



HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN A WEEK

28 March – 3 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
28 March 2022

Lebanon – [After Nine Years, Roula Yacoub's Husband Convicted of her Murder](#)

Years after the murder of Roula Yaacoub at the hands of her husband, the Court of Cassation issued a ruling to imprison Roula's husband for 5 years and ordering him to pay her mother 300 million Lebanese pounds in compensation. In a voice note sent by KAFA to L'Orient Today, lawyer Leila Awada, the head of the domestic violence unit at the NGO, who has been following the case for nine years, explained why this verdict is only partially satisfactory to her. "Roula Yacoub's husband was prosecuted under Article 550 of the Penal Code, which concerns manslaughter and not murder," she said. "The defendant was therefore not charged with intentional homicide.

Tuesday
29 March 2022

Lebanon - [U.N. launches online survey targeting agri-food sector in Lebanon](#)

The U.N. Productive Sectors Development Program (PSDP) funded by the Government of Canada is launching an online survey for women and men farmers, entrepreneurs, and Medium and Small to Medium industries and cooperatives working in the agri-food sector in Lebanon. The survey aims to select beneficiaries in the PSDP's activities, which will include technology transfer and technical skills training in the agricultural and agri-food sectors, training on environmental sustainability, and in-kind support, with a specific focus on female youth skills' upgrade, and innovations promotion.

Wednesday
30 March 2022

Beirut – [LAU announces the dollarization of its university fees](#)

The Lebanese American University (LAU), for the second time this year, announced to its students in an email sent on Wednesday that it will only accept dollar payments for tuition starting in the fall of 2022. Prior to this decision, the establishment accepted payments at 35% at the "lollar" exchange rate, i.e. 8,000 LL, and 65% in fresh dollars.

In his email, university president Michel Elias Mawad writes: "The university has decided to adopt a fresh dollar budget starting in the fall of 2022 in order to financially support the full value of education and increase the financial aid budget at an all-time high of \$100 million or more if needed to support the vast majority of students."

Thursday
31 March 2022

Lebanon - [IMF team launches 2-week mission in crisis-hit Lebanon](#)

An International Monetary Fund (IMF) delegation kicked off talks in Beirut Wednesday as part of a two-week mission aimed at securing progress towards funding for crisis-hit Lebanon.

The government is hoping to secure a rescue package to exit a deep financial crisis that started in 2019 and has seen most of the country's population fall into poverty. "We hope that a preliminary deal will be reached after two weeks of discussions," Deputy Prime Minister Saadeh al-Shami, who heads Lebanon's delegation to the IMF, told AFP.

Friday
1st April 2022

Lebanon – [Shortages set to last while we wait for Lebanese generic medicines to fill the gap](#)
Faced with the shortages, the Minister of Health Firas Abiad proposes to strengthen local pharmaceutical production. A law was voted in this direction Tuesday in Parliament. because of the devaluation of the Lebanese currency, pharmaceutical importers in the country are heavily indebted to pharmaceutical companies abroad which ultimately led to a halt of drug imports in the country. While imported medications are clearly below market needs, and the subsidization of the local industry will take time, drug shortages are not about to end.

Lebanon – [Statement of the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon Mrs. Najat Rochdi on the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\) by the Lebanese Parliament](#)

U.N. Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon Najat Rochdi welcomed on Friday "the important step by the Lebanese Parliament towards the ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) by adopting a law, on 29 March, authorizing the Government to proceed with the ratification process. Lebanon showed its commitment to the human rights of persons with disabilities by signing the Convention in 2007. Lebanon now needs to take the next step of ratification to join the current 185 States parties to the Convention and fully commit to promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights by persons with disabilities," Rochdi said.

Saturday and Sunday
2 and 3 April 2022

Tripoli, Lebanon - [Sexual harasser Samer Mawlawi arrested in Tripoli](#)

Sexual harasser Samar Mawlawi Samer Mawlawi, a teacher at the George Sarraf High School in Tripoli city, was accused in December of sending inappropriate messages and inappropriately touching some of his young female students. He allegedly fled from the northern Lebanon city on 6 December, after students approached the school management to make allegations against him, calling for his immediate dismissal and punishment. He is in custody pending investigation, by decision of North Lebanon Prosecutor Matilda Touma, following an inquiry by the Tripoli Investigation Branch.

This is the first time a sexual harasser is arrested under the new law criminalizing harassment, passed in December 2020. This is also the second complaint filed under this law, the first being against director Jaafar Attar.

Lebanon – [Access to polling stations, a major obstacle for people with disabilities](#)

According to L'Orient-Le Jour many Lebanese voters with disabilities say they are hesitant to participate in the May legislative elections until the conditions are met to allow them to vote in a dignified, safe and independent manner. The municipalities and all the polling stations are not equipped to welcome people with disabilities, even though voting is a basic human right.



