

# Communiqués of Alkarama 2025





# Communiqués of Alkarama for 2025

## About Alkarama

Alkarama for the protection and promotion of human rights in the Arab world was established in 2004 to assist all those in the Arab world subjected to or at risk of extrajudicial execution, enforced disappearance, torture, and arbitrary detention. Acting as a bridge between individual victims and international human rights mechanisms, Alkarama works towards an Arab world where all individuals live in freedom and dignity, and are protected by the rule of law. In Arabic, Alkarama means dignity.

### **Assist victims of human rights violations**

Alkarama brings pro bono legal assistance to victims of the most serious human rights violations, without any discrimination. The organisation focuses its efforts on violations of the right to life, human dignity, physical integrity and freedoms such as extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, torture, and arbitrary detention.

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Using the international human rights mechanisms and working closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), we document individual cases of violations through direct contact with the victims, their families or lawyers, and submit complaints on their behalf to the United Nations (UN) Special Procedures and Treaty Bodies, asking them to intervene with the State in question to put an end to these violations.

Alkarama also gives a voice to the victims or their families by sharing their stories, as well as the recommendations issued by the various UN mechanisms on their cases, both on our website and through our social media channels. We also use the media, lobbying, advocacy campaigns, and collaboration with other NGOs and civil society to ensure the protection of victims.

## **Advocate for reforms to respect and protect human rights in all Arab countries**

Based on our expertise on the Arab world and the individual cases Alkarama documents, we prepare in-depth reports on the human rights situation in each of the 20 countries we cover. These can be public reports, submissions to the Treaty Bodies – such as the Committee against Torture (CAT), the Human Rights Committee (HRCtee), and the Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED) – ahead of a country's review, or contributions to the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) that takes place every four to five years. We also work with local civil society to participate in the reviews of National Human Rights Institutions in the Arab region by the Sub-Committee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI).

On the basis of information submitted to them, all of these mechanisms issue recommendations aimed at improving the human rights situation in a given country, which can in turn be used by the local civil society to lobby for their implementation.

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## **Raising awareness on human rights in the Arab world**

Alkarama also brings media attention to the cases and situations it covers, helping victims to have their voices heard and shedding light on the human rights situation of a country, through press releases as well as public reports and analyses published in various media outlets. In order to reach a broader audience, we increasingly rely on social media, particularly Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

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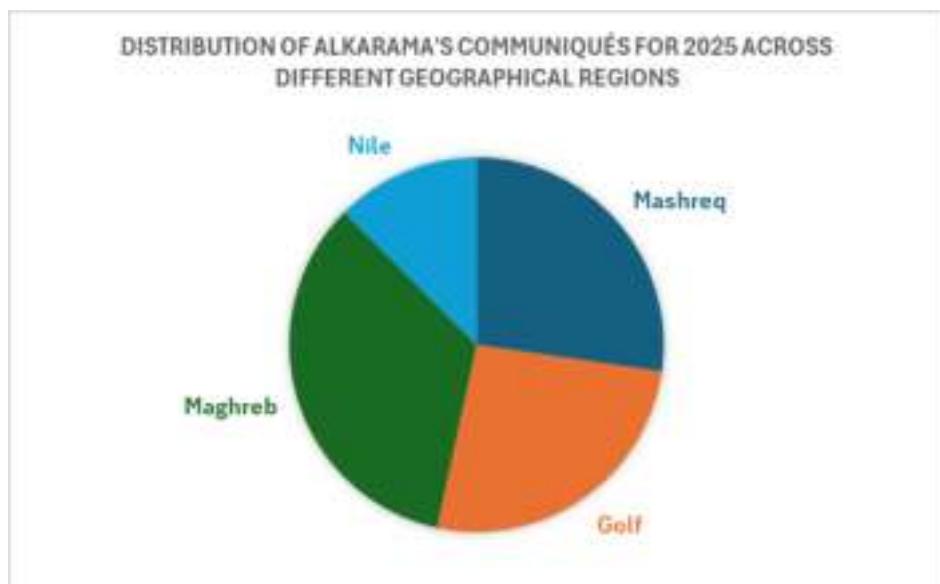
## Introduction

This publication aims to document the communiqués issued by Alkarama in 2025 and published on its websites in Arabic, English, and French, as well as on its various social media platforms (X, Facebook, and Instagram), to facilitate access for those interested in Alkarama's activities and other human rights advocates, including defenders, journalists, and researchers.

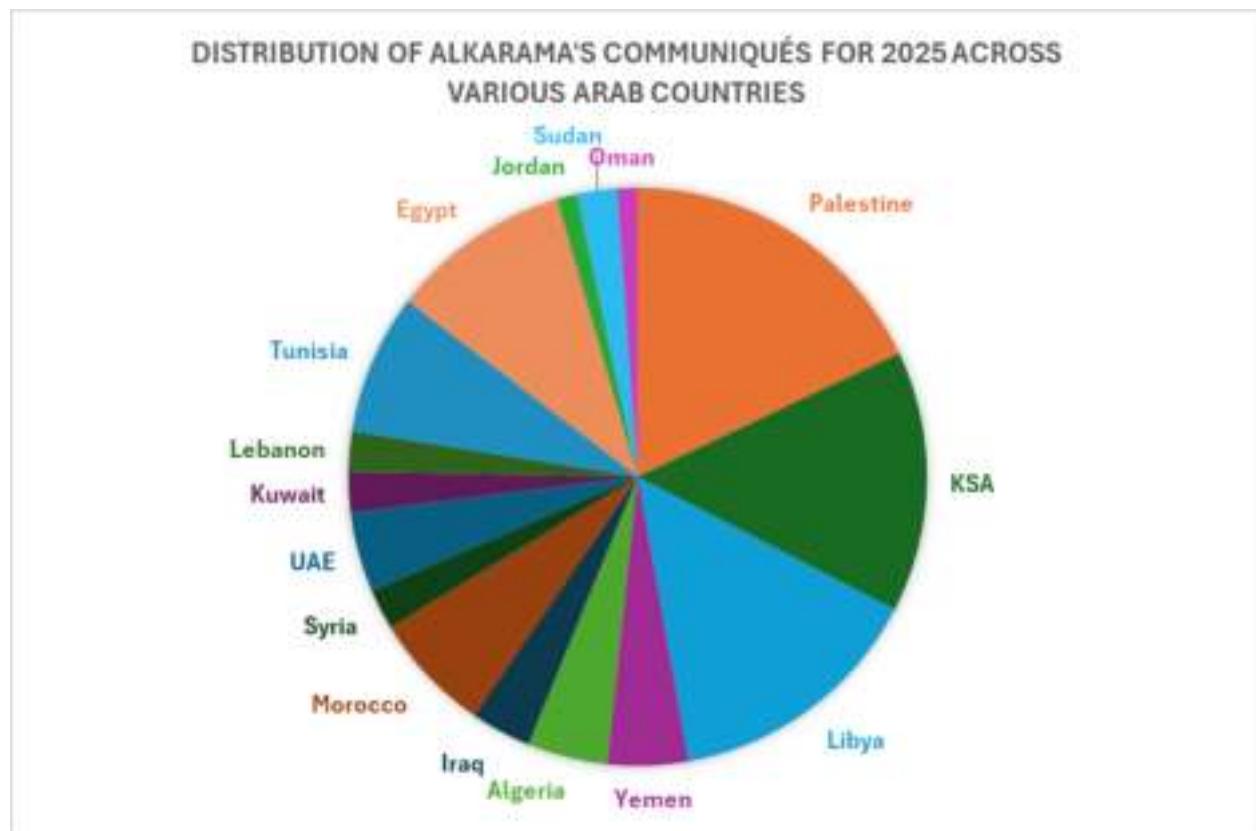
Statistics for 2025 indicate that Alkarama issued 119 communiqués from the beginning of January to the end of December, averaging approximately 10 statements per month. These communiqués included information on the organization's legal activities, reports, and memoranda submitted to various UN human rights bodies, as well as communiqués expressing positions and advocating for various human rights issues in the Arab world.

Of these communiqués, 88 (74%) focused on specific countries, while 31 (26%) addressed diverse cross-border issues such as torture, enforced disappearance, societal violence, freedom, aggression, civil rights, genocide, state terrorism, and solidarity.

The first graph shows that in 2025, Alkarama issued: 24 communiqués on the Mashreq region (27%), 23 communiqués on the Gulf region (26%), 30 communiqués on the Maghreb region (34%), and 11 statements on the Nile communiqués (13%).



The second graph also shows that nearly half of the Alkarama's communiq  s for countries in 2025 dealt with the human rights situation in Palestine (18%), Libya (15%), and Saudi Arabia (15%), and that more than a third of the communiq  s dealt with the situation in Egypt (10%), Tunisia (8%), Morocco (7%), the UAE (4%), Yemen (4%), and Algeria (4%).



It should be noted that the distribution of communiq  s across geographic regions and countries does not necessarily reflect a difference in the severity of human rights situations between these regions and countries. Rather, it stems from Alkarama's limited ability to obtain accurate data and the necessary mandates for legal action in some countries, resulting in a relatively low number of reports.

January 2026  
Alkarama, Media Department



# Gulf Region

## Saudi Arabia: Release of Academic Mohammad Al-Qahtani and Lawyer Issa Al-Nukhaifi

9 January 2025

Saudi authorities have finally released two prisoners of conscience and human rights defenders, namely prominent academic Mohammad Fahad Al-Qahtani and lawyer Issa Al-Nukhaifi, after years of arbitrary detention under unfair sentences resulting from unjust trials. Alkarama worked on their cases within the framework of the United Nations special procedures.



### Dr. Mohammad Al-Qahtani

Dr. Mohammad Fahad Al-Qahtani is a founding member of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA). He is a former professor at the Diplomatic Studies Institute under the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, holding a Ph.D. from Indiana University, USA. A thinker, human rights and political activist, and writer, he contributed to various Saudi newspapers but faced repeated bans on his writings before his arrest on March 9, 2013. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison and an equal period of travel ban.

Although he completed his unjust sentence in November 2022, the authorities chose to retry him instead of releasing him, an action Alkarama deemed a blatant violation of the principle of *non bis in idem* (not being tried twice for the same offense). Alkarama called for his release and an

end to his suffering and that of his family after years of detention and mistreatment.

In [November 2022](#), Al-Qahtani's wife issued an appeal for information about her husband, whose communication with his family was cut off on October 24, 2022. Despite being due for a call, the authorities failed to facilitate this.

