



MEMORIAL
HUMAN RIGHTS
DEFENCE CENTRE

RUSSIAN FEDERATION: SUBMISSION TO THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

ISSUES RELATED TO THE DETENTION OF MIGRANT, REFUGEE, AND ASYLUM-SEEKING WOMEN AND CHILDREN

SUBMITTED: SEPTEMBER 2026

ABOUT THE SUBMITTING ORGANISATIONS

GLOBAL DETENTION PROJECT (GDP)

The Global Detention Project (GDP) is committed to ending arbitrary and harmful migration-related detention practices around the world, and to ensuring respect for the fundamental human rights of all migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. To achieve this, we seek to:

- Increase public knowledge and awareness of immigration detention policies.
- Expand coverage of immigration detention by human rights monitoring bodies and other international agencies.
- Expand partnerships with local and international civil society organisations working to end arbitrary and harmful immigration detention practices.
- Strategically target research and advocacy so that it effectively challenges arbitrary and harmful detention laws and policies.

MEMORIAL HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENCE CENTRE

Memorial Human Rights Defence Centre provides free assistance to everyone whose rights are violated by the Russian state. We monitor and document human rights violations and offer legal assistance and informational support to political prisoners and those facing political persecution, refugees and migrants, LGBTQ+ people, and other vulnerable groups.

What we do:

- Provide free assistance to everyone whose rights are violated by the Russian state.
- Defend those subjected to political persecution and unlawful repression.
- Support members of vulnerable and socially marginalized groups.
- Promote the humanization of the penitentiary system.
- Promote compliance with international humanitarian law in armed conflicts.
- Document mass human rights violations in Russia and by the Russian authorities.
- Support human rights groups and participants in the international human rights movement.
- Carry out educational activities in the field of law.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION: ISSUES RELATED TO THE DETENTION OF MIGRANT, REFUGEE, AND ASYLUM-SEEKING WOMEN AND CHILDREN

JOINT SUBMISSION TO THE UN COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

LIST OF ISSUES

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The [Global Detention Project \(GDP\)](#) and [Memorial Human Rights Defence Centre](#) welcome the opportunity to provide information about the Russian Federation as part of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women's adoption of its List of Issues (LOI), in advance of the State Party's forthcoming review.
- 1.2 This submission focusses on the Russian Federation's immigration enforcement policies and practices, with a particular focus on the detention and deportation of women migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.
- 1.3 This submission is made keeping in mind the Committee's **General Recommendation No. 32** concerning the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality, and statelessness of women. In particular, we recall the Committee's recognition that pregnant and nursing women and women asylum seekers "*should not be detained,*" and that "*failure to address the specific needs of women in immigration detention and ensure the respectful treatment of detained women asylum seekers could constitute discrimination within the meaning of the Convention.*"

2. CONTEXT

- 2.1 Russia is one of the world's more important migrant-receiving countries—with most migrants originating from former Soviet Republics in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Women constitute a significant proportion of the migrant population, and are predominantly employed in the service sector—particularly in retail, hospitality, and food services.¹

¹ Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, "Policy Brief: Women Migrant Workers from Central Asia to the Russian Federation: Trends, Challenges and Prospects," June 2025, <https://www.asiapacificgender.org/reports/women-migrant-workers-central-asia-russian-federation-trends-challenges-and-prospects>

