



# HUMAN RIGHTS MONITOR

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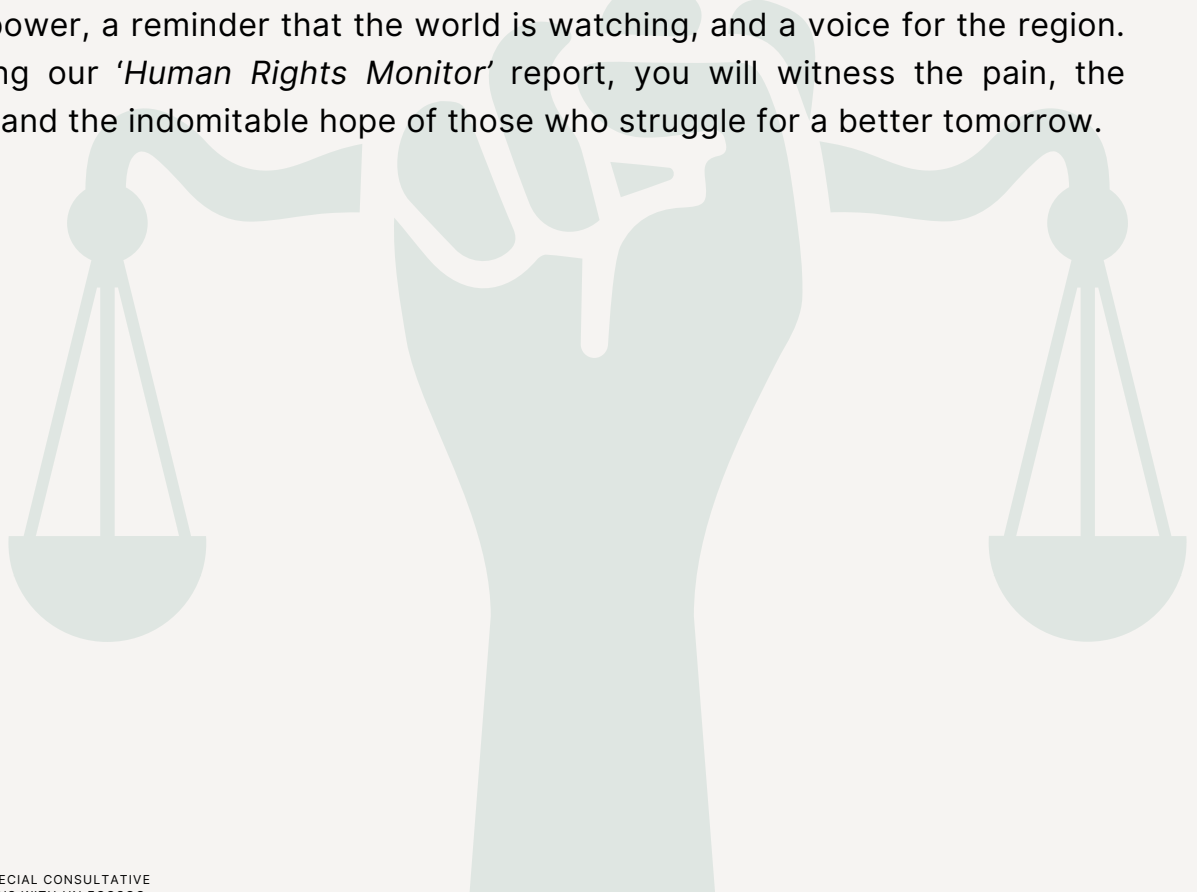
# Introduction

At the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies, our monthly human rights monitor aims to review the most recent human rights developments among our seven priorities. We provide a fact-based review on how ongoing human rights developments are affecting the MENA region. Our reports seek to amplify voices of the voiceless, demand for action and document the struggle of our time.

This month's Human Rights Monitor focuses on, inter alia:

- Political prisoner dies in UAE after years of arbitrary detention, torture, and denial of medical care
- Houthis in Yemen issue seventeen death sentences
- Arrests of journalists and activists in Algeria
- Parliamentary elections held in Egypt and Iraq
- Progress in women's employment rights in Saudi Arabia
- Launch of a digital platform to enhance youth participation in Libya
- Shrinking civic space for youth in Egypt

This report is not just a record of human rights violations but an effort to shine a light on ways of driving justice, highlighting problems and violations that must be addressed. Hence, it is calling for accountability, an appeal to those who hold the reins of power, a reminder that the world is watching, and a voice for the region. By reading our '*Human Rights Monitor*' report, you will witness the pain, the courage, and the indomitable hope of those who struggle for a better tomorrow.



# Right to Life

## Introduction

The ACHRS is against the death penalty and calls for its abolishment by all countries. Advocates for its use assert that it deters criminals from committing certain crimes. However, this is not true. A **report** by the Human Rights Council stated that there was little evidence to show that the presence of the death penalty had an impact on reducing crime levels. In practice, countries that still implement the death penalty use it as a deterrent against government critics under anti-terrorism legislation. Also, oftentimes, confessions are obtained after torture. This month's HRM reports on instances of (the threat of) the death penalty in the Arab region.