Al-Qahtani was held in a facility for mentally ill and psychologically unstable individuals at Al-Ha'ir Prison in Riyadh, where he was physically assaulted by another detainee in May 2022. He faced harassment and poor treatment repeatedly during his detention. In December 2020, he went on a [hunger strike](#) to protest being denied contact with his family and access to books and essential medication.

### **Lawyer Issa Al-Nukhaifi**

Lawyer Issa Al-Nukhaifi also suffered a series of violations that led him to declare a [hunger strike](#) in August 2021 at Al-Ha'ir Prison.

Saudi security forces arrested Al-Nukhaifi, a prominent lawyer and human rights defender, on December 18, 2016, after he responded to a summons for questioning. On January 17, 2017, Alkarama issued an [urgent appeal](#) to the [Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders](#), urging Saudi authorities to release him immediately.

Al-Nukhaifi was interrogated about his Twitter account after he called for the release of [ACPRA](#) members and other prisoners of conscience.

He had been arrested several times before for his peaceful activism. In 2013, he was tried by the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC), responsible for terrorism and state security cases, and sentenced to three years in prison, a four-year travel ban, and a ban on using social media. He was released in April 2016 but was arrested again soon after.

His trial before the SCC resumed on August 21, 2017, with charges including "destabilizing the social fabric and national unity," "communicating with

hostile foreign groups and receiving funds from them," and "using phones and the internet to store and transmit information affecting public order."

In [February 2018](#), the SCC sentenced Al-Nukhaifi to six years in prison, a six-year travel ban, and a social media ban under the Anti-Cybercrime Law. On April 7, 2018, the Court of Appeal upheld the sentence.

### **Alkarama's Advocacy for Mohammad Al-Qahtani**

In March 2013, Alkarama [submitted](#) a memorandum to UN human rights mechanisms, particularly the Special Rapporteurs on the independence of judges and lawyers, the situation of human rights defenders, freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. The submission called for their intervention with Saudi authorities to release Al-Qahtani and cease harassment of human rights activists.

In June 2021, Alkarama submitted a [follow-up report](#) highlighting Al-Qahtani's case amid Saudi Arabia's deteriorating human rights situation and non-compliance with the Committee Against Torture's recommendations.

In November 2015, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued [Opinion No. 38/2015](#) concerning nine Saudi activists, including Al-Qahtani, detained for their human rights and free expression activities. The Working Group deemed their detention arbitrary and recommended their immediate release as the primary means of redress.

Despite repeated calls from the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and mentions of his case in the UN Secretary-General's annual reports on reprisals, Al-Qahtani remained in detention.

### **Issa Al-Nukhaifi**

In late June 2018, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights [published](#) a memorandum addressed by several UN experts to Saudi authorities. The memorandum, dated December 22, 2017, expressed "grave concern over

the widespread and systematic arbitrary arrests and detentions of individuals, including human rights defenders, for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, belief, assembly, and association."

Among the 15 individuals mentioned in the [memorandum](#), Al-Nukhaifi and nine ACPRA members were highlighted.

The Special Rapporteurs on freedom of [opinion and expression](#), freedom of [religion or belief](#), the situation of [human rights defenders](#), human rights and fundamental freedoms while [countering terrorism](#), and the [Working Group on Arbitrary Detention](#) called on Saudi Arabia, as a then-member of the UN [Human Rights Council](#), to "ensure the highest standards of promoting and protecting human rights." They reiterated previous recommendations for the immediate release of all named individuals.

Alkarama urges the Saudi government to release all prisoners of conscience and revoke the unjust sentences issued against them, particularly those whose cases were addressed by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. Alkarama has also raised these concerns with the Saudi Human Rights Commission and the National Society for Human Rights.

## Saudi Arabia: Alkarama calls on the UN to condemn the arbitrary detention of Suleiman Al-Duwaish

6 March 2025

Alkarama recently filed a complaint with [the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention](#) to denounce the arrest and enforced disappearance of Suleiman Al-Duwaish, a prominent religious figure in the country.

Suleiman Al-Duwaish was arrested on 22 April 2016 by members of Crown Prince Mohammed Ben Salmane's personal guard after posting tweets criticising his policies and has since disappeared, with his family still unaware of his fate.



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### Kidnapping followed by torture

According to testimonies gathered from released detainees, Suleiman Al-Duwaish was immediately taken to the Royal Palace in Riyadh after his arrest.

There he was presented to the Crown Prince, who humiliated and violently beat him, insulting him and blaming him for his tweets until he lost consciousness. Witnesses report that he was then held alone in a dungeon in the palace before being transferred to al-Hayr prison in Riyadh, where he was held in the Mabahit section; he was last seen there in April 2017, according to several testimonies shared with his family. Despite numerous representations from his family, no information has been released on his fate.

The Saudi authorities have categorically denied his arrest, although his name appeared on the official list of detainees published by the Saudi General Directorate of Investigations (Al Mabahit) before being removed.

### **Repression extends to his family**

Efforts by Suleiman Al-Duwaish's family to shed light on his fate have been systematically repressed. His three sons were themselves arrested one after the other as a result of their efforts.

Abdelwahab Suleiman Al-Duwaish and Abdelrahman Suleiman Al-Duwaish were arrested after requesting an investigation into his arrest by members of the Crown Prince's personal guard. Malek Suleiman Al-Duwaish was arrested on 5 July 2022 after releasing a video denouncing his father's enforced disappearance and the authorities' inaction. He was subsequently sentenced to 27 years in prison by the Specialized Criminal Court in Riyadh for criticising the Crown Prince.

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### **A flagrant breach of international law**

Alkarama recalls that the treatment suffered by Suleiman Al-Duwaish constitutes a series of particularly serious violations of the fundamental principles of international law.

Faced with this situation and the total impossibility of recourse to the country's judicial system, the victim's family had no choice but to turn to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, asking it to urge the Saudi authorities to officially recognise Suleiman Al-Duwaish's detention and place him under the protection of the law.

Alkarama calls on the Saudi authorities to urgently provide his family with information about the victim, to end his incommunicado detention and to release his children, who are being held in retaliation for their attempts to find out their father's fate.

## UAE: Alkarama brings the case of Abdullah Abdelwahab to the UN, a Yemeni businessman sentenced for Facebook posts

12 March 2025

On 11 March 2025, Alkarama submitted to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ([WGAD](#)) the case of Mr. Abdullah Ali Abdulhafidh ABDELWAHAB, a Yemeni businessman who was arbitrarily arrested in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and sentenced to 15 years in prison merely for posts on Facebook.

Regularly traveling to Dubai for business, Mr. ABDELWAHAB was arrested on 19 October 2022, in Sharjah by State Security agents without any arrest warrant or explanation. His family was only informed of his detention at Abu Dhabi's Al Sadr federal prison two weeks later through a brief phone call. Since then, he has received no legal assistance, and his contact with the outside world has been strictly controlled.



According to the testimony of a former fellow detainee, he was sentenced solely for publishing Facebook posts criticizing UAE airstrikes in Yemen in 2019. Despite the fact that his posts were non-violent and could in no way constitute a criminal offense, Mr. ABDELWAHAB was severely punished merely for exercising his right to freedom of expression.

In recent years, many individuals have been sentenced to lengthy prison terms in the UAE simply for expressing themselves on social media. This repression is based on a restrictive legal framework, including the cybercrime law, which punishes any criticism deemed harmful to the state or its image.

Deprived of visits and subjected to harsh detention conditions, Mr. ABDELWAHAB began a hunger strike in early March to protest his unjust incarceration and sentencing.

Confronted with this situation, his family turned to Alkarama for assistance in bringing his case before the United Nations.

Considering that his arrest and detention have no legal basis and that he was sentenced solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression without access to a lawyer, Alkarama has submitted his case to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and calls for his immediate release.

## Yemen: Civilian casualties in US airstrikes

18 March 2025

The United Nations has confirmed that at least two children, aged 6 and 8, were among those killed in US airstrikes targeting northern Saada, Yemen, on Saturday evening, March 15, 2025. Another child was injured, and the condition of a fourth child remains unknown, according to UNICEF. The United States has been conducting airstrikes for several days, claiming they are targeting Houthi positions in response to attacks by the group on Israeli or Houthi-affiliated vessels in the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea.



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For its part, the United Nations called on Washington and the Houthis to halt the escalation "which threatens to exacerbate regional tensions," according to a statement by Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for the Secretary-General of the organization, who called for "maximum restraint and a halt to all military activities."

He added that "any further escalation could exacerbate regional tensions, fuel cycles of revenge that could further destabilize Yemen and the region, and pose serious risks to the already dire humanitarian situation in the country."

Yemen has been witnessing a civil war since September 2014, following the Houthi group's takeover of the capital Sana'a and other cities, and its commission of widespread human rights violations, before the situation

worsened further following the military intervention of Saudi Arabia and the UAE to support the recognized government. However, the two countries failed to restore stability and contributed to complicating the crisis and the deterioration of the human rights situation in the country.

## Saudi Arabia: UN expert expresses concern over continued detention of Mohammed Al-Bajadi

8 April 2025

On 8 April 2025, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Mary Lawlor, [expressed](#) concern over the continued detention of Saudi human rights activist Mohammed Saleh Al-Bajadi, despite the fact that his sentence officially ended in 2023.



Al-Bajadi (46) is one of the most prominent prisoners of conscience in Saudi Arabia and a founding member of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA). The organisation had called for urgent intervention from the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances ([WGEID](#)) after Al-Bajadi's enforced disappearance upon his arrest on 24 May 2018.

Al-Bajadi was arrested around 11:00 PM when security officers, dressed in civilian and military clothes, raided his home, detained him without presenting a court order, and took him to an unknown location.

He participated in founding the now-banned ACPRA, which documented human rights violations, filed lawsuits against the Ministry of Interior, and informed the Human Rights Council and UN special procedures about serious human rights abuses in Saudi Arabia. Since 2011, the Saudi authorities have launched a campaign against ACPRA members, detaining and arbitrarily [prosecuting](#) them for their peaceful human rights activities.

Al-Bajadi was first arrested in March 2011 after participating in a protest outside the Ministry of Interior in Riyadh. Over a year later, he was tried, and in April 2012, the court sentenced him to four years in prison and a five-year travel ban for “publicly defaming the country and questioning the independence of the judiciary” and “participating in the establishment of a human rights organisation,” which violated his rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Al-Bajadi appealed the sentence, and in March 2015, the Specialized Criminal Court in Riyadh—handling terrorism cases—sentenced him to ten years in prison, five of which were suspended.

