



# Human Rights Council

55<sup>th</sup> Session (26 February- 5 April)

**Item 3:** Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Torture and other Cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment.

## Oral statement

7 March 2024

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Harm Reduction International (HRI), jointly with European Litigation Network (EPLN), UnMode and Promolex, welcome the Special Rapporteur's reports on prison management and Ukraine, commending the attention paid to the right to health of detainees and States' obligation to do no harm.

People from marginalised communities are overrepresented in prisons, and punitive drug policies are a key contributor to prison overcrowding, accounting for 22% of incarcerated people globally.<sup>1</sup> Many of the factors that make these groups more likely to be incarcerated, including discrimination and drug use, also lead to higher burden of ill-health.<sup>2</sup> These, coupled with poor detention conditions and lack of adequate health services, make prisons high-risk environments for the spread diseases and a fertile ground for torture and ill-treatment. To protect the health of people deprived of liberty, prisons must provide at least the same level of health care as for the broader community.

On Ukraine, we are concerned about the alarming situation of people deprived of liberty in a country that is under attack. We have documented various issues regarding prison conditions, including physical and psychological torture, and lack of water, electricity, and medical care. Since the invasion, co-signatories have also documented the illegal transfer of detainees from occupied territories to Russia. Some are detained in poor conditions and with no access to essential medicines, suffering ill treatment and torture; while the location of others remains unknown.

We call on the Council and all relevant stakeholders, to take all necessary measures to protect the right to life and health of people deprived of liberty, including in times of emergencies, war, and humanitarian crisis. We also call on the international community to stop the Russian invasion.

We thank you