## Algeria - Political Activists Facing Execution

Ahead of his court dates on 11 and 30 November 2025, Algerian, regional, and international organizations signed a **joint statement** calling for the release of Hirak poet Mohamed Tadjadit, and for all charges against him to be dropped. Mohamed Tadjadit, along with 12 other activists, are facing terrorism-related and 'conspiracy against the state' charges which are punishable by death. Mohamed Tadjadit is in prison, despite being released under presidential pardon in November 2024, and has been imprisoned at least six times between 2019 and 2025 for his artistic expression and activism which began when he **opposed** the fifth term of former President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. The ACHRS joins the calls for the release of Mohamed Tadjadit and for all charges against him to be dropped. Additionally, ACHRS **calls** for the abolition of the death penalty in Algeria as it has been shown to not be a deterrent of crime, and is frequently used as a tool to silence government critics.

Additionally, the Minister of Justice, Lotfi Bouguemaa, **announced** harsher penalties for drug trafficking, including the death penalty in particularly serious cases. This measure, according to the Minister, is aimed at drug lords and criminal organizations, and not at drug users, who will continue to receive healthcare and access to rehabilitation programs without criminal penalties. The Minister clarified that the death penalty is to be applied only when the crime is committed in particularly sensitive contexts such as healthcare and educational facilities. The ACHRS denounces the use of the death penalty in all cases, regardless of the severity of the crime.



# Right to Life

## Iraq - Executions for Drug Trafficking and Terrorism

A criminal court in Iraq's Muthanna province has **sentenced** a man to death for carrying out a double car bombing in al-Rumaitha district in 2013. The ruling was issued under Article 4 of Iraq's Anti-Terrorism law which requires capital punishment for fatal attacks. The unnamed man is said to have detonated two explosives in an industrial zone, killing two and injuring 13 others.

The Najaf Court in Iraq has **sentenced** 22-year-old Mohammed Suleiman Ahmad Hassan to death for posting a video on his Facebook account showing Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa. The Supreme Judicial Council's Media Center denied that the sentence was over the circulation of the video, saying, in an official statement, that the sentence was due to the defendant confessing to glorifying the deceased terrorist Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, for promoting the killing of members of the Iraqi army, and the Popular Mobilization forces in Tarmiyah. Additionally, the Center said that the defendant called on individuals to join ISIS, and circulated a video of him burning an image of Imam Ali, actions described as being attempts to provoke chaos within Iraqi society. The Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is following up on the case to ensure the authenticity of the court order and its proper legal follow-up.

A **court** in Baghdad has sentenced three drug dealers to death after they were found in possession of 18 kilograms of illegal narcotics. The accused were sentenced under Article 27/First of the Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Law No. 50 of 2017, which imposes either life imprisonment or the death penalty for various drug trafficking offences.

The ACHRS calls on Iraq to adhere to its obligations under **Article 6** of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which states that nobody may be arbitrarily deprived of their life.



# Right to Life

## Kuwait - New Anti-Drug Law Includes Death Penalty for Drug Offences

Kuwait's Cabinet has **approved** a new anti-drug law which has stricter punishments for drug traffickers, dealers, and intermediaries, including the death penalty. This law prescribes the death penalty in specific cases such as supplying drugs to minors, exploiting an official position to traffic drugs, and bartering drugs for favors. Officials say the law has numerous aims, including strengthening prevention efforts as well as the treatment of drug users, and being a deterrent to drug-related crimes.

The ACHRS reiterates that it is the **certainty** of punishment, and not severity, which deters criminals from engaging in criminal behavior, and calls for Kuwait to reconsider the implementation of the new drug law.

## Saudi Arabia - Executions for Alleged Attack Plots

On November 9, Saudi authorities publicly reported **executions** of two people convicted of plotting attacks on places of worship. Saudi state media reported that the two men were accused of involvement in violent plots targeting religious sites, allegedly linked to extremist activities. While the authorities described the acts as threats to national security, civil society organizations emphasized that details of the charges, evidence, and trial proceedings have not been publicly disclosed.

Throughout mid-November, NGOs issued a **joint statement** urging an immediate halt to executions, citing a concerning surge in death penalty use since early 2025. International human rights groups also warned that many of these cases appear to follow trials that fall short of due process guarantees, including limited access to legal representation, opaque judicial procedures, and reliance on confessions reportedly extracted under coercion.

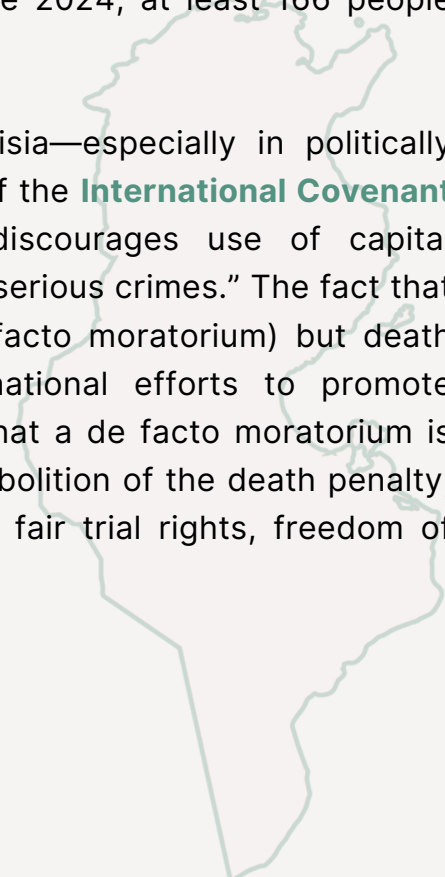
# Right to Life

These executions raise serious concerns about violations of the **UN Safeguards Guaranteeing Protection of the Rights of Those Facing the Death Penalty**. For the ACHRS, these developments represent a severe regression in the protection of the right to life, fair trial guarantees, and the dignity of defendants — underscoring the urgency of advocating for a moratorium and eventual abolition of the death penalty in Saudi Arabia.

