

# HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN A WEEK

20 – 26 June, 2022



Human Rights are inherent to all human beings, regardless of the nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language or any other status without discrimination. These rights are all universal, inalienable, interrelated, interdependent and indivisible.

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Monday 20 June 2022

LOCAL

Lebanon – <u>Cash-strapped Lebanon threatens to expel Syrian refugees</u> During the United Nations (UN) launching ceremony of the Lebanon 2022 Crisis Response

Plan, Najib Mikati, Lebanese Prime Minister, said that Lebanon would have no choice but to legally deport Syrian refugees from its territory, if the international community does not help it repatriate them. According to Mr. Mikati, the economic crisis in Lebanon is such that the country can no longer support refugees from the Syrian crisis. Lebanon says it is hosting 1,5 million Syrian refugees. Under the Plan, \$9 billion in aid has been given to Lebanon since 2015, according to the UN.

#### Lebanon - Yasmine al-Masri. One last trip to 6 hospitals

In Lebanon, the death of a little girl due to lack of pediatric care has gone viral on social networks. It raises awareness on the serious collapse of the medical sector in Lebanon. Yasmine al-Masri, aged one, died after several hospitals in Tripoli refused to admit her on the grounds that they had no pediatric services. Suffering from vomiting, fever and diarrhea, the little girl passed through 6 different hospitals before dying at Notre Dame Hospital. In addition to the general lack of pediatric services, the care of the little girl could not be carried out because of the exorbitant amounts of money requested by the hospitals that had one: Haykal hospital asked the family for \$1,000 to examine Yasmine's blood tests; the family could not afford it.

# Lebanon – UN launches \$3.2 billion plan for crisis-hit Lebanon to support families, refugees

The United Nations (UN) has announced a \$3,2 billion aid package for Lebanon to help it cope with the impacts of the economic crisis. The announcement was made by Najib Mikati, Prime Minister of Lebanon, Hector Hajjar, Minister of Social Affairs, and Najat Rochdi, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon. As part of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2022 (LCRP), the money will help 3 million people, support services, infrastructure and the local economy, paralyzed by a large-scale crisis. 1,5 million Lebanese, 1,5 million displaced Syrians and over 209,000 Palestinian refugees will be supported through the Plan. The UN reminds that 9 out of 10 Syrians in Lebanon live in poverty, while the Lebanese have become considerably poorer over time since the crisis.

#### Lebanon - Calls to Lebanon's suicide hotline grow due to impact of financial crisis

The National Lifeline in Lebanon for Emotional Support and Suicide Prevention has alerted to the alarming increase in phone calls it receives daily. Volunteers working on the line remind that in 2019, the helpline received an average of 5 calls per day, compared to 25 calls in 2021, with an increase in serious calls. For Mr. Ramanos, clinical psychologist and supervisor of the NGO Embrace, it is the repetition of crises (economic, political) that has caused a constant deterioration of the mental health of the Lebanese. Not to mention the shortage of medication that prevents people with mental illnesses from seeking treatment, with the risk of them getting worse. The Institute for Development, Research, Advocacy, and Applied Care (IDRAAC), a psychological research center in Lebanon, reports a steady increase in suicides.

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#### Lebanon - Families of "death boat" victims open fire

On Tuesday evening, families of victims and missing persons of the shipwreck in Tripoli, fired weapons at the Lebanese army barracks in Qobbeh. The army brought back-ups to control the situation. No deaths or injuries were reported. The shooting illustrates the anger of the families against the state for its inaction in resolving this tragedy, the families asking for bodies' return of at least 32 people, still in the sea since April. They are also asking for the responsibility's recognition of 13 Lebanese Navy's members in the sinking, as well as a transfer of investigations from the military judiciary to the Judicial Council.

#### Lebanon -Employer assaulting, torturing and humiliating workers in Lebanon

Local Lebanese media reported videos showing a group of Lebanese and Syrian workers being assaulted and tortured by their employer in the town of Majdel al-Aqoura, Akkar governorate. In the videos, the employer can be seen slapping the workers, most of whom are naked. The workers can be seen being assaulted with sharp objects and electric wires, and their mouths stuffed with potatoes. According to a complaint he filed, the employer accused the workers of a 700\$ theft.The Directorate General of Internal Security Forces announced that an investigation has been opened into the incident. For the municipality of Fneidik, this heinous crime is just a false declaration of theft allowing the employer not to pay the workers their salaries.

