



HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN A WEEK

16 – 22 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
16 May 2022

Lebanon – [US welcomes Lebanon elections, calls on politicians to ‘rescue’ the economy](#)

On Monday, the United States welcomed the Lebanese elections as having been held without major incidents but called on the government to implement the reforms needed to get the country out of the crisis. On Twitter, the State Department called on political leaders to “implement the laws and reforms needed to save the economy”. On Monday, preliminary results showed that Hezbollah and its Christian allies, the Free Patriotic Movement, lost their absolute majority in parliament. Several new independents, members of civil society, also emerge, perhaps giving hope for a new impetus to Lebanon’s reconstruction. According to the World Bank, Lebanon is experiencing one of the worst global financial crises for 150 years.

Lebanon – [Mia Farah, like many others, could not vote because she was discriminated against, as the Interior Ministry failed to provide access for those with special needs](#)

A video posted on Megaphone News’ Instagram shows that Lebanese with disabilities were unable to vote in the parliamentary elections due to lack of adequate means. In the video, Marie Mia Farah, a 40-year-old Lebanese woman with Down syndrome, explains that she was unable to vote for general elections due to a lack of infrastructure adaptation and lack of consideration from municipal employees. After being refused to allow someone to vote for her, she was asked to move around despite her disability and was finally denied the right to vote, under the pretext that her condition would not allow her this right. A discrimination on her physical condition prevented her from exercising one of her fundamental rights. She could not rely on any Lebanese law that would allow her to exercise her right to vote in all legitimacy.

Tuesday
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Lebanon – [UN chief calls for ‘inclusive government’ after Lebanon vote](#)

On Monday, the office of United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called on Lebanon to form an “inclusive government” after this weekend’s elections to address the economic crisis. The UN chief called on the new parliament to “urgently adopt all the laws necessary to stabilize the economy and improve governance” including finalizing agreements with the International Monetary Fund. He called for unity among Lebanese political leaders in the name of the best interests of the Lebanese people.

Lebanon – [EU EOM Report: Vote Buying Practices Affected Voters’ Free Choice, Resulted in a Lack of Level-Playing Field](#)

On Tuesday, during a press conference in Beirut, György Hölvényi, Chief Observer of the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) in Lebanon, made a preliminary statement on the electoral status of Lebanon after Sunday’s elections. He welcomed the fact that the elections were completed. However, he noted widespread vote-buying or patronage practices, various cases of intimidation at polling stations, as well as obstructions to the campaign, all of which “distorted the level playing field and seriously affected the voters’ choice” (MTV). On election day, the EU EOM deployed 167 observers in the country and visited 658 polling stations. The mission will remain in place to observe the rest of the election process and will present a final report in a few weeks with possible reforms to the country’s future electoral processes, according to MTV.

Wednesday
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Lebanon – [Japan and UN Women partner to address escalating socio-economic needs in Lebanon](#)

On Wednesday, an agreement between the government of Japan & UN Women in Lebanon was signed, aiming to provide \$1,294,388 to help vulnerable Lebanese women & Syrian refugees with the most urgent socio-economic needs. This agreement aims to help those in need to access emergency livelihoods, affordable hygiene products and hot meals. It also means job creation: social enterprises or production units, run by women, will be in charge of producing and distributing the products and hot meals. In the end, the agreement aims to help 10,000 women and their families and to produce 54,480 menstrual hygiene commodities and hot meals. Mr. Okubo Takeshi, Japan's ambassador to Lebanon, said "Japan has always been keen on advancing women's economic empowerment and autonomy across Lebanon", while 74% of the population is said to be living below the poverty line due to the current economic crisis (MTV).

Lebanon – [Lebanon's electricity output set to be cut further due to election day use](#)

On Wednesday, Electricity of Lebanon, Lebanon's national electricity company, announced that it would reduce its electricity production in the coming days, due to a depletion of most of its fuel reserves following Sunday's elections. The company did not specify how much it had increased its production during the election period but said it "consumed its fuel reserves at a faster pace". Electricity production decreased after the economic collapse began in 2019: Beirut residents receive only 2 to 3 hours of state electricity per day.

