



HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN A WEEK

9 – 15 May 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
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Lebanon – [Minister: Pope postpones visit to Lebanon for health reasons](#)

Initially scheduled for June, Pope Francis' visit to Lebanon has been postponed due to health reasons. On Monday, the Lebanese Minister of Tourism Walid Nassar explained in a message broadcast by the National News Agency that Lebanon had received a letter from the Vatican that the Pope's foreign visits were suspended for now because of health reasons. The last visit of the Pope to Lebanon dates back to 1990 but the sovereign multiplied the signs of support to the country in recent months and showed his willingness to visit in a context of strong economic and social crisis.

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Lebanon – [Walid Fayad's alleged attacker released on bail](#)

The activist from the October 2019 popular revolt, Elie Haykal, was released on bail on Tuesday following a decision by the Beirut indictment chamber, said his lawyer Ralph Tannous. Elie Haykal had been arrested on April 27 after shoving the Minister of Energy Walid Fayad who was leaving a pub, as a boatload of migrants sank off Tripoli the same day. In return for his release, he must pay a bail of 5 million pounds and must reside in Adonis (Kesrouan). Other activists are also being prosecuted for "violence, formation of a riot group and defamation" against Walid Fayad, such as Chafic Badre, who allegedly gave him a slap.

Lebanon – [Social affairs minister criticizes consequences of Lebanon hosting Syrian refugees as international conference begins](#)

During the Brussels VI conference on international aid for Syrian refugees, the Lebanese Minister of Social Affairs Hector Hajjar called for the departure of Syrian refugees from Lebanon. While the official position of Lebanon is not yet known in the absence of Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib, Mr. Hajjar explained that the presence of Syrian refugees in Lebanon has serious "economic consequences" such as the Lebanese jobs' loss to the benefit of Syrians or their "use of services subsidized by the state". According to him, their presence equals to an "explosion of theft and crime". He proposes to move the Syrian refugees to "alternative nations" and asks for a sum of compensation to Lebanon estimated at "30 billion dollars" as a result of hosting the Syrian refugees.

Lebanon – [Free vaccines distributed to private hospitals, reveals Abiad](#)

On Tuesday, the Lebanese Health Minister Firas Abiad revealed that the Ministry of Health was starting to distribute vaccines to private hospitals free of charge. With the economic crisis, the country is facing a "dropout in vaccination" against the Covid-19 pandemic. The high cost of medical consultations, vaccines... or their unavailability has complicated access to care for the Lebanese, hence the desire to revitalize vaccination by making it free, according to Mr. Abiad. On the side of access to basic health care, the Minister of Health reiterated its support for the local production of generic drugs, which would help overcome the shortages. He also explained that 25 million dollars had been released in April to help finance the drugs.

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Lebanon – [UN urges crisis-hit Lebanon to “change course”](#)

A report by a UN expert, published on Wednesday, warns of Lebanon's failing state amidst widespread poverty. Olivier De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, says the poverty in which the Lebanese population has sunk is largely due to the destructive actions of Lebanon's political and financial leaders. De Schutter's report comes after a visit to Lebanon and an investigation into the structural causes of Lebanon's current worst economic crisis. He accuses the system of endemic corruption, with the complicity of state actors, and highlights their responsibilities: "The Central Bank has led the Lebanese state to be in flagrant violation of international human rights law" (on UN News). The UN expert describes the country as a "failed state", with 4 out of 5 Lebanese people considered to be living in poverty.

Lebanon – [Lebanon's central bank foreign exchange audit to be completed within weeks](#)

On Wednesday, during a meeting with Lebanon's creditors, Lebanese Deputy Prime Minister Saadeh Chami, announced that Lebanon will complete an audit of the Lebanese central bank's foreign exchange operations within 2-3 weeks. According to Mr. Chami, an audit of gold reserves is also planned. In April, Lebanon reached an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a \$3 billion bailout over 4 years. But this payment is conditional on requirements demanded by the IMF, such as the restructuring of banks or capital controls, of which audits are part. The IMF aid program is considered crucial in Lebanon, in the context of a devastating and crippling economic crisis, but many conditions require parliamentary approval to be launched.