#### Lebanon - Lebanon: End military trial against comedian and drop all charges

On Friday, comedian Shaden Fakih will appear at her trial before a military court, in clear violation of her right to a fair trial or freedom of expression. This trial does not allow Ms. Fakih the conditions of self-defense, according to human rights groups. In 2021, Ms. Fakih was summoned by a military court to appear before it on June 24, 2022, on charges of defamation and damaging the reputation of the General Directorate of Security, following the publication of a video on its social networks. Amnesty International believes it is time for military courts to be abolished in Lebanon and cases must be transferred to civilian courts to ensure the efficiency of their rights. Military courts too often use their broad authority to silence activists.

# Lebanon - France to share results of central bank governor inquiry with Lebanon

According to Lebanese judicial sources to The National, France has given a written assurance that it will share the results of its investigation into the fortune of Lebanon's central bank governor, Riad Salameh, with the Lebanese judiciary. In the coming months, the Lebanese and French investigating judges will be able to jointly study information on 9 bank accounts belonging to Raja Salameh, Riad's brother. The study of these accounts will allow them to understand how millions of dollars, suspected of being embezzled Lebanese funds, were transferred from Lebanon to Switzerland, while the country is suffering one of the worst economic crises in the world since 1950. The Salameh brothers are suspected of being part of an embezzlement that looted at least \$330 million in public funds, as Lebanon sinks into poverty.

#### Lebanon – <u>The ministry of Interior's oppressive decision against the LGBTQI+ community is</u> <u>illegal and violates human rights and personal freedoms</u>

The Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH) condemns the illegal decision of the Lebanese Ministry of Interior to ban "assemblies that promote homosexuality", according an official statement. The Ministry of Interior's decision authorizes security forces to stop and repress all events related to and organized by LGBTQ+ communities, which constitutes a blatant violation of the rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and infringement of minority rights. These decisions contribute to the creation of a climate of hatred and violence against the LGBTQ+ community.



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#### Syria - Syrian state media say attack on army bus kills 13 troops

In northern Syria, an attack on a military bus killed 13 soldiers and wounded two, according to Syrian state media. The attack has not been claimed but bears the hallmarks attributed to ISIS militants, who have carried out similar attacks. The attack occurred in the Raqqa province, which was once controlled by ISIS. Today, sleeper cells are still present and still carrying out deadly attacks.

#### Morocco - Moroccans accuse French tycoon Jacques Bouthier of sexual harassment

The former CEO of the insurance brokerage group Assu 2000, Jacques Bouthier, is facing new complaints filed by 4 women in Morocco, for human trafficking, sexual harassment, verbal and moral abuse, between 2018 and 2022, according to Karima Salama, a lawyer for the Moroccan Association for Victims' Rights. Mr. Bouthier was already facing charges of rape of a minor since May, conspiracy to commit kidnapping and sequestration, and possession of child pornography images. Under protected identities, the complainants testified before journalists that they were fired after refusing to give in to Mr. Bouthier's sexual harassment, claiming that his actions at work were covered up by French and Moroccan accomplices in his company, in Tangiers. Mr. Bouthier, 75, is considered one of France's leading fortunes.

#### Occupied Palestine - Israeli settler stabs Palestinian man to death: Health Ministry

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, an Israeli settler stabbed a Palestinian on Tuesday in the northern part of the occupied West Bank. Ali Hassan Harb, 27, died in the Iskaka area after being stabbed in the heart. According to Palestinian witnesses, Mr. Hassan Harb was working near the settlement of Ariel when he was attacked by Israeli settlers, leading to an altercation between Palestinians and Israelis and followed by gunfire from security guards. The Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas condemned the attack as a war launched by settlers against Palestinians. About 475,000 Israeli settlers live in settlements in the West Bank, where 2,8 million Palestinians also live.