Al-Bajadi refrained from any human rights activities after his release in November 2015. His enforced disappearance fits into the broader context of the unprecedented crackdown on freedom of expression in Saudi Arabia, which began in September 2017. Dozens of public figures, activists, and religious leaders have been targeted, with most arrested for either opposing government policies or failing to publicly support Saudi-led efforts against Qatar.

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For its part, Alkarama has called on the UN Working Group to urgently intervene with the Saudi authorities, demanding that they immediately release Al-Bajadi and, in any case, ensure his protection under the law and inform his family of his fate and whereabouts.

## Kuwait: Legalising arbitrary measures and violating the right to privacy with the “genetic fingerprinting” decision

21 April 2025

The Kuwaiti authorities have recently issued a [decision](#) requiring citizens to undergo both genetic and biometric fingerprinting to verify their entitlement to citizenship. This measure has provoked widespread criticism for its breach of the right to privacy. The introduction of mandatory biometric registration, effective from March 2024, has sparked serious concerns about the privacy of Kuwaiti citizens. Justified on grounds of national security, the policy involves the compulsory collection of sensitive biometric data.



However, it is accompanied by retaliatory actions that violate fundamental rights—such as freezing bank accounts, denying access to government services, and withholding healthcare from those who refuse to comply. Citizens protesting and calling on the Ministry of Interior to guarantee that the data collected will not be misused have no legal means to challenge the requirement.

Alkarama has raised this issue—among others—in its [report](#) submitted to the Human Rights Council as part of Kuwait's Universal Periodic Review, scheduled to take place during the [49th session](#) from 28 April to 9 May 2025 in Geneva.

## The Al-Muwaizri case

In early October 2024, Kuwaiti [authorities](#) at the airport denied entry to former MP and head of the parliamentary finance committee, [Shu'aib Al-Muwaizri](#), citing his refusal to provide biometric data. Al-Muwaizri, a prominent critic of government corruption, was prevented from entering the country in a move considered a violation of his right to freedom of movement—namely, the right to leave and return to his own country without restriction, as stated in Article 13, paragraph 2, of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#).

The Ministry of Interior confirmed the incident but claimed in a [statement](#) that “the citizen left [the country] of his own volition without complying with the government’s official procedures, which include the completion of approved biometric registration upon entry.” Authorities did not stop there—they summoned citizens who expressed solidarity with Al-Muwaizri, continuing the [pattern of repression](#) that has followed the dissolution of the National Assembly in May 2024.

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Previously, on 5 October 2017, Kuwait’s Constitutional Court annulled [Law No. 78/2015](#)—which had mandated the collection of genetic fingerprint data—arguing that some of its provisions were incompatible with the rights to privacy and personal freedom enshrined in Articles 30 and 31 of the Kuwaiti Constitution. Nevertheless, the authorities have recently reintroduced the practice through Ministerial Decision No. 678 of 2025, titled “Principles and Regulations for the Use of Modern Scientific Methods in the Granting, Withdrawal, Loss, or Revocation of Kuwaiti Nationality.”

The decision, published in the official gazette Kuwait Al-Youm, sets out the scientific methods that may be used in such matters—including genetic fingerprint analysis, biometric data, and any other modern scientific method currently known or discovered in the future.

## Yemen: Press Freedom – Systematic Repression and Impunity (Joint Statement)

3 May 2025

On the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, Alkarama and the undersigned Yemeni, regional and international human rights organisations express their deep concern regarding the ongoing deterioration of press and media freedom in [Yemen](#), in areas under the control of both the Houthi movement and the internationally recognised government.



Journalists, media professionals, and press workers continue to face systematic repression, including arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and unfair trials, solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression and criticising local authorities. Yemen remains one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists, where violations are committed with near-total impunity. We call upon all authorities in Yemen to uphold their obligations under Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Yemen is a State Party.

### The Judiciary as a Tool of Repression

Over more than a decade of conflict, Yemen's judiciary has become an instrument to restrict press freedom and silence dissenting and independent voices. In January 2024, the primary court in Ataq, in Shabwah

Governorate in southeastern Yemen, sentenced [journalist Aziz Al-Ahmadi](#) to a four-month suspended prison term in connection with a social media post criticising the local authorities. Similarly, Awad Kashmim, head of the Freedoms Committee at the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate in Hadhramaut, was subjected to arbitrary detention. In 2024 alone, at least 40 cases of summonses and interrogations of journalists were documented, often based on fabricated charges and brought before courts lacking legal jurisdiction—such as the Specialised Criminal Court in Sana'a, which is typically reserved for terrorism cases. Despite the existence of courts specialising in press and publication matters, many journalists continue to be prosecuted before criminal courts.

In late September 2024, the Houthi-run Specialised Criminal Court in Sana'a sentenced journalist [Taha Ahmed Rashid Al-Maamari](#)—owner of “Yemen Digital Media” and “Yemen Live” media production and satellite broadcasting companies—to death. The violations also extended to human rights lawyers such as Abdelmajid Sabra and Sami Yassin, who were subjected to [threats and arbitrary detention](#), and were baselessly charged with treason.

Since 2022, judicial harassment campaigns against journalists have escalated significantly, with prosecutions increasingly triggered by criticism of government officials. Courts have handed down prison sentences to at least three journalists on charges such as “insulting a public official” and “threatening to disclose confidential information.” In 2024, the Houthi group launched a wide-scale arrest campaign last September, coinciding with the 62nd anniversary of the 26 September Revolution, detaining hundreds of individuals, including journalist Mohamed Al-Mayyahi, for expressing dissenting views online.

## **Continuing Impunity**

Journalists in Yemen face serious threats and gross violations perpetrated by all parties, including the internationally recognised government, the Houthi movement, and other armed groups. These violations include killings, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, and torture, in the absence of effective mechanisms to hold perpetrators accountable.

The monopolisation of media by various factions has further limited the availability of independent sources of information, criminalised journalistic activity, and fostered a climate of fear and self-censorship. The repeated attacks have rendered journalism in Yemen an extremely dangerous endeavour. Yemeni women journalists are [exposed to compounded threats](#), including online harassment and targeted smear campaigns, aimed at marginalising their presence in the public sphere and excluding them from the media landscape.

Over the past decade, more than [2,600 violations against journalists](#) have been documented, with the Houthi movement responsible for the overwhelming majority. At least five journalists remain arbitrarily detained by the Houthis, including Wahid Al-Soufi, who has been forcibly disappeared since 2015, as well as Mohamed Al-Mayyahi and Nasih Shakir, who are held in conditions amounting to enforced disappearance.

Since 2020, targeted assassinations of journalists have sharply increased, silencing many through extrajudicial killings. The most recent case was the killing of TV cameraman [Musab Al-Hattami](#), who was targeted by the Houthi group on Saturday, 26 April 2025, in Marib while en route to film in front-line areas for media coverage of the ongoing conflict. In June 2022, Japanese TV correspondent [Saber Al-Haidari](#) was killed by an explosive device planted in his vehicle in Aden Governorate. Similarly, photojournalist Fawaz Al-Wafi was shot dead in his car in March 2022 in Taiz Governorate. In November 2021, journalist Rasha Al-Harazi was assassinated, and in June 2020, AFP photojournalist Nabil Al-Quaiti was killed by unidentified gunmen in Aden.

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Despite these crimes, journalists continue their work in the absence of [impartial investigations](#) or accountability by any of the parties in Yemen.

The undersigned organisations call upon all authorities in Yemen to:

- Immediately release all journalists who have completed their sentences, as well as all individuals arbitrarily detained in violation of their rights to due process and fair trial;

- Ensure that cases involving journalists are heard exclusively before courts competent in press and publication matters, in line with Yemen's international legal obligations;
- Undertake comprehensive legal reforms to harmonise national legislation with international human rights standards, ensuring full protection of freedom of expression and journalist safety;
- Initiate transparent and independent investigations into the targeted killings of journalists and bring perpetrators to justice;
- Reform the justice system, guarantee judicial independence, and cease the use of the judiciary as a tool to suppress dissent;
- End judicial harassment targeting journalists, women journalists, and human rights defenders, and reform the judiciary to ensure its full independence.

## **Signatories:**

1. Article 19
2. Center for Economic and Media Studies
3. Media Freedoms Observatory
4. Committee to Protect Journalists
5. Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR)
6. SAM for Rights and Liberties
7. Arab-European Center for Human Rights and International Law
8. American Center for Justice (ACJ)
9. Rights Radar for Human Rights
10. Alkarama – Geneva
11. Watch4HR
12. Defense Foundation for Rights and Liberties
13. Abductees' Mothers Association
14. Witness Organisation for Human Rights – Yemen
15. Haqqi Center for Rights and Liberties – Geneva
16. Yemen Future Foundation for Cultural and Media Development
17. Southern Media Network – Sama
18. Qarar Foundation for Media and Development
19. Dameer Foundation for Rights and Liberties
20. Yemeni Journalists Club – Turkiye
21. Manssa Foundation for Media and Development Studies

22. E-Humanitarian Media Organisation
23. Media Sack Foundation for Media and Development
24. Media Village for Development and Information
25. Abjad Center for Studies and Development
26. Free Media Center for Investigative Journalism
27. Yemeni Coalition to Monitor Human Rights Violations (Rasd Coalition)
28. Sawasia Organisation for Human Rights
29. Women for Peace Association
30. Monitoring Journalists Network
31. Accountability Organisation for Human Rights
32. Centre for Strategic Studies to Support Women and Children (CSWC)
33. Equality Organisation for Rights and Freedoms
34. Protection Organisation for Civil Orientation
35. Amal Cultural and Social Feminist Foundation
36. Rescue Foundation for Development
37. Baheth Foundation for Development and Human Rights
38. Marib Dam Foundation for Social Development
39. Masar Foundation for Development and Human Rights
40. Al-Bilad Center for Studies and Media
41. Basma Youth Initiative – Marib
42. Independent Civil Rights Movement

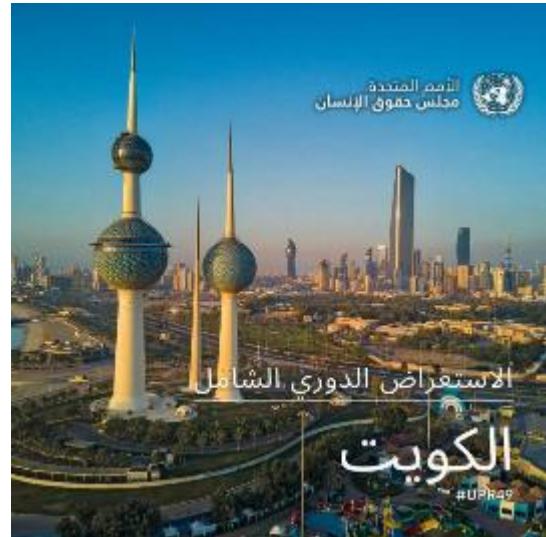


## Kuwait: Conclusion of the Universal Periodic Review

7 May 2025

The United Nations Human Rights Council announced the conclusion of the Universal Periodic Review of the State of Kuwait, during which 115 countries spoke during the session meetings. The Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review is scheduled to adopt Kuwait's report the day after tomorrow, Friday, May 9, 2025.