Lebanon – [Lebanese poll hopefuls ‘buying their way to power’ with cash bribes](#)

As the May 15 parliamentary elections approach, candidates and party members have been accused of trying to buy votes by offering bribes to voters. In Beirut's 2nd district, a Shiite voter told Arab News that he was offered \$300 in exchange for a vote to a businessman. A cab driver confessed that some electoral lists offered him gas and food vouchers in exchange for his vote. According to the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections, candidates distributed "baby milk in northern Lebanon" and donated solar panels. Lebanese electoral law prohibits electoral bribery, but the practice is all the more prevalent now with the collapse of the national currency and precarious living conditions in Lebanon.

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Lebanon – [Brother of Lebanon c.bank governor released on \\$3.7m bail - two judicial sources](#)

Raja Salamé, brother of Lebanon's central bank governor Riad Salamé, was released Thursday on bail of about 3.5 million euros, a judicial source told AFP. Mr. Salamé was arrested on March 17 on the orders of the Prosecutor General of Mount Lebanon, Ghada Aoun, following an arrest warrant issued against him for "money laundering and illicit enrichment". His properties and passport were also seized. The bail of 100 billion Lebanese pounds is the highest ever paid in Lebanese history, but it could be returned if Mr. Salamé is found innocent. Riad Salamé is being prosecuted on the same charges.

Lebanon – [Lebanon jobless rate almost triples since crisis: Survey](#)

On Thursday, a joint survey conducted by the UN and the Lebanese government said that the official unemployment rate in crisis-hit Lebanon had almost tripled between 2018 and early 2022. "Lebanon's unemployment rate increased from 11.4% in 2018-2019 to 29.6% in January 2022, indicating that almost one third of the active labor force was unemployed in January 2022," the survey explained. Published by Lebanon's central statistics administration and the International Labor Organization, the survey estimates that the national currency would have lost 95% of its value, exploded poverty rates and increased the informal economy's share of employment (30%), after years of corruption and financial mismanagement.

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Lebanon – [Lebanese activists launch mock ‘lollar’ currency to denounce high-level corruption](#)

On Friday, Lebanese activists spread fake banknotes, on which one can see a gutted central bank or the explosion of the port of Beirut, paintings made by Tom Young. At the initiative of the Lebanese Association for Transparency, this campaign of "monetary disobedience", entitled "Currency of Corruption", aims to denounce the high level of corruption that has led to the current economic crisis in Lebanon, including the collapse of the Lebanese pound. The use of "lollars" in the street is seen as a means of raising awareness by the activists, as parliamentary elections are approaching. In one of Beirut's main squares, the organizations set up a fake ATM where passers-by could withdraw "lollars".

Saturday and Sunday
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Lebanon – [Syrian refugees to be 'locked in their homes' during Lebanon election](#)

Syrian refugees in parts of Lebanon will be 'locked in their homes' this weekend as the Lebanese go to the polls in a crunch general election. A document, confirmed by NGO Anti-Racist Movement, from the head of Nabatieh governorate to local municipalities orders Syrian refugees to remain in their homes from 6pm Saturday to 8am Monday. The curfew coincides with Lebanon's general election which takes place on Sunday. Activists shared a similar order for the West Bekaa region and other parts of Lebanon over the same period. Nadia Hardman, Refugee and Migrant Rights Researcher at Human Rights Watch, said that these orders correspond with other measures by the state targeting refugees. "If true, these orders are in keeping with the authorities' practice of imposing arbitrary, discriminatory, and restrictive measures on Syrian refugees - designed to make their lives so difficult they consider returning to Syria," Hardman told *The New Arab*. "There is no reason or legitimate basis to impose curfews at a time of national public participation."

Lebanon – [CLDH denounces the Nabatieh municipality decision](#)

"The Nabatieh municipality issued a decision restricting the movement of Syrian refugees by imposing a curfew during elections from 6PM on Saturday till 8PM on Monday. CLDH denounces this racist and discriminatory decision which constitutes a clear human rights violation and a violation of international treaties, in particular the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights."

