



6 May 2014 - Death and destruction in southern and eastern Ukraine has augmented, as well armed and organized opposition groups clash with Ukrainian forces. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay [expressed](#) deep concern about the recent swell of violence and urged all sides to “make a much greater effort to find a peaceful resolution to the current crisis”. Towns in the southern and eastern regions of the country have been most heavily affected by fighting.

She furthermore called on armed groups to, “stop all illegal actions, including detaining people and seizing public buildings in violation of Ukraine’s laws and Constitution.” And moreover she admonished that they lay down their arms, free the detained persons and vacate the public buildings they are occupying. “Inclusive and participatory dialogue needs, as a matter of urgency, to be undertaken at all levels to de-escalate tensions and prevent further violence,” Pillay said.

Pillay also called on the Government to ensure that military and police operations are undertaken in line with international standards. “It is extremely important that the authorities themselves demonstrate full respect for the rule of law and scrupulously protect the human rights of all, including the Russian-speaking population,” the High Commissioner said.

“Leaders at national and local levels need to take serious steps to halt the rhetoric of hatred and confrontation, before the situation spirals totally out of control. Genuine peaceful demonstrations

must be permitted, both as a matter of international law and as a release valve for people's legitimate fears and frustrations," she added. "Policing should facilitate such assemblies while ensuring the protection of participants, irrespective of their political views."

Pillay also emphasised the need to create an environment where freedom of expression and opinion are fully respected, condemning all attacks on, and harassment of, journalists. "All sides must allow journalists space to work," she said. "This is a key element in ending the increasing misinformation, disinformation and hate speech that has been colouring conflicting narratives and fuelling the development of artificial, destructive and deeply dangerous divisions between communities."

Pillay added that journalists themselves should make strenuous efforts to be objective, and to avoid incitement. She also noted that very little time remains before the elections on 25 May, which represent the best opportunity for Ukraine to begin the process of reconciliation and stabilization. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon also underlines the need for "A diplomatic and political solution to this crisis".

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