



HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN A WEEK

18 – 24 April, 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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LOCAL

Monday
18 April 2022

Lebanon – [Anger in Beirut’s southern suburbs over increased thefts and shootings](#)

The lack of security in Beirut’s southern suburbs has led to an increasing number of complaints and outcries from people, with armed robberies taking place in broad daylight also on the rise. A security source linked “the poor security conditions in Beirut’s southern suburbs to the deepening of the economic crisis.” People hear armed clashes every night without knowing the reasons or the identity of the shooters.

Lebanon – [Pharmacists’ syndicate calls on pharmacies to close today following killing of Metn pharmacist](#)

Pharmacists’ syndicate head Joe Salloum called on all pharmacies to close on Tuesday in mourning for the pharmacist Leila Rizk, who was found killed inside of her pharmacy on Monday, the state-run National News Agency reported. Here’s what we know: The NNA reported that Rizk’s body was found in the pharmacy in the Metn area of Mrouj yesterday afternoon.

Lebanon – [Ansar’s quadruple femicide revives the debate on the death penalty in a Lebanon in crisis](#)

To relatives of victims who demand the death penalty, abolitionists tirelessly reply that executing a condemned person does not reduce crime. “I have always been against the death penalty. I am also against hunting. But for those criminals who murdered my three daughters and my ex-wife in cold blood before burying their bodies, I demand capital punishment,” said Zakarya Safawi. Two weeks after the discovery of a quadruple femicide, which horrified the village of Ansar, South Lebanon and shook the public, Safawi.

Tuesday
19 April 2022

Lebanon – [Lebanon expects deal with World Bank on food security](#)

Lebanon is close to reaching an agreement with the World Bank in which the international agency would give the crisis-hit country a \$150 million loan for food security and to stabilize bread prices for the next six months, the economy minister said Tuesday. Amin Salam said talks with the International Monetary Fund were progressing in a positive way. “We are working with the World Bank to keep market stability for the next six months by getting \$150 million,” Salam said. He added that the deal with the World Bank will stabilize the price of bread and wheat until a ration card policy is in force so that people in need can benefit.

Wednesday
20 April 2022

Lebanon – [Lebanon maternal deaths triple, children’s health at risk amid crisis, UNICEF says](#)

The number of women in Lebanon dying from pregnancy-related complications has nearly tripled amid a crushing three-year economic crisis that has seen doctors and midwives leave the country, the UN children’s agency UNICEF said Wednesday. The crisis is also affecting children, especially among Syrian refugees who have fled over the border into Lebanon. UNICEF said a third of children could not access health care by October 2021, and the number of children who die within the first four weeks after birth “increased dramatically among refugees in four provinces assessed, from 65 neonatal deaths in the first quarter of 2020 to 137 in the third quarter.”

Thursday
21 April 2022

Lebanon – [Portuguese man sought over links to Beirut blast arrested in Chile](#)

A Portuguese man wanted by Interpol in connection with the 2020 Beirut port blast was arrested in Santiago on Wednesday, Chilean police have confirmed. Police official Christian Saez said the man is wanted for allegedly smuggling “explosive elements” into Lebanon, which are linked to the August 2020 blast that killed more than 200 people. The Beirut port explosion devastated entire neighborhoods of the Lebanese capital, with authorities determining the cause of the blast to be linked to a shipment of ammonium nitrate fertilizer that caught fire after being stored for years in dangerous conditions.

Friday
22 April 2022

Lebanon – [Sudden exchange rate turmoil angers Lebanese ahead of parliamentary elections](#)

A sudden upheaval in Lebanon's exchange rate has angered people ahead of parliamentary elections. Economist Louis Hobeika said the turmoil should motivate people to “vote for change and not re-elect those in power.” He told Arab News that the ruling parties had all the time they needed to issue laws but did nothing. The Lebanese pound hit a sudden low, trading at LBP28,000 to the dollar on Friday, with the country on official holidays until Tuesday for Orthodox Easter. The exchange rate turmoil caused a clamor in the markets, as people said on social media that shop owners had already started pricing goods based on a rate of LBP30,000 to the dollar. Protesters cut off the southern highway with burning tires, denouncing the deteriorating living conditions, Lebanon's National News agency reported.