## Tunisia - Continued Issuance of Death Sentences Despite Moratorium

Following its first periodic report to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) in October 2025, Tunisia has come under **renewed scrutiny** for continuing to issue death sentences even though it maintains a de facto execution moratorium since 1991. According to abolitionist civil society organizations, Tunisian courts handed down dozens of new death sentences in the period 2015–2025, including in 2025. As of late 2024, at least 166 people (including 8 women) were under sentence of death.

Continued recourse to the death penalty in Tunisia—especially in politically charged cases—violates the spirit and obligations of the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)** which discourages use of capital punishment and urges states to limit it to the “most serious crimes.” The fact that executions have been suspended since 1991 (de facto moratorium) but death sentences keep being issued undermines international efforts to promote abolition. For ACHRS, these developments signal that a de facto moratorium is insufficient protection. What’s needed is a de jure abolition of the death penalty, along with legal and judicial reforms to safeguard fair trial rights, freedom of expression, and civil liberties.



# Right to Life

## United Arab Emirates - Death of Political Prisoner

On November 19, **Human Rights Watch** and other advocacy groups reported the death of the long-detained political prisoner Ali Abdullah Al-Khaja, following more than a decade in arbitrary detention under conditions **alleged** to involve torture, enforced disappearance, denial of medical care, and prolonged solitary confinement.

Al-Khaja was arrested in August 2012 during a sweeping crackdown on political dissent and was convicted in the “UAE94” mass trial in 2013, then sentenced to 10 years in prison. He served his **sentence** but was never released; instead, he was kept in indefinite detention under broad counter-terrorism laws that allow indefinite extension for “terrorist threats,” even after the sentence ends. Over his detention, human rights organisations **documented** repeated abuses: torture, lack of medical care, extended solitary confinement, enforced disappearance, and denial of family contact. There was no transparent investigation, no independent autopsy, and his family reportedly only learned of his death after a delay; others detained in the same facility have since been denied visits.

As ACHRS, we demand an immediate, independent, and impartial investigation into the circumstances surrounding al-Khaja’s death in custody, with full transparency and accountability, including a public autopsy, access to family, and conditions review of the detention facility. The case constitutes a grave violation of the **United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners** (Nelson Mandela Rules)—which require adequate medical care, prohibition of torture and ill-treatment, and humane treatment for all detainees. It also raises concerns under the **United Nations Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance**, given the prolonged periods of disappearance and lack of due process. This incident underscores the urgent need for structural reforms to end arbitrary detention, ensure transparency and protect fundamental civil and political rights in the UAE.



# Right to Life

## Yemen - Houthi Court Sentences 17 to Death in Espionage Case

On November 22–23, a court under the control of the Houthis in Sanaa **sentenced** 17 individuals to death by firing squad on charges of “espionage for foreign powers,” including Israel, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and the UK. According to Houthi-run media (SABA agency), the court **accused** the defendants of belonging to espionage cells affiliated with foreign intelligence services. The prosecution alleged that the defendants had received encrypted communication devices, surveillance training (hidden cameras, tracking software), and had passed strategic information that allegedly facilitated attacks on military, security, and civilian infrastructure, resulting in civilian casualties and widespread destruction. The court **reportedly** ruled that the executions be carried out in a public square as a deterrent.

Human rights observers, including the **Human Rights Watch**, note that these prosecutions occur in the context of broad crackdowns on political opponents, civil society activists, and even United Nations and aid-organization staff, with many detained arbitrarily and given little to no access to independent legal representation or fair trial standards.

These death sentences issued by a court under Houthi control violate the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)** and international humanitarian law, which require that any capital punishment be imposed only following a fair trial by a regularly constituted, independent, and impartial court—something deeply doubtful in the context of Yemen’s conflict, arbitrary detentions, and lack of judicial independence. The public nature of the executions as a “deterrent” also raises issues under the **Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**, and UN principles on the right to life, due process, and prohibition of cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment. For ACHRS, this underscores the urgent need to mobilize international and regional pressure to halt these sentences, demand independent monitoring, and bring an end to capital punishment and judicial abuses in conflict-affected areas—especially those controlled by non-state or de facto authorities.



# Right to Speak

## Introduction

The right to speak freely is one of our most important human rights. It means being able to share opinions, get information, and talk about ideas without fear of punishment or censorship. This right is protected by international law, most importantly by **Article 19** in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that ‘Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers’. While the right to speak pertains to everyone, journalists and activists play an especially important role, as they share knowledge and help inform the public. In the Arab World, their freedom to do their work is constantly under attack.