# Egypt – Egyptian woman slain at university after rejecting marriage proposal

A young 21 Egyptian woman was killed in front of the entrance of her university in Egypt, by a man whose marriage proposal had been refused by the woman. Naiyera Ashraf was attacked with a knife in front of the Egyptian university of Mansoura, by Mohamed Adel, also a student in Mansoura. According to the Egyptian prosecution, the man was arrested by people nearby and witnesses of the crime and was handed over to the police. In 2021, the Observatory of Gender-Based Violence recorded 831 cases of violence against women in Egypt, 296 feminicides, 78 attempted murders, 54 rapes and 100 suicides, according to Megaphone News.

#### Occupied Palestine - Palestinians grant bail to accused killers of activist Nizar Banat

According to multiple sources, 14 members of the Palestinian security forces, who were tried for the murder of activist Nazar Banat, were released on bail on Wednesday. In June 2021, prominent activist Banat died after his violent arrest by Palestinian security forces in the city of Hebron, who were accused of beating him to death, with an autopsy revealing numerous blows to his head, neck, chest and legs. The Palestinian Authority (PA) had promised to render justice for his death in a military trial, while the death of the activist had triggered large demonstrations against the PA. Their release on bail was justified by the risk of spreading Covid-19 in the West Bank prison where they were held. For Jihan Banat to AFP, widow of Mr. Banat, the decision to release them is political and reflects the desire of Mahmoud Abbas to hush up this case. Majed Al-Arouri, a legal expert, confirms this, calling the release illegal and stressing an "intentional procrastination in court procedures with regard to the people accused of killing Nizar Banat".

#### Iraq - <u>Nine killed in Iraq tribal violence</u>

According to Saad al-Zaidi, a local police spokesman, an armed clash between tribes over an agricultural dispute left 9 people dead, including a soldier, in the district of al-Uzair in the southern Iraqi province of Missane. The clash lasted for several hours, and the soldier killed was on vacation when the conflict erupted over disputes on agricultural land. The province of Missane, bordering Iran, is regularly the subject of tribal violence between rival clans, against a backdrop of drug trafficking and smuggling, despite a large security system deployed by the authorities. In early May, similar clashes left 8 people dead.

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#### Darfur – Darfur attacks displace 84,000 in June alone: UN

According to the United Nations (UN), attacks in Darfur forced 84,000 people to move only in June. These are the highest numbers since 2021. Since 2003 and the agreement between the Sudanese government and Arab tribal militias to quell a farmers' rebellion in Darfur, 2,5 million people have been displaced and 300,000 killed in civil violence. In June, 125 people were killed and 50,000 displaced from their homes as a result of attacks by Arab militias on the Gimir tribal town of Kulbus. In Kordofan State, UNOCHA reported that 19 people were killed and 15,150 displaced after tribal fighting. For Will Carter of the Norwegian Refugee Council, conflict is inexorably leading to a large-scale displacement crisis. Human Rights Watch is calling on the government of Sudan to stop the violence by resolving the land and resource disputes that underlie the tribal conflicts.

#### Libya – Despairing teen refugee found hanged in Libya detention centre

A young teenage refugee was found hanged in one of the rooms of the Ain Zara detention center, south of Tripoli, Libya. Asylum seekers say 19-year-old Mohamed Mahmoud Abdel Aziz was desperate and took his own life on June 5, underscoring the plight of refugees. A Sudanese refugee from war-torn Darfur, the young asylum seeker was held in detention centers like thousands of refugees. Photos of the body were taken secretly while Libyan authorities confiscated phones to prevent their distribution. Asylum seekers explain that the conditions in these centers are horrific, severely impacting their mental health and safety and leaving no hope for the future. According to Hussein Baumi, Amnesty International's campaigner for Libya and Egypt, detention centers' monitoring by international organizations in Libya is less and less common, including UNHCR and IOM. As of May, 2,772 people are being held in these centers in Libya, according to UNHCR.