Lebanon – [Lebanon holds first parliament election since financial collapse, Beirut port blast](#)

Lebanese voted on Sunday in the first parliamentary election since the country's economic collapse, with many saying they hoped to deal a blow to ruling politicians they blame for the crisis even if the odds of major change appear slim. Since Lebanon last voted, the country has been rocked by an economic meltdown that the World Bank has blamed on the ruling class, and by a massive explosion at Beirut's port in 2020. As the vote neared, watchdogs warned that candidates would purchase votes through food packages and fuel vouchers issued to families hit hard by the financial collapse. Nationals over the age of 21 vote in their ancestral towns and villages, sometimes far from home. The incoming parliament is expected to vote on long-delayed reforms required by the International Monetary Fund to unlock financial support to ease the crisis. It is also due to elect a president to replace Aoun, whose term ends on Oct. 31.

Lebanon – [Lebanese elections marred by hundreds of rule breaks, observer warns](#)

The Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE) denounced flagrant rights violations during Sunday's electoral vote in Lebanon. During the opening hours of the polling stations, LADE documented hundreds of electoral violations, from the violation of electoral silence to more serious actions of physical violence towards voters, challenging the very principles of the right to vote and its free expression.



Monday
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Iraq – [Yazidis return to camps after fighting in Sinjar](#)

In early May, fights between the Iraqi army and the Sinjar Resistance Units (an armed militia linked to the Turkish Kurdistan Workers' Party) led to the displacement of 1,711 families from Sinjar, or 10,261 people, to secure camps in Kurdistan, according to a local official. The UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) denounces the overcrowded camps, where more than 22,000 people are bunched, and where access to basic services is severely limited. The Yazidi minority, who live in northern Iraq, is the community most affected by the sporadic fighting that prevents them from returning home, while this Kurdish-speaking minority has been persecuted for centuries and massacred by the Islamic State.

Syria – [Syrian rights groups urge UN to probe Tadamon massacre](#)

On Monday, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) sent a letter to Linda Thomas-Greenfield, US Ambassador to the UN, calling for an investigation regarding the Tadamon massacre in Syria in 2013. In the Tadamon district of Damascus, 41 civilians were murdered. The call comes two weeks after the release of a video showing evidence of killings by the Syrian army: in the video released by a former military recruit, civilians can be seen running blindfolded towards a mass grave before being shot and burned by soldiers. For 11 years, this war has left 500,000 people dead, and millions displaced. Many international organizations are calling on the Syrian government to take responsibility for the crimes committed by the army against civilians.

Saudi Arabia – [Saudi authorities hide abuses in migrant centres amid wave of arrests](#)

An investigation by Middle East Eye published on Monday reveals that Ethiopians housed in migrant reception centers in Saudi Arabia are being mistreated by the authorities. They say they are regularly beaten, extorted and locked in overcrowded rooms where conditions are unbearable. Diseases such as tuberculosis and skin diseases are also reported, according to Yvonne Ndege, spokesperson for the International Organization for Migration's office for East Africa and the Horn of Africa. Saudi authorities cover up the abuse, confiscating migrants' cell phones and preventing the inhumane treatment from being broadcast on networks. Migrants have also been forced to sign a confidentiality clause preventing them from talking to journalists. The Saudi authorities regularly round up Ethiopian and Yemeni migrants and can no longer manage the overcrowding of refugee camps. In March, it signed an agreement with Ethiopia to return 100,000 Ethiopians. Saudi Arabia has already been condemned in October 2020 by the European Parliament for mistreatment of refugees.

Egypt – [An Egyptian journalist tells the horror of daily life in prison](#)

Solafa Magdy, an Egyptian journalist and human rights defender, was kidnapped by Egyptian authorities on November 26, 2019, with her husband Hossam al-Sayyad, and another journalist Mohammed Salah. Their abduction was in connection with their participation in the January 25, 2011, revolution as journalists. In a video released by Middle East Eye, she tells her two years of detention in an Egyptian prison. Separated from her husband in jail, she denounces violations of privacy by the guards and the lack of access to basic sanitary services, the endangerment of detainees, as well as psychological and physical torture. A vulnerability that she also puts down to her status as a woman, whose rights are not respected in Egypt, according to her.

