**Statement of the Canadian Association of Human Rights Institutes\***

**on the Russian Aggression against Ukraine**

**28 February 2022**

We are appalled by the unashamed violations of the foundational principles of the United Nations Charter and of basic tenets of international law by President Vladimir Putin and the Russian Federation.

In total contempt for the principles of non-use of force to settle disputes and of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of another State, Russia has breached cardinal rules of the Charter-based system in a naked act of aggression. As an individual, Mr Putin’s decision to wage war incurs criminal responsibility.

Subsequent acts of use of force against manifestly civilian targets, including civilian residences and non-military targets, constitute breaches of International Humanitarian Law and are prima facie war crimes.

As a guarantor of the post Second World War rules-based international order, Russia has been conferred a privileged position as a permanent member of the UN Security Council with a veto in trust of UN Member States and the international community for the purpose of contributing to and upholding global peace and security and the related purposes and principles of the United Nations including respect for human rights and for social and economic development. Willful acts of aggression coupled with abusive use of the veto constitute manifest repudiation of that trust.

As such, Russia no longer merits or can reasonably hold a privileged position in the international community for peace and security, human rights or development.

We call upon UN Member States to unite for peace in the General Assembly and to disregard Russia’s illegitimate diplomatic positions and, instead, to support Ukraine in defense of its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the protection and well-being of all persons within Ukraine.

We call upon the UN General Assembly to remove Russia from its membership of the UN Human Rights Council.

We call upon the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe to disregard Russia in any decision of consensus using the rule of consensus minus one “in cases of clear, gross, and uncorrected violations of relevant OSCE commitments”.

We call upon the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to invoke Article 8 of its Statute and to expel Russia for its gross violations of the stipulated aims of the organisation.

We call upon Canada to stand with Ukraine and for the Government of Canada to extend every facility and means of support to the Government and people of Ukraine in defense of their inherent individual and collective rights to self-determination and all other human rights.

We commend Ukraine for its persistence in calling for a peaceful resolution of the situation notwithstanding extreme threats and, now, attacks against it.

We commit to honest and unreserved testament to the violations we are now witnessing and to support for the full restoration of the independence and development of Ukraine and of the Ukrainian people under the rule of law, according to the genuine will of the people, and with full respect for human rights.

*\* If not all CAHRI Members agree to endorse this statement, we can list those that wish to join in this statement.*