#### Occupied Palestine – UN rights office says its findings suggest Al Jazeera journalist killed by Israeli forces

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has concluded that Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was killed by Israeli defense forces' fire on May 11, while wearing a bulletproof vest marked "press". According to UNHCR spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani, "all information we have gathered – including official information from the Israeli military [...] is consistent with the finding that the shots that killed Abu Akleh [...] came from Israeli Security Forces". According to the investigation, the Palestinians are not responsible. Ms. Shamdasani said it was disturbing that the Israeli authorities were unwilling to open an investigation.

#### Iran - Iran arrests 10 after video shows teenage girls without hijabs mingling with boys

An Iranian official said Iranian authorities arrested 10 people in the city of Shiraz after teenagers filmed themselves freely mingling at a public gathering where girls did not wear headscarves. According to Lotfollah Sheybani, governor of Shiraz to the Mehr news agency, "ten people have been arrested so far for organizing this event". Since 1979 and the Iranian revolution, all women must cover their hair in public. Women who violate this dress code risk being arrested by the Iranian morality police.

#### Egypt/Jordan - Separate murders of two female students triggers region-wide anger

The apparent gender-based killings in Jordan and Egypt spark conversation about the lack of protection for women in the Middle East and North Africa. The consecutive murders of two female students in Egypt and Jordan have triggered widespread fury across the Middle East and North Africa, with calls for greater protection against gender violence and femicide in the region. Iman Rashid, 21, was fatally shot on the campus of the Applied Sciences University in Amman on Thursday night. The nursing student was rushed to hospital in a critical condition but was pronounced dead shortly after arriving, according to the General Security Directorate. Her assailant, who has not yet been identified, fled the scene and remains at large. Security forces have launched a manhunt to track him down. Rashid's murder came only three days after a 21-year-old Egyptian student was stabbed to death outside Mansoura University. Naiyera Ashraf was beaten and stabbed in broad daylight in front of shocked onlookers by a fellow student whose marriage proposal she had rejected, according to local reports. A suspect was detained the following day and has confessed to the killing, the local prosecutor's office said in a statement. The murders have sent shockwaves through Egypt, Jordan, and the wider region, with many suggesting there may be a link between the two incidents.

#### Turkey – Turkey: Nearly 400 Pride march attendees released after Istanbul parade

Turkish police continue their attempts to intimidate LGBTQI+ people. On June 26, law enforcement officers ruthlessly detained nearly 400 people during the Pride march in Istanbul, which is banned by the authorities. Activists and a journalist were arrested, as well as an AFP photographer, Bülent Kiliç. According to the Turkish LGBTQI+ rights association Kaos GL, all those arrested were released on the morning of the 27<sup>th</sup>. Even before the march began, police raided cafes in a very violent manner to arrest people who were there. According to witnesses, the police tried to prevent the press from filming the arrests. Since 2015, the Pride march has been banned in Istanbul for security reasons cited by the government, but every year, hundreds of protesters defy the ban. The European Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatovic, has called on the authorities to lift the ban and protect LGBTQI+ rights in Turkey.

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#### Morocco - More than 20 Migrants Die in Effort to Enter Spanish Enclave in Africa

23 migrants died in an attempt to enter nearly 2,000 illegal immigrants of African origin on June 24, in the Spanish enclave of Melilla in northern Morocco, according to local Moroccan authorities. 18 migrants and one law enforcement officer are under medical supervision, according to AFP. The victims died when they fell from the iron fence that separates the Spanish enclave from Moroccan territory. Along with Ceuta, Melilla is the only European Union land border accessible from the African continent. It is regularly the target of attempted entries by migrants seeking to reach Europe.

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# Worldwide - UN food agency announces further refugee ration cuts, in quest for #ZeroHunger

On International Refugee Day, the World Food Programme (WFP) warned that it must now ration refugees in East and West Africa due to lack of adequate funding and rising needs. According to David Beasley, Executive Director of the WFP, available resources cannot keep up with the growing demand for food around the world, a problem exacerbated by the war in Ukraine. Three-quarters of the refugees supported by WFP in East Africa have had their rations cut by up to 50%, according to the UN agency, with those in Ethiopia, South Sudan, Kenya and Uganda the hardest hit. Last week, the WFP announced that it urgently needed \$426 million over the next few months to prevent famine in South Sudan. The war in Ukraine has greatly exacerbated the refugee crisis and the risk of famine, creating an additional 6 million refugees and driving up the price of commodities such as cereals, on which many African countries are dependent.