- 2.2 While migration has been a major factor in sustaining the country's economy through migrant labour, it has also spurred social and political backlash, prompting accusations that immigrants—particularly those from the Caucasus and Central Asia—are a “security threat.”
- 2.3 The emergence of these scapegoating narratives has been accompanied by growing efforts to control the movement of non-nationals in the country, which has in turn coincided with a sharp rise in the number of immigration detention facilities during the past 15 years.
- 2.4 Xenophobia and discrimination against Central Asian migrants significantly increased in the wake of the March 2024 Crocus City Hall terrorist attack in Moscow. Multiple regions have introduced restrictions on the types of jobs that migrant workers can take. In Omsk, they were banned from working in fields such as education, health care, the production of food, and the provision of social services—fields in which many women migrants are typically employed.²
- 2.5 Additionally, “sweeping” raids conducted by police officers and other security agencies have targeted areas that migrants are known to frequent, including mosques and markets. Thousands have been arrested, detained, and deported during these raids. According to the Federal Bailiff Service, 87,000 foreigners were deported from Russia in 2024—almost twice as many as in 2023.³ Deportation numbers remained high in 2025: the country's Interior Minister reported that “72,000 were deported for violating the law.”⁴ The exact number of women to have been detained and removed is not available, as Russian agencies do not publicly release such statistics.
- 2.6 Today, the Russian Federation has one of the largest networks of migrant detention centres—called “Centres for Temporary Detention of Foreign Nationals” (CTDFNs)—in the world. Since 2013, the Global Detention Project has documented the use of more than 80 migrant detention facilities across the country, including within the north Caucasus.⁵ Most regions operate facilities, since a 2010 Presidential order (Presidential Order No. Пп-1729) instructed the heads of Russia's constituent regions to adopt legislative and organisational measures to establish specialised institutions for the detention of foreign nationals

² Vecherny Omsk, “В Омской области запретили мигрантам работать в пассажирских перевозках, торговле,” 2 March 2025, <https://omskgazeta.ru/all-news/v-omskoj-oblasti-vstupil-v-silu-zapret-na-privlechenie-migrantov-v-passazhirskih-perevozkah/>

³ Interfax, “Глава ФСИН сообщил об удвоении числа мигрантов, выдворенных из РФ в 2024 году,” 14 February 2025, <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/1008941>

⁴ Ria Novosti, “Глава МВД рассказал, сколько иностранцев выдворили из России в 2025 году,” 19 February 2026, <https://ria.ru/20260219/inostrantsy-2075412391.html>

⁵ Global Detention Project, “Russian Federation – Detention Centres,” <https://www.globaldetentionproject.org/countries/europe/russian-federation#detention-centres>

subject to administrative expulsion. As of August 2026, the Moscow Bar Association lists 77 temporary detention centres for foreign citizens.⁶

- 2.7 The detention of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers is provided for by the [Federal Law No. 115-FZ of 25 July 2002 “On the Legal Situation of Foreign Citizens in the Russian Federation”](#) and the “[Code of Administrative Offences of the Russian Federation](#).” According to these, foreign nationals subject to deportation or expulsion orders can be placed in closed detention centres prior to their removal.
- 2.8 In Russian migration law, deportation (депортация) and administrative expulsion (административное выдворение) are distinct legal measures. “Administrative expulsion”, governed by the Code of Administrative Offences, is a punishment for an administrative offence, while “deportations” are governed by Federal Law No. 115-FZ and is applied when an individual has lost the legal basis to remain in the country.

KEY CONCERNS

3. LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS

- 3.1 Although Article 3.9(2) of the Administrative Code prohibits the administrative detention of Russian pregnant women, as well as mothers whose children are under the age of 14 and children under the age of 18, these protections do not extend to immigration detention pending deportation or administrative expulsion. Law No. 115-FZ does not provide any specific protections to these groups, leaving such individuals vulnerable to detention and removal.
- 3.2 The Global Detention Project and Memorial Human Rights Defence Centre have documented their detention in practice. In one 2024 case, a Tajik woman was detained in the [Ekaterinburg CTDFN](#) with her newborn baby, just four days after giving birth. Despite her relatives expressing willingness to purchase a ticket to return her home, they both remained in detention for several days as airlines flying to Tajikistan required children to be at least seven days old.⁷
- 3.3 Although Russian agencies do not publicly release statistics detailing the number of detained and deported/ expelled women and children, some statistics are available for specific centres. According to the Human

⁶ Moscow Bar Association, “Адреса и телефоны центров временного содержания иностранных граждан в РФ,” accessed 4 August 2026, <https://advokat-isakova.ru/uslugi/advokat-po-migracionnym-delam/adresa-i-telefonny-tsentrov-vremennogo-soderzhaniya/>

⁷ Sverdlovsk Human Rights Commissioner, “Annual Report of the Human Rights Commissioner in the Sverdlovsk Region for 2024,” 28 May 2025, <https://oblgazeta.ru/society/commissioner-for-human-rights/2025/05/99542/>

