



HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN A WEEK

23 – 29 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
23 May 2022

Lebanon – [No jobs for veiled women](#)

On Monday, Megaphone News reported on Instagram that a young woman, Dina Al-Durr, was refused a job at the Laldir store in Beirut airport, because she was wearing a veil. The company does not accept to hire veiled women, according to the head of the employment department of the store. The company justified its refusal by foreign shareholders in the store who did not want veiled women to be employed. Discrimination against veiled women in the workplace is repeated once again. In a Facebook post, Ms Al-Durr claims that her veil simply covers her head, not her brain or her abilities. Deputy Halime El-Kaakour condemned the impossibility for women to freely choose their clothes and religious symbols, and called for a reform of policies towards women, who must be able to be integrated into the economic circuit without discrimination, as Lebanon is undergoing a very strong crisis.

Tuesday
24 May 2022

Lebanon – [‘We will act when we see a serious government in Lebanon,’ Saudi minister tells Davos panel](#)

At the World Economic Forum (WEF), currently held in Davos, the Saudi Minister of Finance Mohammed al-Jadaan, talked about the current Lebanese situation, stating that "only Lebanese citizens can help their country". This assertion is reminiscent of the relatively tense situation between Lebanon and the Gulf countries that existed in 2021: Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, Kuwait and Bahrain among others, interrupted their diplomatic relations with Lebanon due to Hezbollah's excessive interference in the government. However, Saudi Arabia acknowledges that it will be present alongside Lebanon when a legitimate and credible government will be installed, recalling that Saudi Arabia has "been (acting) historically and there is no reason why [it] wouldn't come to support" (Arab News). A sign of a willingness to appease and warm relations between the two countries.

Lebanon – [Lebanon's bank association rejects government recovery plan](#)

On Tuesday, the Association of Banks in Lebanon (ABL) rejected the economic recovery plan adopted last week by the Lebanese government, for its financial upturn, while the country is experiencing an unprecedented collapse of its economic system. The ABL had rejected an earlier draft of the plan, which foresees cancelling "a large part" of the central bank's foreign currency obligations to commercial banks and dissolving non-viable banks by November.

Lebanon – [Lebanon begins removing concrete barriers around Parliament](#)

The concrete barriers that surrounded the Parliament and blocked access to it since 2019, in Beirut, have begun to be removed by the Lebanese authorities. The barriers were erected in response to nationwide protests against Lebanon's corrupt elites. Their symbolic removal comes after the arrival of independent opposition deputies in parliament with the May 15 legislative elections. Deputy Elias Jradi said "there are no walls that rise between the representatives of the nation and citizens", on Twitter.

Wednesday
25 May 2022

Lebanon – [Lebanon crippled by electricity, water outages](#)

Lebanon has been plunged into darkness after oil stocks in the country's last functional power plant in Deir Ammar ran out on Tuesday morning. Electricity rations have been severely reduced due to the surplus demanded by the parliamentary elections. Lebanon is expecting the arrival of an oil tanker at the end of the week. The Beirut and Mount Lebanon Water Authority has also announced strict water rationing as pumping stations struggle to operate due to the electricity outages. The government of Prime Minister Najib Mikati has failed to approve an emergency plan.

Lebanon – [Lebanon's intel chief meets top US officials, CIA head for talks on hostages in Syria](#)

On Tuesday, the head of Lebanese intelligence announced that he was participating in negotiations between the United States and Syria for the release of at least six American hostages. Abbas Ibrahim, Major General and head of Lebanon's General Security, announced that talks had been reopened in Washington under the Biden administration. In addition to discussing the release of hostages, including that of journalist Austin Tice who has been missing in Syria since 2012, the talks were also about the current situation in Lebanon. Mr. Ibrahim is known for having secured the release of several Western detainees such as Sam Goodwin and Kristian Lee Baxter in 2020, held by the Syrian regime.

Thursday
26 May 2022

Lebanon – [Doctors, bakers and truckers protest as Lebanon's currency plunges after election](#)

On Thursday, demonstrations and sit-ins took place in Beirut, as the Lebanese pound further depreciated in value to a record low of 35,000 pounds to the dollar. In response, public sector employees set up roadblocks and sit-ins. Tanker drivers blocked the intersections between East and West Beirut, and cab drivers blocked the roads leading to the Ministry of the Interior, in opposition to the fuel prices' rise due to the value's fall of the pound. Bakers also demonstrated, fearing an end of bread subsidies. For analysts, the situation is untenable: the value of the pound has fallen by more than 20% since the May 15 elections and the resulting shortages raise fears of social unrest. Lebanese's buying power is at its lowest.