Thursday
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Lebanon – [Bou Habib delivers Lebanon's statement at ministerial meeting on global food security call to action in New York](#)

On Wednesday, Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib, met with members of the UN in New York at the ministerial meeting on the call to action for global food security, chaired by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, and presented Lebanon's statement. Mr. Bou Habib recalled that "276 million people are facing acute food insecurity" and "48.9 million people are on the edge of famine". He added " According to the World Food Program, food prices in Lebanon have risen by 1,000% overall since the start of Lebanon's economic crisis, and inflation reached 215% in February of 2022. In the midst of this gloomy reality, the repercussions of the current conflict in Europe, coupled with the destruction of Lebanon's largest grain silos in August 2020 as a result of the tragic Beirut Port explosion, have only worsened the situation. "

Friday
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Lebanon – [Escalating cost-of-living crisis hits Lebanese hard just days after parliamentary elections](#)

The cost-of-living crisis in Lebanon has escalated, less than 48 hours after the results of parliamentary elections held on May 15 were announced. The value of the local currency has fallen to 30,000 Lebanese pounds to the dollar for the first time in the five months since the Central Bank intervened to regulate the market. Some shops were forced close to avoid losing money while goods were repriced to reflect the shifting black market exchange rate. Queues for gas returned, even though the price of a 20-liter canister is almost equivalent to the minimum wage. People are also once again queuing for bread, with some stores selling a bread bundle for 30,000 Lebanese pounds on the black market as bakeries run out of flour. Doctors and health workers have again warned of medicine shortages amid a lack of subsidies, with cancer medication particularly badly affected. The crisis affected domestic gas-distribution companies, which waited for the Ministry of Energy's new price list on Thursday and then began selling gas cylinders for 400,000 Lebanese pounds each.

Lebanon – [Sit-in by cancer patients along Baabda Presidential Palace road coinciding with Cabinet session](#)

On Friday, patients suffering from cancer and chronic diseases participated in a sit-in in front of the presidential palace of Baabda, the main residence of the President in Beirut. Organized at the call of the dean of the pharmacists' union, Joe Salloum, the sit-in coincided with the last session of the Council of Ministers and aimed at alerting the government on the need to fund and resupply medication for cancer and chronic disease patients, while Lebanon is experiencing a shortage of medicines.

Saturday and Sunday
21 and 22 May 2022

Lebanon – [Lebanon cabinet passes financial recovery plan: Ministerial sources](#)

Lebanon's cabinet has passed an economic recovery plan designed to pull the country out of a three-year financial meltdown, two ministerial sources told Reuters on Friday. Ministers agreed the measure in the cabinet's final session hours before losing decision-making powers, following the election of a new parliament on May 15 that is set to designate a new prime minister. The plan includes several measures that are prerequisites for an International Monetary Fund bailout, including a plan to restructure the banking sector and reforming a banking secrecy law. Lebanon reached a preliminary agreement with the IMF in April that listed a number of prior actions that the fund said must be implemented before it could reach a full deal.



Monday
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Occupied Palestine – [Palestinian Authority appeals to EU for resumption of financial support](#)

The Palestinian Authority has reiterated its appeal to the EU to provide its pledged aid without conditions. The authority is concerned about the continuing uncertainty over the EU's annual financial support for its budget despite holding several meetings with senior EU officials in recent months. Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyieh, who met EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell Fontelles in Brussels last week, urged the bloc to expedite the transfer of its financial support, which has been suspended for two years. Shtayyieh pointed to a growing financial crisis caused by the drop in external support and the continuation of Israel's deductions from the tax it collects on behalf of the PA. The EU postponed the transfer of \$223 million in annual aid to the PA after EU members supported Hungary's condition to change the curriculum in West Bank schools because it "contains incitement against Israel and anti-Semitic content."

Iran – [Iran bus drivers stage strike to protest low salaries](#)

Dozens of bus drivers went on strike in the Iranian capital Monday to protest over their living conditions following demonstrations in other cities in past days, local media reported. The drivers and workers of the Tehran Bus Company decried the failure to implement a decision by the Supreme Labor Council to introduce a 10 percent salary increase, reformist Shargh newspaper wrote on Twitter. The strike comes days after Iranian media reported that a demonstrator had been killed in the southwestern Iranian city of Dezful during protests over rising food prices. The authorities announced last week a series of measures to tackle mounting economic challenges, such as changing a subsidy system and raising the prices of staple goods, including cooking oil and dairy products. Hundreds took to the streets in a number of Iranian cities to protest the government's decision, including in Tehran province, state news agency IRNA reported.

