

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	568
Land:	Ukraine
Kilde:	OHCHR
Titel:	Evidence mounting about Russian tactics of sexual torture against Ukrainian civilians: UN expert
Udgivet:	21. august 2025
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	20. oktober 2025

Document #2128932

OHCHR – UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Author)

Evidence mounting about Russian tactics of sexual torture against Ukrainian civilians: UN expert

GENEVA – The Special Rapporteur on Torture, Alice Jill Edwards, and several other experts have sent a dossier of sexual torture allegations to the Russian Federation involving the cases of 10 Ukrainian civilians abused in occupied regions of Ukraine, including Kherson, Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia.

“These separate allegations, capturing the experiences of four women and six men, are truly grisly,” said Edwards. “They represent however only a small snapshot of a wider, well-documented pattern of risks of torture to civilians in occupied areas.”

“These were all highly sexualised assaults which included rapes, threats of rape, and other depraved conduct,” the expert said. “It is becoming clearer that the Russian Federation’s deliberate and systematic policy of torture in Ukraine involves sexualised torture and other sexualised cruelty, including against the civilian population.”

In all the documented cases, repeated electric shocks were administered, including to the genitals. These civilians were beaten, kicked, blindfolded and, in some instances, drownings were simulated and mock executions carried out.

“A rudimentary rule of international warfare is that civilians are to be protected. Russia appears to have abandoned the international rulebook entirely. It is high time that they were held to account for these unlawful

practices and more pressure brought to bear by all States with influence over them,” Edwards said.

“The Russian Federation is using torture to intimidate, instil fear and control civilians in occupied territory of Ukraine.”

“There is also credible evidence of arbitrary arrests and detentions, enforced disappearances, and serious violations of the right to health of civilians. The information received also refers to deaths in detention due to torture, including through the denial of medical care,” the Special Rapporteur said.

The experts have called on the Russian Government to provide additional information about the specific allegations, as well as about the broader measures being taken to prevent torture and sexual torture perpetrated by Russian military and military-adjunct personnel, as well as intelligence and detaining authorities. One of the women concerned remains detained in the Russian Federation and an appeal for her urgent release has been raised.

Alice Jill Edwards is the [Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment](#)

ecoi.net description:

Kherson, Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia oblasts: Ukrainian civilians subjected to torture and sexual torture

Countries:

Russian Federation, Ukraine

Source:

[OHCHR – UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) (Author)

Published:

21 August 2025

Original link:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/08/evidence-mounting-about-russian-tactics-sexual-torture-against-ukrainian>

Document type:

Appeal or News Release

Language:

English

Available on ecoi.net since:
25 August 2025

Document ID:
2128932

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Documentation	info@ecoi.net	
(ACCORD)		

ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.