Lebanon – [1,738. Cases of violation against Syrian refugees in Lebanon during 2021](#)

The annual report of the Access Center for Human Rights (ACHR) has just been published: it traces the main violations and crimes committed against Syrian refugees in Lebanon in 2021. The report mentions 1,738 cases of violations and denounces the dangerous conditions in which Syrian refugees live in Lebanon. The report talks about acts of violence such as racist and discriminatory practices, forced expulsions, torture, arbitrary arrests... 156 cases refer to arbitrary measures initiated by the Lebanese state itself, such as illegal curfews or salary limitations, according to Megaphone News.

Friday
27 May 2022

Lebanon – [Kettaneh to LBCI on securing incurable and chronic medicines: Situation has become extremely dangerous](#)

Lebanese Red Cross Secretary-General George Kettaneh, called on Friday for greater caution in securing incurable and chronic medicines, stating that the situation has become extremely dangerous. Kettaneh stated during an interview with Nharkom Said TV that there is a Red Cross mobile clinic and Red Cross dispensaries to provide citizens with medicines and other medical needs, adding that "medicines we get are either from donations or external funding."

Lebanon – [Stop crimes of torture in prisons](#)

On Thursday, the National Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) released a detailed report on violations and torture suffered by prisoners in Lebanon. Following several visits to civilian and military detention centers and prisons between 2020 and April 2022, the Committee explains that most centers are overcrowded, practice torture, and prevent prisoners from their civil and social rights. 12 detention centers have been classified as "places of deprivation of liberty" as a result of acts of torture, and these centers are mainly attached to state institutions (internal security forces, army command, customs, parliamentary security forces, etc.). Centers for the elderly, psychiatric hospitals and orphanages are also concerned, according to Megaphone News.

Saturday and Sunday
28 and 29 May 2022

Lebanon – [Patients unable to pay for hospitalization as Lebanon's exchange rate crisis worsens](#)

According to Arab News, the dollar exchange rate crisis is preventing patients from paying for their hospitalization, as the depreciation fell at 37,000 pounds on Friday. The available medical coverage (provided by social security or other insurance organizations) now guarantees only a small fraction of medical expenses. Hospitals can no longer provide medical services, even to patients covered by insurance, because they can no longer raise funds from banks. On Friday, demonstrations were still going on for health care workers, cab drivers, bakers, and military members. Gas stations and hospitals went on strike. The American rating agency Fitch believes that financial and economic reforms cannot be implemented until the political crisis in Lebanon is not resolved.



Monday
23 May 2022

Saudi Arabia – [Where the abused are abused: Welcome to Saudi Arabia's shelters for women and girls](#)

Recently, the media coverage of a Saudi homeless woman's story on social networks, about her experience in Saudi shelters, has made waves and has prompted Saudi activists and observers to promote discussion about the situation of girls in shelters in Saudi Arabia. Aisha was placed in a home in Riyadh at the age of 3 and spent 17 years there before she began to publicize her conditions in it at the age of 20. She denounced abuse and imprisonment. As a result, she was imprisoned by the authorities for a year and a half and then thrown out on the street. At 22, she tells her story on Instagram and shows the failure of Saudi homes. For Saudi activist and journalist Khulud al-Harithi, these shelters "are prisons". Rothna Begum, a women's rights researcher for the Middle East and North Africa at Human Rights Watch, explains that a woman may be placed in a shelter for several reasons: fleeing domestic violence, awaiting legal proceedings, or disobeying a male tutor. In each situation, a climate of fear and repression is advanced, and for activists, these homes are "lock-ups rife with abuse" (Middle East Eye). Activists have called for changes to the status of these homes, for example in 2014 to King Abdullah, to make them safe places for women, but without success.

Syria – [Red Cross president says end 'life in limbo' for Syria's Al Hol camp children](#)

The president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Peter Maurer, has alerted to the situation of the thousands of children still in the Al Hol camp in northeastern Syria, and called for the legal and political blur surrounding them to be lifted. 22,000 children are being deprived of a normal childhood, and unable to leave the camp despite the fall of the ISIS group in 2019, because their parents are suspected of having collaborated or fought for ISIS. The camp is currently home to 56,000 refugees, with overcrowding, poor hygiene, and difficult access to humanitarian aid making Al Hol camp "one of the biggest child protection crises in the world today" according to Mr Maurer. Some countries, such as France and Russia allowed the return of some women and children.

