Frequently Asked Questions

What is the mandate of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine?

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine was established by the Human Rights Council on 4 March 2022 according to its resolution 49/1.

The Commission is given a mandate to investigate all alleged violations and abuses of human rights, violations of international humanitarian law and related crimes in the context of the aggression against Ukraine by the Russian Federation.

Its task is to collect, consolidate and analyze evidence of such violations and abuses, including their gender dimension, and to systematically record and preserve all information, documentation and evidence, including interviews, witness testimony and forensic material, consistent with international law standards so that they can be used in future legal proceedings.

The Commission documents and verifies relevant information and evidence that is gathered by its investigative team and also cooperates with judicial and other entities, as appropriate. Its task is to identify, where possible, those individuals and entities responsible for violations or abuses of human rights or violations of international humanitarian law, or other related crimes, in Ukraine, with a view to ensuring that those responsible are held accountable.

The Commission is also tasked with making recommendations, in particular on accountability measures to end impunity and ensure accountability, including, as appropriate, individual criminal responsibility, and access to justice for victims.

In addition to the Commission's general mandate, it was given a special mandate to look into the events in the areas of Kyiv, Chernihiv, Kharkiv and Sumy regions in late February and in March 2022 in accordance with the **resolution S-34/1**

What is the scope of the mandate?

Material scope:

Paragraph 11 (a) of Resolution 49/1 requests the Commission to investigate "all alleged violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, and related crimes in the context of the aggression against Ukraine by the Russian Federation" and to "establish the facts, circumstances and root causes of any such violations and abuses". The Commission decides the themes, incidents and alleged violations and crimes that will receive particular focus based on objective criteria and taking into account, among other things, the time and resources available to the Commission to carry out its work.

Geographical scope:

The Commission's general mandate, as per Resolution 49/1, does not exclude specific geographic areas.

The Commission may examine, investigate and report on events outside Ukraine's territory, as long as such events are closely related to ongoing events in Ukraine.

Temporal scope:

Resolution 49/1 does not explicitly restrict the Commission's mandate to a specific time period.

Actors Investigated:

Paragraph 11 (d) of Resolution 49/1 tasks the Commission with identifying, "where possible, those individuals and entities responsible for violations or abuses of human rights or violations of international humanitarian law, or other related crimes, in Ukraine, with a view to ensuring that those responsible are held accountable".

In doing so, the Commission examines alleged violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law and related crimes regardless of the identity or nationality of the alleged responsible individual or entity.

Which bodies of law will be applied by the Commission?

International humanitarian law, international human rights law, and international criminal law will constitute the law applicable to the Commission's mandate. The Commission will also consider other obligations under international law as applicable and where relevant. In doing so, the Commission will apply treaty law and customary international law, as appropriate.

What standard of proof will be used by the Commission?

In the course of its work, the Commission adopts the standard of proof of "reasonable grounds". This means that findings will be included in the reports where the "reasonable grounds" standard of proof has been met, namely where, based on a body of verified information, an objective and ordinary prudent observer would have reasonable grounds to conclude that the facts took place as described and, where legal conclusions are drawn, that these facts meet all the elements of a violation or abuse, and any individual identified is responsible for the violation or abuse.

What is the composition of the Commission?

The Commission is comprised of three independent and impartial experts, Erik Møse, (Chair), Pablo de Greiff (Commissioner), Vrinda Grover (Commissioner), who were appointed by the President of the Human Rights Council. The Commissioners are appointed on a *pro bono* basis and are not paid for their work.

The Secretariat in Vienna supports the Commissioners with the necessary expertise to implement the mandate. It includes human rights investigators and is led by the Coordinator.

What is the relationship between the Commission and the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine?

In carrying out its mandate, the Commission builds on the work of the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) and works in close coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), as mandated in Resolution 49/1. The Commission considers this element of its mandate to be of utmost importance, particularly given the HRMMU's presence in Ukraine since 2014.

The Commission, however, is an independent body and conducts its own investigations independently and separately from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other United Nations offices and agencies. The Commissioners form their own conclusions and make their own recommendations entirely independently of any other body or agency.

How does this Commission relate to other accountability initiatives in Ukraine, including the International Criminal Court investigations?

The Commission is independent. It has no link to any particular country, party, or entity. The findings of the Commission are based on the independent assessment of the Commissioners and their analysis of the information and evidence that comes out of the Commission's investigations.

Numerous national, regional and international entities are engaged in the documentation of the violations and crimes in Ukraine. The Commission is in contact with relevant investigative entities to seek coordination and a victim-centred approach to ensure the efficiency of investigations and respect for the "do no harm" principle.

The Commission may provide and receive information in the context of its interactions with national, regional or international accountability actors, including judicial bodies. The United Nations has well-established internal processes for such cooperation in judicial and non-judicial contexts, and the Commission will fully apply those same policies and standards in its work.

Regarding the ongoing International Criminal Court (ICC) investigations, the Commission has established contacts with the Office of the ICC Prosecutor. It develops coordination mechanisms as appropriate and complies with the above-mentioned United Nations internal processes.

How does the Commission collect information, and what will happen with the information collected?

The Commission aims to securely and safely collect first-hand information, including interviews with direct witnesses and victims of alleged violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law and related crimes. It also seeks to collect information and documentation relevant to its inquiries from States, relevant bodies and agencies of the United Nations system, civil society, the media, and other relevant actors.

Both inculpatory and exculpatory information and evidence will be treated on the same basis. Information and evidence collected will be reviewed and analysed by the Commission and stored securely in accordance with international best practice standards for such information and evidence to be able to support subsequent accountability efforts.

Consistent with the standard practice of Human Rights Council mandated commissions of inquiry, the consent of information providers to further external use(s) pursuant to the mandate is fundamental in handling such information. The Commission pays particular attention to sexual and gender-based violence, and violations and crimes against and affecting children.

When will the Commission issue its reports?

The Commission will provide the Human Rights Council with an oral update (September 2025) and present a report to the General Assembly (October 2025). In March 2026 the Commission will submit a comprehensive report to the Council.

What roles do victims and survivors play in the Commission's work?

Victims and survivors are key to each aspect of the work of the Commission. The Commission adopted a victim-centred approach in all its work. Victims and survivors' testimonies, evidence, and information will be protected and maintained safely and securely according to international standards in this area.

The Commission works closely with victims and survivors and their representatives to enable and facilitate their informed participation in the relevant work of the Commission mindful all the vulnerabilities affecting them, including in the development of recommendations on accountability measures to ensure justice for victims and access to their rights.

The Commission is sensitive and alert to any protection and support concerns that victims and survivors may have due to its engagement with them, further to the principle of "do no harm".

How can victims and survivors, as well as civil society organisations, interact with the Commission?

In addition to conducting first-hand interviews with witnesses and victims and examining available secondary and open-source materials, the Commission invites individuals, groups and organisations to submit information and documentation relevant to its mandate. In particular, the Commission issues a call for submissions that can be sent to: ohchr-submission-coiukraine@un.org

How is the Commission funded?

Being mandated by a resolution of the United Nations Human Rights Council, funding for the Commission is through the regular budget of the United Nations.

The Fifth Committee is charged with overseeing the budget of the entire United Nations and is guided by the United Nations Charter, in particular Chapter IV, Article 17.