Tuesday
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Occupied Palestine – [Dozens injured in Israeli police attack on Palestinian funeral](#)

More than 70 Palestinians were injured after Israeli police lobbed tear gas canisters and shot rubber-coated bullets at a funeral procession for a young Palestinian man who had succumbed to injuries sustained at Al-Aqsa Mosque compound last month. Hundreds of mourners joined the funeral procession on Monday for Walid al-Sharif, who was pronounced dead on Saturday. Al-Sharif suffered a serious head injury on April 22 after Israeli police fired rubber-coated bullets at Palestinians at Jerusalem's most sensitive holy site. Palestinian witnesses and al-Sharif's family say he was shot in the head with a rubber-coated bullet, while Israeli authorities have suggested he died from injuries sustained when he fell on the ground. Israeli hospital officials declined to give a precise cause of death. Amateur video of the attack shows a large group of Palestinians running away from the direction of heavy Israeli fire. Immediately after one shot, al-Sharif is seen falling on his face and lying motionless on the ground. Israeli police then took him away.

Egypt – [Egypt gets tough with farmers amid soaring wheat prices](#)

Faced with record-high wheat prices on world markets, authorities in Egypt are rigorously enforcing a new law designed to ensure local growers sell them 60 per cent of this year's harvest. More than 40 producers and middlemen have been arrested in connection with grain smuggling, with another 30 being pursued by the authorities. Those convicted face a jail term of up to five years and a heavy fine. The wheat and the vehicles used in smuggling will also be confiscated. The world's largest wheat importer, Egypt has traditionally gone to great lengths to secure enough wheat to make bread – a staple for most of the country's 103 million people. About 71 million Egyptians rely on cheap bread under a state subsidized food card system. The disruption of wheat supplies from warring Russia and Ukraine – which together normally account for nearly half of Egypt's imports – has placed Egypt in a precarious position, forcing it to search for alternative markets and seek ways to grow and procure more wheat at home.

Tunisia – [Tunisia military court jails four lawmakers from dissolved parliament: Lawyer](#)

A Tunisian military court on Tuesday issued prison sentences to four lawmakers from the country's dissolved parliament, including Saif Eddine Makhlouf, a prominent opponent of President Kais Saied, their lawyer told Reuters. Makhlouf, head of the conservative Karama Party, and three other party members were charged with assaulting policemen last year. The military court issued 5-month prison sentences for Makhlouf and Nidhal Saoudi and 3-month terms to Mohamed Affas and Meher Zid. On Sunday, thousands of Tunisians protested against President Saied, demanding a return to the normal democratic order and rejecting his replacement of the independent electoral commission with one he named himself.

Wednesday
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Egypt – [Activist Alaa Abdel Fattah's health worsens in Egyptian prison](#)

An Egyptian government-appointed human rights body has urged the country's authorities to transfer the imprisoned activist Alaa Abdel Fattah to another detention centre with better health facilities, as his condition deteriorates. The head of the National Human Rights Council, Moushira Khattab, appealed to the Egyptian interior minister on Tuesday for Abdel Fattah, who has been on hunger strike since April 2 in protest against prison conditions and assaults by prison guards, to be transferred to Wadi al-Natrun Reform and Rehabilitation Centre. Blogger and software engineer Abdel Fattah is one of Egypt's best-known activists, rising to prominence during Egypt's 2011 Arab Spring uprising. He was sentenced in October 2021 to five years in prison on charges of spreading false news.