Egypt – [Egyptian media tycoon sentenced to 3 years for trafficking and assaulting orphan girls](#)

On Monday, the media tycoon Mohamed El Amin was sentenced by an Egyptian court to 3 years in prison and a fine of 330,000 Egyptian pounds for sexual assault of minors and human trafficking, following a complaint filed by the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood. The minors concerned are 7 girls, all from an orphanage that the tycoon owned in Beni Suef, near Cairo. All assaulted took place during the tycoon's regular visits to the orphanage. The case had caused a national indignation against this aggressor, first protected by his fame: he had notably donated one billion Egyptian pounds to the Tahya Misr fund, which provides food, medical services, and other benefits to poor in Egypt.

Tuesday
24 May 2022

Saudi Arabia – [Saudi Arabia: Halt imminent execution of Bahraini men sentenced after flawed trial](#)

On Tuesday, Amnesty International published a report in which it denounced the imminent execution by Saudi Arabia of Jaafar Sultan and Sadeq Thamer, two Bahraini Shi'a men sentenced to death for terrorism and public order offences, related to the smuggling of explosive materials, and while the trial is allegedly flawed. Amnesty International is calling on Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdul Aziz not to ratify their death sentences because their alleged confessions were coerced and to "ensure they are retried in accordance with international law" (Lynn Maalouf, Deputy Director of Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa Programme). Amnesty International denounced a botched trial, in which the convicts had no access to legal representation, were allegedly tortured, and were isolated for three months without access to their families. In its annual report on the death penalty in 2021, Amnesty International reveals that Saudi Arabia has doubled the number of executions compared to 2020.

Sudan – [UN warns Sudan's future hangs in balance as political stalemate persists](#)

On Tuesday, during a Security Council meeting devoted to developments in Sudan, the UN urged the Sudanese government to re-establish dialogue with civilian parties in order to bring peace to the country's violence. Volker Perthes, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Sudan, called for a political transition that would put an end to arbitrary arrests and the state of emergency's lift, necessary for the country's political, social and economic stability. In particular, the UN referred to the armed clashes between the Arab and Masalit communities in Kereneik, West Darfur, in April, which left 150 people dead, thousands wounded and displaced, and houses burned. The current lack of political agreements between the parties and the involvement of the Sudanese army in the violence is affecting the security situation. Peaceful demonstrations continue in Khartoum, calling for a restoration of the democratic transition process.

Wednesday
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Occupied Palestine – [Israeli forces kill Palestinian teenager in occupied West Bank](#)

Israeli forces have shot and killed a Palestinian teenager in the northern city of Nablus in the occupied West Bank. The Palestinian health ministry identified the teenager as 16-year-old Ghaith Rafeeq Yamin. Yamin was killed early on Wednesday during confrontations that broke out with the Israeli army at the site of Joseph's Tomb in the eastern part of Nablus. The army had been providing protection to Jewish settlers visiting the site. Yamin, who was shot in the head, arrived at the Rafidia public hospital in Nablus at approximately 2am (23:00 GMT) in critical condition and was pronounced dead 15 minutes later. At least 80 other Palestinians were wounded on Tuesday night during confrontations with the Israeli army in the Nablus area, including 19 injured after being hit by rubber bullets and more than 65 from tear gas suffocation, according to the official Palestinian news agency Wafa.

Tunisia – [Tunisia's first LGBTQ play lifts curtain on hidden violence](#)

"Flagranti" (or "In the Act"), which premiered at a city-center theatre in the capital at the weekend, deals with "a reality that we pretend not to see", Jaibi told AFP. The work, co-produced by LGBTQ rights group Mawjoudin (translating to "we exist"), is played by six mostly amateur actors aged between 23 and 71, reflecting a decades-long struggle for gay rights in the North African country. Infused with black humor, it tells the stories of people who have suffered violence at home, in the workplace and in public. Tunisia is seen as relatively liberal on social issues compared with other Arab countries, but nevertheless imposes sentences of up to three years in prison for "sodomy" for both men and women. The country saw a rise in public LGBTQ rights activism in the years following its 2011 revolution that kicked off the Arab Spring uprisings. But despite years of efforts, rights groups say the community is still vulnerable, with as little as a photo on a telephone potentially leading to arrest, physical violence and anal examinations. The notorious Article 230 of the penal code saw 59 people jailed between early 2020 and last October, according to Mawjoudin.

