



► What are human rights?

Human rights represent a fundamental area of international law which developed following the atrocities committed during World War I and II. Amongst the first instruments is the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) - championed by Eleanor Roosevelt – marking the first time that a statement existed that human rights do not simply belong to the national level but exist on the international plane as well. Subsequently, human rights were defined internationally as we know them today – rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of the nationality, place of residence, sex, national/ethnic origin, colour, religion, language or any other status without discrimination. These rights are all universal, inalienable, interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. They are subject to national implementation and international protection. Therefore, it remains the responsibility of states to act in certain ways or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups.



LOCAL

Monday
18 October 2021

Beirut – [Nasrallah to the Lebanese Forces: Don't miscalculate, Hezbollah has 100,000 militants at its disposal](#)

4 days after the deadly clashes in Beirut, Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah accused the leader of the Christian Lebanese Forces, Samir Geagea, of attempting to ignite a civil war. Nasrallah warned against further provocations, claiming Hezbollah commands 100,000 armed and trained militants.

Beirut – [Low Turnout as Lebanese Mark Two Years of Protests](#)

October 17 marked 2 years since the start of the 2019 uprisings. Low-key demonstrations commemorated the protests that once promised to rock the corrupt political system and bring about democratic change in Lebanon. The protests did little to effect government reform, and 2 years later, Lebanese citizens are fatigued from years of economic crisis, the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the devastation of the Beirut port explosion.

Tuesday
19 October 2021

Lebanon – [Lebanon sets March date for parliamentary election | Elections News](#)

Lebanon's Parliament voted Tuesday to set parliamentary elections for March 27, ahead of schedule. The election vote comes with the decision against adding six seats to represent the diaspora and a rejection of a quota for female MPs.

Lebanon – [Beirut blast judge summons ex-ministers as pressure mounts](#)

Judge Tarek Bitar, the lead investigator into the Beirut port explosion, summoned ex-finance minister Ali Hasan Khalil and ex-interior minister Ghazi Zeiter for questioning on October 29. The investigation was briefly suspended last week after the former ministers filed a legal complaint against the judge in an attempt to remove him from the investigation.

Wednesday
20 October 2021

Lebanon / Syria – [Syria: Returning Refugees Face Grave Abuse](#)

Human Rights Watch interviewed 65 individuals who returned to Syria from Jordan and Lebanon, concluding refugee returns to Syria are unsafe. Returnees face arrest, arbitrary detention, torture, kidnappings, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and alleged sexual violence. The Lebanese government is pressuring refugees to return to Syria and has deported thousands of refugees since 2019.

Lebanon – [Fuel price hike worsens Lebanon's tough living conditions](#)

The Lebanese government removed the last of the fuel subsidies on Wednesday, raising the cost of fuel by 25%. The price of 20 liters of fuel has reached almost half the minimum wage, according to the AP. The price increase will affect the cost of diesel fuel used for heating, raising concerns for the coming winter.

Thursday
21 October 2021

Lebanon – [How greed fueled Lebanon's deadly milk and medicine shortage](#)

Traders and corrupted individuals kept 74% of government subsidized goods from reaching the public in September. Essential goods such as medicine and baby formula were found hoarded in stockpiles while cancer patients went without medication and mothers struggled to feed their children.

Lebanon – [Roads closed in several regions in protest against soaring fuel prices](#)

Protestors blocked roads across Lebanon in protest of the recent fuel price hike.

Friday
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Lebanon – [Lebanon's President Aoun rejects draft electoral law | Politics News](#)

President Michael Aoun sent back to parliament the draft law proposing the upcoming parliamentary elections to be held in September. President Aoun said holding the elections in March would shorten the timeframe for Lebanese expats to register to vote and would deny young people who would reach voting age between March and May from voting.

Lebanon / Russia – [Putin to produce satellite images of the Beirut port, but does not see the use](#)

Russian president Vladimir Putin announced he would provide satellite images of the Beirut port to aid the investigation into the blast. When he made the announcement, President Putin said he believed the explosion happened because officials wanted to profit from the ammonium nitrate stored in the port that caused the blast. He emphasized on letting the investigation continue without violence.

Lebanon / European Union – [Syrians abandon Lebanon as new migrant route to Europe beckons](#)

Syrian refugees are abandoning Lebanon, choosing a route to Europe through Belarus. The economic crisis in Lebanon has made life even harder for refugees, who already faced challenges supporting themselves and their families. Migrants flocked to Belarus in the last two months after President Lukashenko announced he will not stop migrants from crossing the border into Poland.

Saturday and Sunday
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Lebanon – [Two years after protests, Lebanon activists set sights on vote](#)

Lebanese activists hope the coming parliamentary elections will be a chance to reform the corrupt political system. The nationwide uprising in October 2019 failed to bring substantive change to the government that has allowed the country's economy to free fall and has obstructed justice for the devastating port explosion. As new political parties that have emerged since the revolution have far fewer resources at their disposal than established parties, and people are fatigued by the tragedies of the recent years, activists and reformers have a tough battle ahead.