Lebanon – [Bitar's probe blocked at the Finance Ministry's door](#)

Youssef Khalil freezes the adoption of a decree that could pave the way for the resumption of the port blast investigation. The investigation into the Beirut port explosion of Aug. 4, 2020 has been stalled for four months by ongoing lawsuits against the investigating judge, Tarek Bitar, and is not about to resume. The latest obstacle: Finance Minister Youssef Khalil, who is close to the Amal Movement, refused to sign the draft decree to appoint six chamber presidents to the Court of Cassation

Saturday and Sunday
23 and 24 March 2022

Lebanon – [Several dead, dozens rescued after migrant boat capsizes off Lebanon](#)

At least six people died, including a little girl, and almost 50 others were rescued after an overloaded migrant boat capsized off north Lebanon during a chase by naval forces, Lebanese officials said. The boat carrying nearly 60 people capsized on Saturday night near the port city of Tripoli, the departure point for a growing number of people attempting a potentially lethal sea escape. The deadly accident, weeks ahead of parliamentary elections scheduled for May 15, is not the first of its kind for the crisis-hit country grappling with its worst-ever financial crash. But it marks a grim reminder of the suffering behind a growing number of people, including Lebanese nationals and Syrian refugees, risking their lives at sea in search of a future abroad. The latest incident stoked public anger in Tripoli, Lebanon's second city and one of its poorest. Growing poverty and unemployment rates have turned Tripoli into a launchpad for illegal migrants. The UN refugee agency says at least 1,570 people, 186 of them Lebanese, left or tried to leave illegally by sea from Lebanon between January and November 2021.

Lebanon – [Anger in Lebanon with army after people-smuggling boat sinks](#)

Tensions rose in the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli on Sunday after a boat capsized and sank off its coast as it was being pursued by the army, with agitated crowds gathering outside the hospitals treating the survivors. Six people, including an 18-month-old girl called Taleen Al-Hamwi and two women, died. There were 45 survivors as of Sunday morning, and more than 10 people remain missing. Families of the victims headed to the shore to find out the fate of the missing. Their anger also focused on the Lebanese army.



Monday
18 April 2022

Yemen – [Houthi sign UN plan to end recruitment of child soldiers](#)

Yemen's Houthi militia has signed an action plan with the UN to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict, the killing and maiming of boys and girls, attacks on schools and hospitals and other grave violations, a UN spokesman said on Monday. UN experts have repeatedly said the Houthis were recruiting children, using summer camps and mosques to indoctrinate them and teach them how to handle weapons. More than 10,000 children have been killed in the war that began in 2015.

Yemen – [Latest Round of Saudi-UAE-Led Attacks Targets Civilians](#)

The Saudi and UAE -led coalition carried out three attacks in Yemen in late January 2022 in apparent violation of the laws of war that resulted in at least 80 apparently civilian deaths, including three children, and 156 injuries, including two children, Mwatana for Human Rights and Human Rights Watch said today. Houthi forces guarding the facility also shot at detainees trying to flee, witnesses said, killing and injuring dozens.