#### France - Organ transplants: pandemic-related delays persist

On the French National Day of Reflection on Organ Donation, Transplantation and Recognition of Donors, doctors' councils alert to the delays in organ transplants that persist in France, despite the end of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Biomedicine Agency (ABM) explains there was a decline in organ transplant activity of 25% in 2020, due to Covid, then a fairly positive recovery in 2021 with 5,276 transplants performed, an increase of 19,3%. However, the ABM explains the delay has not been caught up compared to 2018 and 2019. For Emmanuelle Cortot-Boucher, "the needs are not fully covered", and the opposition of families to the donation of organs from dead relatives is on the rise, while more than 20,000 people are waiting for a transplant. As of June 1, 20,774 receivers are on the waiting list for a transplant.

#### Ukraine - Ukraine: UN and partners deliver lifesaving aid to Donetska region

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) confirmed the arrival of relief supplies in Kramatorsk and Sloviansk for 64,000 people, in the most affected cities in the Donetska region of Ukraine. The relief supplies include food, water purification tablets, and basic hygiene products. According to Osnat Lubrani, UN humanitarian coordinator for Ukraine, the towns are located just 10km from the front line and are under constant shelling. More than 2,2 million people in the Donetska region need life-saving assistance according to OCHA. In Sloviansk, 27,000 people will receive humanitarian supplies and 37,850 in Kramatorsk. According to the UN, the war has left 16 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Ukraine.

#### France - Sexual violence: an internal investigation identifies 17 cases of rape at AgroParisTech

The engineering school AgroParisTech, in Paris, revealed that an internal survey reported 17 cases of rape committed within the school in 2021, among 526 situations of sexist and sexual violence that are very frequent in one of the most feminized engineering schools in France (65%). The awareness and information unit on sexuality (Cassis), a student association, surveyed 970 students, with 58% of respondents: in total, 141 students, or 24,7% of respondents, said they had been victims of sexual assault. Laurent Buisson, the school's director, has promised to strengthen the school's listening and awareness-raising system for sexual and gender-based violence. French students deplore a climate of trivialization of sex and alcohol in student life, necessary to be well "integrated" according to them, but yet factor of violence.

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# Ghana - LGBTI Activists in Ghana Sue Over Abusive Arrest and Detention

Last week, lawsuits were filed against Ghana's Inspector General of Police and Attorney General over the illegal arrest of 21 LGBTI activists. The lawsuit comes from a group of Ghanaian lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex rights organizations who accuse the Ghanaian police of illegally arresting their activists during a workshop in support of LGBTI rights. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), during their three-week detention, the activists were tortured, humiliated, held in undignified conditions, and denied access to medical care. One intersex woman testified that she was stripped, humiliated, physically touched, and thrown into a men's cell by police officers, who threatened to rape her to "prove her womanhood". The group has taken the case to Ghana's High Court to seek reparations for her suffering. HRW calls on the Ghanaian Parliament to reject the discriminatory Family Values Bill and to introduce legislation that protects sexual and gender minorities.

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#### France - A camp of 360 migrants evacuated in the northeast of Paris

On Wednesday, 360 migrants were evacuated from a makeshift camp near the Porte de Pantin, in the north-east of Paris. The migrants will be received in a shelter for an evaluation of their administrative situation, announced the prefecture of Ile-de-France. François Dagnaud, mayor of the 19<sup>th</sup> district in Paris, said that the occupants were mainly Afghans or coming from the Horn of Africa, mostly asylum seekers. But migrant aid associations claim that their reception in accommodation centers is not efficient, as these migrants are a single group that regularly reconstitutes unsanitary camps from one place to another. They have already been evacuated under the same conditions on May 11, according to the Solidarité Migrants Wilson collective.