Qatar – [FIFA: Pay for Harm to Qatar's Migrant Workers](#)

Hundreds of thousands of migrant workers in Qatar have not received financial compensation or any other adequate remedy for serious labor abuses suffered while building and servicing infrastructure for the FIFA World Cup, which begins in November 2022, Human Rights Watch said today. On May 19, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, FairSquare, and a global coalition of migrant rights groups, labor unions, international football fans, abuse survivors, and business and rights groups said that the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and the government of Qatar should provide remedy for serious abuses that migrant workers have suffered since the 2022 World Cup was awarded in 2010. These include thousands of unexplained deaths and injuries, wage theft, and exorbitant recruitment fees. Human Rights Watch has opened a global campaign, #PayUpFIFA, to support this coalition call. Amnesty International is releasing a report, "Predictable and Preventable," setting out how FIFA and Qatar can remedy 12 years of abuses.

Saudi Arabia – [Human Rights: 19th Ordinary Session of the OIC IPCHR in Jeddah](#)

The 19th Ordinary Session of the Independent Permanent Commission on Human Rights (IPCHR) of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) will be held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, from 22 to 26 May 2022. The "promotion and protection of human rights in the OIC countries," will be addressed according to its press release. Civil, political, economic and socio-cultural rights in OIC member states will be on the agenda, including situations of human rights violations in Palestine or in the Kashmir region, annexed by India. A collaborative day with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is scheduled for May 25.

Thursday
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Syria – [Syrians struggle to survive in 'no man's land' desert camp](#)

The Syrian government and its Russian backers have tightened their blockade on Rukban camp, a makeshift settlement housing about 10,000 internally displaced Syrians in the arid "no man's land" between the Jordanian, Iraqi, and Syrian borders. Nearly 80 percent of the camp's residents are women and children, living in squalid conditions. For more than three years the al-Assad regime has blocked United Nations aid from entering the camp, forcing its residents to survive off meagre amounts of smuggled-in goods.

Occupied Palestine – [Israel will not investigate Shireen Abu Akleh's killing](#)

The Israeli military is not planning to investigate the killing of Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, according to Israeli media, leading her family to reiterate their call for a transparent probe into her shooting. Israel's Military Police Criminal Investigation Division believes an investigation that treats Israeli soldiers as suspects will lead to opposition within Israeli society, the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz reported on Thursday. Abu Akleh, 51, was killed by an Israeli soldier last Wednesday, according to witnesses and colleagues who were present when she was shot while covering an Israeli military raid in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin. In response to the report, Abu Akleh's family said they were not surprised by the Israeli military potentially not investigating her death.

United Arab Emirates – [Experts warn of health effects from dusty conditions as sandstorm blankets UAE](#)

This week, much of the UAE has been blanketed by sandstorms. Experts are warning of the health effects caused by the dusty conditions. Dr Rakesh Kumar Gupta, deputy medical director and specialist pulmonologist of Lifecare Hospital, Musaffah, told Al Arabiya English: "In this dusty weather, a higher number of patients seek medical attention for respiratory issues. "Exposure to sandstorms can cause health problems in people in the high-risk category like patients with pre-existing respiratory conditions, pregnant women, children, the elderly, and those who work outdoors." The doctor said it is necessary to take adequate precautions during a sandstorm. "Avoid going outside, especially when there is low visibility and high winds. Carry water with you to stay hydrated. Keep your mouth and nose covered with a mask or respirator. Wear protective eyewear and rinse your eyes with water if your eyes are irritated."

Friday
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Tunisia – [Tunisia: Three migrants dead, 10 missing in shipwreck](#)

On Friday, the Tunisian National Guard announced that 3 migrants died, and 10 others are missing after the sinking of the boat that was taking them to Europe. The boat was carrying 50 migrants, all Tunisians, and sank near the Tunisian coast of Sfax, said Houcem Eddine Jebabli, spokesman for the Tunisian gendarmerie. The city of Sfax is one of the most used departure cities for Tunisian migrants to the Italian coast. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), nearly 2,000 migrants are missing or drowned in the Mediterranean in 2021.

Sudan – [Sudan frees detained anti-coup figures, Communist Party says](#)

On Thursday, thousands of Sudanese demonstrated against the October 2021 putsch by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhane, and for a return to democratic institutions. During these protests, the government arrested 2 communist leaders according to their party. Mukhtar al-Khatib, political secretary of the Sudanese Communist Party (SCP), and another party official were arrested and taken "to an unknown location" according to the SCP, before being released on Friday. Despite al-Burhane's promise to release political prisoners held by the state in preparation for a national dialogue, the men were probably arrested for colluding with armed groups hostile to Khartoum. One death was reported after the protests, bringing to 96 the number of people killed by the crackdown on demonstrations since the coup, in addition to hundreds of injuries and arrests. The United Nations and the African Union are calling for a resumption of dialogue.