Occupied Palestine – [Dozens of mothers of prisoners in Gaza denied access to sons](#)

On April 17, when Palestinians commemorate Prisoners' Day Abu al-Qambuz, 73, along with dozens of mothers of prisoners in Gaza who have been denied access to their children in Israeli prisons for nearly 6 years, feels more grief. Majed's mother said that she was able to visit him for the first time in 2012 after the so-called "dignity strike" that the prisoners held. Although human rights institutions have obtained a judicial decision to re-allow visits to prisoners after they were stopped during the pandemic, the decision excluded about 70 Palestinian prisoners belonging to Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

Occupied Palestine – [Palestinian teenager dies after succumbing to wounds from Israeli raid on Jenin](#)

A 19-year-old Palestinian teenage girl died on Monday after succumbing to gunshot wounds she received during an Israeli raid in Jenin earlier this month. The large-scale raid on Jenin, which took place on 9 April, left 23-year-old Ahmad al-Saadi dead and 12 others injured. The crackdowns in Jenin have been building up for several months, but the deadly shootings in Israel carried out by camp residents Diya Hamarshah and Raad Hazem, which left eight Israelis dead, seem to have pushed Israeli aggressions over the edge.

Egypt – [Egyptian TikTok star sentenced to three years in jail for 'human trafficking'](#)

An Egyptian court on Monday sentenced TikTok influencer Haneen Hossam to three years in prison and a fine of 200,000 pounds (\$10,759) after a retrial convicted her of "human trafficking". The crackdown on Hossam began in August 2020, when authorities brought charges against 10 female TikTok influencers, including "indecent" and "violating family principles and values". Hossam also faced the additional charge of human trafficking. The case of human trafficking, according to the verdict, was brought against her in relation to an Instagram video in which she encouraged women over 18 to post videos of themselves on the app Likee to earn money. The TikTok influencers were prosecuted under Egypt's 2018 cybercrime law, legislation that has been widely criticized by human rights campaigners and activists for being vague and for being used to unfairly target people.

Tuesday
19 April 2022

UAE/ Saudi Arabia – [UK-based Pegasus targets threaten lawsuits against NSO, UAE and Saudi Arabia](#)

Three UK-based civil society leaders have notified NSO Group, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates that they plan to sue them in the UK's High Court over allegations that the two countries used the Israeli firm's spyware against them, their lawyers said on Tuesday. The hacking, say the lawyers with the London-based Bindmans law firm, was an invasion of their privacy rights and their clients are seeking to bring breach of privacy claims against the firm and Saudi Arabia and the UAE. The three potential defendants were informed about this in letters sent in late February, but only the NSO Group has responded formally, the lawyers said in a statement on Tuesday.

Morocco – [Drop Charges Against Activist](#)

Moroccan authorities should drop charges against a social media commentator who risks up to four years in prison on a charge of disrespecting the king, Human Rights Watch said today. This case is the latest in a series of prosecutions against social media commentators criticizing the king. The charge stems from two videos posted on Facebook and YouTube in which he addressed the king in a casual tone and contrasted his personal wealth to Morocco's widespread poverty. Criminalizing peaceful criticism of those in power is a blatant violation of freedom of expression. "There is no right more fundamental than the right to criticize those who hold power, even if it's a monarch," said Eric Goldstein, deputy Middle East and North Africa director at Human Rights Watch.

Wednesday
20 April 2022

Libya – [The LAAF is 'brutally crushing' freedom of expression and peaceful assembly](#)

The Internal Security Agency (ISA), a collection of powerful armed groups operating in areas under the control of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF), is arbitrarily detaining at least nine peaceful protesters and a journalist incommunicado after they participated in a demonstration in Sirte, Amnesty International said today. "The arbitrary detention of these peaceful protesters for demanding justice and reparation in connection to the 2011 armed conflict shows just how intolerant LAAF and affiliated armed groups are of any independent activism, even if not critical of their rule. The LAAF must immediately ensure the release of all those detained simply for exercising their rights to peaceful assembly and expression," said Diana Eltahawy, Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa at Amnesty International.

Thursday
21 April 2022

Egypt – [Egypt: Release Autopsy Report, Investigate Suspicious Death](#)

Egyptian authorities should urgently release the autopsy report and investigate the suspicious death of economist Ayman Hadhoud, Human Rights Watch said today. Hadhoud was forcibly disappeared on February 5 or 6, 2022, and died in the custody of security authorities on March 5, according to his death certificate. The authorities did not inform his family of his death until April 9, more than a month later. An autopsy ordered by the public prosecution took place on April 12 but without independent observers, according to friends and family. Its results have not been released to his family.

