at stake –including families and children. Please, act swiftly to stop these attacks.

Sincerely,

Group 524
March 2022



Russian Consulate, New York, NY

9 East 91 Street

New York, NY 10128

Consul General: Sergei K. Ovsyannikov

Russian Consulate, San Francisco, CA

2790 Green St.

San Francisco, CA 94123

Consul General: Sergey V. Petrov

Russian Consulate, Houston TX

1333 West Loop South, Ste. 1300

Houston, TX 77027





US SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATION INTO WAR CRIMES IMPORTANT FIRST STEP TOWARD JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS

March 10, 2022

This morning, Vice President Harris spoke at a press conference in Warsaw, Poland, where she discussed U.S. support for NATO and backed calls for an international investigation into war crimes following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Responding to her remarks, Daniel Balson, Europe and Central Asia Advocacy Director at Amnesty International USA, said:

"Vice President Harris' support for an international investigation into Russia's violations of international humanitarian law in Ukraine is a clarion call for political leaders in the U.S. and abroad to stand on the side of human rights.

"For too long, Republican and Democratic administrations in the U.S. have stood in the way of the pursuit of international justice. As Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues, we are witnessing what impunity looks like: it looks like missile attacks against maternity hospitals and the clusterbombing of preschools. Political leaders in the U.S. and abroad must choose whether we will live in a world where the shelling of civilian neighborhoods is greeted with indifference or with justice.

"We look forward to the administration turning the Vice President's words into deeds and urge it to reaffirm its signature of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and provide tangible support for its work."

Background

At present [123 nations](#) have ratified the Rome Statute and are members of the ICC Assembly of States Parties. While the United States played a central role in the establishment of the Rome Statute that created the ICC and initially signed the treaty, the administration of former President George W. Bush effectively withdrew the signature.

In 2014, Ukraine's parliament adopted a resolution accepting ICC's jurisdiction for war crimes committed on its territory from February 2014.



RUSSIAN AUTHORITIES BLOCK AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE WEBSITE

March 11, 2022

Responding to the Russian authorities' decision to block access to Amnesty International's Russian-language website as part of the Kremlin's assault on freedom of expression following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Marie Struthers, Amnesty International's Eastern Europe and Central Asia Director, said:

"People in Russia have the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds and from all available sources. By blocking Amnesty's Russian-language site, along with those of many other human rights organizations, independent media outlets and social media platforms, the Kremlin is showing that it can't stomach the truth about the horror Russia has unleashed in Ukraine.

"This is just the latest attempt by the Russian authorities to suppress information about the possible war crimes its troops are committing in Ukraine and hide them from internet users across the country. We call on Russia to immediately unblock Amnesty's Russian language website and allow people to freely decide what sources of information they want to access."

Background

On March 11, it transpired that the Russian media regulator, Roskomnadzor, blocked access to Amnesty International's Russian-language website (eurasia.amnesty.org), as well as the websites of Human Rights Movement Golos (an independent election watchdog) and two independent media outlets, Colta and Vazhnye Istorii (Important Stories). Last week, the latter was designated as an "undesirable organization," which criminalized its operations and barred it from working in Russia. The blocking of all these websites was implemented at the request of the Prosecutor General.

Over the last three weeks, the Russian authorities have unleashed an unprecedented nationwide [crackdown](#) on independent journalism, anti-war protests and any voices opposing Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including by effectively banning the use of such terms as "war" and "invasion" and criminalizing independent reporting on the conflict.