On October 11, 2024, Alkarama submitted its parallel report as part of Kuwait's fourth Universal Periodic Review, including a number of recommendations to improve the human rights situation in the country.



## Saudi Arabia: UN Independent Expert Deplores Refusal to Visit Al-Hawali and Al-Awdah

12 May 2025

The [UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons](#), Claudia Mahler, [expressed](#) her regret at the Saudi authorities' refusal to allow her to visit Safar bin Abdulrahman al-Hawali and Salman bin Fahd Al Awdah in their place of detention at Al-Ha'ir prison during her country visit from [20 to 30 April 2025](#).

In her report on the visit, the expert stated: "I visited Al-Ha'ir prison in Riyadh, the largest detention facility in the country, which holds 1,006 inmates, including 82 elderly men. I requested to meet with two religious scholars and human rights defenders: Mr. Safar bin Abdulrahman al-Hawali (75) and Mr. Salman Al Awdah (68), whose detention, risk of execution, prison conditions, and denial of medical care are a source of concern within the UN human rights system." She added: "Unfortunately, the prison authorities denied my request, citing a lack of time to facilitate the visit, despite having been notified 24 hours in advance of my intention to meet with them in prison."

Claudia Mahler considered that this refusal contravenes the terms of reference governing country visits by special procedure mandate holders, which include the right to confidential and unsupervised contact with persons deprived of liberty.



She continued: “This report confirms the concerns raised by other special procedures mandate holders and by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.” She further stated: “I reiterate their calls to allow unrestricted contact with their families and to guarantee their physical and psychological safety, particularly in light of their vulnerability as older persons.” The UN expert concluded that although a branch of the Saudi Human Rights Commission is present in prison facilities, it has provided no information or taken any concrete action regarding the rights of elderly detainees.

This comes at a time when Saudi Arabia continues to ignore numerous visit requests by UN rapporteurs, especially those addressing urgent matters. Since 2006, the country has welcomed only four rapporteurs while ignoring or rejecting sixteen visit requests, including from the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and from the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions.

The cases of Safar al-Hawali and Salman Al Awdah are among the key cases worked on by the organisation Alkarama, in which UN decisions have recognized the arbitrary nature of their detention and called for their immediate release and an end to reprisals against their families.

### **Safar bin Abdulrahman al-Hawali and His Sons**

On 13 July 2018, Alkarama requested urgent intervention from the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID) and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, urging Saudi authorities to release all members of Sheikh Dr. Safar al-Hawali’s family or, at the very least, to protect them by law and inform their relatives of their fate and place of detention.

Alkarama highlighted the critical health condition of Safar al-Hawali, who had previously suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and a fractured pelvis.

On 12 October 2020, Alkarama [filed a complaint](#) with the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), denouncing the authorities' relentless persecution of Mr. al-Hawali and his family.

In response, on 6 November 2020, the CRPD requested that Saudi authorities take several measures to prevent irreparable harm to Safar al-Hawali, including his immediate release. Later, Alkarama informed the Committee that, in an act of reprisal, the Saudi Court of Appeal had doubled the prison sentences of several relatives of the prominent cleric.

On 21 April 2021 and again on 21 April 2023, Alkarama submitted updates on Mr. al-Hawali's case in its report to the UN Secretary-General concerning reprisals against individuals cooperating with UN human rights mechanisms.

On 2 May 2023, Alkarama submitted comments to the CRPD in response to the Saudi government's reply on Mr. al-Hawali's case.

On 15 April 2024, [UN experts](#) on the rights of persons with disabilities determined that the prolonged solitary confinement of the critical religious scholar Safar al-Hawali—without trial and without accommodations for his disability—constituted serious violations, including arbitrary detention and acts of torture or inhuman treatment.

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued Opinion No. 26/2023 on Dr. al-Hawali, in a 17-page document based on an exchange of correspondence with Saudi authorities, who responded belatedly, claiming that the country had not ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

The Working Group relied on credible information about Mr. al-Hawali's arrest, which occurred during a large-scale campaign targeting academics, clerics, activists, and reformist lawyers advocating for human rights, political participation, and opposing Western tutelage in the Arab world as well as the establishment of foreign military bases in the region.

The Group examined the Saudi government's responses and demonstrated their invalidity in detail, condemning the authorities for violations such as enforced disappearance, denial of fair trial guarantees, and violations of freedom of expression and equality before the law. It also rejected the authorities' claims that his arrest was linked to counter-terrorism efforts, concluding that the real motive lay in his peaceful criticism of state policies.

Previously, based on a complaint by Alkarama, the [CRPD](#) had called on the Saudi authorities to immediately release the prominent scholar Safar al-Hawali. The Committee specifically requested that the authorities "proceed with Mr. al-Hawali's immediate release" while ensuring his safety and taking all necessary precautions to prevent harm. Furthermore, the state was urged to guarantee Mr. al-Hawali access to appropriate medical care, either at home or in any health facility of his choice.

In a clear sign of reprisal and punitive intent toward Mr. al-Hawali and his relatives, the Saudi authorities repeatedly failed to respond to the Committee's requests, first in [November 2020](#) and again in December 2022.

### **Salman Al Awdah and His Brother Khaled Al Awdah**

Regarding Dr. Al Awdah and his brother, Alkarama filed a complaint on 4 October 2017 with the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

On 25 October 2017, Alkarama [submitted](#) the case to the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression.

On [20 September 2018](#), it was also submitted to the UN Special Rapporteur on the protection of human rights while countering terrorism. On 26 January 2021, the case was submitted to the CRPD, with an urgent request for Dr. Al Awdah's immediate release in light of reprisals against his family. On 31 May 2022, Alkarama submitted a request to the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to rule on the arbitrary nature of Dr. Salman Al Awdah's detention.

During its 97th session, held from 28 August to 1 September 2023, the Working Group issued Opinion No. 56/2023 concerning Dr. Salman bin Fahd Al Awdah and his brother Khaled Al Awdah, reaching the same conclusions as in the case of Dr. al-Hawali. In an 18-page opinion, the Group expressed its astonishment at the Saudi government's responses, which mainly consisted of challenging the Group's competence to examine the complaint. It concluded that this opinion is part of a broader series of decisions issued in recent years, revealing a systematic policy of human rights violations by the Saudi authorities. The Group also addressed the case of Mr. Khaled Al Awdah.

The Group praised the reliability of the information provided by the complainant, despite attempts by Saudi authorities to discredit them. It criticized the counter-terrorism legislation, anti-money laundering laws, and cybercrime laws under which the victims were prosecuted, asserting that the government had failed to demonstrate the legality of their detention.

Similarly, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights had, on 22 December 2017, published its [letter](#) to the Saudi authorities regarding the cases of Dr. Al-Hawali and Dr. Salman Al Awdah, expressing "deep concern over the massive and systematic arbitrary arrests and detention of individuals, including human rights defenders, solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly."

## **Yemen: Detention of journalist Mohammed Al-Mayahi upheld – Judiciary used to retaliate against journalists**

24 May 2025

A court controlled by the Houthi group in Sana'a sentenced detained journalist Mohammed Dabwan Al-Mayahi to a year and a half in prison and obliged him to write a pledge not to publish anything that touches the group's leader or to write in newspapers and websites that criticize the group's violations in Yemen.



On September 20, 2024, armed Houthi elements violently stormed the home of journalist Al-Mayahi in Sana'a, terrorizing his wife and child and looting some of his belongings. They then took him to one of their prisons and forcibly disappeared him for several weeks, before it was later revealed that he was being held in a security and intelligence prison. On January 13, 2025, his case was referred to the Specialized Criminal Prosecution for Terrorism and State Security Cases, whose legitimacy is contested. He was charged with broadcasting and publishing malicious statements that harm state security and disturb public order.

Alkarama expresses its condemnation of the use of a "formal" judicial body as a tool to take revenge on a journalist. It considers the decision to imprison journalist Al-Mayahi, issued by a court whose legitimacy is not recognized, as a link in the chain of violations he has been subjected to since the moment of his arrest, in clear violation of international human rights law, especially Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights. It demands his immediate release and an end to the persecution and targeting of journalists.

Alkarama has been monitoring numerous cases of repression, intimidation, prolonged detention, and unfair trials suffered by Yemeni journalists in recent years, and urges all parties to protect journalists, enable them to carry out their work freely, and lift restrictions on press freedoms in the country.

## Saudi Arabia: Alkarama Strongly Condemns the Execution of Saudi Journalist Turki Al-Jasser

16 June 2025

Alkarama firmly condemns the execution of Saudi journalist and activist Turki Al-Jasser by the Saudi authorities, approximately seven years after his arrest and enforced disappearance on charges related to the exercise of his right to freedom of expression and opinion. Alkarama has submitted the case to the relevant United Nations mechanisms, including the [Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions](#), calling for the condemnation of this flagrant violation of the right to life, amid a broader escalation of politically motivated executions in [Saudi Arabia](#).



Rachid Mesli, lawyer and Director of Alkarama, emphasized that this execution exemplifies the ongoing pattern of systematic repression carried out by Saudi authorities against independent and dissenting voices, in a context marked by a lack of transparency and the instrumentalization of the judiciary as a tool of repression rather than protection.

“These practices — including arbitrary detention, torture, unfair trials and execution — constitute a systematic breach of Saudi Arabia’s international obligations and call for international accountability, the cessation of these violations, and the restoration of fundamental freedoms and the rule of law,” he added.

### **Arbitrary Arrest and Unfair Trial**

Turki Al-Jasser, in his late forties, was arrested on 15 March 2018, during a raid by Saudi security forces, during which his electronic devices and personal belongings were confiscated. He was subsequently subjected to enforced disappearance until 29 December 2019, when he was allowed a single phone call to his family — after which he disappeared again. A second call was permitted in 2021, with no further developments.