In this report, we take a closer look at Algeria, Bahrain, Palestine, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia. In Algeria, journalist Saad Bouakba was arrested for discussing Ben Bella in an interview, while poet Mohamed Tadjadit faces the death penalty for his activism and poetry; in Bahrain, Ebrahim Sharif was arrested for publicly demanding Arab regimes to change their position on Palestine; Trump’s meeting with Khashoggi seemingly legitimised the Saudi regime’s brutal repression of the right to speak; in Palestine, ‘israel’ continues to deliberately target journalists, and in Tunisia, large anti-government demonstrations took place after the Court of Appeals sentenced nearly 40 opposition figures to up to 45 years in prison.

## Algeria - Suppression of Freedom of Speech: Arrests and Trials

### *Journalist Saad Bouakba Arrested for “Defaming” Ex-President Ben Bella*

On **November 27**, 79-year-old journalist Saad Bouakba was arrested on charges for defaming the late President Ahmed Ben Bella. The charges were brought forward by the president’s daughter, who filed a complaint about Bouakba’s **interview** with Youtube Channel Vision TV. In the interview, Bouakba had discussed Ahmed Ben Bella’s alleged unlawful distribution of the National Liberation Front’s (FLN) funds and his request for support from Gamal Abdel Nasser for colonial-era inherited borders.



# Right to Speak

At Algiers' Bir Mourad Raïs Court, Bouakba **was charged** with 'dissemination of false, inaccurate, and defamatory information, insulting state symbols and figures of the independence struggle.' His trial is scheduled for the 4th of December.

## *Poet Mohamed Tadjadit Faces Possible Execution*

On the **11th of November**, Algerian poet and activist Mohamed Tadjadit, was sentenced on terrorism charges to five years in prison, for '**glorifying terrorism**' and '**using communication technologies to support terrorist organizations**'. Tadjadit, who was arbitrarily detained in January 2025, played a crucial part in the 2019 pro-democracy Hirak movement, and since then has endured several arbitrary arrests and imprisonment.

On the 30th of November, a separate case will commence for him and 12 other activists, in which they are accused of 'conspiring to incite citizens against the authority of the state and to undermine national unity' and 'receiving funds to carry out actions undermining state security'. Under Articles 77 para 1, 78 and 79 of the Algerian Penal Code, these charges are punishable by death. According to **Amnesty**, these charges are as a result of the activists' involvement in the Hirak protests and publicly commenting on the political situation and socio-economic conditions in the country.

## *Release of Writer Boualem Sansal*

French-Algerian writer Boualem Sansal has been **pardoned** by the Algerian authorities after having been detained in prison for a year. Sansal, a known critic of the Algerian government, was detained and sentenced to five years in prison due to his comments on Western Sahara which, **according** to the Algerian government, "undermin[ed] national unity". Although his arrest was officially an 'anti-terrorist' measure, many **considered** the move politically motivated and a result of the French-Algerian diplomatic crisis. In a TV appearance on France 24 following his release, Sansal **expressed** his fear of now speaking freely, due to potential reprisals against his family. Thus, even though his release is a positive development, his story, as well as the recent arrest of Saad Bouakba and the trial of Mohamed Tadjadit still exemplifies the worrying trend of the suppression of the freedom of expression in Algeria.



# Right to Speak

## Bahrain - Activist Ebrahim Sharif Arrested

On November 12, Bahraini authorities **arrested** Ebrahim Sharif, a political activist, at the Bahrain airport, upon his return from Lebanon. He was arrested following comments he made at the Arab National Conference in Beirut, where he **said** people should come together to form a strong public opinion with the goal of changing the position of Arab regimes on Palestine. **According to** the Bahraini Interior Ministry, his comments constituted “spreading false news on social media and uttering phrases offensive to sisterly Arab states and their leadership.” Sharif is **one of the many** political activists who has been detained, arrested, prosecuted, and convicted since the 2011 uprising, many of which are still detained. As of December 1, 2025, Sharif’s case has not appeared in court yet, but the hearing is supposed to take place in the beginning of December. ACHRS condemns the arrest of Ebrahim Sharif, demands his release, and calls for Bahrain to stop its practice of violating the right to speak.

## Palestine - Continued Targeting of Journalists

On November 18, the IDF **shot and wounded** Fadi Yassin, an Al Jazeera cameraman, while he was working to cover a protest at the Nur Shams refugee camp in the occupied West Bank. This is another example of the occupation forces deliberately targeting journalists to stop them from carrying out their work. Simultaneously, in the West Bank, an **increasing number** of journalists are being attacked by settlers. The latest big incident happened on November 8, when 6 international and local media professionals, including Reuters reporter Raneen Sawafta, **were attacked**. While this violence is being perpetrated by settlers and not the government or the army directly, the IDF fails to protect journalists, despite its obligation under international law as an occupation power. Instead, it has **protected** settlers, and **detained** journalists as well as activists who were previously assaulted. Thus, this constitutes a serious violation of the right to speak.