Lebanon – [Lebanon uprising protesters anxiously await military court trials](#)

Dozens of protesters who took to the streets in Lebanon's October 2019 uprisings now await trial in a military court. Over 200 protesters have been summoned to testify in front of the court. Lebanon's military court has jurisdiction over civilians when trying them for conflict with security personnel, espionage, treason, and possession of weapons. 64 of 237 charged by the court have been tried, and no police officer has been held accountable for violence against protesters.



REGIONAL Middle East

Monday
18 October 2021

Iraq / U.S. – [‘He lied’: Iraqis blame Colin Powell for role in invasion on Iraq](#)

Former Secretary of State Colin Powell died of Covid-19 on Monday. In the wake of his death, Iraqis reflected on Powell’s central role in ordering the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. Powell testified in front of the U.N. Security Council, where he presented later disproven evidence of the existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The war that followed resulted in “decades of death, chaos, and violence” for Iraqis.

Tuesday
19 October 2021

Yemen – [Yemen war reaches ‘shameful milestone’ - 10,000 children now killed or maimed](#)

10,000 children in Yemen have been maimed or killed since the onset of fighting in 2015, reports the U.N. An additional 1.7 children are internally displaced. UNICEF warns they won’t be able to reach every child in need unless international funding dramatically increases.

Afghanistan – [Afghanistan to restart polio vaccination programme with Taliban support](#)

The Taliban has agreed to allow the WHO and UNICEF polio vaccination campaign to resume after a 3 year pause. The Taliban will allow women to join frontline workers. Afghanistan and Pakistan are the last two countries in the world to have polio cases in children.

Iran – [Over-compliance with US sanctions hurting Iran’s ‘butterfly kids’](#)

US sanctions on Iran are preventing a Swedish company from supplying needed treatment for Iranian children suffering from the severe skin condition, epidermolysis bullosa. Businesses, including pharmaceutical companies, are halting business in Iran as part of ‘over-compliance’ with U.S. sanctions. Medical goods are exempt from sanctions, but companies still choose to halt business in Iran out of fear of penalties.

Turkey – [Turkey: Terrorism financing law has immediate ‘chilling effect’ on civil society](#)

The Turkish government introduced a terrorism finance law in December 2020 that has infringed on the ability of non-profits from carrying out their work without fear of running afoul of these laws. The new legislation is being used to ‘suppress civil society and restrict the rights to freedom of association and expression in the name of combating money laundering and terrorism financing,’ reports Amnesty International.

Wednesday
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Afghanistan – [Female Afghan Judges and Lawyers Now Fear For Their Lives](#)

Hundreds of female judges remaining in Afghanistan fear reprisal from freed prisoners. Female judges are no longer able to work due to Taliban disapproval of women ‘sitting in judgement of men.’ They instead remain in hiding, in fear of harm coming to themselves and their families.

Afghanistan – [Russia holds high-profile Afghanistan talks with Taliban](#)

Russia held high level talks on Afghanistan on Wednesday, calling for the international community to resume economic and humanitarian aid to Afghanistan in order to prevent a refugee crisis. Senior Russian diplomats underscored that aid would be conditioned on the inclusivity and human rights record of the new Taliban government.

Palestine / Worldwide – [Digital apartheid: Palestinians being silenced on social media](#)

Social media companies, including Zoom, Facebook and Twitter, are reinforcing Israel’s erasure of Palestinians, excluding Palestinian voices from mainstream media narratives in the West and attempting to whitewash Israel’s crimes against them.

Thursday
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Syria – [Assad regime ‘siphons millions in aid’ by manipulating Syria’s currency](#)

For every dollar aid donated to Syria in 2020, the Central Bank of Syria pocketed \$0.51, making \$60 million. The Syrian currency has significantly depreciated in the last year, and the official rate stands at SYP2,500 to the dollar while the black market rate has dropped to SYP 3,500 to the dollar. The Syrian regime forced the UN to use the official rate, siphoning off huge sums while exchanging aid dollars at the lower official rate.

Syria – [Syria says 24 executed for starting wildfires | Death Penalty News](#)

The Syrian regime executed 24 individuals charged with starting fires that burned thousands of acres and killed three. Although the death penalty is common in Syria, the number executed was larger than usual. The executed were charged with terrorism, a charge which often strips the accused of due process in Syria.

Libya – [Libyan PM, foreign powers back landmark election in December](#)

Libyan and foreign officials endorsed holding national elections on December 24th this year. Since Libya has been engulfed in conflict since the NATO-backed uprising in 2011, Libyans and the international community see elections as a way to end the state of crisis. However, disagreements over voting rules cast doubt on whether the country will see free and transparent elections.

