



► What are human rights?

Human rights represent a fundamental area of international law which developed following the atrocities committed during World War I and II. Amongst the first instruments is the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) - championed by Eleanor Roosevelt – marking the first time that a statement existed that human rights do not simply belong to the national level but exist on the international plane as well. Subsequently, human rights were defined internationally as we know them today – rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of the nationality, place of residence, sex, national/ethnic origin, colour, religion, language or any other status without discrimination. These rights are all universal, inalienable, interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. They are subject to national implementation and international protection. Therefore, it remains the responsibility of states to act in certain ways or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups.



LOCAL

Monday
14 February 2022

Lebanon – [Norway announces multi-million dollar support package for Palestinian refugees](#)
UNRWA, the organization supporting 479,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, has faced an existential economic crisis the past several years. The Norwegian Foreign Minister announced last week a multi million dollar financial support package over four years. The funding will ensure continued access to vital services for Palestinian refugees in the occupied West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

Lebanon – [A tale of opportunity and need: Illegal logging is rife in North Lebanon](#)
Unpermitted logging in Lebanon's mountainous regions has increased in the last year, driven by need and opportunity. After wildfires, locals flock to the burn sites to collect firewood. After the Interior Ministry claimed that several wildfires in the past years appeared to be set intentionally, the ministry is investigating suspicions that the fires were set to create an opportunity for firewood collection.

Tuesday
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Lebanon – [1 in 2 children at risk of violence and exploitation in Lebanon](#)
The economic crisis has left one in two children in Lebanon at serious risk of physical, emotional, or sexual violence. According to social worker Darine Abou Fakher, mass unemployment has caused parents to take out their distress on their children. Particularly among refugee populations, child labor is on the rise as families struggle to make ends meet.

Wednesday
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Lebanon – [Inside Lebanon's solar revolution](#)

As electricity and fuel are ever more scarce, Lebanese are looking to possible energy alternatives, such as solar power.

Lebanon – [Water infrastructure on the brink: Amid ongoing electricity crisis, Lebanese communities struggle with water cuts](#)

Lebanon's water network is on the brink of collapse as the UN program that has been supplementing water establishments' supply of diesel to run generators is set to end at the end of this month. Although Lebanon is a water-rich country, electricity cuts are straining the water supply network.

Thursday
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Beirut – [Homelessness prevails in areas affected by port blast](#)

The Housing Monitor released a report finding that in areas most affected by the port blast, vulnerable communities such as the elderly, refugees, migrant workers, women, and members of the LGBTQ community are under the highest threat of homelessness and displacement. The Housing Monitor criticized the Protection of the Damaged Areas and Support of Reconstruction Law for socio-economic elements of reconstruction and urban planning.

Friday
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Beirut – [‘Listen to our pleas’: Beirut blast victims demand global support](#)

A dozen teenagers rallied outside of the French Embassy in Beirut last week to call for an international inquiry to push forward the local investigation into those responsible for the devastating port explosion. Despite praise for Judge Tarek Bitar's resistance to political pressure in his investigation, more families of the blast's victims are backing calls for the international community to support judge Bitar in an advisory role via a United Nations-mandated fact-finding mission.

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Beirut – [Relatives of Beirut blast victims demonstrate against demolition of port silos](#)

Around 100 relatives of the victims of the catastrophic 2020 port explosion gathered at the port on Sunday to protest a state proposal to demolish the grain silos warped and wrecked by the blast. In individual interviews, the families expressed their anger over discussions of removing the silos while the search for remains of loved ones continues. Some of the relatives believe the proposal is a way to erase the memory of the disaster before upcoming elections.



Monday
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Occupied Palestine – [Arrests made as Israeli lawmaker visits East Jerusalem flashpoint](#)

Far-right Jewish politician, Itamar Ben Gvi, opened a parliamentary office in the flashpoint East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah. As Ben Gvi called on his supporters to gather in the area, Palestinians were called on to do the same. As scuffles broke out, Israeli police arrested eight people for their involvement. More than 200 Jewish settlers live in East Jerusalem, and settler efforts to expand their presence have increased in recent years.

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

Israeli soldiers entered Jenin in the Occupied West Bank to demolish the home of a man accused of killing an Israeli, and shot dead a teenage Palestinian in confrontations near the home. The Israeli military arrived with a military bulldozer and prevented vehicles from entering the area. Palestinians from neighboring villages arrived on foot to protest the demolition before the army injured dozens with live ammunition and rubber coated bullets. The Palestinian Red Crescent said its ambulances were prevented from accessing the village.

Sudan – [Sudan arrests former ruling council member again](#)

Sudanese authorities arrested a former member of the civilian-led government in the latest wave of arrests since the military coup in October. Security forces stopped Mohamed al-Faki Suleiman, a member of the Unionist Alliance party, while he was driving home in Khartoum. This was al-Faki's second time under arrest since the coup, an episode that could derail a fragile political transition to full civilian rule.

Wednesday
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Syria – [Civilians despair as Idlib hospitals shut down due to budget cuts](#)

More than a dozen hospitals run by nonprofits have recently closed in Idlib due to lack of funding. The living conditions in Idlib grow more dire as 97 percent of the population live in extreme poverty and 80 percent rely on food assistance daily. Medical staff and humanitarian agencies say funding gaps are not a new issue, but the recent cuts come at a time when hospitals are already strained following heavy snowstorms and rampant respiratory diseases among children.

Syria / Iran – [Human rights lawyers in bid to bring Syrian, Iranian war-crime cases to court](#)

The Iran Human Rights Documentation Center is attempting to bring cases of war crimes allegedly committed by Iranian and Syrian military officials to the International Criminal Court (ICC). The evidence being presented in The Hague says the Syrian civilians felt forced to flee in the face of bombardments, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest, and detention, along with other civil liberty abuses. It adds that Iranian-backed militias, including Lebanon's Hezbollah, attacked their towns and cities with the help of armed factions of the Syrian government.

Syria – [UN envoy to Syria expects constitutional talks to resume](#)

The UN's special envoy for Syria said Wednesday he expects a committee representing the Syrian government and the opposition to resume talks next month over draft constitutional reforms. Talks stalled late last year after the Syrian regime refused to negotiate on revisions to the country's constitution.

Sudan – [Over 100 Sudanese detainees, including high-profile politicians, start hunger strike](#)

More than 100 Sudanese detainees, including high-profile politicians, began a hunger strike on Tuesday, as part of a protest movement against an Oct. 25 army coup that ended a civilian-military power-sharing arrangement. "More than 100 unlawful detainees in Soba prison entered today in an open hunger strike due to their unjustified and illegal detention," the Defense Committee for the Unlawfully Detained and Martyrs of Arbitrary Killings said in a statement.

Egypt – [Egypt: Rights Defender's Imprisoned Father At Risk](#)

Egyptian authorities denied healthcare to detainee Salah Soltan, an official in the government of former President Mohamed Morsy and the father of human rights defender Mohamed Soltan. Soltan has been detained since September 2013 and subjected to enforced disappearance since June 2020. During a brief supervised visit, his relative reported he was unable to support his own weight and was carried into the room by two guards. Soltan's deteriorating health appears to be the result of reprisals for his son Mohamed's advocacy in the US," said Joe Stork, deputy Middle East and North Africa director at Human Rights Watch.

Kuwait – [Kuwait Overturns Law Used to Prosecute Transgender People](#)

Kuwait's constitutional court issued a landmark decision for transgender rights in the Middle East on Wednesday. The court overturned a law that authorities had used to prosecute transgender people, saying the statute violated Kuwaitis' right to personal freedom. The law, Article 198, criminalized "imitation of the opposite sex," giving Kuwaiti authorities free rein to stop, arrest and prosecute people whose appearance did not match the gender marked on their official identification card.

Tunisia – [Does new decree mark the end of judicial independence in Tunisia?](#)

Tunisia's High Judicial Council issued a statement strongly condemning President Kais Saied's decision to form a temporary judicial authority to replace the dissolved Supreme Judicial Council. The Council called the provisions of the President's decree an "attack on the independence of the judiciary" and "a violation of the fundamental rights of magistrates". The decree allows the president to control appointments, promotions, transfers and postings of judges, and further bans the judiciary from going on strike.

Sudan – [Sudanese security forces embark on abduction spree of protesters](#)

In recent weeks, Sudanese authorities have ramped up a campaign of arbitrary arrests of protestors across Sudan. In Khartoum's Soba prison alone, at 150 people are held without due process. Security forces have abducted protesters and politicians from their homes, offices, and even hospitals – as well as killed 81 people.

Jordan – [‘Elephant in the room’: Jordanian women and equal rights](#)

Tensions over a new amendment to Jordan's constitution erupted into a fistfight in parliament. The amendment passed last month changed the title of the second chapter of the constitution to "Rights and duties of Jordanian men and Jordanian women". Women's rights activists argue the amendment is merely a symbolic nod towards women's rights and does little to improve the constitution's support for women. On the opposing side, a member of the Islamic Action Front argues the change will have long lasting dangerous repercussions on family affairs laws.

Sudan – [Violence in Darfur lays bare deepening crisis](#)

The military coup that rocked Sudan last year left a widening security gap in Darfur, where tribal clashes, lootings, rape, and anti-coup protests have surged. Disputes over land, livestock, access to water and grazing have since October triggered a spike in conflict that has left around 250 people killed in fighting between herders and farmers. The renewed violence has displaced thousands, forcing already uprooted people to flee within Darfur and over the border to Chad.

Syria – [Failure to stop Assad's aid abuses threatens entire region, analysts warn](#)

Center for Strategic and International Study (CSIS) published a report detailing how Syrian President Bashar al-Assad turned billions of dollars in foreign assistance into profits that reward loyalists and punish opposition. The regime tightened its grip on international aid agencies, restricting access to areas not under regime control, in addition to restricting food and water access to those living in rebel-held territory.

Syria – [Conflict and Climate Change Ravage Syria's Agricultural Heartland](#)

A prolonged drought in northeast Syria is threatening to destabilize the region ravaged by a decade of war, a devastated economy, damaged infrastructure and increasing poverty. The World Food Program reported last year that nearly half the population did not have enough food. Farmers cannot afford the diesel to run water pumps to replace the low rainfall of recent years, and the wheat they do grow is lower quality and earns a lower price than it would have before the drought. Climate change is only part of the problem for the semi-autonomous region. They have to sell most of their crop to Damascus leaving little for themselves, and Turkey controls the water supply and is suspected of limiting water to areas under control of the Kurds, who Turkey considers an enemy.

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Sunday**

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INTERNATIONAL

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Myanmar – [Myanmar: Rohingya Genocide Case Steps Toward Justice](#)

Gambia brought a case against Myanmar in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) alleging that the military's atrocities in Rakhine State against Rohingya Muslims violate the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Genocide Convention). During the upcoming February hearings, representatives of Myanmar and Gambia will present arguments as to whether the ICJ has jurisdiction to examine the genocide claims against Myanmar. The ICJ granted Gambia's request in 2019 for provisional measures to protect the Rohingya remaining in Myanmar from genocide, yet Human Rights Watch and others have documented ongoing grave abuses against the 600,000 Rohingya remaining in Myanmar since the measures were ordered.

Malaysia – [Workers Sue Dyson on Allegations of Forced Labor in Malaysian Supplier](#)

Migrant workers from Nepal and Bangladesh are suing household appliance manufacturer, Dyson, over complaints of forced labor and other dangerous working conditions at one of its supplier factories in Malaysia. Dyson conducts audits of its business by outside inspectors. However, human rights activists argue that inspections spanning only a few days have limited ability to identify and prevent forced labor.

Cameroon – [Cameroon: 2 Years On, Massacre Victims Await Justice](#)

The trial of 21 people accused of involvement in the killings of 21 civilians in Ngarbuh, in Cameroon's North-West region, on February 14, 2020, has dragged on for 14 months. The lack of progress is compounded by the limited opportunity for access and participation by victims' families, the lack of probative witnesses, and the fact that senior officers with command responsibility have not been arrested or charged. Human Rights Watch research concluded that government forces and armed ethnic Fulani killed 21 civilians in Ngarbuh, including 13 children and a pregnant woman in a reprisal operation against the community suspected of harboring separatist fighters.

Tuesday
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India – [India's Hijab Debate Fueled by Divisive Communal Politics](#)

The recent protests in India's Karnataka state over the wearing of the hijab, or headscarf, in educational institutions have exposed communal rifts in India that are increasingly fueled by divisive political campaigns. The rifts have led schools to close temporarily over the hijab issue. The Karnataka government has backed the ban on Muslim female students from wearing the hijab in classrooms, claiming it is for public safety. Many Indians have taken to social media to express discriminatory and misogynist views; or to argue against them.

Nigeria – [Nigeria's Kano State Needs Child Protection Law](#)

The Federation of Women Lawyers Kano staged a peaceful protest last week to demand the Kano state adopt the Child Protection Bill. The issue has gained momentum in the wake a grisly of a five-year-old girl, yet child rights abuses, such as child marriage and sexual violence, remain widespread in Kano state.

Thursday
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United States – [Florida Advances 'Don't Say Gay' Bill](#)

On Tuesday, a Florida committee advanced a bill that would restrict discussions of sexual orientation and gender identity in schools. The bill would ban discussing these issues in primary school and would limit discussions in other grades if not deemed "age-appropriate". The bill would likely deter open discussions and support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students.

Iraq – [Iraq Detains More than 1,000 Children as ISIS Suspects](#)

Iraqi authorities detained over 1,000 children, some as young as nine years old, last year on national security charges, primarily for suspected links with the Islamic State. Although ISIS attacks have dropped considerably since the group lost most of its territory four years ago, the report finds that the detention of children has significantly increased. Many of these children were arrested on dubious evidence and tortured into confessions of ISIS involvement, according to Human Rights Watch.

Friday
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Ukraine – [Ukraine: Shelling Residential Areas Puts Civilians at Risk](#)

The shelling of a school, a kindergarten, and residential areas along the line of contact in eastern Ukraine on Thursday, apparently by Russia-backed armed groups, injured civilians and damaged civilian infrastructure. The attacks, which injured at least four civilians, severely damaged or destroyed several homes. Attacks that indiscriminately strike civilian objects violate international humanitarian law, or the laws of war, and if committed willfully amount to war crimes, said Human Rights Watch.

Canada – [Canadian Religious Groups Speak Out on Immigration Detention](#)

Religious organizations across Canada urged the federal and provincial governments to get on a path toward abolishing immigration detention following a key interfaith gathering to discuss the issue on Thursday. Religious communities have been at the forefront of welcoming refugees across Canada for decades. Despite their efforts, the Canadian government has held tens of thousands of people in immigration detention over the past decade; rather than a warm welcome, many people are met here with handcuffs.

Rwanda – [Still No Answers 2 Years After Rwanda Singer Found Dead](#)

On February 13, 2020, the popular Rwandan singer Kizito Mihigo was arrested and accused of attempting to cross illegally into Burundi. Authorities said he was trying to join “terrorist groups” and was breaching the terms of his release from prison in 2018. The singer, himself a survivor of the Tutsi genocide, released a song in 2014 that expressed compassion not only for the victims of the 1994 genocide, but also obliquely for the Hutus killed by soldiers of the current ruling party. The official narrative remains that revenge killings by RPF soldiers were isolated cases dealt with internally.

Ethiopia – [Facebook 'lets vigilantes in Ethiopia incite ethnic killing'](#)

Facebook is under renewed scrutiny this weekend, accused of continuing to allow activists to incite ethnic massacres in Ethiopia’s escalating war. Despite being aware it helps directly fuel tensions, Facebook is still letting users post content inciting violence through hate and misinformation.

China – [Pelosi Warns US Olympic Athletes Not to Anger China With Protests](#)

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi discouraged Olympic athletes from protesting at the opening ceremony in Beijing on Thursday. Pelosi said that she and other politicians would speak out against China’s human rights record, but that athletes would be at risk if they use their platforms to protest. Although it is unclear what repercussions athletes would face for speaking out, Some national teams, including the United States and Canada, have warned their athletes that there is potential legal jeopardy in speaking out – from both the International Olympic Committee and China’s judicial system.

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