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Syria – [EU pledges 1.5 billion euros in aid to Syrian refugees](#)

On Tuesday, at the 6th Conference of Donor Countries for Syria (Brussels VI), the head of European diplomacy Josep Borrell announced a contribution of aid for Syrian refugees and displaced persons to 1.5 billion euros for the year 2022, from the European Union (EU). To the 70 states and international institutions involved, he asked them not to "abandon Syria", announcing that a new financial support of 1.56 billion euros would be paid for the year 2023 by the EU. After 11 years of conflict, commitments for humanitarian aid to the Syrians tend to be fragile: in 2021, 2 billion euros of aid had been announced for the year 2022, revised downwards. But on May 5, a donors' conference for Ukraine gathered commitments of 6 billion euros.

United Arab Emirates – [Dubai Police make 1,000 arrests in anti-begging drive](#)

During the month of Ramadan, Dubai police arrested 1,000 people in an anti-begging campaign. A police statement said 902 men and 98 women were arrested on the street between March 18 and May 6. Brig Jamal Salem Al Jallaf, director of the General Criminal Investigation Department of the Dubai Police, says the arrests are to prevent beggars from exploiting the Ramadan period to force donations. In the Emirates, begging is illegal for security reasons, and beggars face up to three months in jail and 5,000 UAE dinars' fine.

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Yemen – [Yemeni government vows to uphold UN-brokered truce despite Houthi violations](#)

On Monday, Yemeni Foreign Minister Ahmed Awadh bin Mubarak announced that his government would respect the truce negotiated with the UN in order to "alleviate the suffering of Yemenis", even though the Houthis have violated it on several occasions, according to him. The truce will include the resumption of flights from Sanaa airport (controlled by the Houthis) as well as the resumption of fuel exchanges at the seaport of Hodeidah. These measures are intended to bring Yemen out of the disconnect with the international community into which the war has plunged it. But the Yemeni government believes that the Houthis may benefit from the reopening of Yemen to international trade: they have reportedly taken advantage of the truce to transport military vehicles and heavy weapons to other parts of Yemen, according to Mr. Mubarak.

Iraq – [British man found with ancient shards in Iraq to stand trial](#)

Iraq is accusing a British national of collecting archaeological fragments and attempting to smuggle them out of the country, which will land him on trial, Sunday; in the Iraqi Criminal Court in Baghdad, on potentially death penalty charges, his lawyer Thair Soud told The Associated Press. Jim Fitton, a 66-year-old retired geologist, was arrested in March at Baghdad airport after Iraqi customs officials found pottery fragments on him from an ancient Mesopotamian tourist site in southern Iraq called Eridu. Fitton's family petitioned the British Foreign Office to allow Mr. Soud to negotiate with Iraq by closing the case quickly, on the grounds that it could harm Iraqi interests. Indeed, Iraq has introduced a policy of encouraging tourist travel to its archaeological sites in recent years, especially for economic benefits.

Occupied Palestine – [Shireen Abu Akleh: Al Jazeera reporter killed by Israeli forces](#)

Israeli forces have shot dead Al Jazeera's journalist Shireen Abu Akleh in the occupied West Bank, according to witnesses and the Palestinian health ministry. Abu Akleh, a longtime TV correspondent for Al Jazeera Arabic, was killed on Wednesday while covering Israeli army raids in the city of Jenin in the northern occupied West Bank. She was rushed to a hospital in Jenin in critical condition, where she was declared dead shortly after, at 7:15am (4:15 GMT), according to the Palestinian health ministry. Abu Akleh was wearing a press vest and was standing with other journalists when she was killed. Another Al Jazeera journalist, Ali al-Samoudi, was also wounded by a bullet in the back at the scene. He is now in stable condition. Shatha Hanaysha, a local journalist who was standing next to Abu Akleh when she was shot, also told Al Jazeera that there had been no confrontations between Palestinian fighters and the Israeli army. She said the group of journalists had been directly targeted.

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United Arab Emirates – [UAE introduces unemployment pay for Emiratis and residents under new scheme](#)

On Thursday, the Minister of Human Resources and Emiratization, Dr. Abdulrahman Al Awar, presented a new social assistance program in the UAE, which will allow people who lose their jobs to receive a basic salary, each month, in cash. The program is scheduled to start in January 2023 and would cover all employees (Emirati or foreign) in the public and private sectors. The payment would come from contributions paid by employees through an insurance company. In return, employees will receive 60% of their basic salary each month, i.e., up to 20,000 UAE dirhams for a limited period "to help with living costs" (The National News). The same applies in case of firing. Shahram Safai, of the legal consultancy Afridi & Angell, which specializes in labor law, points out that the amounts paid out will certainly be much lower, but that they already represent a significant safety net.