Rights Commissioner of Sverdlovsk, for example, between January and November 2024 355 women and 132 children were detained in [Ekaterinburg CTDFN](#)—a significant increase on 2023, when 153 women were detained and 61 children during the same period.⁸

- 3.4 In 2023, the State Party amended the Administrative Code (Federal Law No. 649-FZ, dated 12/25.2023), limiting detention in immigration detention facilities to 90 days (and judicial control over the extension of this period).⁹ This amendment also provided for the right of detainees to apply to the court to verify the legality of their deprivation of liberty. However, in cases where deportation is technically not possible, the court can extend the individual's detention by 90 days, up until—but for no longer than—two years.
- 3.5 Further, when a detainee is released due to the technical impossibility of their deportation, Russia does not issue documents that would allow them to legally reside in the country. This leaves them vulnerable to re-detention due to the absence of legal status. In some cases, non-citizens have been immediately re-arrested following their initial release from detention and issued new detention orders. Stateless persons are particularly susceptible to this as they do not have the necessary legal documents that would enable them to exit Russia or legally enter another country, and they are thus unable to abide by removal orders.¹⁰ The ECtHR noted the risk of the “cyclic” detention of stateless persons in *Kim v. Russia* and urged Russia to address the issue, stating: “*The Court is therefore convinced that it is incumbent upon the Russian Government to avail itself of the necessary tools and procedures in order to prevent the applicant from being re-arrested and put in detention for the offences resulting from his status of a stateless person.*”¹¹ To date, however, measures to improve the situation have not been taken.
- 3.6 We remind the Committee of its statement that “*As a general rule, pregnant women and nursing mothers, who both have special needs, should not be detained.*” (CEDAW General Recommendation No.32.)

⁸ Sverdlovsk Human Rights Commissioner, “Annual Report of the Human Rights Commissioner in the Sverdlovsk Region for 2024,” 28 May 2025, <https://oblgazeta.ru/society/commissioner-for-human-rights/2025/05/99542/>

⁹ ADC Memorial, “The Decisions of the ECtHR and the Russian Constitutional Court Have Become Law: A Victory in the 10-Year Struggle For the Rights of Prisoners of Immigration Detention Facilities,” 28 December 2023, <https://adcmemorial.org/en/news/breaking-news/the-decisions-of-the-echr-and-the-russian-constitutional-court-have-become-law-a-victory-in-the-10-year-struggle-for-the-rights-of-prisoners-of-immigration-detention-facilities/>

¹⁰ ADC Memorial, “Kim vs. Russian Federation: Russian Government Admitted Violations of European Convention on Human Rights,” 8 February 2014, <http://adcmemorial.org/www/8683.html?lang=en>,

¹¹ European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), “Case of Kim v. Russia, Application No. 44260/13,” 17 July 2014, <http://www.refworld.org/cases,ECHR,53c7957e4.html>

- 3.7 **Recommendations:** In light of General Recommendation No 32 stipulating that women with special needs, including pregnant women and nursing mothers, should never be placed in immigration detention, , we encourage the Committee to request the following information:
- 3.7.a How does the State Party intend to amend its domestic legislation to protect vulnerable women—specifically, pregnant and nursing women, as well as girls under the age of 18—from detention and removal, in line with the Committee’s General Recommendation No. 32?
 - 3.7.b What efforts is the state party undertaking to reduce the length of time for which migrant women are detained prior to their deportation.
 - 3.7.c What measures is the state party taking to regularise the immigration status of persons whose deportation or expulsion cannot be carried out for technical reasons, in order to prevent their subsequent re-detention?
 - 3.7.d Can the State party provide statistics detailing the number of migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking women detained and deported / expelled since 2020?