Iran – [Iran 'heavily disrupts' internet access after protest: HRW](#)

According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), Iranian authorities have severely restricted Internet access in several provinces following protests in recent days and union strikes over the widespread price hikes in Iran. The HRW report also indicates the arrest of several Iranian activists, including a sociologist and 4 labor rights activists, on "baseless accusations". The protesters expressed their anger at the country's highest religious authority, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, as well as President Ebrahim Raisi. The crackdown on Iranian protests left one person dead in May.

Saturday and Sunday
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Occupied Palestine – [Palestinian teen killed in Israeli raid in occupied West Bank](#)

Israeli troops shot and killed a teenage Palestinian boy as they raided the northern city of Jenin in the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian health ministry and local media said. The health ministry identified the dead teen as Amjad al-Fayyed, 17. It said an 18-year-old Palestinian was in a critical condition after being wounded by Israeli gunfire. "A 17-year-old boy was killed and an 18-year-old was critically wounded by the Israeli occupation's bullets during its aggression on Jenin," the ministry said in a statement. Local media reported confrontations erupted outside Jenin's refugee camp when Israeli forces stormed the area, and al-Fayyed was hit by about a dozen rounds fired into the upper part of his body.

Turkey – [Thousands protest Turkish opposition politician's conviction for insulting Erdogan](#)

Thousands gathered for a rally in Istanbul on Saturday to protest the conviction of leading Turkish opposition politician Canan Kaftancıoğlu for insulting the president and the state. Demonstrators in the central district of Maltepe chanted songs and waved the opposition and national flags. Kaftancıoğlu, who was sentenced to just under five years in jail, heads Republican People's Party's (CHP) Istanbul branch and is one of the strongest voices in it. In 2019, she played a significant role in municipal elections in the city that saw the CHP take over the mayoralty, which had been held by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's AK Party and its Islamist predecessors for the last 25 years. Under Turkish law, sentences of under five years are suspended, and two legal experts told Reuters that Kaftancıoğlu would not be jailed.



INTERNATIONAL

Monday

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United States – [Gunman Kills 10 at Buffalo Supermarket in Racist Attack](#)

A "racially motivated" terrorist attack took place Saturday, May 14 in Buffalo, New York. An 18-year-old heavily armed man opened fire in a Tops supermarket, before being arrested by police, killing 10 people and wounding 3, 11 of whom were African-American. The FBI has opened an investigation for "hate crime and a racially motivated violent extremism case," said Stephen Belongia, FBI special agent in Buffalo, at a news conference. For John Garcia, sheriff of Erie County, where the supermarket is located, "this was clearly a racially motivated hate crime". Indeed, the neighborhood of the supermarket is predominantly populated by African-Americans. The profile of the killer also points to this hypothesis: Payton Gendron was carrying a gun with the number "14" on it, a symbol of white supremacists. He also shared on social networks a "manifesto" of a racist nature, a 180-page document containing the theory of the "great replacement" of the white population. US President Joe Biden denounced an "abominable shooting" as limit the rise of gun violence was to be one of his achievement at the federal scale in US politics.

Burkina Faso – [Burkina Faso: Armed Islamists Kill, Rape Civilians](#)

In Burkina Faso, armed Islamists allegedly killed and raped civilians between September 2021 and April 2022, according to a Human Rights Watch (HRW) report released on Monday. The report said the army and pro-government militias responded with summary executions and enforced disappearances. HRW called on the government, which came to power in a coup in January 2022, to better protect civilians from attacks and ensure that all forces involved respect human rights: "Government forces and associated militias must scrupulously uphold international human rights and humanitarian law and desist from killing in the name of security". HRW interviewed 83 survivors and witnesses of incidents that occurred in several regions of Burkina Faso. Testimonies refer to the rape and abuse of women by Islamist fighters, the looting and destruction of villages, and the recruitment of armed children. Other testimonies refer to the reaction of government security forces and pro-government militias, the Volunteers for the Defense of the Homeland, acting with impunity: illegal executions, forced disappearances of dozens of civilians presumed to be Islamist fighters. An immunity clause protects the status of the Burkinabe Special Forces: it grants these members immunity for any action taken "during their operations". HRW recalls that all parties must comply with international humanitarian law, including Article 3 of the Geneva Convention of 1949, which states that rape, summary executions and enforced disappearances are war crimes and must be tried as such.