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In its [statement](#), the Saudi Ministry of Interior declared: "Turki bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh Al-Jasser — a Saudi national — committed several terrorist offenses, including high treason through espionage and conspiracy against the Kingdom's security with foreign actors, as well as receiving funds to finance terrorist activities, thereby endangering internal security, national unity, and state stability."

It further [stated](#): "The investigation substantiated the charges, and after referral to the competent court, a final verdict ordering his execution was issued. The judgment was upheld on appeal and confirmed by the Supreme Court, and a royal decree was issued for its enforcement. The execution by Ta’zir (discretionary punishment) was carried out on Saturday, 14 June 2025 (18 Dhul Hijja 1446), in the Riyadh region."

This execution provoked widespread shock among Saudi human rights defenders, who see it as a symbol of the regime’s relentless repression of

dissent. They denounce the egregious lack of procedural guarantees in the case — including arbitrary detention without a public trial for seven years, torture, ill-treatment, enforced disappearance, and the absence of effective legal representation.

## **Echoes of the Khashoggi Case**

The case has also reignited memories of the assassination of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, as [highlighted](#) by Carlos Martinez de la Serna, Program Director at the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). He stated that the enduring impunity for Khashoggi's 2018 murder in Istanbul continues to enable the persecution of journalists in Saudi Arabia. He affirmed: "The international community's failure to secure justice for Jamal Khashoggi was not only a betrayal of one journalist, but has also emboldened Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the Kingdom's de facto ruler, to persist in his oppression of the press."

Alkarama reiterates its strongest condemnation of the execution of Mr. Turki Al-Jasser, which it considers a particularly serious violation of peremptory norms of international human rights law, particularly the right to life and freedom of expression, as enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Saudi Arabia is a State Party.

Alkarama further underscores that the deliberate targeting of journalists for their opinions or professional activities constitutes a blatant violation of Article 19 of the Covenant, which guarantees every individual the inalienable right to freedom of expression — including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers and through any medium.

## Saudi Arabia: Release of ACPRA Member Abdulaziz Al-Shubaily After Nearly Eight Years in Detention

22 June 2025

Alkarama has learned from Saudi human rights sources that the authorities have finally released Abdulaziz Al-Shubaily, a human rights activist and member of the Saudi Association for Civil and Political Rights (ACPRA), after nearly eight years of detention.

Alkarama had closely followed Al-Shubaily's case and, on 30 April 2015, submitted an urgent appeal to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ([WGAD](#)) and to the [Special Rapporteur](#) on the situation of human rights defenders regarding his trial before the Specialized Criminal Court.



Abdulaziz Al-Shubaily is a member of ACPRA, an association founded in 2009 but never officially recognized by the Saudi authorities. Despite lacking legal status, ACPRA—known by its acronym—worked to document human rights violations in Saudi Arabia and to transmit this information to the United Nations. It also called for the Ministry of Interior to be held accountable for its violations of fundamental rights.

In 2012, the Saudi authorities launched a broad crackdown on ACPRA members and human rights defenders, initiating judicial proceedings that resulted in harsh prison sentences and the dissolution of the association.

## Background

Al-Shubaily was summoned multiple times for interrogation and appeared before the Specialized Criminal Court on 7 May 2015, a judicial body frequently criticized by UN experts and mechanisms for its lack of independence and failure to uphold fair trial guarantees. During this hearing, he refused to recognize the legitimacy of the court, arguing that it should only have jurisdiction over terrorism-related cases.

His trial began on 27 October 2014, as part of the broader repression against ACPRA and its members, based on the 2014 Law on Combating Terrorism and its Financing. This law is widely criticized for its vague and overly broad definitions of terrorism, which are used to criminalize legitimate acts such as freedom of expression, peaceful dissent, and human rights advocacy.

Al-Shubaily was eventually arrested on 17 September 2017 in the Al-Qassim region. He was later sentenced by the Specialized Criminal Court to eight years in prison, followed by an eight-year travel ban, on charges including incitement of public opinion, contempt of the judiciary, and participation in the founding of ACPRA.

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## Alkarama's Action

Alkarama has consistently followed the cases of detained ACPRA members, submitting several complaints to the UN special procedures on human rights. It has regularly drawn [attention to their situation](#) through parallel [reports](#) to UN mechanisms and produced a range of [media content](#) to advocate for their cause, denounce the violations they face, and put pressure on the Saudi government to end its repressive policies and guarantee freedom of expression.

In October 2016, Alkarama, in cooperation with other NGOs, [launched a campaign](#) against the arbitrary detention and persecution of ACPRA members. As part of this effort, an open letter was addressed to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, urging him to demand the

immediate release of all detained members and to call for legislative reforms to safeguard the fundamental rights of all Saudi citizens.

In March 2018, on the occasion of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's first official visits to several foreign capitals, Alkarama and other international human rights organizations issued a joint appeal to the international community. They used the opportunity to highlight the plight of detained activists and to draw the attention of host countries to the repressive practices and systematic violations faced by human rights defenders in Saudi Arabia.

In addition to Al-Shubaily, Alkarama has consistently advocated for the release of other ACPRA members. While some have been freed, others have tragically died in detention, such as Dr. Abdullah Al-Hamid. Several remain behind bars, including activist Mohamed Al-Bajadi, despite having served their sentences.

Alkarama hopes that the release of Mr. Al-Shubaily will mark a first step toward the liberation of all prisoners of conscience in Saudi Arabia, the release of all individuals detained for peacefully exercising their freedom of expression or expressing political dissent, and an end to repressive policies, intimidation, and the abusive use of anti-terrorism laws to silence critical voices.

## Saudi Arabia: Release of Academic Khaled Alodah after Eight Years of Arbitrary Detention

27 June 2025

The Saudi authorities have released academic Khaled Alodah, brother of the prominent preacher and scholar Dr. Salman bin Fahd Alodah, after eight years of arbitrary detention. He had been arrested for sharing information about his brother's arrest, who remains arbitrarily detained under inhumane conditions, despite a decision by the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) describing the detention of both brothers as a flagrant violation of international law.



The Saudi authorities had arrested Dr. Salman Alodah on 10 September 2017, following a tweet in which he expressed hope for reconciliation among Gulf countries. His arrest was part of a broad crackdown targeting numerous religious scholars, preachers, and activists. His brother, Dr. Khaled Alodah, was arrested two days later, simply for announcing Salman's arrest and expressing his support.

Following complaints submitted by Alkarama, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ([WGAD](#)), during its [97th session](#), issued [Opinion No. 56/2023](#). It concluded that the deprivation of liberty of the Alodah brothers constituted arbitrary detention in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The group emphasized that they had been arrested without a judicial warrant, denied access to legal

counsel, and not brought before a judge within a reasonable time frame, in violation of Articles 9, 10, and 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), as well as fair trial standards. It further determined that their detention was politically motivated and called for their immediate release and appropriate compensation.

In its submissions to UN human rights protection mechanisms, Alkarama reported that Dr. Khaled Alodah had been subjected to prolonged solitary confinement and deprived of any contact with the outside world, under conditions amounting to ill-treatment or even torture, in violation of the Convention against Torture, to which Saudi Arabia acceded in 1997.

For its part, on 22 December 2017, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights published a [letter addressed to the Saudi authorities](#) referring to the cases of Dr. al-Hawali, Dr. Salman Alodah, and his brother. In this letter, the High Commissioner expressed “deep concern at the widespread and systematic arbitrary arrests and detention of individuals, including human rights defenders, solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly.”

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Although Dr. Khaled Alodah has been released after nearly eight years of detention, Dr. Salman Alodah remains imprisoned, prosecuted solely for his opinions and peaceful exercise of freedom of expression. During his detention, he has endured prolonged periods of solitary confinement, been denied medical care and family visits, under particularly humiliating and inhumane conditions.

In light of these ongoing violations, Alkarama reiterates its call on the Saudi authorities to implement the [decision](#) of the UN Working Group by releasing Dr. Salman Alodah immediately and unconditionally; to investigate the conditions of his detention and the serious violations surrounding it; and to put an end to all politically motivated prosecutions against activists, human rights defenders, and preachers. Finally, Alkarama urges Saudi Arabia to uphold its international obligations under the ICCPR, the Convention against Torture, and other international human rights instruments.

## United Arab Emirates: Life sentences reflect regime's brutality against prisoners of conscience and political opponents

30 June 2025

The authorities of the United Arab Emirates are continuing their campaign of repression and intimidation against prisoners of conscience and political opponents, using the justice system and anti-terrorism laws as tools in their war against human rights. On June 26, 2025, the UAE Federal Supreme Court confirmed, following a partial appeal, life sentences imposed on 24 prisoners of conscience accused of involvement in what it calls the "Justice and Dignity terrorist organization case," according to the official news agency [WAM](#).



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The authorities have not disclosed the names of the convicted individuals, but the verdict states that "the court must apply the penalty corresponding to the two most serious offenses — financing a terrorist organization and collaborating with it — taking into account the sentences already served. The court rejects the argument that the criminal procedure regarding these two charges was closed by a final judgment in case no. 79/2012 of the State Security Court, as that judgment only addressed the charge of creating and managing the organization 'Dawaa Al-Islah' (Call for Reform) under Article 180/1 of the Penal Code, without specifically addressing the crimes of financing and collaboration defined in Law No. 1/2004 on counter-terrorism, which provide for distinct and more severe penalties."

Me Rachid Mesli, director of Alkarama, emphasized that this decision appears to be an attempt by the UAE government to evade accusations of “flagrant and repeated violation of the principle prohibiting trying a person twice for the same facts after a final judgment, not to mention that the detainees have already served their sentences following trials lacking guarantees of fairness.”

Alkarama had already strongly condemned, on July 10, 2024, the arbitrary convictions handed down by a UAE court against 53 political prisoners, victims of repeated trials. Several of them had already been the subject of opinions from the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention denouncing these detentions and calling for their release.

On that occasion, Alkarama had referred the competent United Nations human rights mechanisms, considering these new unfair trials and convictions as an attempt by the State party to escape its obligations of good-faith cooperation with UN bodies, as well as a violation of its commitments under international human rights law.

The Federal Court of Appeal of Abu Dhabi (State Security section) had sentenced 53 defendants, including prisoners of conscience, political activists, lawyers, teachers, and six companies, for creating and managing a terrorist organization called the “Justice and Dignity Committee,” and another called “Dawaa Al-Islah,” both considered by the authorities as affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, banned in the Emirates.