#### United States of America - 'Coercive and arbitrary': New report details US prison labour

In a report released in mid-June, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the University of Chicago's Global Human Rights Clinic examine the rights of prison workers in the United States. According to the ACLU, prison workers are punished when refusing to do certain tasks and are underpaid overall. Nearly 800,000 of the 1,2 million US prisoners perform work, creating \$11 billion in goods and services annually, but their services are reportedly accompanied by "coercive and arbitrary conditions" and "paltry wages or no wages at all", according to the ACLU. The report is based on public records, questionnaires or interviews with inmates, and 75% of those interviewed explained they had been punished after refusing to do certain tasks, such as "loss of visitation rights with loved ones and even solitary confinement", according to Jennifer Turner, author of the report. Most prison work is paid between 13 and 52 cents an hour, and in some states like Texas, Georgia, or even Florida, workers are not paid at all.

#### Myanmar - Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi moved to prison solitary confinement

The military government has confirmed the transfer of Aung San Suu Kyi to prison. Previously under house arrest, then held at a secret location, Myanmar's leader deposed by the February 2021 coup has been transferred to a prison in the capital, Naypyidaw, in solitary confinement, according to Zaw Min Tun, a military government spokesman. Phil Robertson, deputy director of Human Rights Watch, said the government's decision to transfer the Nobel laureate to prison was intended to intimidate and undermine attempts by opponents of the junta to rebel. Tom Andrews, UN special rapporteur about human rights in Myanmar, urged the international community to do more to resolve the country's political crisis, as the military cracked down on more than 2,000 opponents.

#### Cape Verde - <u>Cabo Verde: 'Unprecedented' food insecurity triggers social and economic</u> emergency

Severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and drought, Cape Verde is being severely impacted by the war in Ukraine and is at risk of famine. As a result, the government has declared a social and economic emergency. According to Prime Minister Ulisses Correia e Silva, 9 out of 10 Cape Verdeans are threatened by food insecurity due to the drop in purchasing power and inflation of 8%. By declaring an economic and social emergency, the government can hope for more support from the international community to continue financing measures, to protect families.

#### Afghanistan - Afghan earthquake survivors lack food, shelter as aid trickles in

Two earthquakes, of magnitude 5,9 and 4,5, hit the province of Paktika, a mountainous and hard access region of Afghanistan, bordering Pakistan, on Tuesday night 21 to Wednesday 22. According to official authorities' information, the death toll is over a thousand, 2,000 people were injured and 10,000 houses were damaged. The affected region is very poor, rural and difficult to access, which increases the time needed for rescue operations, forced to evacuate by helicopter. Limited in number and capacity, the Afghan rescue services are inadequate to deal with this disaster. Tomas Niklasson, the European Union's special envoy to Afghanistan, announced that the EU was ready to send urgent aid and to coordinate relief operations. The UN, through the WHO, announced it was already present on the spot. Mohamed Ag Ayoya, representative of the UN Children's Fund, announced that UNICEF had already brought health and nutrition teams to provide first aid to those in need. The Taliban government has made repeated appeals for international aid, while the country has been cut off from much foreign aid due to sanctions.

#### United States of America – <u>USA: Supreme Court decision to overturn Roe v. Wade marks grim</u> milestone in history of the United States

The US Supreme Court has just overturned the Roe vs. Wade decision, which, since 1973, has granted American women the right to abortion throughout the country. This decision does not make abortion illegal but leaves it up to each state to decide whether or not to allow abortion in its jurisdiction. According to the Center for Reproductive Right, about half the states could ban abortion. Missouri was the first state to announce a ban on abortion in its jurisdiction immediately after the ruling was overturned. According to the Guttmacher Institute, 58% of American women, or 40 million women, live in a state that could deprive them of the fundamental right to control their own bodies. Joe Biden denounced a tragic mistake that puts women's health and lives at risk. The Supreme Court's decision restarts speculation about the fate of other acquired rights, such as same-sex marriage, or access to contraception.

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#### France - France seeks to enshrine abortion rights in constitution after Roe v Wade reversal

Following the United States Supreme Court's decision to reverse the federal right to abortion, the French government will support a bill to enshrine the right to abortion in the French Constitution. Aurore Bergé, president of the parliamentary majority group Renaissance, has announced the filing of a bill to enshrine respect for abortion in the French constitution. These provisions aim to prevent future leaders in France from reversing this fundamental right, as the Constitution is much more difficult to change than a simple law.