Tuesday

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Ukraine – [Ukraine says Azovstal combat mission fulfilled, more than 260 soldiers evacuated](#)

On Tuesday, Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Ganna Malyar, said that 265 soldiers, including 51 seriously wounded, had been evacuated from the Azovstal steel plant in the besieged port city of Mariupol, while they were kept locked in by the Russian offensive. The General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces said in a statement that all efforts were maintained to save the remaining defenders in the territory of Azovstal. This evacuation is the result of an agreement with Russia: the evacuated Ukrainian soldiers are prisoners according to Moscow, and "all those who need medical assistance are sent to the hospital in Novoazovsk" said the Russian Ministry of Defense. President Volodymyr Zelensky made them symbols of Ukrainian heroism during the war and called on the Russians to keep the soldiers alive in a speech on Monday night.

Italy – [Rescue ship crew face jail for 'helping smugglers'](#)

On Saturday, members of 3 charities will appear at a Sicilian court in Trapani, accused of illegally bringing migrants to the European Union (EU) in collaboration with smugglers, while rescuing them from drifting boats in the Mediterranean Sea. 21 people are involved. The Italian authorities accuse them of having crossed the line between humanitarian rescue and illegal reception of migrants by setting up a "ferry service" to collect migrants in international waters, before bringing them to the EU. The defendants face up to 20 years in prison if convicted of aiding illegal immigration. Their rescue boats, operated by Doctors Without Borders and Save the Children, have been seized as part of the investigation. Kathrin Schmidt, one of the defendants, claims that their operations rescued 14,000 people in distress from life-threatening danger. For the Italian prosecutors, these rescues were only intended to help them enter Italy illegally, not to save their lives. For the defendants' lawyer Nicola Canestrini, "saving lives cannot be a crime. The accusations have political implications, they serve political interests," a view shared by rights groups that denounce "Fortress Europe". The head of the European border management agency Frontex, Fabrice Leggeri, resigned last month over alleged cases of forcibly pushing back migrants to European waters after they had reached the coast.

Worldwide – [Long path to full equality says UN, marking Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia](#)

On the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia, United Nations leaders called for a world where everyone can live free of violence and discrimination. In a statement, UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet recalls that there are still "widespread violations" against LGBTIQ+ people, including "murder, torture, sexual violence, criminalization and arbitrary detention" despite positive changes in recent years, thanks to the actions of human rights defenders. The United Nations Population Fund recalls that LGBTIQ+ people still suffer from inequalities in civil and human rights, and are still denied access to basic services, such as legal protections or essential health care. More than a third of countries still criminalize sexual relations. May 17 is a day to celebrate diversity and raise awareness of the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people.

Wednesday
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Belarus – [Belarus introduces death penalty for 'attempted' terrorism: Reports](#)

On Wednesday, a decree published in Belarus and quoted by the Russian agencies Interfax and RIA Novosti, explains that Belarus introduced the death penalty for attempts to carry out acts of terrorism, Russian news agencies reported Wednesday, charges that several opposition activists face in the ex-Soviet country. Belarus is the only country in Europe that continues to carry out executions despite calls for a moratorium. "Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko signed a law on the possibility of the death penalty for an attempted terrorist act," the RIA Novosti news agency reported, citing an online government portal for legal information. It said the law would come into force 10 days after its publication. A Belarusian court in the city of Grodno on Wednesday started a closed-door hearing in the case against 12 activists accused of "preparing acts of terrorism," according to Belarusian rights group Vyasna. Among them is veteran activist Nikolai Avtukhovich, who has already served more than seven years in jail. The 59-year-old faces a litany of other charges, including treason.