The court had then imposed life sentences on 43 defendants, 15 years’ imprisonment on five others found guilty of allegedly supporting Dawaa Al-Islah (notably through articles and tweets) knowing its opposition to the State, and 10 years’ imprisonment plus a fine of 10 million AED on five others convicted of money laundering related to the creation and financing of a terrorist organization.

However, the court had declared the public action extinguished for 24 defendants on the charges of “cooperation and financing of Dawaa Al-Islah” and acquitted one other, with penalties imposed on 78 persons,

without specifying the fate of six others initially included in the trial, while noting that these decisions may be appealed to the Federal Supreme Court.

## **Repeated trials**

In early January 2024, the UAE authorities resumed prosecutions against dozens of political prisoners who had already served their sentences. The Attorney General then referred 84 political prisoners to the Abu Dhabi court, accusing them, mostly members of the Muslim Brotherhood, of having created a new secret organization to commit violent and terrorist acts in the country.

In an official statement, the prosecutor said that “the accused had concealed these alleged crimes and their evidence before their arrest and trial in 2013 (case no. 17/2013 – State Security).”

Me Rachid Mesli described these prosecutions as a “major sham and total contempt for justice,” denouncing a “flagrant violation of the principle prohibiting trying a person twice for the same facts after a final judgment, not to mention that sentences had already been served following unfair trials.”

He declared: “By this move, the UAE authorities worsen the violations of the victims’ rights and practice a form of slow execution, while evading their international obligations, notably their duty of good-faith cooperation with the UN special procedures, in particular the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, which has issued several opinions highlighting the arbitrary nature of these detentions and demanding their release and reparations.”

He added that the Abu Dhabi authorities, far from following the Group’s recommendations, “establish a climate of absurdity where the rule of law disappears, giving way to brutality and state coercion as the dominant mode of governance.”

## Opinion of the UN Working Group

The resumption of trials comes more than a year after the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, [for the fourth time](#), demanded the release of these peaceful opponents, detained for exercising their freedom of expression and calling for political reforms.

The opinion concerned 12 citizens among the 94 arrested in 2012 following the “Arab Spring,” sentenced to 10 years in prison for “terrorism” and “cybercrimes.”

The UAE authorities had then conducted a widespread [arrest campaign](#) targeting notably academics, judges, lawyers, and human rights defenders after they submitted a petition to the president and the Supreme Council requesting democratic reforms. They were held incommunicado, subjected to torture, before being convicted in what was the largest collective trial in the country’s history, known as the [“Emirates 94.”](#)

## Rehabilitation centers (Munasaha)

The UN Group also raised the issue of detentions in “rehabilitation” centers ordered by the State Security courts at the request of the prosecution. The anti-terrorism law does not clearly specify the maximum duration of detention in these centers nor the obligation to renew the detention order. According to Article 40(3) of the anti-terrorism law and Article 11 of the law on rehabilitation centers, the center must send a quarterly report to the prosecutor, who transmits it to the court along with his opinion on the detainee’s possible dangerousness. The court can then decide on release if the detainee’s “situation” allows.

## Alkarama’s Action

For Alkarama, these new trials and sentences constitute a form of psychological torture inflicted on individuals who have already served long sentences and hoped to regain their freedom. This practice reflects the UAE’s disregard for the recommendations of the Committee against Torture during the State’s initial review in 2022, to which Alkarama

contributed via [a shadow report](#) and participation [in NGO briefings](#) at the Office of the High Commissioner in Geneva in July 2022.

The Committee, in its [final observations](#) of August 2022, recommended that the State party ensure that anti-terrorism and State security laws fully comply with international standards, notably by providing all fundamental legal guarantees (paragraph 13 of General Comment No. 2 of 2007), and prosecute and sanction perpetrators of torture.

The Committee also recommended that detention in rehabilitation centers be strictly time-limited and clearly defined by law, and that detainees be able to challenge the legality of their detention. It also [emphasized](#) aligning detention conditions with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules) and the need to strengthen cooperation with UN mechanisms, including allowing visits from the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and other human rights experts.

It is important to underline that the UAE continues to detain over 60 prisoners of conscience, most of whom [have served their sentences](#) since July 2022 but remain imprisoned under the pretext of “rehabilitation” (Munasaha), despite numerous violations, torture, and ill-treatment.

Among them is the prominent lawyer and human rights defender Dr. [Mohammed Al-Roken](#), who served 10 years in prison following an unfair judgment. For years, Alkarama has worked on the case of Dr. Al-Roken and other Emirati prisoners of conscience and political opponents, including the “Emirates 94” group, filing individual complaints with UN special procedures. The Working Group has repeatedly concluded the arbitrary nature of these detentions and demanded their release. Alkarama has also raised their case during the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council and issued numerous press releases.

## Previous UN decisions

Following complaints from Alkarama and other NGOs, the Working Group adopted in 2013 (Opinion [No. 60/2013](#) of September 9) an opinion

confirming that the charges against these prisoners related to the legitimate exercise of freedom of expression and that the restrictions imposed were neither proportionate nor justified. It noted that the individuals concerned had been held in isolation without legal basis and that the charges were vague and imprecise, concluding serious violations of the rights to a fair trial and freedom of expression.

The Group had previously adopted Opinions [No. 64/2011](#) and [No. 8/2009](#), in which it concluded violations of freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association (Articles 7 and 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), as well as the prohibition of arbitrary detention (Article 9). It expressed concern over the UAE's systematic practice and insisted on the need for the State to comply with international law.



## Saudi Arabia: UN recognizes the arbitrary nature of Bassam Al Jalladi's detention

8 July 2025

On 30 May 2025, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ([WGAD](#)) issued Opinion No. 37/2025, concluding that the detention of Bassam Al Jalladi, a Yemeni national detained in Saudi Arabia since 2019, is arbitrary.

This Opinion follows proceedings initiated in [May 2024 by Alkarama](#), after the victim's family approached the organization due to several years without effective legal remedy.



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### Background of the case

On 27 May 2019, Bassam Al Jalladi was arrested in Al Mahra, Yemen, by military forces without being informed of the reasons for his arrest or the existence of any warrant. After being detained in a local military prison, he was transferred to Saudi Arabia in early June without any legal procedure without a judicial decision and without his relatives being notified.

He was then detained at Abha prison in the south of the country, before being transferred in 2022 to Dhahban central prison in Jeddah. During his first months of detention, he was completely cut off from the outside world. It was not until September 2019 that he was allowed to make his first phone call. Contact with his family was then limited until it completely

ceased in October 2022. Since that date, his relatives have had no news of him.

In June 2022, three years after his arrest, Mr. Al Jalladi appeared for the first time before the Specialized Criminal Court, an exceptional jurisdiction established and controlled by the Ministry of Interior. It was then that he discovered he was being prosecuted for alleged membership in a terrorist organization — the same charges for which he had been arrested in Yemen in 2016, before the Yemeni judiciary cleared him and closed the case in 2019. He was sentenced to 36 years in prison.

### **Alkarama submits the case to the UN Working Group**

In the proceedings before the UN, Alkarama requested an opinion detailing the numerous violations suffered by Mr. Al Jalladi, both during his arrest and throughout his detention. In particular, Alkarama emphasized the absence of legal procedures surrounding his transfer to Saudi Arabia, his incommunicado detention, the lack of legal assistance, and the fundamentally unfair nature of his trial.

In its response to Alkarama’s complaint, the Saudi government denied any wrongdoing, asserting that Mr. Al Jalladi’s arrest in Yemen and subsequent transfer to Saudi Arabia were carried out in accordance with the law, that he had been informed of his rights, and that he had received a fair trial.

However, the UN Working Group upheld Alkarama’s complaint and accepted its observations, finding that Mr. Al Jalladi had no access to a lawyer for three years, that his trial was held before a court whose independence is disputed and that the charges against him were based on vague and unstable legal grounds.

### **Recognition of the arbitrary nature of the detention**

In its Opinion No. 37/2025, the Working Group concluded that Mr. Al Jalladi’s detention was arbitrary, lacked any legal basis, and violated fundamental rules of international law, including the right to a fair trial. This engages the responsibility of both Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

In response to Alkarama’s requests, the UN experts urged the immediate release of Bassam Al Jalladi, the provision of adequate reparations, and the initiation of an independent investigation into the circumstances surrounding his arrest and detention. The Working Group also reaffirmed the absolute prohibition of extrajudicial transfers between States without judicial safeguards, even when conducted under the guise of security cooperation.

### **Broader context and call for cooperation**

In its Opinion, the Working Group rightly emphasized that during its 34 years of existence, it has demonstrated that Saudi Arabia has systematically violated its international human rights obligations in more than 75 documented cases.

The experts expressed deep concern at a situation they consider indicative of a deeply rooted and widespread problem of arbitrary detention in the country, constituting a serious and persistent violation of international law.

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In light of these repeated and troubling failures, the Working Group reiterated its urgent request to carry out an official visit to Saudi Arabia (requests renewed on 24 August 2021 and 4 February 2022), emphasizing the need for constructive dialogue with the Saudi authorities to support them in implementing concrete measures to end these serious human rights violations linked to arbitrary deprivation of liberty.



## Saudi Arabia: UN Experts Find Detention of Yemeni Mohsen al-Awlaqi Arbitrary

9 July 2025

In its Opinion No. 1/2025, issued on 1 April 2025, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ([WGAD](#)) concluded that the detention of Yemeni national Mohsen Saleh Nasser Al-Awlaqi was arbitrary and remains unlawful, in clear violation of international law. This decision followed a complaint submitted by Alkarama on [23 October 2024](#) concerning the arrest of this construction worker in May 2021 in Saudi Arabia.



On 26 May 2021, Mr. Al-Awlaqi was arrested in Riyadh by plainclothes officers, without a warrant and without being informed of the reasons for his arrest. He was solely accused of expressing his religious beliefs online, including his alleged support for a group linked to “Ansar al-Mahdi.”

He was then held incommunicado for three months, with no contact with his family or access to legal counsel, treatment that the Working Group described as a blatant violation of his right to liberty and due process guarantees.

According to the Working Group, Mr. Al-Awlaqi’s statements, which did not incite violence, fell entirely within his rights to freedom of conscience and expression as protected by Articles 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Nevertheless, his alleged affiliation with a religious

minority opposed to Saudi Arabia's official doctrine was deemed sufficient to convict him.

In November 2022, the Specialized Criminal Court, a special tribunal whose lack of independence has been criticized by the Committee against Torture and various UN special procedures, sentenced Mr. Al-Awlaki to 20 years in prison and 80 lashes.