# Right to Speak

## Saudi Arabia - President Trump Excuses Journalist Khashoggi's Murder

On November 18, in a widely broadcasted meeting between US President Donald Trump and Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), Trump seemingly gave his okay for the brutal repression of the right to speak in Saudi Arabia. In October 2018, Jamal Khashoggi was **killed** by Saudi agents in the Saudi consulate in Turkey. While the official story is that MBS was not involved, nor knew of the murder, US intelligence sources **have found** that MBS ordered it. Though this sparked international outrage, there have been no significant repercussions for the Saudi Crown-Prince or the Saudi regime at large. Seven years after the brutal murder, Trump seems to be willing to forget the entire thing. In the meeting, Trump and MBS talked about increased **cooperation** between the two countries, despite the country's **human rights record**. When asked about Khashoggi during the press conference, Trump wrote off the question, saying that MBS knew nothing about it, and that "a lot of people didn't like that gentleman". MBS himself showed slightly more concern about the issue, but **said** that the Saudi government had investigated and reformed the system properly.

Overall, the conversation showed several negative signs for the right to speak. First of all, it contributed to the normalisation of relations with Saudi Arabia and MBS despite the murder of Jamal Khashoggi. Secondly, with his comments towards the reporter, Trump questioned the credibility of the journalist and the media. Lastly, President Trump practically gave his okay to the Saudi regime, whilst the latter is carrying out an **intense crackdown** on freedom of speech. ACHRS calls for other governments, as well as international organisations, to continue holding MBS and the Saudi regime accountable for the murder of Khashoggi, as well as their current repression of the right to speak. A small positive development is the fact that after the meeting, the Saudi government **released** the travel-ban on Saad Ibrahim Almaghrabi, an American-Saudi citizen. Almaghrabi had been imprisoned and was later banned from travelling due to critical tweets about the murder of Khashoggi, but is now free to travel back to his family in the United States.

# Right to Speak

## Tunisia - Sentencing of Political Opponents and Subsequent Protests

On **Saturday the 29th** in Tunis, thousands protested the increase of curtailed freedom, escalating authoritarianism and jailing of government critics in the country. This protest came the day after the Court of Appeal **sentenced** nearly forty opposition, business, and political figures to up to 45 years in prison. Most had been charged with 'conspiracy against state security' and 'belonging to a terrorist group', in what several human rights groups have denounced as **an unjust and politically motivated trial**.

Although Saied denounced the European call for the release of detained dissidents in Tunisia as **"blatant interference"**, the reality on the ground is one of increased authoritarianism and repression of freedom of expression. ACHRS supports and encourages the international community to continue pressuring Saied to return to the democratic standards Tunisia upheld after the Arab Spring.



# Right to Participate

## Introduction

This month saw significant political developments across the Middle East and North Africa, particularly in relation to electoral processes and political participation. Egypt and Iraq held parliamentary elections, while Morocco witnessed a new initiative aimed at strengthening diaspora political engagement. At the same time, Syria's transitional government received growing international recognition, shaping the broader context for future political processes. The following report provides an overview of these developments and their implications for democratic governance and political participation in the region.

## Egypt – Parliamentary Elections

This month, Egyptians **headed to the polls** to elect a new House of Representatives. Egyptians living abroad voted on November 7-8, while Egyptians living inside the country voted in two phases: one on November 10-11 and one on November 24-25. The House of Representatives has 596 members, comprising 284 individual seats that are contested by individual candidates, 284 seats that are filled through a closed party list system, and 28 seats for members appointed by presidential decree.

Ahead of the elections, **four coalition lists have been disqualified** for disregarding legal and procedural requirements set by the National Election Authority, namely the Popular List, Your Voice for Egypt list, Call for Egypt List, and the Generation List. As a result, the National Unified List for Egypt was the only coalition to be able to run for the election in all electoral constituencies. Therefore, only one coalition list and 2,625 individual candidates have successfully registered, showing an alarming absence of serious competition.

This year, individual candidates had to undergo a **mandatory medical examination**, including health checkups, laboratory tests, and drug and alcohol screenings. These tests have been conducted by the Central Laboratory Directorate as well as regional provincial laboratories. However, these health check-ups can easily be abused to disqualify oppositional candidates.

# Right to Participate

For example, **Mohamed Abdel Halim** was excluded after failing a drug test. Even after successfully conducting a second test, his appeal was rejected. After another party member, Haitham al-Hariri, got disqualified as well for being exempted from military service, the whole **party withdrew from the elections** as a protest against such exclusionary measures.

The Egyptian National Elections Authority further announced that, during the first phase, **elections in 19 constituencies** would be cancelled. This was the result of reported election violations, including failing to provide candidates with a copy of the vote tally report and discrepancies in the number of votes between the sub-committees and the general committees. Now, new election dates for these constituencies must be announced and election results remain unclear.

Overall, the disqualification of entire coalition lists, the use of medical and administrative procedures to exclude candidates, and the annulments of results due to procedural violations all undermine the principles of genuine competition, transparency, and equal access, which the UN Human Rights Committee identifies as essential for free and fair elections. Therefore, these developments point to a deeply constrained electoral environment that raises serious concerns about the right to political participation, as protected under Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

## Iraq – Parliamentary Elections

On November 9, Iraq's **security forces and internally displaced people casted their votes** ahead of Tuesday's polls, which were open from 7 am to 6 pm local time. Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission announced a voter **turnout of 82.4 percent**. Particularly in the **Kurdistan region, voter turnout was high**, varying between 90 and 95 percent depending on the province. In Erbil, even 97.17 percent was reached.