Monday
28 March 2022

Occupied Palestine – [Towards a new Middle East Cold War](#)

On Sunday, foreign ministers of the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and Egypt joined their American and Israeli counterparts for a first-of-its-kind summit at the Sde Boker farm in southern Israel, where Israel's first Prime Minister Ben Gurion lived and is now buried. Ben Gurion was responsible for the 1948 Palestinian catastrophe (Nakba), the horrific ethnic cleansing of most Palestinians from lands that later became Israel.

Tuesday
29 March 2022

Syria – Jordan – [A life of isolation for Syrian refugees in Jordan's Azraq camp](#)

Uniform rows of white caravans plotted neatly in the desert's empty expanse are home to nearly 38,000 Syrian refugees. They are the victims of the now 11-year-long Syrian war who continue to wait at Jordan's Azraq camp, their futures still uncertain and their livelihoods still dependent on donors' generosity. Nearly 80 percent of the 673,957 registered Syrian refugees in Jordan live in urban areas, where UNHCR's breadth of services, notably housing and healthcare, are far less accessible – posing great challenges for a population whose work opportunities are extremely limited.

Libya – [UN Libya mission uncovers abuse, investigates mass graves](#)

United Nations investigators have uncovered further evidence of human rights violations against detainees in Libya and are seeking to verify the existence of mass graves thought to contain the corpses of migrants at a trafficking hub. In its second report released on Tuesday, the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya (FFM) said there were reasonable grounds to believe that international human rights and humanitarian law are being violated in several secret detention facilities in Libya.

Wednesday
30 March 2022

Bahrain – [US rights group calls for 'free and fair' elections in Bahrain](#)

A Bahraini-American rights group has called on Bahrain to release political prisoners and allow independent monitors to observe the country's upcoming parliamentary elections in order to avoid a repeat of what it called a "sham" vote in 2018. In a statement released on Wednesday, Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) also urged Manama to remove restrictions on freedom of expression and refrain from imposing political conditions on who can run in the November elections.

Syria – [Mass Graves in Syria Could Hold Evidence of War Crimes](#)

The New York Times has gathered evidence that sheds new light on one enduring mystery of the Syrian war: What happened to the bodies of the many thousands who died or were killed in government detention centers? Interviews over the past several months with four Syrian men who worked at or near secret mass graves led to an examination of satellite images. Together, those clues revealed the locations of two sites. Each one holds thousands of bodies, according to the men who worked there. "If the issue of the missing and the disappeared is not resolved, there can never be peace in Syria," said Diab Serrih, the co-founder of an association of former detainees in Syria's notorious Saydnaya prison that has worked to locate mass graves.

Thursday
31 March 2022

Iran – [Women Blocked From Entering Stadium](#)

Iranian authorities prevented dozens of Iranian women from entering Imam Reza football stadium in the city of Mashhad on March 29, 2022, possibly using excessive force, Human Rights Watch said today. FIFA should use its leverage with Iranian authorities to demand that they urgently overturn Iran's discriminatory stadium ban on women and ensure accountability for abuses. The authorities prevented women, including those who had reportedly already purchased tickets, from entering the sports stadium in Mashhad, in Khorasan province, to watch a FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 qualifying match between Iran and Lebanon. Videos circulated on social media appear to show women who have gathered in front of the stadium alleging that authorities used pepper spray to disperse them.

Friday
1st April 2022

Turkey – [Controversial news for Turkish women: Is the new tax cut from 18% to 8% on feminine hygiene products a real success or a total disappointment?](#)

After years of struggle of Turkish women and organizations and the demand of many MPs to reduce the 18% tax on feminine hygiene products in Turkey, the semi-good news finally came on March 29, 2022. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced the reduction of VAT, Value-Added Tax, from 18% to 8% for the aforementioned products after the request made by Bendevi Palandoken, President of the Confederation of Turkish Merchants and Craftsmen (TESK), on March 26, 2022, on his Twitter account. However, this is not a complete victory, but only a partial one, due to the sharp rise in prices and the impact of inflation on almost all products in the country. Thus, suffering from economic collapse, people demand access to essential products with zero taxes, not 8%.

Saturday and Sunday
2 and 3 April 2022

Iran – [Iranian women denounce violence in film industry](#)

Hundreds of women working in Iranian cinema have slammed "systematic" violence against women in the film industry and called for mechanisms that would make perpetrators and enablers accountable. In a strongly-worded statement on Friday, more than 200 women – including some of the most well-known Iranian actresses locally and internationally – condemned sexual violence and harassment, which they said has become endemic in Iranian cinema.

Occupied Palestine – [Israeli Troops Kill 3 Palestinian Militants in West Bank After Rise in Attacks](#)

Israeli security forces killed three Palestinian militants in the occupied West Bank early Saturday morning, as they continued to scale up their operations in response to a wave of terrorist attacks in Israel. The Israeli police said in a statement that the militants had been intercepted while driving through the northern West Bank, after the authorities received a tip that they were about to carry out an attack.