4. CONDITIONS IN DETENTION

- 4.1 [Government Resolution No. 1306](#) (30 December 2013, amended in December 2024), establishes rules regarding accommodation conditions in facilities for foreigners and stateless persons subject to removal from Russia.
- 4.2 The regulations contain several provisions addressing the specific needs and circumstances of women and children. Men and women, for example, are to be detained separately, although spouses, parents, grandparents, and children may be accommodated together in separate rooms. The rules also provide for increased nutritional provisions for pregnant and breastfeeding women (Appendix No. 3(1)) and for child detainees (Appendix No. 4). However, they do not establish broader safeguards regarding the detention of girls, pregnant women, nursing women, or mothers with young children.
- 4.3 Concerns regarding conditions in immigration detention facilities in the Russian Federation have been documented by the Global Detention Project and Memorial Human Rights Defence Centre, as well as numerous other observers. These concerns are particularly relevant in light of the Committee’s guidance in its General Recommendation No.33 in which it called on states parties to:

“[E]nsure that all appropriate measures, including effective legal aid and procedures, are in place to enable women to challenge the legality of their detention; ensure regular reviews of such detention in the presence of the

detainee; and ensure that the conditions of administrative detention comply with relevant international standards for the protection of the rights of women deprived of their liberty.”

Health Care

- 4.4 In its 2021 Concluding Observations following the Committee’s review of the State Party’s ninth periodic report,¹² CEDAW noted its concerns regarding barriers to health care access for women in immigration detention.
- 4.5 These concerns remain as of 2026. Many detention centres, for example, continue to lack specialised doctors, including reproductive health specialists, creating unnecessary risks for women and children.
- 4.6 As Russia’s immigration detention centres do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Federal Penitentiary Service (FSIN) or the Ministry of Health, but are instead subordinate to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, they fall outside standard medical regulations for the prison system (The Penal Enforcement Code, for example, provides for the presence of hospitals and medical units within the penitentiary service system, ensuring access to specialised medical services.) As such, the provision of medical care remains limited in CTDFNs: specialised medical care for chronic conditions, for example, remains unavailable—even though it is provided in prisons.

Legal Assistance

- 4.7 Under the so-called “Foreign Agents” law, individuals and NGOs labelled as “foreign agents” cannot participate in public procurement or selection of providers for state/municipal social services, or receive state financial support, which is significantly decreasing the availability of legal assistance for detainees.

Hygiene and Sanitation

- 4.8 Authorities provide soap, toilet paper, and laundry detergent to detainees—however, quantities are extremely limited, and according to documentation by Memorial Human Rights Defence Centre, are insufficient. State supply of menstrual products and specialised hygiene products, meanwhile, are almost non-existent and are instead generally provided by relatives and volunteers. Disposable razors are issued rarely and through a centralised system, forcing detainees to use dull blades, which leads to skin infections.

¹² UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, “Concluding Observations on the Ninth Periodic Report of the Russian Federation,” CEDAW/C/RUS/CO/9, 30 November 2021, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FRUS%2FCO%2F9&Lang=en

- 4.9 Floor-mounted toilets (squat toilets) in the cells often lack proper partitions or doors to separate them from the living area. This not only compromises privacy but also degrades sanitary conditions in the room.

Staff

- 4.10 We recall the Committee's General Recommendation No. 32 in which it states that *"The use of female guards and warders should be promoted. All staff assigned to work with women detainees should receive training relating to the gender-specific needs and human rights of women."*
- 4.11 However, female detainees in CTDFNs are supervised by both female and male staff, and human rights activists regularly document the presence of men in women's living areas.

Overcrowding

- 4.12 Following a large-scale crackdown on undocumented migrants after the Crocus City Hall attack in March 2024, reports indicated that some dedicated immigration detention facilities became overcrowded, resulting in migrants being held in alternative facilities, including police detention centres and prisons. Today, overcrowding remains an issue of concern in CTDFNs, particularly due to intensified raids and arrests.

Limited Independent Monitoring

- 4.13 Since 2015, local Public Monitoring Commissions (PMCs) have been granted access to CTDFNs, as established under [Federal Law of 10.06.2008 N 76-FZ "On Public Monitoring of Human Rights in Places of Compulsory Detention and on Assistance to Persons in Places of Compulsory Detention."](#) Commissions, selected by the Civic Chamber, should be comprised of individuals aged over 25 who have "experience in the field of protecting citizens' rights" (Article 12(1)). There are reportedly more than 1,500 PMC members in 85 regions.¹³
- 4.14 However, the independence and effectiveness of PMCs is regularly questioned. Independent human rights defenders have been expelled (such as Marina Mitinovich in 2021); and human rights activists are not elected¹⁴ –while persons involved in security and law enforcement have been found to have prominent roles. An investigation into Vladimir Oblast's PMC in 2021, for example, found that at least five members of the PMC had ties to the law enforcement system.¹⁵
- 4.15 In 2021, the Constitutional Court approved the practice of interrupting interviews by PMC members, if they were discussing "issues that are not

