

**Input for the preparation of the report of the UN Secretary-General
pursuant to the UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/79/161**

**“A global call for concrete action for the elimination of racism, racial discrimination,
xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to
the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action”,**

To be presented on the 80th session of the UN General Assembly (September 2025)

June 3, 2025

Comments on the situation in the Russian Federation

Key questions:

Reparatory justice regarding slavery, the slave trade, the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism, apartheid, genocide and past tragedies and appropriate and effective measures to halt and reverse the lasting consequences of those practices

Participation in the inclusive design and implementation of processes that contribute to halting, reversing and repairing the lasting consequences and ongoing manifestations of systemic racism

In the modern Russian context, the initiatives listed in these key questions belong not to the state, but to civil society, while the state denies the historical problems of colonialism and systemic discrimination against minorities and harasses activists who try to highlight issues of independence of Russian regions, effective federalism, and self-determination of ethnic groups.

In April 2025, representatives of the indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation and Russian civil society (all forced to emigrate due to political persecution and/or anti-war position) signed the **Orcas Island Declaration: A Statement of Reconciliation and Respect** (named after the meeting place – the territory of Lammi, an indigenous people of North America). This document was developed with the participation of representatives of indigenous peoples, activists of the Russian opposition, human rights defenders, experts and lawyers, based on the experience of other countries in overcoming the colonial past (in particular, the Resolution of the U.S. Congress S.J.Res.14 (2009-2010), formally apologizing to Native peoples for treaty violations, forced displacement, and the destruction of their cultural traditions; Final Report (2015) of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission established in 2008 in Canada under the Indigenous Residential Schools Reconciliation Agreement (IRSSA), recommendations for the restoration of the rights of Indigenous peoples, including recognition of the cultural genocide against these peoples; Report (2023) of the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission “Sannhet og forsoning” (Norway) confirming the Norwegianization policy towards the Sami, Kven and Forest Finns, with subsequent proposals for recognition and compensation; the work of the Reconciliation Council in Australia, launch of the independent organisation Reconciliation Australia, and development of the Uluru Declaration from the Heart (2017), calling for recognition of Indigenous rights in the Constitution.

The Orcas Island Declaration calls on Russian society to recognize the mistakes of the past, to objectively and honestly assess the colonial policy that the state has pursued for several centuries against various peoples inhabiting the territories of modern Russia (primarily the most vulnerable small-numbered peoples), and to begin the reconciliation process based on the principles of international law, primarily on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The initiators of the Declaration have created a permanent platform for dialogue between representatives of the indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East and Russian civil society. As first steps, it is proposed to:

1. To carry out continuous monitoring of violations of the rights of indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East and provide assistance in their protection, as well as to provide the results of this monitoring to the UN, other international organizations and other interested parties.
2. To coordinate academic, educational and expert activities to analyze the consequences of colonial policy, restore historical memory and study the problems of indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East.
3. Develop legislative initiatives and draft regulatory legal acts aimed at restoring the rights of indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East.
4. To involve in the discussion a wide range of participants from among representatives of the indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East, Russian civil society, scientists, politicians, human rights defenders, activists, journalists, and also to hold meetings, consultations and other events aimed at promoting reconciliation and restoring justice.

The participants in the Declaration are aware that currently, under the conditions of a de facto dictatorship, residents of Russia cannot freely carry out their declared activities due to the risk of repression. However, it is already necessary to shape the country's future based on the principles set out in the Declaration. In a future democracy, the following steps have been announced to recognize the rights of indigenous peoples:

1. Establishment of a parliamentary commission to examine violations of the rights of indigenous peoples, regardless of the statute of limitations.
2. Preparation of a national report on colonization and violations of the rights of indigenous peoples, similar to documents prepared in Canada, Norway and Australia.
3. Establishment of an independent body to consider indigenous peoples' claims on land and cultural rights.
4. Adoption of a law recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples to their ancestral lands and natural resources.