Iran – [French couple go missing while on holiday in Iran](#)

Iran's intelligence ministry announced the arrest of two "European teachers" who allegedly sought to "provoke chaos and social disorder with the aim of destabilizing Iran", official Iranian news agencies said Wednesday. While they did not reveal the nationality of the teachers, it is almost certain that the teachers are French. A national education official, Christophe Lalande, had said he had no news of a French colleague who had left with her husband for a tourist trip to Iran, although they were due to return earlier this week. An Iranian diplomat confirmed that the two people arrested were French, and that they are accused of having met with members of the Coordinating Council of Iranian Teachers' Associations, a union network fighting against the deterioration of living standards and repression. The French Foreign Ministry has demanded their "immediate release". This new case of "prisoner-hostages" will certainly poison relations between Paris and Tehran, which are already tense.

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Occupied Palestine – [Fifteen European nations urge Israel to reverse plans for more settler homes](#)

On Friday, fifteen European nations urged Israel to abandon plans to build thousands more housing units in the West Bank for Israeli settlers. The statement came from France, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Poland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and Sweden. The statement said that settlement projects "impede" a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians, as they are "in flagrant violation of international law". On Thursday, Israel announced a plan to build 4,427 housing units for Jewish settlers in the West Bank.

Yemen – [Houthis using summer camps to train child soldiers, parents warned](#)

Yemeni journalists, human rights activists and government officials are warning families living in Houthi-controlled areas against children's recruiting to summer camps. Houthi officials have announced the construction of 57 camps in Sanaa city alone, intended to house young people during the summer. Abdel Malik al-Houthi, Houthis' chief, justifies these camps as a way to "immunize" young people "against misconceptions about his organization and against Islam," but the government accuses the Houthis of wanting to turn them into child soldiers and recruit them into the army, by radicalizing and indoctrinating them. Ghamdan al-Yosifi, a Yemeni journalist, warns of the role of these camps, which make children "a time bomb that will kill you tomorrow". In January, a UN report showed that nearly 2,000 Yemeni children recruited by the Houthis, some as young as 10 years old, had been killed in fighting between early 2020 and May 2021, and that there was evidence of their military training in summer camps.

Occupied Palestine – [Photos: Israeli forces attack Shireen Abu Akleh's funeral](#)

Israeli police have stormed the grounds of a Jerusalem hospital to forcibly prevent a funeral march for Shireen Abu Akleh, the Al Jazeera journalist who was killed by Israeli forces while covering an Israeli army raid in Jenin on Wednesday. TV images on Friday showed Abu Akleh's coffin nearly falling to the ground as police grabbed Palestinian flags from the crowd close to the procession outside St Louis French Hospital in occupied East Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. Reporting from the scene, Al Jazeera's Imran Khan said the Israeli forces targeted mourners because they did not want them to walk with Abu Akleh's coffin. Police hit mourners holding the coffin with batons, almost causing it to drop, before eventually allowing it to be moved in a hearse. At least four people were arrested.

Iraq – [Iraq exhumes remains of Saddam-era victims from mass grave](#)

On Saturday, an Iraqi official revealed that the remains of 15 people were exhumed in April in southern Iraq from a mass grave dating back to the 1990s. The mass grave was discovered near the Shiite holy city of Najaf during the construction of a housing complex. According to the official, the site dates to the era of dictator Saddam Hussein. In 1991, Hussein suppressed an uprising by the Shiite community in the south with violence, killing nearly 100,000 people. "There could be 100 victims in this grave. It is an estimate," Abdul Ilah al-Naidi, director of the Martyrs Foundation, the government organism responsible for opening mass graves, told AFP. Between 1980 and 1990, the regime of Saddam Hussein would have made disappear more than one million people according to the authorities.