Tunisia – [One dead, 75 missing as migrant boat sinks off Tunisia](#)

On Wednesday, a boat full of migrants sank off near the Tunisian city of Sfax, as a shipwreck occurred in the same place last week. One person died and 75 are missing, according to Reuters. 30 people were rescued by the coast guard, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), a UN agency. The boat was leaving from Zawara, Libya. More than 123,000 migrants arrived in Italy in 2021 compared to 95,000 in 2020.

Thursday
26 May 2022

Yemen – [US calls on Yemen's Houthis to release its local embassy staff](#)

In Sanaa, Yemen, the U.S. Embassy announced Thursday that Abdelhamid al-Ajami, a member of its staff in the Yemeni capital who was abducted by the Houthis in late 2021, had died in Houthi prisons, after acts of torture according to Yemeni activists and local media. His death sparked outrage among human rights activists, Yemeni government officials, and U.S. diplomats, who criticized the Houthis for their mistreatment of prisoners. Mr. al-Ajami was also a member of the American humanitarian organization USAID. Fouad al-Mansouri, a Yemeni human rights activist, told Arab News that the Houthis were not forced to stop mistreating prisoners. The French and US embassies have called for the release of the latest hostages, two Yemenis working for the UN.

Occupied Palestine – [Palestinian probe says Israeli forces deliberately shot Abu Akleh](#)

The Palestinian Authority has announced the results of its investigation into the killing of Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, saying that it shows Israeli forces deliberately shot and killed the veteran reporter. The findings echoed the results of a preliminary investigation announced nearly two weeks ago and were widely expected amid global outrage over the killing of Abu Akleh. Speaking to reporters on Thursday in the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah, Palestinian Attorney General Akram al-Khatib said, "It was clear that one of the [Israeli] occupation forces ... had fired a bullet that hit journalist Shireen Abu Akleh directly in her head" while she was attempting to escape. Abu Akleh, 51, was hit with an armor-piercing bullet, the attorney general said, while she was wearing a helmet and a vest that was clearly marked with the word "PRESS".

Turkey – [Turkey Fails Domestic Violence Victims](#)

In a report entitled "Combatting Domestic Violence in Turkey: The Deadly Impact of Failure to Protect", Human Rights Watch (HRW) denounces the Turkish government's failure to protect victims of domestic violence, even though restrictive court orders supposedly protecting them have been issued. According to HRW, these orders are not systematically applied by the courts, leaving women victims of domestic violence at the mercy of their husbands. The study was conducted in the context of Turkey's withdrawal from the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in July 2021. In Turkey, women identified as vulnerable by the authorities have been killed by their attackers, according to Emma Sinclair-Webb, deputy director of the Europe and Central Asia division at HRW. HRW denounces an insufficient legal framework, as well as an overly present mentality of sex non-equality in Turkey. The authorities tend to be more reactive on domestic violence when they are publicized.

Friday
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Morocco – [Morocco: ban on a demonstration against the cost of living](#)

On Friday, organizers of a demonstration announced that Moroccan authorities had banned them from demonstrating in Casablanca on Sunday against high living costs, restrictions on freedom and the normalization of relations with Israel. The coordination of the Moroccan Social Front, composed of left-wing parties and trade unions, announced that the local authorities banned the demonstration citing the maintenance of public order. For the movement, this repression is proof that the Moroccan government does not respect rights and freedoms. The movement still called for a sit-in on Sunday.

Iran – [Iranian officials bribing Instagram moderators to remove accounts hostile to regime: BBC](#)

On Friday, the BBC reported that Iranian intelligence officials were offering Instagram content moderators more than \$10,000 to delete the accounts of activists and journalists hostile to the regime, in clear violation of the right to freedom of expression and information. A former moderator revealed that he was offered \$10,700 to delete the account of Iranian-American activist Masih Alinejad, according to BBC Persia. An opposition activist @1500tasvir, claimed in a tweet that his Instagram account had been restricted to "protect [the] community". Activists also noted that social media posts referring to the current protests in the country were regularly deleted. The company in charge of regulation for Instagram, Telus International, announced that it takes these accusations very seriously but believes them to be false.