Burundi – [Burundi: Suspected Opponents Killed, Detained, Tortured](#)

On Wednesday, Human Rights Watch reported that people suspected of belonging to or working with armed opposition parties were killed, arbitrarily detained, tortured, and harassed by police, national intelligence, in Burundi. In response to the actions of rebel groups (including violent abuses against civilians), the authorities escalated the violence without seeking credible investigations, objective evidence, or due process. For Clementine de Montjoye, researcher at HRW's Africa division, the government "should focus on bringing those responsible for abuse to justice, including members of the security forces". Between October 2021 and April 2022, HRW collected testimonies and video evidence in which military officers admitted to killings.

Thursday
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Worldwide – [Nearly 60m people internally displaced worldwide in 2021](#)

A study conducted by NGOs and made public on Thursday, denounces the displacement of 59,1 million people in 2021, within their own country, due to conflicts and natural disasters, bringing the total number of displaced to 60 million. Half of them were under 18 years old, according to the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). This is the second highest number in 10 years, after the year 2020 marked by natural disasters. The year 2022 looks equally bleak with the war in Ukraine, according to Alexandra Bilak, director of IDMC. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest number of internally displaced people, including more than 5 million in Ethiopia, due to the conflict in Tigray and a severe drought. The figures are also bad in Afghanistan, where the return to power of the Taliban has reinforced the exodus, and in Burma with the return of the junta to power. However, natural disasters are still the first cause of displacement in the world and were responsible for 94% of all displacements in 2021.

India – [Indian court convicts Kashmiri rebel leader Yasin Malik of terrorism](#)

On Thursday, a high Kashmiri separatist leader was convicted by an Indian court in a terrorism case that carries a life sentence or death penalty. Mohammed Yasin Malik was charged with illegal fundraising, terrorist acts, membership of a terrorist organization and criminal conspiracy, despite describing himself as a "freedom fighter" and denouncing "politically motivated" charges against his organization, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front. It is one of the first armed rebel groups to emerge in Kashmir, which has been under Indian control since 1989, fighting for an independent and united Kashmir. However, the group has not been armed since 1994.

Friday
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Sahel – [18 million in Africa's Sahel on 'the brink of starvation'](#)

On Friday, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) warned that 18 million people will face severe food insecurity over the next three months in Africa's Sahel region, including 7,7 million children under the age of five. In the Sahel, "entire families are on the brink of starvation," said Martin Griffiths, UN humanitarian affairs officer. This food insecurity is linked to a combination of different factors: violence, insecurity, deep poverty and rising food prices, reinforced by the war in Ukraine, are the main ones. The UN has decided to release an additional 30 million dollars to strengthen humanitarian aid in Chad, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

Saturday and Sunday
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Kenya – [Kenya: facing human trafficking](#)

On Friday, Amnesty International published a photo report realized in late 2021 by Polish photographer Wojciech Grzedzinski on human trafficking in Kenya. Kenya has emerged as the main hub of one of the world's most profitable criminal trades. More than 140 billion dollars a year are generated by human trafficking, and 3,5 million African people suffer from it, most of them are women and children, through modern slavery, labor exploitation, or prostitution networks. According to the anti-trafficking NGO, Haart Kenya, Kenya is a provider, recipient and transit country for the trafficking system.

Afghanistan – [Afghanistan's female TV presenters must cover their faces](#)

Women presenters and reporters on TV channels in Afghanistan went on air with their faces covered on Sunday, in line with a Taliban order. The day before, some of them had defied the edict and kept their faces visible. One presenter said women working in TV had resisted but their employers had come under pressure. After seizing power last year, the Taliban have increasingly imposed restrictions on women's lives in recent weeks. Wearing hijabs and face-covering veils, women presented and reported on news bulletins and other programs across popular channels such as TOLONews, Ariana Television, Shamshad TV and 1TV. After some women initially refused to comply, a Taliban official said they would talk to the managers and guardians of the presenters, who face the prospect of being penalized. Most Muslims around the world do not consider women covering their faces in public to be a mandatory part of the religion, and the Taliban initially appeared to be adopting a more flexible approach after seizing control of the country in August last year. But in recent weeks, they have imposed a series of restrictions on women's lives, including assigning separate days for them to visit public parks and barring them from making longer journeys without a male guardian.