On November 11, the polls opened for the rest of the people. The overall voter turnout for this year's elections reached 56.11 percent, according to Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC). Following the elections, **the seat allocation for the 329 seats of parliament is projected to be as follows**: 45 seats for Sudani's Reconstruction and Development Coalition, 30 seats for the State of the Law Coalition, 27 seats for the Kurdistan Democratic Party, 27 seats for the Progress Party, 26 seats for the Sadiqoun bloc, 19 seats for the Badr Organization and 18 seats for the State Forces Alliance.



# Right to Participate

The elections were **reported to run smoothly** with security forces playing a significant role in ensuring the successful safeguarding of the election process. There have been no major technical and organizational issues and there were no reports of security breaches. However, there were over **hundreds of cases of violations**, including cases of electoral propaganda, the expulsion of independent observers from polling stations, and cases of polling staff members failing to provide necessary information and clearly explaining voting procedures.

Overall, there are signs of progress in voter participation as well as security and organizational aspects. Nevertheless, the persistence of **corruption and clientelism** continues to undermine the effectiveness of Iraq's electoral process and reinforces the cycle of political elite dominance. Therefore, in order to significantly increase citizens' trust in the electoral process and ensure fair competition, especially for smaller parties and independent candidates, significant changes have to be made regarding the electoral laws. ACHRS has published a statement providing a more detailed analysis of the election process, the preliminary results, and the challenges ahead in forming the new government, which you can read by clicking [this link](#).

## Morocco – Diaspora Participation Initiative

This month, 34 Moroccan leaders and civil society figures **announced the creation of a platform** called “the October 31 Front for the Political Rights of Moroccans Worldwide”, to enhance political participation opportunities of Moroccans residing abroad. It is said that the initiative is supposed to defend their right to full citizenship as well as their right to participation in political life. Its launch comes ahead of the 2026 elections, which **renewed debates on the voting rights** for Moroccans abroad and the related mechanisms through which their participation could be ensured. While the initiative signals increased attention to diaspora engagement, it also underscores the extent to which political influence for Moroccans abroad remains contingent on informal advocacy rather than guaranteed institutional channels.

# Right to Participate

## Syria - International Recognition for Transitional Government

Two recent moves in the international sphere strengthen the international recognition of Syria's transitional government. This recognition opens space for Syrians' right to participate to be realized in practice by creating the political legitimacy and stability needed to prepare for inclusive political processes, including future elections.

The **UN Security Council passed Resolution 2799**, removing Syria's transitional leaders, President Ahmed al-Sharaa and Interior Minister Anas Hasan Khattab, from the UN sanctions list targeting alleged terrorists. These sanctions were originally imposed on individuals or groups linked to ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida. By removing Ahmed al-Sharaa and Anas Hasan Khattab from the list, the UN recognizes Syria's new transitional government as legitimate and aims to support the country's political stability and economic recovery.

Additionally, **Ahmed al-Sharaa visited President Donald Trump at the White House** and announced that Syria would begin a new era of cooperation with the United States, joining the international coalition to combat the Islamic State group and, in general, terrorism.

These steps show growing international support for Syria's government. However, they do not guarantee genuine political inclusion inside Syria, where long-standing structural barriers, security concerns, and limited civic freedoms may continue to hinder participation.



# Women's Rights

## Introduction

Everywhere in the world, and in the Arab region, women's rights continue to be a struggle that needs to be fought for. Highlighting and amplifying this struggle is part of the fight. This month focuses on women's vulnerability in conflict, their representation in politics as well as the labor market, and initiatives by women to represent themselves and their struggles.

## Algeria - A Revival of Feminist Media

After decades of not having feminist media in Algeria, journalists have started to **revive** it through both social media and traditional media. In an effort to counter the trivialization of gender-based violence by mainstream press, several Algerian journalists have started feminist magazines, podcasts and radio programmes for women and by women. The objective of these initiatives is to bring more awareness to the reality of women in Algeria and to change the narrative used when talking about violence against women.

## Egypt – (Digital) Violence Against Women

**Violence against women in Egypt** continues to be a very urgent, but often overlooked human rights issue. From physical and psychological abuse within homes to digital harassment across social media, countless women suffer in silence, constrained by stigma and weak legal protections, despite some progress in awareness campaigns.

Recent tragic cases in which Egyptian men brutally murdered their wives show that Egypt still has a long way to go in ensuring women's safety and dignity. However, real change requires more than awareness. It requires action and accountability.

The ACHRS recommends the following:

1. Create and enforce stronger laws against domestic and digital violence.
2. Establish a faster and more accessible reporting system for victims.
3. Train law enforcement officers to handle cases sensitively and professionally.
4. Promote community awareness and provide support for survivors.



# Women's Rights

## Palestine - Mothers Disproportionately Affected

Over two years have passed since October 7, 2023, and despite a ceasefire agreement, Palestinians in Gaza are still suffering from **Israeli attacks** and from the Israeli-imposed blockade on humanitarian aid. Mothers and children are disproportionately affected by this lack of resources. Since the beginning of the war food and humanitarian aid have been very scarce, and very **little nutritious food** of quality has entered the enclave. This leads to **malnourished mothers** giving birth to babies for whom they will have difficulties finding proper food. Adding to that, the necessary **maternal healthcare appointments** for pregnant and postpartum mothers and their babies are very difficult to access, despite the official ceasefire.