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Sri Lanka – [In Blow to Ruling Family, Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Quits in Face of Unrest](#)

In Sri Lanka, clashes between anti-government protesters and supporters of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the current regime, have left five people dead, including a member of parliament, and around 200 injured, leading to the resignation of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, his brother. For several weeks, Sri Lanka has been plunged into chaos, plagued by anti-government protests. The demonstrators denounce the government's inability to cope with the multiple cuts (medicine, fuel, food). Sri Lanka is experiencing the worst economic crisis since its independence in 1948: the country is reportedly 51 billion dollars in debt. Coupled with the Covid-19 crisis, it is leaving the inhabitants in a situation of food insecurity. The authorities have declared an immediate and indefinite curfew. Julie Chung, US Ambassador to Sri Lanka, condemned the violence against the protesters and called on the government to act.

Mali – [Before the ICC, the "French colonizers" questioned by the defense of a Malian jihadist](#)

On Monday, the trial of Abdoulaziz Al-Hassan resumed at the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague. Held by the ICC since 2018, he has been on trial since July 2020 for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Timbuktu, Mali, among other things for torture, rape, sexual slavery in forced marriages and destruction of mausoleums. The Tuareg, originally a veterinarian, had become a major figure in the armed group Ansar Eddine, a Salafist jihadist group that emerged in 2012 during the Mali war. He was notably commissioner of the Islamic police during the jihadist occupation of Mali until 2013. The defense pleaded the vacuum left by France after Mali's independence in 1960. The ICC considers the destruction of classified cultural heritage as a war crime. In 2016, another Malian jihadist was sentenced to 9 years in prison.

Democratic Republic of the Congo – [DR Congo: UN chief calls for probe into deadly armed attacks on mining site](#)

On Monday, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned the May 8 attacks by the armed group Cooperative for the Development of Congo (CODECO) on the Blakete-Plitu mining site in Djugu, Ituri province. 38 civilians, including women and children, were killed. Women were reportedly raped, a village was burned, and civilians are missing, according to Guterres. Civilians seriously injured after the attack were evacuated to medical facilities in Bunia by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The CODECO militia is one of the militias that claims to defend members of the Lendu community, but it is known for its abuses against civilians, soldiers, displaced persons and humanitarians. Guterres "calls on the Congolese authorities to investigate these incidents and bring those responsible to justice" and asks "all armed groups" to "cease their ruthless attacks against civilians".

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Ecuador – [Ecuador prison riot: More than 40 inmates killed](#)

On Monday, bloody clashes between rival gangs in an Ecuadorian prison left at least 44 inmates dead. The prison in the province of Santo Domingo de los Tsachilas, in northern Ecuador, saw rival gangs kill each other "with knives", "executed in the common rooms, in the cells" before a mass escape attempt. According to Interior Minister Patricio Carrillo, authorities regained control of the prison and brought 112 inmates back into it, although no indication of the total number of escapees was given, and as these escapes pose security problems for the population outside. The gangs are waging a merciless war to take control of the prisons, which is made possible by the excessive overcrowding inside (1,700 prisoners for a capacity of 1,200 places) and the fact that the authorities are powerless to contain them. Since February 2021, 350 inmates have been killed in prison gang wars.

Mexico – [Two Mexican journalists killed, taking 2022 death toll to 11](#)

On Monday, two journalists were murdered in Mexico, according to judicial authorities. Yesenia Mollinedo and Sheila Garcia were shot dead in the state of Veracruz, bringing to 11 the total number of journalists or informers killed since the beginning of 2022. These killings have led to demonstrations in Mexico City calling for an "end to violence and the killing of journalists in Mexico". The press freedom NGOs Reporters Without Borders and Artículo 19 have taken on the task of investigating these murders, but they accuse President López Obrador of peddling "insulting and stigmatizing rhetoric" towards journalists, and thus implicitly supporting impunity for the murders of journalists in Mexico. According to them, Mexico is one of the most dangerous countries in the world for the press, with 150 journalists murdered since 2000.

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Spain – [Pegasus spyware: Spain's intelligence chief dismissed over phone hacking scandal](#)

On Tuesday, the director of Spain's intelligence services, Paz Esteban, was dismissed by the government following illegal wiretapping of Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez and Catalan independence fighters. Ms. Esteban, head of the National Intelligence Centre, acknowledged last week that Catalan independence fighters had been spied on by her services, using Pegasus spyware, created by the Israeli company NSO. She claims that the judiciary was aware of this and that the tapping was legal. Government sources totally refute these allegations.