The participants express their readiness for cooperation and consistent work to achieve the goals of reconciliation, recognition of historical justice and ensuring the rights of the indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East.

The coordinator of the development of the Orkas Island Declaration, the Batani Indigenous Peoples Foundation, was recognized as an "undesirable organization" in Russia shortly after its signing, which became a new round of criminalization of groups and organizations with an anti-colonial, regional and indigenous agenda. The Russian authorities' repression against civil society has intensified over the past decade, and such forms of persecution as recognition as a "foreign agent" have also affected indigenous organizations. After the outbreak of Russia's war against Ukraine, persecution intensified and in 2024 it reached the point where various formal and informal groups with an anti-colonial, ethnic, and regional agenda were first recognized as "extremist" organizations, and then as "terrorist" ones (including leading indigenous organizations: the Aboriginal Forum, the International Committee of the Indigenous Peoples of Russia, Indigenous Russia).

Data on and the lived experiences of victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance, in particular women and girls, persons with disabilities, children and youth, migrants and refugees, Africans and people of African descent, Asians and people of Asian descent and Indigenous Peoples

In the context of the war unleashed by Russia against Ukraine and the general persecution of dissidents, people with anti-war and anti-colonial positions, racism and xenophobia in Russia are turning into a state ideology. Chauvinistic, particularly anti-Ukrainian and anti-migrant rhetoric, has become mainstream in the state media and in public statements by government officials. The high-level support of movements and groups with xenophobic ideology and the delegation them the right to use violence is very alarming.

Such ultra-right nationalist organizations as “Russkaya Obshchina” (“Russian Community”), “Russkaya Druzhina” (“Russian Guard”), “Severny Chelovek” (“Northern Man”), and others are examples of such movements affiliated with the Russian authorities. With the permission of the security forces, the militants of these organizations participate, together with the police, in raids and anti-migrant operations. The head of the Investigative Committee, Alexander Bastrykin, reacts quickly to the signals of far-right activists, and his support, as well as the public xenophobic rhetoric of other high officials, inspire nationalists with a sense of impunity. The lack of proper counteraction leads to the spread of nationalist ideology; the “Russian Community” organization has more than 150 regional branches and more than a million subscribers on their social networks.

Activists of nationalist organizations are involved in massive violations of the rights of minorities. Thus, in 2023, an unprecedented anti-Roma pogrom took place in the village of Korkino in the Chelyabinsk region. The trigger was the murder of a woman, which was quickly blamed on the local Roma community. The far-right organizations “Russian Community” and “Northern Man” spread unproven accusations on social networks, which led to mass riots, arson attacks on Roma houses and cars. About 150 people participated in the pogrom, about 40 aggressors were detained, but then released. Subsequently, anti-Roma police raids took place all over the country.

According to the Sova Monitoring Center, the level of racist violence in Russia began to rise sharply in 2023, and the first half of 2024 is characterized by a very intensive increase. Human rights defenders' data may be incomplete, while there are no official statistics on such abuses at all. More than 10 years ago (by 2012-2013), the Russian authorities managed to significantly reduce the number of hate crimes and stop the activities of Russian nationalists, but nowadays there is a sharp regression. The number of hate crimes has now reached the level of a very troubled 2011 year (243 people were injured then). In 2024, 259 people were affected by hate crimes, one of them died, and three people received serious death threats.

The victims of 163 racist attacks in 2024 were natives of Central Asia, the Caucasus, black people, people of “non-Slavic appearance,” including several young children. Most of the attackers are very young people, often teenagers 13-14 years old. They often post videos of their crimes on the Internet. In 2024, at least 70 people were convicted of violent hate crimes (compared to 35 in 2023, which is a twofold increase). However, it should be concluded that the authorities do not respond properly and quickly to hate crimes. This is largely due to the fact that the rhetoric and policies of the authorities themselves have become distinctly nationalistic, while accusations in “Nazism” are used against those who support Ukraine and oppose Russian aggression.