



## On Human Rights Day: Widespread Abuses Amid International Silence

Joint Statement By - International Human Rights Organizations - 10 December 2025

On the occasion of International Human Rights Day, the signatory international human rights organizations reiterate a simple yet fundamental truth: human rights are neither privileges granted by governments nor favors that can be withdrawn or bargained away. This applies in particular to civil and political rights, which form the backbone of human dignity; violations of these rights inevitably leave deep and lasting consequences across entire societies.

While this day is meant to mark progress, the world instead finds itself confronting a cascade of crises that reveal a sharp regression in the state of basic human rights. This deterioration is especially evident across several countries in the Middle East and North Africa, where abuses are reaching unprecedented levels.

### Palestine

The gravest humanitarian situation continues to unfold in both Gaza and the West Bank, where violations amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. In Gaza, acts of genocide are being committed through deliberate starvation, siege, indiscriminate bombardment of civilians, and widespread destruction.

In the West Bank, arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, daily attacks, property destruction, and assaults by occupation forces and settlers have escalated sharply, amid a dramatic expansion of settlements.

Several European states continue to exhibit clear political bias in favor of Israel, weakening efforts to ensure accountability and denying Palestinians the international protection they urgently need. This bias is reflected in the refusal of some governments to support UN resolutions on Palestinian rights, as well as in the continuation of military and financial support to Israel despite well-documented violations.

### Egypt

Human rights conditions continue to deteriorate, with thousands of political detainees held in prolonged pre-trial detention for months or years without fair trials. Women and girls are also detained for peacefully expressing opinions or due to familial connections with opposition figures.

Mass death sentences—issued without meeting basic standards of due process—remain a grave concern. Reports of torture, ill-treatment, denial of family visits, and lack of medical care in prisons are widespread.

At the societal level, restrictions on public freedoms have intensified, accompanied by declining labor rights, soaring poverty, and worsening access to education and essential services.



## **Tunisia**

Tunisia has also witnessed significant regression over the past year. Arrests have targeted political figures, beginning with the Speaker of Parliament and Ennahda Party leader Rached Ghannouchi, and most recently the opposition leader and lawyer Ahmed Nejib Chebbi, detained just days before this statement amid measures widely viewed as unconstitutional and aimed at curtailing judicial independence. Judges, lawyers, journalists, media workers, bloggers, and human rights activists have likewise been detained. Restrictions on women working in human rights and media sectors have grown, most recently the arrest of activist Shaimaa Issa, deepening an already suffocating environment for civil liberties.

## **Sudan (Darfur, Displacement Camps, Al-Fashir, and Beyond)**

Sudan is witnessing one of the worst humanitarian catastrophes in the region, particularly following the escalation of conflict in Darfur and the takeover of numerous areas by the Rapid Support Forces. Civilians face deliberate killings, rape, the destruction of civilian infrastructure—including mosques, clinics, and schools—alongside mass displacement from camps and the collapse of basic services.

## **Libya**

Arbitrary detention, torture, inhumane detention conditions, and enforced disappearances targeting migrants and asylum seekers continue unabated in Tripoli and other regions, with minimal judicial or international oversight.

In May 2025, a video circulated showing Member of Parliament Ibrahim Abu Bakr Al-Darsi restrained and imprisoned while being subjected to torture and degrading treatment, sparking local and international condemnation. Al-Darsi—an MP from Benghazi and former head of the Religious Affairs Committee—had disappeared in May 2024 after attending an official event organized by the so-called “General Command” of Khalifa Haftar. The footage strengthens long-standing concerns of military involvement in abuses committed against him despite his parliamentary immunity.

## **Syria**

Despite political shifts, the human rights situation in Syria remains deeply alarming. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has reported dozens of cases of abduction and enforced disappearance. Recent cases include the disappearance of a White Helmets volunteer in July 2025 during a humanitarian mission.

In parts of northwestern Syria, international organizations have documented mass civilian deaths and entire families killed—evidence of escalating indiscriminate violence against civilians amid ongoing conflict.

## **Yemen**

Arbitrary arrests, abductions, home raids, repression of protesters, and severe restrictions on freedom of expression persist against the backdrop of a protracted war that continues to devastate civilians.

In Aden alone, between December 2024 and May 2025, a local organization documented approximately 219 violations against protesters, civilians, women, children, activists, and journalists, including arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, home raids, suppression of peaceful assembly, excessive use of force, and civilian targeting.

The ongoing conflict is compounded by the collapse of essential services and growing threats to basic rights, worsening the vulnerability of the civilian population.

## **United Arab Emirates**

The UAE continues to maintain one of the region’s most repressive environments for freedom of expression, using counterterrorism and cybercrime laws to criminalize peaceful speech and to keep dissidents imprisoned for years beyond their original sentences. The case of the “UAE 94” remains one of the clearest examples of systematic violations, alongside the country’s material support to armed groups implicated in abuses across several Arab states.

## Saudi Arabia

Human rights conditions in Saudi Arabia continue to decline. Specialized courts are routinely used to issue harsh sentences against writers, activists, and women's rights defenders—sometimes amounting to years of imprisonment over social-media posts or peaceful opinions. A significant number of prisoners of conscience remain behind bars, facing trials that fall far short of international fair-trial standards. The authorities continue to impose sweeping restrictions on civil society and freedom of expression, and international organizations have documented cases of enforced disappearance and travel bans targeting activists and families who attempted to speak out or engage with UN mechanisms.

## Lebanon

Torture inside detention facilities remains widespread, often used to extract confessions. Civilians are increasingly tried before military courts. In a striking case of cross-border repression, Lebanon violated international law by deporting Abdelrahman Al-Qaradawi, a Turkish national of Egyptian origin, who has since remained forcibly disappeared.

## Morocco

Many families of the forcibly disappeared in Morocco continue to await information on the fate of their loved ones.

In recent years, the country has seen a marked deterioration in fundamental freedoms—particularly freedom of assembly. Although the constitution guarantees this right, authorities have responded to protests, especially those led by “Generation Z” youth, with heavy security pressure, judicial repression, and widespread arrests targeting activists and students.

One of the most troubling indicators of this decline is the continued imprisonment of former minister and bar association head Mohamed Ziane, a prominent political and human rights figure, under circumstances that raise serious concerns regarding judicial independence.

## Urgent Calls to the International Community

On Human Rights Day, we call on the international community, the United Nations, and regional bodies to move beyond expressions of concern and take concrete steps to protect civilians, halt violations, and ensure accountability for perpetrators.

We also urge immediate and unhindered access for humanitarian and medical assistance to all affected areas—including displacement camps and Gaza—and call for full protection of relief teams as they carry out their work.

Furthermore, we call for the immediate release of all those arbitrarily detained and for ensuring their protection from torture and ill-treatment.

## Commitment of the Organizations

The signatory organizations reaffirm their commitment to documenting abuses, standing with victims, defending human rights, and pursuing accountability for perpetrators—no matter how long it takes.

### Signatory Organizations