Saturday and Sunday
28 and 29 May 2022

Libya – [‘Slavery, rape, torture’: Libya threatened by foreign fighters](#)

Migrants are extremely vulnerable to human rights abuses perpetrated by military groups and foreign fighters, in the conflict in Libya, according to a United Nations report seen by the Associated Press. The UN accuses 7 Libyan armed groups of systematically committing human rights abuses, such as illegal detention and torture, in defiance of international law. The UN specifically refers to "acts of slavery, rape and torture". In addition to private militias such as Wagner, foreign fighters are also present, such as Chadian mercenaries and Sudanese and Syrian fighters. These fighters operate in the context of the conflict between the rival governments in Libya, between the East supported by the military commander Khalifa Haftar and the West, in Tripoli, recognized by the UN.

Sudan – [Sudan women’s activist wins human rights prize](#)

Amira Osmane Hamed, 40, a Sudanese women's rights activist, has just received the award for human rights defenders at risk from the international NGO Front Line Defenders. First arrested in 2002 for wearing pants, then in 2013 for refusing to cover her hair, Ms. Osmane Hamed has been known for her defense of women's rights for several years. She recently denounced the military coup of General Abdel Fattah al-Burhane in October 2021. For the NGO Front Line Defenders, she "has never deterred from her mission, constantly (advocating) for democracy, human rights and women's rights" despite threats of intimidation from the government.



Monday

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Worldwide – [UNHCR: A record 100 million people forcibly displaced worldwide](#)

On Monday, the United Nations Refugee Agency (from UNHCR) reported that the number of people forced to flee conflict, violence, human rights violations and persecution has reached the 100 million mark for the first time, a figure that is “sobering and alarming in equal measure” for Filippo Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. This figure is due to new waves of violence or prolonged conflicts (Burma, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Ukraine...). It represents 1% of the world's population, and counts both the 53,2 million internally displaced persons, plus refugees and asylum seekers. In 2022, the war in Ukraine alone caused the internal displacement of 8 million people, and 6 million refugees. For Grandi, this figure is a call to “resolve and prevent destructive conflicts”.

China – [UN rights chief's visit to China will be held in 'closed loop', Beijing says](#)

From May 23 to 28, Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, is visiting China at the invitation of the Chinese government according to Beijing. Ms. Bachelet, who has been openly criticized for her secrecy on Uyghurs rights violations in the Xinjiang region, will visit Kashgar and Urumqi, the two main cities of Xinjiang, for meetings with Chinese officials, business representatives, diplomats and civil society organizations to discuss the respect, promotion and protection of human rights. Critics of the UN's policy of appeasement with China see this meeting as a crucial opportunity for the UN to salvage its credibility over the situation of the Uyghurs, while several national parliaments are accusing China of genocide against this people. The spokesman for the US State Department, Ned Price, is skeptical about what this meeting could change for the Uyghurs: “We do not believe that China will guarantee her the access to carry out a complete and unmanipulated assessment of the human rights issue in Xinjiang” (Le Monde). And indeed, Ms. Bachelet's visit is conditioned by an agreement between the UN and China, negotiated for months, on what the UN mission will be able to see or not.

France – [Feminist collective deploys banner on red carpet](#)

As part of the documentary *Riposte féministe*'s screening, by Simon Depardon and Marie Perennès, the French collective Les Colleuses led a feminist action on the red carpet of the Cannes Film Festival, on Sunday. They deployed a huge banner with the names of the victims of the 129 feminicides, killed since July 2021 in France. Dressed in black, the activists then posed with raised fists, and used black smoke. In this documentary, the filmmakers follow the daily life of the collective, known for the action of its activists who stick everywhere in France, often at night, messages on the walls of cities to denounce gender-based violence, street harassment and messages of support to victims of sexual assault.

Worldwide – [Executions surge 20 percent in 2021 led by China, Iran: Amnesty](#)

The rights group Amnesty International has just released its annual report on the death penalty around the world. Entitled *Death Sentences and Executions*, the report says that capital executions increased by 20% in 2021, and the number of death sentences rose by 40%. 579 people were executed, and 2,052 were sentenced to death. Notable increases were seen in Iran (28% increase in executions compared to 2020), Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Burma, where the return to martial law in February 2021 normalized the use of the death penalty. The report points out that China, North Korea and Vietnam, are also reported to execute thousands of people, but their figures remain secret. The report notes that approximately 90 people have been arbitrarily executed. However, Amnesty International points out that these figures are only for a minority of countries that still apply the death penalty (18 countries, the lowest number since the movement began publishing these reports).

