

UN warns that warmongers and authoritarians are suffocating global human rights



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres delivers a speech at the opening of the 58th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, on February 24, 2025 [Fabrice Coffrini/AFP]

Geneva, February 24 (RHC)-- Warmongers and authoritarians are “suffocating” human rights across the world, the chief of the United Nations has warned.

Speaking at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on Monday, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres depicted a world where human rights were “on the ropes and being pummelled hard.”

Highlighting the devastating effects of conflicts, including in the Middle East, Ukraine and Congo, Guterres noted abuses linked to economics, technology, climate change, migration, and gender.

Guterres called out a “morally bankrupt global financial system” that favours profits over planet protections. He also spoke of those who might exploit artificial intelligence to harm people, and leaders who seek to demonise migrants or restrict women’s rights.

Speaking on the third anniversary of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Guterres said that the international community “must spare no effort to bring an end to this conflict, and achieve a just and lasting peace”.

The Gaza ceasefire is “precarious” and the world “must avoid at all costs a resumption of hostilities,” he continued. “Gravely concerned” over escalating violence in the occupied West Bank, he noted violence committed by Israeli settlers and calls for annexation, which he described as alarming developments.

He also condemned horrifying human rights abuses in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where Rwanda-backed M23 rebels have fought to take control over cities in the east of the country in recent weeks.

The comments came ahead of a critical UN debate as the United States and Ukraine push competing resolutions regarding efforts to end the war, sparked by Russia’s full-scale invasion in February 2022.

The effort faces opposition in the form of a rival text proposed by Ukraine and its European allies, which echoes the UN’s longstanding demand for Russia to end hostilities.

The U.S. proposal notably makes no reference to Russian aggression. President Donald Trump recently accused Kyiv of being responsible for the invasion and subsequent war.

Washington left its seat at the UN Human Rights Council empty on Monday, in line with Trump’s decision to disengage from the body, which is the only intergovernmental organization designed to protect human rights.

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