France – [Migrant children rescued after boat's generator breaks down in French waters](#)

On Monday, migrant children were rescued from a broken-down dinghy, adrift in the English Channel, because of a boat's generator break. The boat was composed of 30 people, who were trying to reach the English coast. The children were rescued by members of the rescue vessel Abeille Languedoc, who took them back to France, as the boat was adrift in French waters. The English Channel is one of the most used routes in the migration path, but it is also very dangerous. This rescue comes at a time when more and more migrants are trying to reach England, and when the United Kingdom is seeking to introduce a plan to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda. Since the beginning of the year, 7,739 migrants have arrived in the UK, according to the National News.

El Salvador – [El Salvador jails woman accused of abortion for 30 years](#)

On Monday, a Salvadoran woman was sentenced to 30 years in prison by a judge for homicide charges. While she had called the emergency room due to an obstetric emergency (miscarriage), she was denounced by the police as trying to kill her baby, without receiving the necessary care, according to the Citizen's Collective for the Decriminalization of Abortion. Her lawyer, Karla Vaquerano, denounced the biased and gender stereotyped accusations. El Salvador is one of the countries in the world where abortion is totally prohibited. While the election of progressive President Nayib Bukele in 2019 had raised some hopes for the evolution of women's rights, the situation has not changed in a country where the Catholic Church enjoys a strong base. A dozen women are currently in prison following obstetric emergencies.

Hong Kong – [Hong Kong arrests Cardinal Zen, singer over activist fund](#)

Cardinal Joseph Zen, 90, star Denise Ho, 45, and human rights lawyer and former Democratic Party deputy Margaret Ng, 74, were arrested on Wednesday by Beijing's political police and charged with "collusion with foreign forces," which Beijing's National Security Law, enacted in 2020, defines as a crime. The day before, Professor Hui Po-keung, a former lecturer at Lingnan University, was arrested on the same charges. All of them are the last remaining prominent members of the pro-democracy camp in Hong Kong and are known to be tireless advocates of political freedom and democratic reform. Ms. Ho and Mr. Zen were released later in the day on bail. The White House had called for their immediate release. Recently, China has tried to undermine forms of contestation in Hong Kong, which it claims as an integral part of China.

France – [France opens probe into torture claims against Interpol president](#)

The Emirati President of Interpol, General Ahmed Naser Al-Raisi, has again a judicial investigation for "complicity in torture" against him, while he was already the subject of a preliminary investigation by the National Anti-Terrorism Prosecutor's Office for other charges of torture, opened by the NGO Gulf Center for Human Rights. The new complaint comes from 2 British nationals, who accuse him of "torture", "arbitrary detentions" and "spying" in 2018 and 2019, when he was serving as the Emirati top police officer. The appointment of the general in Interpol had caused a huge controversy, while member countries knew about the complaints opened against him. The Emirati Ministry of Foreign Affairs considers them "groundless".

Cameroon – [Cameroon: Rising Violence Against LGBTI People](#)

In a report released Wednesday, Human Rights Watch said the Cameroonian state is failing to protect LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) minorities from discrimination and violence, and is instead contributing to their arrest. According to civil society groups, there has been an increase in violence and abuse against LGBTI persons in Cameroon in 2022. Since March 9, 6 people were reportedly arrested and 11 detained by police forces for "gender non-conformity," as they had been victims of group attacks and were seeking protection from state forces. Cameroonian law prohibits homosexual relations, a crime punishable by up to 5 years in prison, while the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, of which Cameroon is a member, has explicitly called on member states to protect sexual and gender minorities.

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Nigeria – [Daesh murders 20 Nigerian Christians in 'revenge' for setbacks in Middle East](#)

Last week, an attack in Borno State, Nigeria, was carried out against 20 Christians by Daesh militants in revenge for the deaths of several of the group's leaders in the Middle East. Hassan Chibok, a local community leader in Kautukari, said the Nigerian military was unable to prevent the killings. The killings came as United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres was visiting the Nigerian capital Maiduguri to meet with survivors of religious violence. On Wednesday in Marrakech, members of the international community fighting Daesh met to discuss the group's escalating violence in West and North Africa and in the Middle East.