¹³ Russian Red Cross, "Public Monitoring of Human Rights in Places of Detention," accessed 4 August 2026, <https://www.redcross.ru/en/activity/onk/>

¹⁴ Kommersant, "«Из 20 правозащитников в ОНК попал только я»" 8 October 2019, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4118539>

¹⁵ Meduza, "Independent Observers Get in the Way," 31 March 2021, <https://meduza.io/en/feature/2021/03/31/independent-observers-get-in-the-way>

relevant to ensuring the rights of prisoners in places of detention,” thus providing prison administrations with de facto control of issues discussed. Additionally, since June 2023 funding of PMC members has been provided by Regional Civic Chambers rather than NGOs, “making PMCs fully dependent on regional authorities.”

- 4.16 The “Foreign Agents” law has also created further problems. NGOs labelled as “foreign agents” no longer have a right to nominate candidates for PMCs, significantly undermining civil society participation in oversight efforts.
- 4.17 To-date, the National Preventive Mechanism has not been established in Russia.
- 4.18 The lack of effective and independent monitoring heightens risks for women in detention, including sexual harassment and gender-based violence. As a coalition of NGOs wrote in 2023:

“Public control over places of detention has become fictitious and formal. Places of detention are left without actual independent monitoring by civil society, which increases the risk of inhumane and degrading treatment and torture of prisoners.”¹⁶

- 4.19 **Relevant Committee opinions:** In its General Recommendation No. 33 (2015), the Committee recommends to “*Ensure that mechanisms are in place to monitor places of detention.*”

- 4.20 **Recommendations:** The GDP and Memorial Human Rights Defence Centre encourage the Committee to request that the State Party:

- 4.20.a Explain what efforts are underway to ensure that the conditions in which women migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers are detained comply with international human rights standards, including by guaranteeing access to gender-sensitive health care, adequate sanitary conditions, protection from gender-based violence, supervision by female staff, and effective access to legal assistance and judicial remedies.
- 4.20.b Explain whether the state party can remove restrictions imposed on those designated as “foreign agents” where those restrictions impede the protection of the rights of migrant, refugee, and asylum seeking women.

¹⁶ Man and Law, Citizens Watch, European Prison Litigation Network, “Joint Submission From Non-Governmental Organisations: Dismantling of Public Commissions and the Lack of Transparency of the Russian Penitentiary System,” 4 April 2023, https://upr-info.org/sites/default/files/country-document/2024-01/JS23_UPR44_RUS_E_Main.pdf

5. VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING

- 5.1 In its 2021 Concluding Observations, the Committee called on Russia to develop and adopt a national action plan to combat trafficking in persons, as well as to develop national guidelines for the early identification and referral of women and girl victims of trafficking to appropriate services and to provide “systematic training on such procedures” to authorities including immigration officials.
- 5.2 Later, on 10 December 2024, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) adopted its judgment, “F.M and others v. Russia”—a case concerning five women from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan who were trafficked to Russia—which identified systemic shortcomings in Russia’s protection of women who are victims of trafficking (the judgment became final on 10 March 2025).¹⁷ Among concerns, the Court found that Russian law does not recognise that consent obtained under coercion is invalid, and that trafficking can occur through means other than physical force. The Court also noted that Russian authorities have not adopted actions plans or trainings to identify and protect trafficking victims, and that Russian law criminalises providing help to illegal migrants, despite the fact that many are victims of the trafficking.
- 5.3 On 19 February 2024, Memorial Human Rights Defence Centre submitted an application to the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery and to other UN Rapporteurs highlighting the absence of an effective investigation of this case. On 15 May 2025, the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants and Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation subsequently issued a joint communication to Russian authorities on the case.
- 5.4 The UN Special Rapporteurs expressed concern at the repeated failure of Russian authorities to conduct a full-scale investigation into credible allegations of human trafficking and to recognise victims as such. They urged Russian authorities to open a comprehensive criminal investigation, establish all relevant facts, and ensure that these well-substantiated allegations are thoroughly examined. They also called on Russia to address the investigative deficiencies.
- 5.5 However, to date Russian authorities have not responded to the communication of the UN Special Rapporteurs, and have not adopted systemic measures deriving from the Committee’s 2021 Concluding observations or from the ECtHR’s 2024 judgment. Indeed, despite the ECtHR’s findings concerning the State’s failure to protect victims of