Angola – [Angola: Authorities repress civil society organizations ahead of election](#)

In the run-up to general elections in August, Angolan authorities are reportedly cracking down on civil society organizations by preventing civil society meetings from taking place, according to Amnesty International. On May 21, two NGOs, Omunga and ADCDH, were prevented from holding a conference on peacebuilding by Angolan police. Participants were prevented from entering. Deprose Muchena, Amnesty International's director for Eastern and Southern Africa, denounced the repression of civil society organizations and the intimidation of activists as “a worrying development for human rights in Angola”. Angola is deliberately violating the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, which is enshrined in the Angolan Constitution and in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, to which Angola is a signatory.

Tuesday

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Afghanistan – [UN unequivocal about right of Afghan girls to education, World Economic Forum told](#)

On the World Economic Forum in Davos today, the United Nations reevaluated the human rights situation in Afghanistan since the Taliban's came back to power nine months ago. Achim Steiner, the administrator of the United Nations Development Program, reminded the assembly that the Afghan authorities must respect human rights, and that this also includes reauthorizing access to education for young girls. Mr. Steiner deplored the fact that the Taliban had not respected its promises of flexibility made to the international community. He said the country must reestablish the "rule of law in the sense of fundamental rights". He also pleaded for saving Afghanistan from an unprecedented economic crisis, to which the US is trying to respond by releasing \$7 billion of frozen assets in Afghanistan, half of which will be invested in humanitarian aid.

Greece – [Greece turns back 600 migrants in biggest attempted sea crossing of 2022](#)

On Monday, a Greek official announced that Greek coastguards had turned back about 600 migrants from reaching their territorial waters. The nine boats were prevented from entering Greek waters by "visual and sound signals" used by the coast guard, in what appears to be the largest attempt to cross the Aegean Sea. All the boats headed back to Turkey and were intercepted by Turkish coastguards. This comes at a time when Greece has been accused of illegally turning back migrants from its territorial waters via the Frontex agency, a scandal that has led to the resignation of its director, Fabrice Leggeri. On Tuesday, EU Commissioner Ylva Johansson visited Frontex's headquarters in Warsaw to meet with its executives and called on the agency to operate in "full compliance of the law," according to Politico. More than 3,000 asylum seekers have arrived in Greece since 2022.

United States of America – [George Floyd two years on: some accountability but killings go on](#)

2 years passed since George Floyd died in Minneapolis when officers handcuffed the 46-year-old African-American behind his back, tackled him face down in the street and choked him. On Wednesday, memorials were held at the intersection where he died. Despite a planned reform bill by the Biden administration, advocates confirm that US police still interact violently with black communities and Floyd's death hasn't changed that, according to a Black Lives Matter organizer. In March 2021, the House of Representatives passed police reform legislation, the "George Floyd Justice in Policing Act" which aims to overhaul the relationship between society and police and bring more federal prosecutions of officers using excessive force. A reform that is not "a true inflection point" but could be effective in the long run, according to Arthur Ago, director at the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights. A Minnesota State Human Rights Commission released an investigation revealing the systemic and racist nature of the Minneapolis Police Department. In April, after the death of Patrick Lyoya, Black Lives Matter denounced police violence as the "norm".

France – [Benjamin Brière's sister, detained in Iran, calls on Paris to "bang its fist on the table"](#)

In an interview with AFP, Blandine Brière, sister of the French hostage held in Iran Benjamin Brière, calls on the French state to do everything possible to free her brother, arrested in May 2020. Benjamin Brière, 36, had been arrested during a trip in Iran, in which he had taken pictures of forbidden areas with a hobby drone, in a natural park. He was sentenced to 8 years and 8 months in prison in January for espionage and propaganda against the regime. 3 other French people are still detained in Iran, including 2 teachers arrested in May. NGOs denounce a "diplomacy of hostages", an attempt by Iran to extract concessions from the West on sensitive issues by doing pressures with hostages.