Columbia – [Colombia court approves medically assisted suicide](#)

It is a first in Latin America. Colombia, where euthanasia has already been legal since 1997, allows assisted suicide for the sick, by medication, Colombia's constitutional court told AFP on Thursday. It concerns serious or incurable diseases and removes an article of the penal code which punished from 12 to 36 months of prison any person providing assistance to the suicide. The patient will be able to administer a lethal injection, under the supervision of a doctor, who no longer risks any punishment, according to the Laboratory of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Desclab).

Central African Republic – [Murder of Camille Lepage in the Central African Republic: RSF denounces an investigation "completely at a standstill"](#)

In a report released Wednesday, Reporters Without Borders denounces a "completely stalled" investigation into the murder of Camille Lepage in the Central African Republic. In 2014, the 26-year-old press photographer had been shot dead in an ambush while reporting with a militia to cover the looting of a village, the country being in civil war since 2013. According to RSF, "the witnesses were not all questioned, certain avenues were not explored, no reconstruction of the facts was carried out and the investigation file even remained untraceable for several months." RSF urges France and the Central African Republic to get more involved in this case, so that those responsible are punished. The possibility of an ambush had been favored, but according to Vincent Fillola, lawyer for the Lepage family, the possibility of a settlement accounts was too quickly dismissed.

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Nigeria – [Female student killed by mob at Nigeria school over blasphemy claims](#)

On Thursday, Nigerian police said a Christian schoolgirl was stoned and burned by a group after being accused of blasphemy. The killing of Deborah Samuel took place in Sokoto State, a state in northern Nigeria where Sharia law is applied alongside common law, at Shehu-Shagari School. After reading a comment by Deborah Samuel, posted on social networks, which they considered offensive to the Prophet Muhammad, "students forcefully removed the victim from the security room where she was hidden by the school authorities, killed her and burnt the building" according to Sanusi Abubakar, spokesman for the Sokoto police. All suspects identified in the murder have been arrested, police said. Under sharia law, blasphemy is punishable by death.

Ukraine – [First war crimes trial begins in Ukraine with Russian soldier](#)

Ukraine is preparing to open the first war crimes trial in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict that has been going on since February 24. Vadim Shishimarin, a 21-year-old Russian soldier, is accused of killing with a Kalashnikov an unarmed 62-year-old civilian on a bicycle, the office of the Kiev prosecutor general, Iryna Venediktova, said in a statement on Wednesday. He will be the first Russian soldier to be tried for war crimes. Shishimarin faces life in prison if convicted of war crimes and premeditated murder. The circumstances of his arrest are not known, nor is the date of his trial. More than 10,700 alleged war crimes involving 622 suspects have been referred to the prosecutor's office until now.

France – [In Calais, around 350 migrants evacuated from camps](#)

On Friday morning, French police evacuated 350 migrants from camps in Calais. The evacuation took place "calmly" according to the Pas-de-Calais prefecture, while Human Rights Observers (HRO) denounced "forced sheltering" and the seizure of migrants' belongings (tents, personal objects, food), a technique used by the police to "force them to leave" according to HRO. The evacuation was carried out for reasons of tranquility, public safety and health, according to the prefecture. HRO has counted 127 eviction operations from informal camps in Calais in April alone.

Saturday and Sunday
14 and 15 May 2022

Croatia – [Croatia abortion: Thousands protest against termination](#)

On Saturday, several thousand people demonstrated against abortion in Zagreb, Croatia, in a "march for life". This demonstration comes 2 days after a mobilization in support of Mirela Cavajda, a woman facing the disease of her fetus (brain tumor) and who managed to obtain permission to abort in the 6th month of pregnancy. Her abortion requests were all rejected by public hospitals, but public pressure forced the medical commission of the Ministry of Health to accept the procedure. In Croatia, it is legal to abort up to the 10th week of pregnancy; after that time, it is possible to have an abortion in cases of rape or incest, or if the health of the mother or the fetus is in danger. But conservative groups, mostly Catholic in influence, are pressing the government to limit abortion. In contrast, in the United States, Saturday was a national day of action to defend abortion rights as the Supreme Court prepares to reverse a landmark decision protecting abortion.