This disproportionate impact of conflict on women has been recognised by the **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**, which is preparing an addendum to its General Recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post conflict situations in relation to the Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. This addendum looks to frame the impact of conflict for women **beyond sexual violence** only, and includes access to healthcare, maternal care and menstrual supplies, among others.

“[Being a mother] means being the last line of protection in a place where safety no longer exists,” said UN Women’s Chief of Humanitarian Action Sofia Calltorp after her **visit** to Gaza in November 2025.

## Saudi Arabia - Women’s Protection and Empowerment

*The Forbes Middle East Women’s Summit*

The third edition of the **Forbes Middle East Women’s Summit** took place in Riyadh on the 2nd and 3rd of November. With the aim of giving a platform for women to amplify voices on female leadership, entrepreneurship, financial empowerment, and women in STEM, wellness, and creative industries, the summit offered numerous panels and networking opportunities.



# Women's Rights

While the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies encourages all actions that amplify the voices of women, it still acknowledges that a lot of efforts are still necessary in Saudi Arabia for gender equality.

## *National Framework and Institutional Efforts*

Recently, Saudi Arabia has made **substantial progress** in strengthening women's rights and combating gender-based violence. Saudi academics and experts highlight improvements driven by legislation, institutional coordination, and national awareness campaigns. Government bodies, such as the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, the Human Rights Commission, and the health authorities, have established a framework to protect women from abuse and ensure access to reporting channels and support services.

Key areas of progress include:

- Enforcement of the Protection from Abuse Law.
- Nationwide awareness campaign condemning violence against women.
- Expansion of psychological, legal, and social support.
- Strengthening of partnerships between the government and civil society.
- Increasing training for professionals.

## *Advancement of Women's Employment Rights*

A significant milestone in Saudi Arabia was the enforcement of Article 3 of the Saudi Arabia Labor Law, which states:

"Work is a right for every citizen [...]. Citizens are equal in the right to work without any discrimination on the basis of gender, disability, age, or any other form of discrimination, whether during the performance of work, at the time of employment, or in job advertisement".

This article prohibits gender-based discrimination in:

- Hiring and job advertisements,
- Wages and benefits,
- Training opportunities,
- Promotion and career advancement.

# Women's Rights

Furthermore, employers are required to adopt anti-discrimination policies, provide a safe work environment, and create reporting mechanisms for violations. These reforms theoretically contribute to a more inclusive labor market and support the economic empowerment of women.

A recent report, issued by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, highlights this progress for Saudi Women in the labor market, particularly during the second quarter of 2025. Here, the number of employed Saudi women reached 1,021,140, representing 41.2% of all employed Saudis.

Data indicate that Saudi women's economic participation peaks in the 25-29 age group, accounting for more than 23% of all employed Saudi women. The 30-34 age group follows at approximately 21.2%. This trend signals effective government support in enabling women to enter the labor market during their prime working years.

While ACHRS is positive about the reforms in Saudi Arabia, it is important that practice aligns with theory. In the upcoming months and years, ACHRS hopes to see the Saudi government, as well as different segments of society implement and uphold these changes. Only in this case will the rights and lived reality of women in Saudi Arabia truly improve.

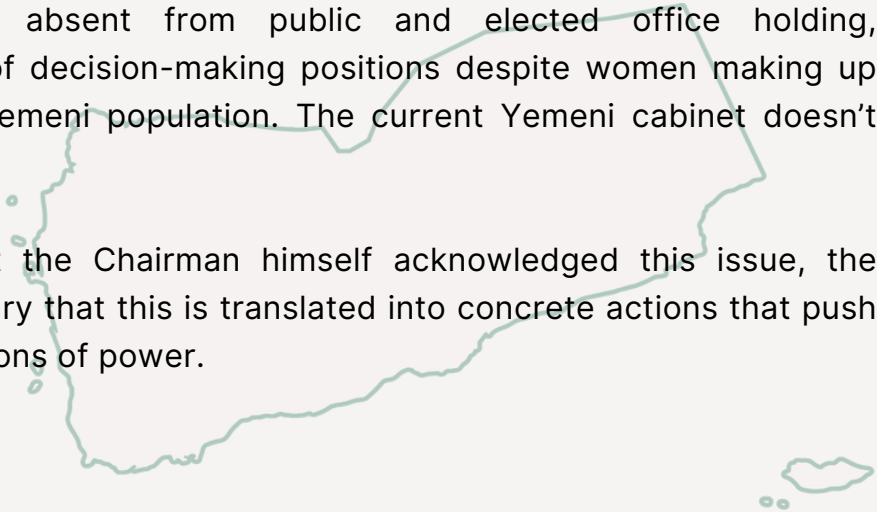


# Women's Rights

## Yemen - Women in the Government

On November 23rd, the Chairman of the Presidential Leadership Council, Rashad Muhammad al-Alimi, acknowledged that there is a **lack of female representation** in the government and in positions of power. However, despite this statement, women remain largely absent from public and elected office holding, representing only 4.1% of decision-making positions despite women making up more than half of the Yemeni population. The current Yemeni cabinet doesn't include any women.