Deprived of legal assistance throughout the preliminary phase, he only met his lawyer on the day of his first hearing, one year after his arrest. The trial was conducted hastily, in clear violation of international fair trial standards.

### **Alkarama's Submission**

Mandated by Mr. Al-Awlaki's family, Alkarama [filed a complaint](#) with the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, denouncing the complete disregard for international fair trial standards and, consequently, the arbitrary nature of his detention.

Alkarama pointed out that this arbitrary deprivation of liberty targeted not only Mr. Al-Awlaki but formed part of a broader repressive campaign by the Saudi authorities against activists, religious scholars, journalists, bloggers, businessmen, and more generally, anyone peacefully expressing dissenting views. This crackdown has intensified since the Crown Prince came to power.

Alkarama thus requested that the Working Group recognize the arbitrary nature of Mr. Al-Awlaki's detention and urge Saudi Arabia to release him immediately. In response, the Working Group concluded that his detention was motivated by ideological and political considerations, amounting to a form of discrimination prohibited under international law. It called on the Saudi authorities to release him without delay, grant him reparations, conduct an independent investigation, and undertake a comprehensive reform of the judicial system.

Furthermore, the Working Group recommended a thorough investigation into the conditions of his detention, appropriate measures against those

responsible, and referred the case to the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism.



## Saudi Arabia: UN Experts Condemn the Detention of Yemeni Preacher Mohammed Al-Wadaei

18 July 2025

The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ([WGAD](#)) issued Opinion No. 31/2025, concluding that the detention of Yemeni national Mohammed Ali Hussein Al-Wadaei in Saudi Arabia is arbitrary and violates international human rights law. The Group called for his immediate release as well as full reparation.

On May 31, 2024, Alkarama [filed a complaint](#) on behalf of Mr. Al-Wadaei's family with the UN Working Group, detailing the circumstances of his arrest, detention and what was deemed an unfair trial.



After a thorough examination of the facts, the UN independent experts concluded that the arrest, trial, and sentencing of Mr. Al-Wadaei to 19 years in prison were the result of his peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression, notably for sharing on social media posts critical of the Kingdom's policies, particularly following the assassination of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in October 2018. The Group found that the charges against him lacked legal basis and fell within the definition of arbitrary detention under international standards.

## **Documented Violations**

Mr. Al-Wadaei was arrested on October 19, 2022, without a warrant and without being informed of the reasons for his arrest or the charges against him. He did not appear before a judicial authority until more than a year later. During the first three months, he was held in total isolation, without any contact with a lawyer or his family, a situation the Group characterized as a violation of safeguards against torture and enforced disappearance.

He was unable to fully exercise his right to defense and met his lawyer only at his first hearing in November 2023, which constituted a serious breach of the principles of a fair trial. His conviction was based on anti-terrorism and cybercrime laws, which the Group described as "vague and imprecise" and which have been widely used by Saudi authorities to criminalize the peaceful exercise of freedom of opinion and expression.

## **Call for Release and Reparation**

The Working Group urged Saudi authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Mr. Al-Wadaei and to provide him with compensation and full reparation in accordance with international standards. It also recommended opening an independent investigation into the circumstances of his arrest and conviction, and prosecuting those responsible for the violations committed.

The UN independent experts expressed particular concern that Mr. Al-Wadaei's case adds to more than 75 already documented cases of arbitrary detention in Saudi Arabia, illustrating an alarming pattern of systematic violations of fundamental rights. They called on the Kingdom to strengthen its cooperation with UN mechanisms, to authorize an official visit to assess the human rights situation, and to undertake legal reforms consistent with its international obligations.

The opinion issued by the Working Group supports the demands made by Alkarama in its complaint, which called for recognition of the arbitrary nature of Mr. Al-Wadaei's detention, carried out by a special jurisdiction applying repressive laws infringing on fundamental freedoms.

Alkarama also recalled that numerous UN experts have repeatedly expressed concerns regarding these laws, noting that Saudi authorities systematically resort to them to justify the repression of freedom of expression and opinion, as clearly demonstrated in the case of Mr. Al-Wadaei.



# Oman: Alkarama Presents its Human Rights Assessment to the Human Rights Council Ahead of the Upcoming UPR

24 July 2025

On 17 July 2025, Alkarama submitted its contribution to the fourth cycle of [Oman's Universal Periodic Review \(UPR\)](#), scheduled to take place from 3 to 14 November 2025 in Geneva. This report, based on several years of rigorous documentation, outlines the systematic violations of fundamental rights in the country and puts forward concrete recommendations to end impunity and initiate structural reforms.



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## Context

Since Sultan Haitham bin Tariq came to power, he has undertaken administrative and economic reforms. However, these initiatives have not been accompanied by genuine democratic openness. Freedom of expression, assembly, and association remain severely restricted, while authorities continue to arbitrarily arrest journalists, activists, and ordinary citizens for peacefully expressing their views, particularly on social media.

## Restrictive Legal Framework and Increased Judicial Control

Vaguely worded laws, especially regarding cybercrime, defamation, and counterterrorism, are used to suppress dissent. In 2024, a new media law further strengthened censorship, while a 2025 reform of the nationality

law allows for citizenship to be revoked on grounds of expression or association deemed contrary to state interests.

The judiciary remains tightly controlled by the executive, depriving citizens of fair trial guarantees. Arbitrary arrests, often followed by incommunicado detention, open the door to acts of torture. For instance, in May 2024, seven young Yemenis were tortured by security forces, with no investigation launched to date.

### **Crackdown on Civil Liberties and a Shrinking Civic Space**

Peaceful assemblies are routinely dispersed, as demonstrated by the one-year prison sentence handed down to activist Talal Al-Salmani for participating in a sit-in. Associations must obtain prior authorization, and any political or religious activity is prohibited.

### **Lack of Cooperation Despite Commitments and Weakness of the National Institution**

Despite having accepted many recommendations during previous review cycles, Oman has yet to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Furthermore, no visits by UN Special Procedures have been allowed since 2014.

The National Human Rights Commission also remains under the control of the executive. In 2024, GANHRI maintained its “B” status due to the institution’s lack of structural independence.

### **Alkarama’s Recommendations**

In its submission, Alkarama called on Oman to ratify the ICCPR, ensure judicial independence, reform repressive laws, end torture and arbitrary detention, and protect human rights defenders.

Alkarama also stressed the need to repeal provisions allowing for arbitrary revocation of nationality, urging participating States in the UPR to pressure the authorities to adopt concrete reforms.



# **Saudi Arabia's World Cup Bid: Communication Filed with UN and FIFA Over Failure to prevent Human Rights Violations**

29 July 2025

In a renewed effort to demand accountability and uphold human rights in Saudi Arabia, Alkarama has submitted on 23 July 2025 a new communication to both UN Special Procedures and FIFA concerning the attribution of the 2034 FIFA World Cup to the Kingdom.



This document reports in detail the serious legal and procedural flaws that have undermined the integrity of the bidding process and enabled Saudi Arabia to secure the 2034 FIFA World Cup despite longstanding and credible human rights concerns raised by civil society actors and international experts alike. This new communication builds on two prior submissions made to the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights ([WGBH](#)) and other Special Procedures in October and December 2024, shortly after [FIFA's confirmation of Saudi Arabia](#) as the sole host through an expedited and non-transparent vote held on 11 December 2024.

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For the first time, the communication has also been submitted directly to FIFA through its [Human Rights Grievance Mechanism](#) as a pivotal test of FIFA's commitment to human rights accountability and its willingness to address well-documented risks associated with the 2034 World Cup bid.

## 1. Legal and Procedural Flaws in the Attribution of the 2034 World Cup Bid

The confirmation of Saudi Arabia as the host for the 2034 FIFA World Cup followed an unusually accelerated and opaque bidding process that deviated from prior practice and expectations of transparency. In October 2023, [FIFA announced an expedited timeline](#) and bundled the 2030 and 2034 bids into a single decision-making process. Thus, Member associations were effectively stripped of any meaningful opportunity to deliberate on the merits and risks of each bid separately.

Saudi Arabia became the sole candidate for the 2034 tournament within days of the bid announcement, after other potential contenders either withdrew or were disqualified by geographic constraints. FIFA then conducted the vote by acclamation during a virtual session, without opening the floor to prior debate or presenting a full human rights assessment to member associations. This closed and predetermined approach lacked procedural safeguards, and meaningful stakeholder engagement, ultimately affecting the adherence to FIFA's own commitments to human rights due diligence.

Of further concern is the role played by the law firm AS&H Clifford Chance, which was commissioned by Saudi authorities to conduct a [human rights context assessment](#) in support of the bid. Multiple [NGOs](#) and independent experts have since denounced this assessment as biased and lacking independence, describing it as a whitewashing of documented abuses. The assessment's limitations include its narrow scope—excluding critical issues such as freedom of expression, the repression of human rights defenders, and the misuse of anti-terror legislation—and its reliance on exclusively state-controlled sources. Further compromising its objectivity, the firm failed to engage with independent civil society, trade unions, or affected communities, and completed its assessment within an unreasonably short six-week timeframe. Rather than facilitating genuine scrutiny, the report has served as a veneer of legitimacy for FIFA's decision, despite obvious human rights risks and procedural flaws. FIFA's endorsement of this report raises serious concerns about its due diligence obligations and institutional accountability.

Lastly, the voting process itself lacked transparency. Members were asked in [December 2024](#), to approve the bids by acclamation, without debate or discussion, during a meeting conducted via videoconference. FIFA has failed to provide any clear rationale for combining the 2030 and 2034 votes, nor has it explained how this approach aligns with its obligations under international human rights standards.

## 2. Human Rights Risks Associated with the Saudi Bid

Alkarama highlighted that human rights risks were to be understood in the context of Saudi Arabia's continued use of [vague anti-terrorism legislation](#) to silence peaceful dissent—particularly targeting human's rights defenders, minorities, and online activists—through a pattern of violations that include notably arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and torture.

For example, the [Saudi bid](#) includes large-scale projects such as NEOM, a futuristic megacity that has drawn global condemnation due to reports of forced evictions, judicial repression, and violence against members of the indigenous Howeitat tribe. These actions have been denounced by UN Special Procedures as clear violations of international human rights law.

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Migrant workers also remain at severe risk. In March 2025, the first publicly reported migrant worker death linked to a 2034 World Cup construction site underscored the real-life consequences of awarding mega sporting events to countries that fail to meet international labour and human rights standards.