United Arab Emirates – [Dubai court sentences man to death for double murder](#)

A Dubai court has sentenced a 26-year-old man to death for the murder of an expat couple and the attempted murder of their daughter, local media reported. The man has been convicted of two pre-meditated murders, the attempted murder of the daughter and the robbery, the reports said. He has 15 days to appeal the verdict.

Occupied Palestine – [Top Israeli journalist lambasts Tel Aviv for 'brutality' at Al-Aqsa compound](#)

A leading Israeli journalist has launched a scathing attack on the Tel Aviv government for the manner in which police and soldiers brutalized civilians and journalists at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in the Haram Al-Sharif over the past week and called for a probe into their actions. "However ... we saw again and again very hard videos of police using clubs hitting people, hitting journalists, women, hitting a man who (stood with) his son. It's terrible. I cannot be more (critical) of the Jerusalem police about it. I think they have to give more answers and they have to open investigations against those officers, not only because it makes no sense to treat ... civilians (this way), but also because it puts oil on the fire, on the flames."

Turkey – [Turkey's refugee problem at the center of heated debates](#)

Turkey's migration management policy has become a hot topic in recent days, with members of the public asking for stricter security measures against irregular inflows. The growing hostility toward refugees has not only been triggered by a worsening economic situation in Turkey, but also following a series of recent incidents. According to Prof. Murat Erdogan of Ankara University, 85 percent of Turks want Syrians to be repatriated or to be isolated in camps or safe zones. The topic, which gained momentum after the recent arrival of about 60,000 Ukrainian refugees to Turkey, has been promoted by anti-immigrant parties, such as the Zafer Party, who have said they will send all refugees back to their home countries after 2023 elections.

Western Sahara – [Women activists say they face rape, house arrest and forced divorce](#)

The photos shared by Mbarka Mohamed al-Hafiz and Fatima Mohamed al-Hafiz paint a stark picture of the abuse the sisters say they received at the hands of Moroccan police. The two women, activists from the city of Boujdour, in Moroccan-controlled Western Sahara, are both still covered in cuts and bruises and currently trapped in their homes, facing, they say, more brutality from the security services who are still monitoring their every move - if they attempt to leave. Both Mbarka and Fatima are part of a group of female activists who had been campaigning on behalf of another prominent local human rights activist, Sultana Khaya.

Friday
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Occupied Palestine – [Dozens wounded in clashes at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa compound](#)

The UN voiced deep concern at the worsening violence between Israel and the Palestinians, as clashes erupted again at Jerusalem's flashpoint Al-Aqsa Mosque compound on Friday. Palestinian medics said at least 57 Palestinians were injured in clashes with Israeli police at the compound on Friday. People were injured by rubber-coated metal bullets, along with dozens of cases of suffocation, during a raid by Israeli security forces.

Saturday and Sunday
23 and 24 April 2022

Tunisia – [Death toll from migrant shipwrecks off Tunisia rises to 17](#)

The death toll from several migrant shipwrecks off the Tunisian coast has risen to 17 people, a judicial official said on Sunday. On Saturday the Tunisian coast guard said four boats carrying 120 African migrants headed for Italy had sunk off the coast near the city of Sfax. The coast guard said 98 people had been rescued. The coastline of Sfax has become a major departure point for people fleeing conflict and poverty in Africa and the Middle East and seeking a better life in Europe. In recent months, dozens of people have drowned off the Tunisian coast, with an increase in the frequency of attempted crossings from Tunisia and Libya toward Italy.

Egypt – [Egypt releases 41 political prisoners out of tens of thousands](#)

Egypt on Sunday released 41 political prisoners from pre-trial detention, according to a politician-turned-negotiator. Rights groups estimate that tens of thousands of such prisoners are being held in Egypt. According to the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, the total number of prisoners in Egypt in March 2021 was 120,000, with an estimated 65,000 political prisoners - at least 26,000 of them were held in pre-trial detention.