While it is positive that the Chairman himself acknowledged this issue, the ACHRS deems it necessary that this is translated into concrete actions that push for more women in positions of power.



# Youth Rights

## Introduction

This month's overview of youth rights developments in the MENA region highlights a continued decline in civic space, increasing restrictions on freedom of association, rising incidences of violence against teenagers, and persistent barriers to education and political involvement. It also summarizes regional efforts that, in spite of constrictive surroundings, continue to promote equity, community resilience, and youth participation. In addition to supporting ACHRS's ongoing efforts to monitor human rights and advocate for inclusive, rights-based policies, this overview seeks to provide a clear picture of emerging patterns that impact the realities of young people in the region.

On the occasion of International Children's Day, held on the 20th of November, the Amman Center for Human Rights calls for the strengthening of protection systems and the creation of safer spaces in response to the rising violence, discrimination, and poverty affecting young people.

## Egypt - Shrinking Civic Space in Youth Institutions

In Egypt, civic space for youth is once again shrinking. The parliament has debated a **law** that tightens restrictions on political activity in youth clubs and state sports organizations, consolidating government control over spaces traditionally used for youth organizing. Legal ambiguity increases the risk of repressive enforcement and limits freedom of association and expression. Most ruling-party and allied MPs supported the measure, arguing that youth spaces should remain "apolitical," while a smaller number of MPs and civil society actors voiced concerns about the negative impact on freedom of association and youth participation. This measure would reinforce government control over spaces where young people have traditionally been able to organize themselves and exchange ideas, raising serious concerns about its impact on freedom of association and expression. Despite these challenges, **youth organizations** are running campaigns against child marriage and for gender equality, although they operate under clear limitations due to the restrictive political context.

# Youth Rights

## Libya – Digital Platform to Enhance Youth Participation

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) launched a **new digital platform** aimed at strengthening the political participation of young people between 10 and 35 years. The platform serves as a space for people to express their views and opinions on key issues and to participate in dialogue-oriented discussions.

By expanding accessible channels for youth engagement, the initiative strengthens their right to participate. Nevertheless, they are not yet accompanied by meaningful opportunities for youth to influence decision-making processes within Libya's fragmented political landscape.

## Morocco - Youth Congress Highlights Regional Engagement

**The Youth Congress Morocco took place** from November 21 to 24 in Rabat, bringing together youth leaders from more than 30 countries. The youth who attended received full scholarships that covered their attendance at the congress and gave them access to the training sessions provided during the event, which included leadership development, human rights advocacy, diplomacy, and social justice. The congress featured panels and workshops where young people discussed the future of youth action and reform in Morocco, creating an important space for international exchange.

## Palestine - Resilience Amid Destruction

The youth of Gaza continue to endure extremely harsh conditions. But despite the destruction of schools and mass displacement, some students managed to hold **graduation ceremonies in November. This symbolizes** small but meaningful expressions of resilience in an environment marked by family separation, significant instability, and severely limited resources.



# Youth Rights

ACHRS's priority to protect the rights of conflict-affected youth is undermined by the continued targeting of civilian infrastructure by armed actors and the absence of safe spaces for learning and psychosocial recovery.

## Syria - Persistent Violence and Community Responses

The situation of young people in Syria remains deeply affected by ongoing violence. Since October and throughout November, dozens of sectarian and political killings have been **documented** in regions such as Homs, Aleppo, and Idlib, with minors among the victims. This sustained pattern of violence keeps adolescents and young people in a state of constant fear and insecurity.

The targeted killings and exposure of minors to armed conflict constitute critical violations of UN Security Council Resolutions on Children and Armed Conflict and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 19 and 37). While we are not directly engaged in youth rights work in Syria, ACHRS remains aware of the complex environment affecting children and youth and believe these issues merit continued attention

"Meanwhile, there are positive initiatives for youth in Syria, local organizations in the northeast have launched **educational activities** on November 25, including workshops for young men focused on equality, respect, and violence prevention. These initiatives reflect grassroots efforts to promote positive social change even in such a fragile and volatile context.

## Yemen - Extreme Vulnerability and Limited Stability

Yemen remains one of the most dangerous environments for children and young people. In November, **international organizations documented new serious abuses, including** the recruitment of minors, forced displacement, and other forms of violence. Despite challenges such as overcrowding, shortages of classrooms and learning materials, youth organisations continue to operate under increasingly restrictive conditions in relatively stable areas, providing children and young people with a limited degree of continuity and stability.



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## OUR VISION & COMMITMENT

As a think tank center, ACHRS is dedicated to promoting justice, equality, democracy, and all human rights for all. Our mission is to provide credible research, advocacy and educational programs that raise awareness of, promote and protect human rights and drive concrete changes in policies and practices by focusing on six priorities: the right to life, the right to think, the right to expression, the right to participation, women’s rights, youth rights and the right to social protection.

We are grateful to all individuals and institutions who support our priorities. contributions enable us to continue advocating for the rights of vulnerable communities and promoting freedom and human dignity across the MENA region.

We call on human rights defenders, policymakers, and international partners to join us in this mission.

**Together, we can foster more just and humane societies.**

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