¹⁷ CASE OF F.M. AND OTHERS v. RUSSIA, European Court of Human Rights, <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-238319>

trafficking, Russian authorities subsequently issued a deportation order against one of the applicants in *F.M. and Others v. Russia*, rather than ensuring her protection and assistance as a recognised victim of trafficking.

- 5.6 Amongst concerns shared by Global Detention Project and [Memorial Human Rights Defence Centre](#) is the fact the authorities have failed to establish a comprehensive legislative and administrative framework to effectively prevent trafficking in persons, hold perpetrators accountable, and effectively protect victims. Russian criminal law does not clearly define human trafficking in accordance with international standards, failing to recognise that consent obtained under coercion is invalid and that trafficking can occur through means other than physical force, such as threats, abuse of power, or debt bondage.
- 5.7 Secondly, Russia continues to lack adequate regulatory measures to prevent trafficking in persons. The country has never adopted a comprehensive anti-trafficking law or a national action plan to combat contemporary forms of slavery. There is no coordination between relevant authorities, no systematic research or data collection on human trafficking, and law enforcement officials receive no specialised training. Civil society organisations that might have played a role in assisting victims have been systematically suppressed – branded as “foreign agents”, sanctioned, or even dissolved by the State.
- 5.8 Thirdly, the Russian government has failed to put in place any meaningful protections for victims of trafficking in persons. No mechanisms exist to identify or assist survivors. In the absence of such safeguards, trafficking victims continue to be treated as immigration offenders rather than victims requiring protection. As a result, trafficking victims continue to be detained due to reasons related to their immigration status. Victims receive no material, legal, or medical assistance, and shelter services remain unregulated and grossly inadequate. Furthermore, Article 322.1 of the Russian Criminal Code criminalises assistance to undocumented migrants, effectively deterring organisations and individuals from providing aid to victims of trafficking.
- 5.9 As a result of these systemic failures, Russia has experienced a severe deterioration in its human trafficking situation in recent years. It is estimated that nearly two million people¹⁸ live in conditions of contemporary forms of slavery in Russia, with a significant proportion being migrant workers from Central Asia, particularly women and girls.

¹⁸ Walk Free, “Modern Slavery in Russia, Global Slavery Index 2023.” <https://cdn.walkfree.org/content/uploads/2023/05/17114737/Global-Slavery-Index-2023.pdf?ref=new-internationalist.ghost.io>

5.10 Recommendations: The GDP and Memorial Human Rights Defence Centre encourage the Committee to request that the state party:

- 5.10.a Explain what measures it plans to adopt to resolve the systemic problems related to trafficking identified by both the Committee and the ECtHR, and in particular, what measures it intends to take to ensure that victims are not detained as a result of their immigration status due to their experience being trafficked.

6. PROLONGED DETENTION OF UKRAINIAN WOMEN DETAINEES

- 6.1 Ukrainian women detained by Russian authorities have been subjected to a range of detention regimes, including secret and unofficial detention, criminal detention, and immigration detention.¹⁹ Those captured in connection with Russia's war against Ukraine have faced particularly severe abuses. In many cases, such women have been held in basements or secret places of detention and subjected to torture and degrading treatment. There have also been cases of Ukrainian women captured during the war who died in Russian detention.
- 6.2 Observers have documented numerous cases in which Ukrainians have been released upon the completion of criminal sentences, only to be detained again in immigration detention centres for alleged violations of migration law. In September 2024, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation noted that some 250 such cases had so far been documented.²⁰ However, due to the war, deportation to Ukraine is currently impossible (due to the lack of normal diplomatic relations between the two countries)—leaving such persons detained despite the absence of realistic prospect of return.
- 6.3 **Recommendations:** We encourage the committee to request that the state party provide information on the measures taken to prevent Ukrainian nationals, particularly women, from being re-detained in immigration detention following the completion of their criminal sentences, while deportation to Ukraine cannot be carried out.