INTERNATIONAL

Monday

18 April 2022

Spain – [EU must act to end spyware abuse after prominent Catalans targeted with Pegasus](#)

European Union institutions are failing to end the rampant human rights violations committed with spyware, Amnesty International said today, after the organization independently confirmed new attacks using Pegasus spyware against prominent Catalans. New research by the Citizen Lab has revealed how scores of Catalan politicians, journalists and their families were targeted with NSO Group's Pegasus spyware between 2015 and 2020. Technical experts from Amnesty International's Security Lab have independently verified evidence of the attacks.

Ukraine – [Guterres appeals for urgent humanitarian ceasefire in Ukraine](#)

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has again called for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Ukraine to allow delivery of life-saving aid as well as evacuations, his spokesperson said on Monday. The appeal followed attacks on cities across the country – most recently Lviv, Dnipro, Kharkiv and Mykolaiv – which resulted in numerous civilian casualties and destruction. Mr. Guterres was also greatly concerned about the continuing appalling humanitarian situation in the besieged port city of Mariupol, UN Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said in New York.

Tuesday

19 April 2022

Sweden – [Middle East leaders condemn far-right plan to burn Quran amid violent riots](#)

Several cities in Sweden have been engulfed by riots relating to a planned rally by right-wing groups on Sunday at which they wanted to burn copies of the Quran during the holy month of Ramadan. Protesters have been burning cars and destroying public goods in a violent reaction to the planned far-right rally. The rally was organized by far-right politician Rasmus Paludan, who leads the right-wing Hard Line party. The politician has previously burned copies of the Quran. He has not hidden his grievances against the estimated 8 percent Muslim community in Sweden, many coming from Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. Egypt's al-Azhar university declared its "deep dissatisfaction and strong condemnation" of Swedish extremists, calling the attempt to burn the Quran a "disgraceful act despite its violation of all international laws and covenants that stipulate the necessity of a commitment to respecting sanctities".

UN/Afghanistan – [Afghanistan: UN condemns deadly blasts at two schools in Kabul](#)

The United Nations has condemned the deadly bomb blasts at two educational institutions in Afghanistan's capital, Kabul, on Wednesday, which killed at least six people and wounded nearly 20 others. Ramiz Alakbarov, UN Humanitarian Coordinator in the country, issued a statement strongly condemning the "horrific" attacks. "Violence in or around schools is never acceptable. For the people of Afghanistan, already beleaguered by forty years of war, schools should be safe havens, and places where children can learn and flourish," he said.

Wednesday

20 April 2022

Europe – [Refugees in Europe Need Mental Health Support](#)

After fleeing Afghanistan following the Taliban takeover, all evacuees we interviewed in France continue to grapple with trauma and psychological distress. A 2020 study on global refugee populations suggests that experiences of post-traumatic stress and depression among refugees and asylum seekers are higher than in the general population. Reports from Afghanistan, Ukraine, Syria, Ethiopia, and many other regions from where people have been forced to flee in recent years reveal the devastating impact of traumatic experiences. Studies suggest that once in Europe, people seeking refuge face significant barriers to receiving mental health support. Human Rights Watch found that in France, asylum seekers are not eligible for full health coverage for their first three months in the country, a requirement that often presented a major barrier to accessing mental health services.

UK – [UK: Certifying Assange's extradition puts him at great risk and "would pose grave threat to press freedom"](#)

If the UK Home Secretary certifies the US request to extradite Julian Assange, it will violate the prohibition against torture and set an alarming precedent for publishers and journalists around the world, Amnesty International said today following the UK Magistrates' Court's decision to issue an order to extradite him. "The UK has an obligation not to send any person to a place where their life or safety is at risk and the government must not abdicate that responsibility. The US authorities have flatly stated that they will change the terms of Assange's imprisonment in a federal facility whenever they see fit. This admission places Julian Assange at great risk of prison conditions that could result in irreversible harm to his physical and psychological well-being," said Agnes Callamard, Amnesty International's Secretary General.