Sudan – [Crowds take to Sudan's streets after calls for rival protests](#)

Supporters of Sudan's transitional government took to the streets to oppose protesters who are calling for the dissolution of the civilian government and the reinstatement of military rule. Government forces have injured 37 protesters, reports the Central Committee of Sudanese Doctors.

Occupied Palestine – [Israel Accuses 6 Palestinian Rights Groups of Terrorism](#)

Israel designated 6 Palestinian human rights groups as terrorist organizations on Friday. International rights groups criticized the move as an attempt to stifle Palestinian civil society. In his statement announcing the designation, Defense Minister Benny Gantz accused the rights groups of funneling money to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. In a joint statement, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International described the accusations as outrageous, lauding the designated groups as "the best of global civil society."

Libya– [Thousands of refugees and migrants plead for Libya evacuation](#)

Over 5,000 migrants in Libya have been rounded up and placed in indefinite detention, while others have been handed over by the Libyan coastguard to militias where they are murdered, enslaved, tortured, and raped, according to a UNHCR report. Thousands of migrants are now camped out in front of a U.N center in Tripoli, calling for evacuations to Europe and North America.

Syria – [UN says Syrian constitution negotiations a 'big disappointment'](#)

The first round of Syrian Constitutional Committee Talks since last January has failed to produce progress towards the establishment of a new Syrian constitution. An agreement was reached in 2018 at a Russian held peace conference to draft a new constitution equally representing the Syrian government, political opposition, and civil society. The parties were unable to agree on any new constitutional provisions, according to a U.N. official.

Yemen / Saudi Arabia – [More than 260 Yemen rebels killed, Saudi-led coalition says](#)

The Saudi-led coalition in the civil war in Yemen announced it had killed 260 Houthi rebels on Sunday. The coalition has conducted almost daily air strikes on the Marib region in the last 2 weeks. The announcement could not be independently verified, according to Al Jazeera.

Occupied Palestine – [Israel to build 1,300 settlement units in occupied West Bank](#)

Israel is continuing its settlement policy, announcing they will build an additional 1,355 homes for settlers in the occupied West Bank. 7 new settlements will be constructed to accommodate the new homes. The U.N. condemned the move, reminding the international community that "all settlements are illegal." The U.S. Department of State expressed "concern" over the construction, while Jordan decried it as a "violation of international law."

Occupied Palestine – [Under Israel's blockade, Gaza fishermen struggle for a catch](#)

Israel expanded the permitted fishing zone off the coast of Gaza by 15 nautical miles, yet its restrictions on the type of engines and sonar devices fishermen need to reach deep waters mean Gaza fishermen are stuck in overfished shallow waters. Fish from the Mediterranean Sea provide a critical source of protein to the 200 million residents of Gaza, half of whom are unemployed.

Friday

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**Saturday and
Sunday**

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INTERNATIONAL

Monday
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Myanmar – [Myanmar Announces Amnesty for Thousands of Anti-Coup Protesters](#)

The military junta that seized control of the Myanmar government in February has agreed to release 5,600 anti-regime protesters. Millions of people took to the streets in February to protest the military coup. 7,300 were detained and 1,170 were brutally killed in the severe crackdown. It remains unknown if officials of the ousted civilian government, such as leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, will be among those released.

Tuesday
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Cuba – [Cuba: Peaceful Protesters Systematically Detained, Abused](#)

The Cuban government has 'systematically engaged in arbitrary detention, ill treatment of detainees, and abuse ridden criminal prosecutions' in response to July protests over the government's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, rights restrictions, and lack of access to food and medicine. The government is denying detainees' rights to due process by engaging in summary criminal trials, infringing on the right to legal counsel, and relying solely on police testimony.

Myanmar / India – [Thousands Flee Myanmar for India Amid Fears of a Growing Refugee Crisis](#)

15,000 have fled Myanmar since the military overthrew the civilian government in a coup. The ruling junta, the Tatmadaw, is targeting the People's Defense Force, an armed civilian group, burning down homes, shooting fleeing civilians, and cutting off internet and food supplies. Civilians are seeking refuge in India, where they face squalid living conditions and limited access to food and water.

Wednesday
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Russia / European Union – [Navalny, Putin's Imprisoned Foe, Wins EU's Top Human Rights Award](#)

Alexei Navalny was awarded the EU's top Human Rights Award on Wednesday. Navalny has led opposition to the Kremlin for decades and is currently held in a Russian penal colony after surviving an assassination attempt. The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought was awarded to Navalny for his unflinching advocacy for political change and his fight against President Vladimir Putin's corrupt regime.