7. RECRUITMENT OF MIGRANT WOMEN FOR UKRAINE WAR

- 7.1 As part of Moscow's efforts to bolster the war effort in Ukraine, observers have documented authorities' efforts to coerce convicted inmates and

¹⁹ See, for example, UN Human Rights Council, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Russian Federation, Mariana Katzarova," 13 September 2024, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/57/59>

²⁰ UN Human Rights Council, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Russian Federation, Mariana Katzarova," 13 September 2024, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/57/59>

immigration detainees into fighting in Ukraine.²¹ According to Human Rights Watch, migrants are commonly targeted in raids, detained in police stations, and then psychologically pressured into joining the war—while simultaneously being promised high salaries and fast-tracked citizenship.²² Abuses including deprivation of food and water, beatings, and taser shocks have also been documented.²³ In one particular case, Novaya Gazeta documented the mass arrest of 3,000 Central Asian migrants in Moscow on New Years Eve 2023. According to the paper:

“[T]he following morning, army recruiters came to the centres and urged the men to join the army, promising people without citizenship that they would receive Russian passports upon the completion of their service and warning people who hesitated that if they did not agree to sign contracts, their entire families could be deported from Russia and legal proceedings would be opened against them for violating migration legislation.”²⁴

- 7.2 Women have been amongst those targeted, and several cases have been documented in which Central Asian migrant women have been deployed in exchange for “release” from prison.²⁵ Some women are reported to fight, while others have been placed in support position such as cooks, cleaners, medics, and other roles.²⁶ The exact number of women affected is unclear, as Russia’s Defence Ministry has not released data on the number of foreign women sent to the front.
- 7.3 Women sent to the front have reported violence, lack of medical care, corruption, threats of extrajudicial execution, and the practical impossibility of terminating their participation in hostilities.

²¹ Radio Liberty, “How Russia is Recruiting Central Asian Women for its War in Ukraine,” 8 February 2026, <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-ukraine-central-asia-kyrgyzstan-women/33671384.html>; Global Detention Project, “Russia: Weaponising Immigration Policies to Push Migrants into War and Launching a New “Expulsion Regime,” 28 April 2025, <https://www.globaldetentionproject.org/russia-weaponising-immigration-policies-to-push-migrants-into-war-and-launching-a-new-expulsion-regime>

²² Human Rights Watch, “Living in Fear and Humiliation: Rising Xenophobic Harassment and Violence Towards Central Asian Migrants in Russia,” 17 March 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2025/03/17/living-fear-and-humiliation/rising-xenophobic-harassment-and-violence-towards>

²³ Radio Svaboda, ““Пытки шокером и обезвоживанием”. Как в России вербуют на войну мигрантов,” 29 July 2024, <https://www.svoboda.org/a/pytki-shokerom-i-obezvozhivaniem-kak-v-rossii-verbuyut-na-voynu-migrantov/33053227.html>

²⁴ Novaya Gazeta Europe, “New Year’s Nightmare,” 8 January 2024, <https://novayagazeta.eu/en/articles/2024/01/08/new-years-nightmare-en>

²⁵ Center for Countering Disinformation, “Russia Recruits Imprisoned Women from Central Asia for War Against Ukraine,” 22 January 2026, <https://cpd.gov.ua/en/international-threats-en/global-south/russia-recruits-imprisoned-women-from-central-asia-for-war-against-ukraine/>

²⁶ Radio Liberty, “How Russia is Recruiting Central Asian Women for its War in Ukraine,” 8 February 2026, <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-ukraine-central-asia-kyrgyzstan-women/33671384.html>

7.4 **Recommendations:** We encourage the Committee to request that the state party:

- 7.4.a Provide information on the measures taken to prevent the coercion, intimidation, or exploitation of migrant women—including migrant women in prisons, police custody, and immigration detention—for the purpose of deployment to the war in Ukraine.
- 7.4.b Provide information on how it investigates reports that detained migrant women have been offered release, or other benefits in exchange for military service.
- 7.4.c The state party should also be encouraged to disclose the number of foreign migrant women who have been “recruited” for the war.