Afghanistan – [Over one million Afghan children could face severe malnutrition](#)

According to UNICEF, the United Nations children's agency, there will be 1,1 million children under the age of 5, in Afghanistan, suffering from the most severe form of malnutrition in 2022. According to its May 2022 assessment report, poverty is worsening because of rising global food prices due to the war in Ukraine. In a tweet, UNICEF's representative in Afghanistan, Mohamed Ag Ayoya, explained that the number of children under 5 admitted to hospital for severe acute malnutrition has increased in recent years: in March 2020, there were 16,000 hospitalizations for it, compared to 28,000 in March 2022. In cases of severe acute malnutrition, the child's metabolism is affected, so weakened that it can no longer absorb nutrients. According to the UN, 38 million Afghans, or half the population, live below the poverty line. The Taliban government is accused of not helping its people. The UN is currently helping 38% of the Afghan population.

Thursday
26 May 2022

Spain – [Spain: Pegasus spyware scandal reveals risk of intelligence services acting with total impunity](#)

On Thursday, the Spanish Prime Minister, Pedro Sanchez, spoke before the Congress of Deputies about the use of Pegasus spyware by the Spanish intelligence services, used to spy on political figures. In response, Amnesty International has submitted 10 recommendations to the Spanish authorities to limit the secret surveillance of communications, which illustrates the risk that the intelligence services act with impunity. Among these recommendations, the organization calls for remedies or accountability measures for victims of human rights violations, including those who have suffered arbitrary surveillance. Esteban Beltran, director of Amnesty International Spain, said: "The intelligence services have to respect human rights standards". The organization also calls for the full truth regarding the widespread spying on Catalan and Basque figures.

Friday
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Chile – [Chile: Apology for sterilizing HIV-positive women in moment of 'reproductive justice'](#)

On Friday, Winnie Byanyima, head of UNAIDS, the United Nations' AIDS agency, welcomed Chile's public apology for involuntary sterilizations of women living with AIDS perpetrated these last decades. She hailed it as a historic step forward for reproductive justice. In a case brought before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) by a Chilean woman who has been sterilized without her consent in 2002, shortly after giving birth. Gabriel Boric, President of Chile, apologized for all the women whose reproductive autonomy has been violated. These sterilizations were intended to minimize the risk of AIDS transmission from mother to fetus. The state signed an agreement accepting its responsibility and committing to compensate the victims.

Malawi – [Malawi facing worst food crisis in decade, requires \\$81 million in relief aid – UN agency](#)

According to the UN World Food Programme (WFP), soaring food prices will push Malawi to the brink of famine. For Tomson Phiri, WFP spokesperson, WFP expects the situation to worsen: the cost of the food basket has risen by 18%, the highest increase in southern Africa, while 50% of the Malawian population was already living below the poverty line (UN News). The difficulties can be attributed both to the Covid crisis and to the effects of the Ukrainian crisis. The UN agency has warned that its aid will not be able to keep up with the global increase in food prices. For its operations in Malawi, and to avoid famine, the WFP would need \$6 million more, including \$2,9 million to support poor households, affected in addition by recent floods.

Democratic Republic of the Congo – [UN: Latest DRC violence has displaced more than 72,000 people](#)

Fighting between the army and the M23 rebels in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has forced 72,000 people to move from their homes, according to the United Nations. The M23 is a rebel militia that claims to act in the interests of ethnic Tutsis. It is currently waging its biggest insurgency since 2013 against the government around Goma. Since the Rwandan genocide in 1996, the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has been in constant conflict. Of the 72,000 displaced people, 7,000 are believed to have crossed into Uganda, according to the UN refugee agency. The DRC has 5,6 million internally displaced people, the largest number in Africa.

Saturday and Sunday
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Afghanistan – [Afghan women protest in Kabul, demand education and work](#)

On Sunday, about 20 Afghan women marched through Kabul shouting "bread, work, freedom" to protest the Taliban's restrictions on women's freedoms in Afghanistan. "Education is my right! Reopen schools!" chanted the demonstrators, many of whom wore veils covering their faces. They gathered in front of the Ministry of Education. They were dispersed by Taliban and were only able to demonstrate for about 100 meters. The women were prevented from taking photos, filming, and speaking, and their phones were confiscated. Since their return to power, the Taliban have imposed a series of restrictions, such as the obligation for women to wear full-face veils in public places and the ban on young girls' access to education in secondary schools.