Afghanistan – [Afghanistan: Herat Women’s Prison Head Missing 6 Months](#)

The women’s prison director in Herat, Afghanistan has been missing since October 2021 and is feared to have been forcibly disappeared, Human Rights Watch said today. Alia Azizi had worked under the former government but returned to her job after the Taliban took over Herat in August. Taliban authorities should promptly and credibly investigate Azizi’s enforced disappearance and release her from custody or make her whereabouts known. Azizi’s case illustrates the failure of Taliban authorities to investigate serious allegations of human rights violations, including retaliation against former government officials.

Thursday
21 April 2022

South Korea – [Landmark judgement on same-sex sexual acts in military a huge victory for LGBTI rights](#)

Responding to the Supreme Court of Korea reversing the convictions of two soldiers jailed in 2017 for engaging in consensual same-sex sexual acts while off duty, Amnesty International’s East Asia Researcher Boram Jang said: « This groundbreaking decision is an important triumph in the fight against discrimination faced by LGBTI people in South Korea. The criminalization of consensual same-sex sexual acts in South Korea’s military has long been a shocking violation of human rights, but today’s ruling should pave the way for military personnel to freely live their lives without the threat of prosecution”. Today’s decision also reversed the Supreme Court’s own precedents which confirmed convictions of consensual sexual acts between men without examining whether the acts took place on or off duty and whether the acts were mutually consented.

Germany / Gambia – [Germany Tries Crimes Against Humanity Committed in Gambia](#)

The opening of the first German trial for serious crimes committed in Gambia is a major step for justice, Human Rights Watch, the International Commission of Jurists, Reporters Without Borders, and TRIAL International said today. The trial of Bai L., an alleged member of the “Junglers,” a paramilitary unit also known as the “Patrol Team,” set up by then-president Yahya Jammeh in the mid-1990s, will take place in the German city of Celle. Jammeh’s 22-year rule was marked by systematic oppression and widespread human rights violations, including torture, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and sexual violence against actual and perceived opponents to Jammeh’s rule.

Friday
22 April 2022

Russia – [Prominent opposition activist faces up to 15 years in prison for sharing information about the war in Ukraine.](#)

Responding to a new criminal investigation launched against Vladimir Kara-Murza, a member of the political opposition and critic of the Kremlin, simply for sharing information about the actions of the Russian military in Ukraine. Marie Struthers, Amnesty International’s Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, said: “As a consequence of Vladimir Kara-Murza’s brave criticism of the Russian authorities, he has twice suffered what appeared to be attempts to poison him. Now, he stands accused of committing a ‘crime’ that could see him jailed for over a decade simply for sharing information. The Russian authorities must drop all charges against Vladimir Kara-Murza as they stem solely from his right to freedom of expression. He must be immediately and unconditionally released. The Kremlin’s repressive new law that criminalizes the sharing of ‘fake news’ about the actions of the Russian army must be abolished. The very existence of this law is an affront to human rights.”

Saturday and Sunday
23 and 24 April 2022

France – [Protection of human rights must become a priority of Emmanuel Macron’s second term](#)

Following the re-election of Emmanuel Macron as President of the French Republic Cécile Coudriou, President of Amnesty International France said: “President Macron’s first term has been far from exemplary on human rights and Amnesty International will continue, throughout his second term, to demand that the President’s policies respect fundamental rights and international law,” “The egregious human rights failings that need to be addressed include France’s treatment of refugees and asylum at its borders, systemic discrimination in the form of ethnic profiling by police, disproportionate & dangerously vague counter-terror laws, curbs to the right to protest, intrusive surveillance that impacts the right to privacy, failing to uphold climate commitments and selling arms to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.”.