Haiti – ['Haitians are kidnapped every day': missionary abductions shed light on growing crisis](#)

One Canadian and 16 American missionaries were kidnapped on Saturday in Haiti's capital, Port-Au-Prince. While this kidnapping has received extensive media coverage, little attention has been paid to the hundreds of Haitians who have been kidnapped this year alone. As violent gangs have gained power, kidnappings have soared, making Haiti the kidnapping capital of the world.

Bangladesh – [6 Deaths, 450 Arrests and Mass Protests. It Started With a Facebook Post.](#)

A weeklong spate of violence targeting Hindus in Muslim-majority Bangladesh has left six people dead while authorities arrested some 450 others, all because of a Facebook post that many Muslims found offensive, but which experts suspect was deliberately aimed at inciting a mob.

China – [Should Parents Be Punished for Their Kids' Bad Behavior? Chinese Draft Law Says Yes.](#)

China is planning to introduce a law to punish parents if their young children exhibit "serious misconduct" or commit crimes. According to an August draft of the family education promotion law, parents would be reprimanded or ordered to receive parenting training if their underage children misbehave.

Ecuador – [State of Emergency Declared Over Crime Spike and Cocaine Boom in Ecuador](#)

Faced with soaring drug trafficking and homicides, Ecuador's President Guillermo Lasso declared a state of emergency this week and said he is sending troops onto the streets to address the problem.

Thursday
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Haiti – ['It's Terror': In Haiti, Gangs Gain Power as Security Vacuum Grows](#)

For years, the Haitian government strengthened and cooperated with the nation's violent gangs, often using them as a means to oppress Haitian citizens. Now, gangs have grown so strong they act as de facto governments, operating "police stations" and imposing taxes.

United States – [US Records Show Physical, Sexual Abuse at Border](#)

In a Human Rights Watch (HRW) Report, "They Treat You Like You Are Worthless": Internal DHS Reports of Abuses by US Border Officials," US asylum officers accuse US officials of 'physical, sexual, and verbal abuse, due process violations, harsh detention conditions, denial of medical care, and discriminatory treatment at or near the border.' The US government documents obtained by HRW detail 160 instances of abuse.

Friday
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South Korea - [South Korean workers channel "Squid Game" to protest their real-life economic woes](#)
Frustrated South Korean workers have sought to seize an opportunity presented by the huge popularity of Netflix's "Squid Game" to draw attention to their demands for better employment conditions. Thousands of people staged demonstrations in Seoul and elsewhere on Thursday, many in costumes inspired by the gruesome show that was itself inspired by the dire economic conditions facing many South Koreans.

Nicaragua - [Nicaraguan business leaders arrested in Ortega's pre-election crackdown](#)

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega arrested the head of Nicaragua's most prominent business federation, Michael Healy, in an attempt to repress opposition voices. American Secretary of State Antony Blinken accused Ortega of 'attempting to establish an authoritarian dynasty' by 'silencing and arresting opponents.'

Ethiopia / United Nations - [U.N. Flight Thwarted as Fighting Grows in Ethiopia](#)

A UN humanitarian flight headed for Ethiopia's Tigray region was forced to return to the capital as government airstrikes hit the area. Humanitarian organizations struggle to deliver aid into conflict zones as a result of government checkpoints and other bureaucratic obstacles. These obstacles risk causing the worst famine in a decade.'

Russia - [Russia Strengthens Its Internet Censorship Powers](#)

Russia is censoring the internet by blocking, slowing down, and filtering websites it does not want its citizens to see.

Greece - [Prisons in paradise: Refugees detentions in Greece raise alarm](#)

An Al Jazeera investigation found that Greek officials are violating E.U. and Greek laws on the island of Kos. Asylum seekers are arbitrarily detained on arrival. Five Multi Purpose Reception and Identification Centers (MPRIC) funded by the E.U. will replace previous refugee camps infamous for their inhumane living conditions. However, these centers have been criticized for 'pushing refugees out of sight', and even 'creating prison-like conditions' instead of providing more human conditions for refugees.

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Burkina Faso - ['Kill them all, don't spare anyone': A massacre in Burkina Faso](#)

Violence linked to al-Qaeda and ISIL has killed thousands and displaced upwards of 1.4 million people in Burkina Faso in the last 5 years. The military has been largely ineffective in combating the militants, often ignoring citizen calls for help. Protests against government inactivity are mounting across the country.

United States / Afghanistan / Kosovo - [U.S. Struggles With Afghan Evacuees Weeded Out in Vetting and Now in Limbo](#)

Several dozen Afghans evacuated after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan have been flagged for possibly having committed violent crimes or for possible links to extremist groups. The Afghans' futures remain uncertain as they await investigation results in a U.S. military base. The Biden Administration acknowledged the Afghans will not be welcome in the U.S. if wrongdoing is uncovered. However, international law prohibits repatriation of refugees to countries while they will likely be abused.