



Human Rights  
Institute

## 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

23 September 2024

Item 4: Interactive Dialogue with the UN Special rapporteur on the Human Rights Situation in the Russian Federation

### Oral Statement

The International Bar Association, Lawyers for Lawyers and Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada thank the Special Rapporteur for her comprehensive report. We condemn widespread and escalating attacks on independent lawyers in Russia, including judicial harassment, arbitrary disciplinary actions, disbarment, and criminal charges. Lawyers are repeatedly labelled "foreign agents", simply for performing their legal duties and defending the rule of law. They face severe pressure, including prosecution and physical violence amounting to torture and ill-treatment as also indicated by the Special Rapporteur.

We are extremely concerned about the law "On Advocacy and the Legal Profession" aiming at expanding the Ministry of Justice's oversight of the legal profession through centralized administrative control, including the power to impose disciplinary sanctions.

We are further concerned about amendments to the Law on State Secrets, imposing notification of departure on lawyers with access to sensitive information, an over-broad definition, easily abused. This severely limits their ability to leave the country, especially when facing judicial persecution and harassment.

We keep condemning the arbitrary detention of the three lawyers who represented Aleksei Navalny, currently facing charges of extremism. We urge Russia to release them unconditionally and end any further persecution and prosecution of lawyers.

In this context it is imperative to maintain rigorous monitoring over Russia. We therefore urge this Council to renew the mandate of the Special Rapporteur and ensure additional resources necessary to fulfil its role.

*This statement was delivered by:*

Francesca Restifo, Senior Human Rights Lawyer and UN Representative  
International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)

[francesca.restifo@int-bar.org](mailto:francesca.restifo@int-bar.org)