INTERNATIONAL

March

28 March 2022

El Salvador – [El Salvador declares state of emergency after gang killings](#)

El Salvador's parliament has approved the state of emergency that temporarily suspended some constitutional protections in the Central American country following a wave of killings attributed to criminal gangs. Police reported a total of 62 homicides on Saturday, making it the most violent day in nearly three decades. The measures come after 62 homicides were reported on Saturday, making it the most violent day in nearly 30 years.

Tuesday

29 March 2022

Ukraine – [Over four million people have now fled war in Ukraine](#)

NHCR, the UN refugee agency, said 4,019,287 Ukrainians had fled across the country's borders since the February 24 invasion, with more than 2.3 million having headed west into Poland. "Refugees from Ukraine are now four million, five weeks after the start of the Russian attack," UNHCR chief Filippo Grandi said on Twitter. The number of refugees has surpassed UNHCR's initial estimate that the war could create up to four million. The agency says the speed and scale of the displacement is unprecedented in Europe since World War II. Women and children account for 90 percent of those who have fled. Ukrainian men aged 18 to 60 are eligible for military call-up and cannot leave.

Wednesday

30 March 2022

India – [Workers strike across India for labor rights, better pay](#)

Millions of workers have begun a two-day strike across India to express their anger at the government's economic policies and press their demands for improved rights for industrial workers, employees and farmers. About a dozen labor unions that organized the strike want the government to provide universal social security coverage for workers in the vast unorganized sector, hike the minimum wage under a flagship employment guarantee program and stop the privatization of public-sector banks.

Afghanistan – [New Evidence that Biometric Data Systems Imperil Afghans](#)

The Taliban control systems holding sensitive biometric data that Western donor governments left behind in Afghanistan in August 2021, putting thousands of Afghans at risk, Human Rights Watch said today. These digital identity and payroll systems contain Afghans' personal and biometric data, including iris scans, fingerprints, photographs, occupation, home addresses, and names of relatives. The Taliban could use them to target perceived opponents, and Human Rights Watch research suggests that they may have already used the data in some cases.

Thursday

31 March 2022

United States – [U.S. to issue gender neutral passports, take steps to combat anti- transgender laws.](#)

The White House and State Department on Thursday marked Transgender Day of Visibility with an announcement that U.S. citizens will be able to select "X" as the gender marker on their passport application beginning April 11. The State Department in June said U.S. citizens could select their gender on applications without having to submit medical documentation. In October, it issued the first American passport with an "X" gender marker, designed to give nonbinary, intersex and gender-nonconforming people an option other than male or female on their travel document.

Friday
1st April 2022

United States- [Amazon workers form labor union](#)

Amazon workers on New York's Staten Island just made history, becoming the first group to vote in favor of unionizing at a U.S. facility operated by the country's largest e-commerce company. After a hard-fought battle, the result is a major defeat for Amazon, which has used all of its might to keep organized labor off its premises. As of Friday, the tally at the Staten Island warehouse, known as JFK8, was 2,654 votes in favor of joining the union and 2,131 opposed, with 67 ballots being challenged. The Amazon Labor Union didn't even exist until last year. Now, the grassroots organization that relied on a crowdfunding campaign to fund its organizing is responsible for negotiating a collective bargaining agreement on behalf of roughly 6,000 employees at Amazon's largest fulfillment center in New York.

Saturday and Sunday
2 and 3 April 2022

Pakistan- [Labour human rights advocates won the first battle but not the war, yet](#)

Labor rights advocates in Pakistan have after many years persuaded the government of Sindh province, the country's third largest, to increase and implement the statutory minimum wage. However, this significant victory will be put to the test before Pakistan's Supreme Court, which on January 27 ordered that Sindh's minimum wage increase be reevaluated. The new monthly minimum wage – from PKR 17,500 (US\$100) to PKR 25,000 (US\$142) – was a result of long and sustained advocacy by labor rights groups in Pakistan. Domestic and international groups including Industrial, the National Trade Union Federation, and the Home Based Women Workers Federation widely welcomed the increase.

China- [China denies Beijing-led Human Rights Abuses and Adopts Reciprocal Countermeasures on U.S. Officials](#)

Following the recent human rights-related sanctions imposed by the U.S. on several Chinese entities, Beijing has decided to react by forcing visa restrictions on those U.S. officials who have fabricated "lies" about China's human rights record, undermining its reputation at the international level. On March 31, the Chinese Foreign Minister's spokesperson Wang Wenbin accused the United States of violating international law, as well as the essential rules governing international relations. Therefore, Wang announced new counter-sanctions against U.S government officials in a way to defend China's sovereignty, as well as its development and security interests. While Beijing strains to turn the tables and cleanse its compromised reputation, international rights groups keep denouncing massive human rights abuses perpetrated by the Chinese regime against up to one million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang.