

HUMAN RIGHTS MONITOR



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HUMAN RIGHTS MONITOR

Monthly Press Monitoring of Human Rights News in The Middle East and North Africa

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AFGHANISTAN

Taliban ban women's beauty salons and push women further out of public life

The Afghanistan government order has continued the repeated exclusion of women from public spaces since they initially seized power in August in 2021. These restrictions include banning girls and women from education above sixth grade level, banning women from most forms of employment, restricting their freedom of movement, their freedom of expression and freedom of association.

The restriction of public spaces took a more specific form when the government recently banned beauty salons. This was one of the last working sectors of women in the country, a rare space where women and girls could find community and support outside of their homes.

Source: [AlJazeera](#)

ALGERIA

Guantanamo Bay prisoner released after 21 years of detention without charges

On 20 April 2023, Saeed Bakhouch, an Algerian prisoner was released from Guantanamo Bay prison. Detained for 21 years, he was arrested in Pakistan a few months after the attacks of September 11, 2001. He was never charged by the US government.

However, on his return home, he was arrested again by the Algerian authorities. According to The Intercept, “the U.S. provided the Algerian government with harmful and unfounded allegations about Bakhouch’s past – information that led to his detention – and that Bakhouch is imprisoned under severe conditions which violate international law” Lawyer H. Candace Gorman warns about her client’s situation: “He was being stripped of all of his rights.”

Saeed Bakhouch is currently held in provisional detention under conditions of difficult incarceration.

Source: [The Intercept](#), [CRRJustice](#)

BAHRAIN

British MPs and rights groups demand answers after government removes Bahrain from human rights priority list

Earlier this month, the United Kingdom removed the Kingdom of Bahrain from its list of human rights priority countries. The decision was revealed in the UK government’s 2022 Human Rights and Democracy Report.

In a statement, the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) explained that “the decision to remove Bahrain from the Human Rights Country list reflects their consistent progress in this area over a number of years, which has been directly supported by the UK”.

However, British legislators and rights groups have opposed the decision, arguing that no improvements have been made to the human rights situation in Bahrain. Rights groups and MPs have also pressured authorities to explain exactly how the decision was made, and accused the government of putting its principles “up for auction,” as the decision to remove Bahrain from the human rights list was made 10 days after the oil-rich country pledged to invest £1bn in the UK.

“Whatever criteria they are using don’t seem to have a basis in human rights, but rather are influenced by British economic interests” stated Niku Jafarnia – Bahrain and Yemen researcher for Human Rights Watch. She also added that “a country... where people continue to be imprisoned and tortured for exercising their freedom of belief and religion, and where just last month Bahraini authorities blocked access for Shia Bahrainis to the largest Shia Friday prayers, is not a country that has a 'long tradition of respecting and enabling freedom of religion and beliefs.’”

Source: [PressTV](#), [UK Gov](#), [Middle East Eye](#)

EGYPT

Egypt pardons political prisoners

On Wednesday 19th of July, Egypt granted presidential pardon to two political prisoners: Patrick George Zaki and Mohamed Al-Baqer.

Patrick George Zaki, a human rights activist and researcher at the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), was pardoned the day following his conviction. Zaki was arrested in 2020, spent over 20 months in pretrial detention, before being

convicted for “disseminating false news about the country’s internal conditions that would disturb security and social peace” over an article he wrote on the discrimination faced by Egypt’s Coptic Christian minority.

Mohamed Al-Baqer, lawyer and human rights activist, was arrested in 2019 for trying to represent the well-known human rights activist Alaa Abdel Al-Fattah. Al-Baqer was detained for two years on pre-trial detention and later sentenced, in December 2021, for four years in prison before receiving presidential pardon earlier this month. He was charged for spreading fake news and for belonging to a terrorist organization.

For more information, check out ACHRS’ [statement](#)

Source: [Frontline Defenders](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [New York Times](#)

US senators and rights groups urges Biden to withhold military aid to Egypt over human rights concerns

On July 28th, a group of 11 US senators issued a letter to Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, urging Washington to withhold \$320 million of Foreign Military Financing destined to Egypt. The lawmakers explained that Egypt’s “human rights record has continued to deteriorate, despite the Egyptian government’s claims to the contrary.”

“The [Egyptian] government has not only failed to investigate allegations of human rights abuses, it has also continued to commit ‘significant human rights’ violations such as extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearance, torture, and life-threatening prison conditions, and sever restrictions on freedoms of expression, assembly, and associations” stated the letter.

Furthermore, more than 20 human rights groups have also urged the United States to cut off its military aid to Egypt, accusing the President Al-Sisi of carrying out a “merciless crackdown on the press, political opposition, and civil society.”

Source: [Al Jazeera](#), [US Senate](#), [Middle East Eye](#)



Photo source: Al Jazeera

IRAN

Authorities intensify punishments against women who refuse the hijab

For several months, Iranian authorities have intensified the oppression of women and girls in Iran who choose not to wear headscarves in public. In mid-July, the authorities announced the reintroduction of patrols making sure that women comply with the compulsory veiling regulations throughout the country. They threatened that women who disobey the norms will be “referred to the judiciary.” The patrols have been observed in various cities to confront, warn or arrest women who are not complying with the compulsory veiling regulations. The patrol team includes chador-clad female agents, plainclothes male agents and uninformed police officials.

At the same time, concerning videos circulated on social media, in which security forces were violently assaulting women while arresting them. The officers threw them into police cars and fired teargas into crowds of people who attempted to stop the arrest of the women.

According to the report of Amnesty International, courts have degrading punishments for women who refused to comply with compulsory veiling. Amnesty adds that the punishments for women included washing corpses, having to clean at governmental buildings or taking counseling classes for “anti-social behavior”.

Source: [Amnesty International](#)

55 Lawyers were summoned after declaring support for Mahsa Amini’s family

In Bukan, the Kurdistan province in Iran, 55 Lawyers were summoned after signing a statement about providing legal assistance to Mahsa Amini’s family. In the statement the lawyers declared to pursue justice in the case of Mahsa Amini. According to the Kurdistan Human Rights Network, the prosecutor of Bukan wanted to force the lawyer to drop the statement. When they refused, the prosecutor filed charges against them. After the death of Mahsa Amini in a detention cell of the morality police, protests flared up in Iran.

Source: [Human Rights Watch](#)

Two students and four journalists face trial after protests

Two Iranian student protesters had to appear in front of the court on July 10. Hasti Amiri and Zia Nabavi are on trial under the accusation of “propaganda against the state,” on the grounds of their participation in a protest against the widespread poisoning of students at schools.

Source: [Human Rights Watch](#)

Three Jordanian journalists are on trial due to “Propaganda” and “national security” charges. The journalists Saeideh Shafiei, Mehrnoush Zarei Henzaki and Nasim Sultan Beigi face up to ten years of prison due to their reporting and writing on social media. Furthermore, the prominent activist and journalist Golrokh Iraee faces a 5-year prison sentence. This decision of an Iranian appeals court came in the wake of the protests that were sparked by the death of Mahsa Amini.

Source: [Human Rights Watch](#), [AL-monitor](#), [Arab News](#)

IRAQ

Human rights organization banned due to support of the LGBT-Community

In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, a court shut down the human rights organization Rasan because of “its activities in the field of homosexuality.” Rasan is a human rights organization focusing on women’s rights, domestic violence and rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (LGBT). In the Kurdistan region of Iraq, Rasan was the only organization that openly stood up for the rights of the LGBT-Community in the region.

Supposedly, the primary reason for the ban was not due to the activities of the organization, but their logo consisting of the colors of the rainbow, which represents a symbol of the LGBT-Community worldwide. The court order declared that “the expert committee confirmed that the logo of the organization is a complete expression of its activities in the field of homosexuality.”

Rasan has filed an appeal, however, the organization remains closed until the end of the pending appeal process. The shutdown of Rasan is part of a wider trend of oppression and discrimination against the LGBT-Community and their constituency, carried out by local Kurdish authorities. Only recently, Human Rights Watch has reported how armed groups in Iraq, including the regional government, have attacked LGBT-individuals and targeted them online.

Source: [Human Rights Watch](#)

JORDAN

Jordan approves a new controversial cybercrime law

On July 27th, Jordan’s parliament approved a first draft of a new controversial cybercrime law, empowering the government for more control over online content. The new law, which aims to replace Jordan’s 2015 cybercrime law, consists of 41 articles compared to the previous law’s 15 articles. According to Faisal Al-Shboul, an official spokesperson, the law aims to strengthen online security and will also introduce a stricter penalty to combat rising online crimes.

Several rights groups have criticized the new legislation, warning that “it will further quash civil liberties.” Reuters explained that “the measure tightens prison sentences and penalties for any website, social media platform or person responsible for a public account deemed to have violated privacy and a host of other provisions.”

While the new law was being examined in parliament, Human Rights Watch (HRW) and 13 other organizations released a joint statement, urging the government to withdraw the proposed cybercrime law before parliament. According to them, “the draft legislation will jeopardize digital rights, including freedom of expression and the right to information, and will ultimately fail in achieving the Jordanian government’s stated goals of tackling ‘disinformation,’ ‘hate speech,’ and online defamation.”

The statement lists four main reasons in which the “draft law fails to meet international human rights standards and principles included in various digital rights conventions already ratified by Jordan”. Those are: 1) It uses overly broad, vaguely defined terms, 2) It will hamper free expression and access to information, and increase online censorship, 3) It will weaken online anonymity, 4) It introduces new controls over social media.

Source: [Jordan News](#), [HRW](#), [Arab News](#), [Reuters](#)



Photo source: Gerald/Pixabay

KUWAIT

Five prisoners executed

In a statement issued on the 16th of March, Amnesty International published the results of its investigation into the cases of detained minors arrested during and after protests. The report exposed torture methods used by Iranian forces, including electrical discharge, lashing and sexual abuse.

Human Rights Watch also released a statement on 25 April denouncing violations of the rights of children, in the form of acts of torture, assaults, killings, arrests at schools, lack of medical care, unfair trials, and cases of disappearances.

This violence is part of a strategy to crush the revolts and dissuade many minors from their peaceful participation by humiliating and punishing them. Children and their families are being threatened with prison or death sentences if they do not confess and sign letters of repentance. Iranian rights groups have reported that since August 2022, 537 people have been killed in the context of the protests, and at least 68 of these people were children.

Sources: [HRW](#), [Amnesty International](#)

LEBANON

Thousands of Syrians are being deported regardless of legal status

According to a report from the beginning of July by Human Rights Watch, thousands of Syrians have been deported back to Syria between April and May 2023. The deportations, carried out by the Lebanese Armed Forces, have generally affected Syrians without legal status, among them were also unaccompanied children. Deported Syrians state that the Lebanese authorities did not consider their refugee status, even if they were registered as refugees with UNHCR, the United Nations refugee agency. Deportees that expressed to army officials that they were registered refugees and that they feared being deported, were ignored. Moreover, several people reported violence and abuses like beating, threats or sexual harassment.

A humanitarian source indicated that since April, there have been over one thousand deportations of Syrian refugees. Humanitarian workers confirm that this year's deportations are the most severe. These deportations violate Lebanon's obligations as a signatory to the UN Convention Against Torture and contradict the international law principle of non-refoulement. The principle of non-refoulement prohibits the forced return of individuals to countries where they risk being tortured or persecuted.

Source: [HRW](#)

Famous Lebanese journalist faces one-year prison sentence

The famous Lebanese journalist Dima Sadek was sentenced to one year in prison for defamation and slander. This after Sadek described the actions of the Free Patriotic Movement, one of the largest political parties in the country, as "racist" and "Nazi-Like". Now, the journalist faces a one year jail sentence and a fine of 110 Million Lebanese pounds. Activists and organizations like Amnesty International condemned the verdict calling it a "judicial escalation in the criminalization of freedom of expression in Lebanon." The journalist Sadek has been subject to controversies for several years for exposing corruption and criticizing powerful parties.

Source: [AL-Monitor](#)



Photo source: Getty images

LIBYA

Stranded Sub-Saharan Migrants Rescued by Libyan Authorities

A group of sub-saharan African migrants were recently rescued by Libyan police officers along the Tunisia-Libya border. Many of these migrants were stranded along the border due to the growing intolerance of sub-saharan illegal migration into Tunisia fueled by the xenophobic comments from Tunisian president, Kais Saied, who stated this migration was changing Tunisia's demographic make-up.

Many of these migrants were dehydrated and exhausted from sitting in the sand, trying to take shelter in temperatures beyond 40 degrees ([Vatican News](#)). They were rescued during police patrols along the border areas with Tunisia between Dahra and Tawilat Al-Rutba.

This incident comes in the following week after the European Union finalized a deal with Tunisia to boost trade relations and dissipate illegal migration from Tunisia to the continent. Under this agreement, Brussels is to provide cash to Tunisia in exchange for stronger border controls, however, this brings the question of how this may impact Libya's border and intake of stranded migrants.

Following the International Conference on Development and Migration, however, Head of Libyan Presidential Council and Head of Government of National Unity, Abdulhamid Al-Dbeibah, met with Italian Foreign Minister, Antonio Tajani. In this meeting, the Italian Foreign Minister announced the location of 8.5 million Euros for three projects in Libya. The money would be used to help train local authorities in abilities to manage illegal migration in line with human rights and voluntary return of migration, amongst other intentions.

Source: [Arab News](#), [Al Arabiya](#), [Middle East Monitor](#)

United Nations Expresses Serious Concern over Libyan Human Rights towards Migration

In February of this year, around 120 migrants and refugees were released by Libyan Directorate for Combating Illegal Migration (DCIM) from a warehouse in Tazirbu. These freed migrants and refugees, among them some suspected to be victims of trafficking, were taken to an undisclosed location and met with the threshold of enforced disappearance.

Over the past two years, an estimated additional 700 individuals were allegedly released and transferred to Libyan detention centers after being held captive and tortured for ransom in various locations throughout the country. It is suspected that in these locations many of the migrants and refugees were subjected to serious human rights violations including torture, forced starvation, and sexual violence.

On the 21st of July, United Nations experts expressed their serious concern about this history of violence and human rights abuses towards the migrants and refugees in Libya. They cite that the subsequent timeline of migrants being released by Libyan authorities and then transferred to unknown detention centers have only made these migrants at more risk towards human rights violations.

United Nations experts told [Jurist](#), a non-profit online legal news service: “This is not an isolated incident, and we are very concerned about the situation of many more migrants and refugees, including victims of trafficking, who have also been transferred to detention centres where no humanitarian agencies, lawyers or civil society organizations have been granted access.”

Source: [Jurist](#), [HRW](#), [OHCHR](#), [Lawyersrankings](#)

MOROCCO AND WESTERN SAHARA

Polisario Front and rights groups denounce ongoing human rights violations in Western Sahara

In a statement published on July 17, the representative of the Polisario Front at the United Nations and in Switzerland – Bashir Oubi Boushraya – declared that Sahrawi cities, occupied by Morocco, “continue to be the scenes of all forms of odious and systematic human rights violations, in the face of the deafening silence of the international community”.

In his statement, Oubi Boushraya also criticizes Morocco and “certain countries within the Security Council” for having opposed the establishment of a human rights monitoring mechanism within the United Nation’s Mission for Western Sahara – MINURSO – that would facilitate the monitoring and reporting on human rights violations. He adds that the endowment of such a mechanism would “create a favorable climate necessary for the revival of any political process.”

Furthermore, on July 23, the FreedomSun Defenders – a human rights organization for the protection of Sahrawi human rights activists – released a statement expressing its concern over the increased attack on Sahrawi human rights defenders. It also denounces the recent “assassination attempt on Sahrawi human rights defender and journalist Rachid Saghir in the city of Dakhla (occupied territories) by Moroccan settlers...” Furthermore, the statement goes on to say that the organization “is deeply troubled by the international community’s apparent inertia in condemning these atrocious crimes committed by Moroccan settlers in broad daylight” and that “the community’s disregard for the Moroccan occupation’s targeting of Sahrawi human rights activists is a matter of great concern.”

Source: [Sahara Press Service](#), [FreedomSun Defender](#)



Photo source: Cuyahoga/Pixabay

OMAN

No News

No news related to human rights recorded

PALESTINE

Israel's biggest raid in decades in the Jenin Refugee Camp

On the 3rd and 4th of July 2023, Israeli forces launched one of their biggest military operations in the occupied West Bank. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) raided the Jenin refugee camp striking “terrorist infrastructure” in an “extensive counterterrorism effort in the area of the city Jenin and the Jenin Camp,” according to an official statement. 12 people were killed, among them four children and another 140 injured.

According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) at least 3500 Palestine Refugees were forced to flee their homes and nearly 1000 homes in the camp were damaged. 41 of them were destroyed and more than 70 were severely damaged. Nine kilometers of water and sewage networks and almost four kilometers of roads were destroyed as well. UNRWA is now seeking funding of \$23.8 million for a multi-sectoral emergency response.

Source: [UNRWA](#), [ACHRS](#)

QATAR

Three teenagers trapped in Qatar, 8 months after the end of the World Cup

Going to work in Qatar was a great opportunity for Papasecka (19), Ebrima (18) and Saikou (16), all from Gambia. After being recruited in their country, they decide to leave in the hope of having a better life and being able to help their family. They sold their family land for £2,480 and used the funds to go to Qatar. Often migrants who are minors, have their age modified to be able to leave through a work visa, which is only accessible to adults.

There is disillusionment towards an easy new future for these migrants. Their reality is that they have to look for work on their own and are more than often exploited by unscrupulous employers. Interviewed by The Guardian, they explain, “unpaid wages, threats of eviction, passport confiscation and 12-hour shifts on construction sites in “unforgiving weather.”

Recruited by Stark Security Services, the teenagers become security agents for the World Cup that takes place in the country between November 20 and December 18, 2022. They are happy: “We were all fortunate to have a security post at such a prestigious ceremony... if [only] we knew how wrong we were.” A few days after the final of the tournament, Papasecka, Ebrima and Saikou were dismissed without having received their full salary.

At the same time, another 200 employees of the same security company decided to go to the headquarters of Stark Security Services to demonstrate against their unfair treatment. Three were arrested by the police and sentenced to prison, the others were deported.

The three teenagers who did not go to the demonstration are still trapped in Qatar.

Since the beginning of the year, they have been living in a “government shelter” where they are supervised. They compare the place to a “prison.” Between January and February, they cannot leave to work. When allowed, the identity documents of two of them expired and they could no longer find work.

Qatar stated they were doing their best to ensure that their workers can return home and receive their wages.

Source: [The Guardian](#), [Arab News](#)

SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi Arabia Denies Human Rights Abuses Despite Continuation of Executions

In a statement sent to the United Nations in Geneva, Saudi Arabia responded to the United Nations Human Rights Council report criticizing the continuation of executions towards political detainees. A letter from the permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations denying the accusation that three men were sentenced to death for criticizing the new Neom project in Saudi Arabia.

Neom is a new project located in the northwest of Saudi Arabia to create a technologically advanced city that, according to their [website](#), “will provide residents with the enhanced livability while protecting 95% of the surrounding natural landscape.” The three men, Shadli, Ibrahim, and Atallah Al-Kuwaiti from the Huwaitat tribe were all sentenced to death. Their conviction was related to the men’s peaceful opposition to forced evictions and residents’ displacement for the state-led Neom megacity project.

Saudi Arabia claimed that these men were, instead, connected to the terrorist organizations of Daesh and Al-Qaeda. In their response, they stated “the information contained in the joint communication is inaccurate and contains false allegations and claims that are only based solely on information received from

the source without substantiation or evidence. The joint communication alleged that the penalties imposed on the said persons were simply for expressing their opposition to evictions, which is totally untrue. The penalties imposed on them were for being convicted of terrorist offenses”.

Source: [OHCHR](#), [ALQST](#), [Dezeen](#)

SUDAN

Clashes between the RSF and the Sudanese army intensify causing increasing civilian deaths

Entering into their twelfth week, the clashes between Sudan’s army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) continues to intensify in the country’s capital and western regions. In Darfur, a region of Western Sudan, there have been increased accounts of innocent civilians being killed on foot by the RSF-supported militia. This has been written in an account released by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner (OHCHR) for Human Rights earlier this month.

The violence in Darfur has mirrored violent accounts throughout history as they witnessed dead bodies scattered along the road – and the stench of decomposition plaguing the air. Spokesperson for OHCHR, Ravina Shamdasani, stated that OHCHR condemns the killing of people fleeing their communities and ending the hate speech enacted by the RSF.

Despite the violence, there are multiple concerns regarding humanitarian aid being sent and received to vulnerable Sudanese communities. Due to bureaucratic obstacles, funding shortages, and security constraints imposed by local authorities, the delivery of essential aid has been fundamentally hindered. Many of the local authorities have also made it difficult to receive access to conflict-affected areas due to the disregard for humanitarian laws and concerns.

The United Nations states that more than \$3 billion is needed from international donors to support the humanitarian response in Sudan and neighboring countries that are hosting large numbers of refugees. As ACHRS prioritizes the safety and security of vulnerable populations, we implore that the violence enacted by the RSF stops as well as local authorities accept and distribute humanitarian efforts to aid vulnerable Sudanese populations.

Source: [Arab News](#), [France 24](#), [UN News](#)

SYRIA

United Nations Condemns the Detention of Syrian Children due to Parents’ Supposed ISIL Ties

The Al-Sina’a prison, the largest located in the Ghwayran region, has been the focal point of discussion regarding the continuous detention of supposed ISIL (ISIS) fighters’ children. In 2022, experts at UNICEF have stated the numbers of children detained have to exceed 850, but in a recent United Nations statement, experts have expressed concern that tens of thousands remain in arbitrary detention in northeastern Syria. This detention is similarly due to their parents’ alleged ties to ISIL in violation of international law.

Fionnuala Ni Aolain, a Special Rapporteur at the United Nations, told Al-Jazeera: “The thing I will say that concerned me the most and my team the most as we visited northeast Syria was the mass indefinite and arbitrary detention of children, particularly boys, in various types of facilities.” She further states this practice is in direct violation of international law that condemns the unending cycle of cradle-to-grave detention.

Many mothers in Northeastern Syria who have become victims to the detention of their sons have stated that this experience is the most anxiety, the most suffering, and the most psychological harm to them. Ni Aolain further states that “the rationale for taking these boys simply does not stand up to scrutiny.”

Northeastern Syria, including the Al-Hawl refugee camp, falls under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a United States-backed group. The SDF officials regularly call on foreign countries to repatriate families of ISIL fighters in camps, but these camps are dire and extreme as the temperatures exceed 50 degrees Celsius (122 degrees Fahrenheit). These camps also restrict entry as people are not freely able to come and go.

Source: [VOA News](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Arab News](#)

TUNISIA

Tunisia's expulsion of Sub-Saharan African Migrants to remote border areas despite recently signed MoU with the EU

According to several videos provided to Al Jazeera by NGOs and Libyan border agencies, Tunisian security forces expelled several hundred Sub-Saharan men, women, and children to a militarized buffer zone at the Tunisian-Libyan border. As these migrants have been put in this area, they are not able to enter Libya nor return to Tunisia, forcing them to walk into the desert without any food and water.

Tensions have been high in the country for months as Tunisian residents campaigned against the African foreigners. This has escalated the racially motivated attacks against the vulnerable population. Over time, Tunisia got to be a prominent leaving-destination for migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa.

On the 16th of July, Tunisia and the European Union signed a 1 billion “strategic partnership” deal, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), to combat human trafficking and tightening borders. According to Mounir Satouri, a French Member of the European Parliament “it is EU money on a silver platter for a president (Saied) who shifted Tunisia’s nascent democracy to an autocracy. (...) The EU is externalizing its migration management to Tunisia, even though Tunisian authorities are not respecting migrants’ rights. The signaling could not be worse.”

Source: [ACHRS](#)

TÜRKİYE

Turkish authorities arrest 154 demonstrators during a rally in commemoration to the 2015 suicide bombing victims

On July 20th in Istanbul, a rally was scheduled to commemorate the 33 victims of the 2015 suicide bombing perpetrated by IS. These people were mostly socialist activists. The rally did not take place. The city police intervened and arrested nearly 154 demonstrators. Witnesses explained that the people were surrounded and “suffocated.” According to Human Rights Watch, nearly 45 people, in relation to the protests, had already been arrested on July 17th when they distributed leaflets. They wrote in a

statement: “The court decision to hold people for pretrial detention for distributing leaflets, [...] provides only abstract reasons and no concrete evidence to justify pretrial detention as a necessary and proportionate measure.”

After their detention, the arrested activists report the insults and violence they suffered: use of tear gas, kicks, destruction of personal objects, being “dragged by the hair.”

Nearly 121 demonstrators were detained on a bus for more than 10 hours before being released. They did not have access to water or food. There was no air conditioning in the vehicle when it was very hot.

33 people remained in custody during the night following their arrest. The prosecutor questioned only four of them and released the other 29.

Most of those arrested only had access to a lawyer very late in the proceedings. According to Human Rights Watch, among the protesters were lawyers belonging to the human rights and lawyer rights centers of the Istanbul office association. One of his lawyers, Zehra Kurt, says that the police would have called lawyers “terrorists.”

On 21 July 2023, the Turkish Bar Union expressed its concern about the rights and freedoms of lawyers.

Source: [HRW](#)



Photo source: HRW

UAE

UAE's secret service carries out smear campaigns

In a series of articles published in July 2023, Médiapart reveals that the intelligence services of Abu Dhabi asked a Swiss dispensary to investigate a series of personalities from 18 European countries. The purpose of this information gathering was to carry out disinformation campaigns.

French journalist Rokhaya Diallo was on the list of targets. She says she was the victim of a smear campaign involving the United Arab Emirates. According to the campaign, she should be branded as a “Muslim Brotherhood sympathizer” (Middle East Eye). The United Arab Emirates did not react to the accusations.

Source: [Middle East Eye](#), [Mediapart](#)

YEMEN

Yemeni civil society issues a declaration for achieving post-conflict justice and reconciliation

On July 26, over 40 local and international civil society organizations issued the Yemen Declaration for Justice and Reconciliation.

The declaration sets out principles for achieving post-conflict justice and reconciliation, which are “necessary to advancing the human rights of all people in Yemen, as well as achieving a just, inclusive and sustainable peace for Yemen.” The declaration underlines the importance of seeking accountability for all perpetrators of war crimes, social cohesion, as well as redress and reparations.

An excerpt from the declaration states: “The absence of justice maintains the causes of conflict unresolved, and risks triggering future conflict and suffering. We acknowledge that a long-lasting peace can only be achieved by addressing past atrocities and responding to current demands for justice. Neglecting past grievances has contributed significantly to the ongoing conflict, and we call on all stakeholders to avoid similar errors in the future.”

Source: [Common Dreams](#), [Yemen Justice](#), [HRW](#)



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ABOUT ACHRS

ACHRS is an independent non-governmental Think Tank center advocating for the enhancement of democracy and human rights in Jordan and the MENA region. The center's five priorities are the right to life, the right to speak, the right to think, the right to participate and women's rights. ACHRS also has special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).

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