Taken together, these conditions reaffirm Saudi Arabia's classification as a high-risk environment for human rights violations, raising the alarm that hosting the World Cup there may actively contribute to further abuses. Alkarama highlighted in its latest submission that since the initial October 2024 communication UN human rights mechanisms and civil society have continued to document systemic human rights violations in Saudi Arabia. These include:

- **Arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance**, often targeting human rights defenders and other peaceful activists for merely expressing dissent online,
- **Torture and ill-treatment in detention**, involving prolonged solitary confinement, *incommunicado* detention, and severe abuse by security forces as well as denial of medical care,
- **Retaliation against human rights defenders**, prosecuted under vague anti-terrorism laws and denied fair trial guarantees,
- And the **continued use of the death penalty**, including for acts that do not meet the threshold of “most serious crimes” under international law, notably in cases involving juveniles or protest-related charges.

### 3. Violations of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)

Alkarama’s report concludes that FIFA’s decision to award the 2034 World Cup to Saudi Arabia constitutes a direct breach of its own [Human Rights Policy](#) and its responsibilities under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights ([UNGPs](#)), a global standard endorsed by the United Nations to guide businesses and organisations in preventing, addressing, and remedying human rights abuses linked to their operations. Specifically:

- **Principle 13** has been violated through FIFA’s failure to prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts it knew or should have known were linked to the Saudi bid, including risks to freedom of expression, assembly, and the rights of advocates, women, migrant workers and minorities.
- **Principles 17 and 18** were breached due to the absence of any credible human rights’ due diligence process, including a lack of transparent stakeholder consultation or meaningful risk assessment—despite prior warnings from UN bodies and civil society.
- **Principles 23 and 24** require heightened care in high-risk environments, yet FIFA proceeded without sufficient safeguards, oversight mechanisms, or binding commitments from Saudi Arabia, effectively ignoring the systemic and ongoing nature of human rights violations in the country.

#### **4. Requests Submitted to UN Special Procedures and FIFA**

In its conclusions and requests, Alkarama called on the UN Special Procedures—particularly the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights—to closely monitor FIFA’s handling of this communication. It urges them to assess whether FIFA is upholding its responsibilities under international human rights standards and the UNGPs.

In parallel, the association is requesting that FIFA take immediate and concrete steps to address the failures identified. Specifically, FIFA should cancel the confirmation of Saudi Arabia as the host of the 2034 World Cup and restart the bidding process with a reformed framework. This should include a truly independent and comprehensive human rights assessment covering labour rights, freedom of expression, and the protection of human rights defenders; the establishment of measurable and enforceable human rights benchmarks for host countries; and a requirement for Saudi Arabia to provide binding commitments to reform laws and practices that currently violate international standards.

Alkarama highlighted that FIFA must commission a new, truly independent and transparent human rights assessment that includes all relevant rights concerns—such as labour protections, freedom of expression, and safeguards for vulnerable groups—and that consults with independent civil society and affected communities.

Furthermore, FIFA must require Saudi Arabia to adopt enforceable commitments to fundamental freedoms, including reforming repressive laws, ratifying core international treaties, cooperating with UN mechanisms, and enabling the work of independent civil society and media. Finally, robust monitoring mechanisms must be implemented to ensure compliance throughout the process.

## Conclusion and Call to Action

This new complaint marks the first time that Alkarama has submitted its concerns through FIFA's Human Rights Grievance Mechanism. The association has also formally informed both UN Special Procedures and FIFA of this dual filing, emphasising that FIFA's response—or lack thereof—will serve as a critical test of whether its grievance mechanism offers genuine access to remedy and institutional accountability.

In the same vein, Alkarama calls for more public accountability : civil society organisations, football fans, workers' rights advocates, and other affected individuals are invited to submit complaints through [FIFA's grievance mechanism portal](#). As a publicly proclaimed tool for remedy, this mechanism must be tested and held accountable. Only through collective pressure can the normalisation of repression through global sporting events in countries such as Saudi Arabia be challenged and reversed.

## UAE: Yemeni Businessman Incarcerated Following an Unfair Trial Remains in Detention

11 September 2025

Yemeni businessman Abdullah Ali Abdulhafidh Abdelwahab remains detained at Abu Dhabi's federal prison, known as Al-Sadr, in conditions that contravene international human rights standards. His contact with his family is extremely limited: when he is allowed to make a phone call, it never lasts more than one minute, deepening the anguish and distress of his relatives.



In [March 2025](#), Alkarama submitted a communication to the United Nations Special Procedures, stressing that the arrest and detention of Mr. Abdelwahab have no legal basis.

### Case Background

On 19 October 2022, Mr. Abdelwahab was arrested in Sharjah by the Emirati State Security services, without a warrant or any official explanation. It was only two weeks later that his family received a first brief call from him, revealing that he was being held in Abu Dhabi. Since then, he has been denied the right to legal assistance and kept in near-total isolation.

According to credible sources, he was sentenced to 15 years in prison for peaceful Facebook posts dating back to 2019, in which he criticized the

United Arab Emirates' airstrikes in Yemen. Although these messages clearly fall within the legitimate exercise of freedom of expression as protected under international law, they were used as grounds for a harsh and arbitrary sentence.

In addition to being denied family visits, Mr. Abdelwahab is subjected to particularly harsh detention conditions. In March 2025, he began a hunger strike to protest his unjust imprisonment and sentence, highlighting the seriousness of his physical and psychological condition.

Mr. Abdelwahab's case is part of a broader policy of repression carried out by the Emirati authorities, who resort to restrictive law such as the Cybercrime Law to criminalize any criticism deemed harmful to the State or its image, leading to the imprisonment of many individuals for peacefully expressing their opinions on social media.

### **Alkarama's Action**

On 11 March 2025, Alkarama [filed a complaint](#) with the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ([WGAD](#)), asserting that the arrest, detention and conviction of Mr. Abdelwahab constitute acts of reprisal for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of opinion and expression.

Alkarama calls on the United Nations and the international community to exert strong pressure on the Emirati authorities to secure the immediate and unconditional release of Mr. Abdelwahab and to ensure respect for his fundamental rights, including regular communication with his family, access to effective legal assistance, and adequate medical care.

## Saudi Arabia: Mohammed Al-Bajadi, Human Rights Lawyer and Activist, Targeted for a New Trial Two Years After Completing His Sentence

8 October 2025

According to human rights sources, Saudi authorities are reportedly planning to retry lawyer Mohammed Saleh Al-Bajadi, even though he completed his sentence in 2023.

Alkarama had [already referred](#) the case of lawyer and human rights defender Mohammed Al-Bajadi to the United Nations Special Procedures on human rights. According to the account [Prisoners of Conscience](#), the court now plans to retry him.



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Mohammed Al-Bajadi was first arrested in March 2011 for supporting other prisoners of conscience and was released five years later. He was arrested again on May 24, 2018, and remains in detention to this day. The organization [ALQST](#), which focuses on prisoners of conscience in Saudi Arabia, reports that the first hearing of the new trial is scheduled for October 27, without specifying the nature of the charges.

In April 2025, Mary Lawlor, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, [expressed](#) concern over Al-Bajadi's prolonged detention despite the completion of his sentence in 2023. On her [X page](#), directly mentioning the account of the Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia in Geneva, she wrote: "Disturbing news of detained Saudi human rights defender Mohammed al-Bajadi, arrested in 2018 in relation to his peaceful

work, ended his prison sentence in 2023 but like many other Saudi human rights defenders, remains held.” calling for the immediate release of all affected detainees.

Aged 46, Mohammed Al-Bajadi is one of Saudi Arabia’s most prominent prisoners of conscience and is among the founders of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA).

Alkarama had requested urgent intervention from the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances ([WGEID](#)) following his forced disappearance after his arrest on May 24, 2018.

Al-Bajadi was arrested around 11:00 PM during a raid by State Security officers in civilian and military attire at his home, without being presented with a judicial warrant or informed of the reason for his arrest and was then taken to an unknown location.

He had helped establish ACPRA, now banned, which documented human rights violations, filed legal actions against the Ministry of Interior, and informed the Human Rights Council as well as the UN Special Procedures of serious human rights violations in Saudi Arabia. Since 2011, authorities have conducted a campaign targeting [all ACPRA members](#), arresting and prosecuting them for their peaceful human rights activities.

His first arrest took place in March 2011, after participating in a demonstration in front of the Ministry of Interior in Riyadh. More than a year later, he was brought before a court and, in April 2012, sentenced to four years in prison and a five-year travel ban for “publicly undermining the reputation of the country,” “challenging the independence of the judiciary” and “participating in the creation of a human rights organization” in violation of his freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

He appealed the judgment and in March 2015, the Specialized Criminal Court in Riyadh, which handles terrorism-related cases, sentenced him to ten years in prison, five of which were suspended.

Since his release on April 21, 2016, Al-Bajadi had refrained from any human rights activity. His disappearance is part of an unprecedented crackdown on freedom of expression in Saudi Arabia, launched in September 2017, targeting dozens of public figures, activists and religious leaders arrested either for opposing government policy or for not publicly supporting the Saudi blockade of Qatar.

Alkarama has once again requested urgent intervention from the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to ensure the immediate release of Mohammed Al-Bajadi, to place him under legal protection and to inform his family of his situation and place of detention.

## UAE: Political Prisoner Ali Al-Khaja Dies After 13 Years of Detention Despite UN Release Order

21 November 2025

Alkarama has learned, from Emirati human rights defense sources, of the death of political prisoner Ali Abdullah Al-Khaja in Al-Razeen Prison in Abu Dhabi. His health had severely deteriorated and he remained imprisoned for more than thirteen years despite a United Nations decision deeming his detention arbitrary and calling for his release.



Alkarama had submitted the cases of 62 political prisoners, including Ali Abdullah Al-Khaja, to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to denounce the growing repression of human rights defenders and political activists in the UAE since 2011. Following this submission, the Working Group issued [Opinion No. 60/2013](#) condemning their detention and calling for their immediate release.

Alkarama [monitored the case](#) from its beginnings through the delivery of unjust verdicts in the case known as the “UAE 94.” On August 19, 2013, it requested a new opinion from the Working Group concerning [61 detainees](#) sentenced to terms ranging from seven to ten years.

During this period, the Emirati authorities launched a [widespread arrest campaign](#) targeting dozens of individuals – academics, judges, lawyers, and human rights defenders – due to a petition they had sent to the President of the UAE and the Supreme Council of the Federation demanding

democratic reforms. The State Security detained them secretly and for prolonged periods, subjecting them to severe acts of torture. These detainees were later tried in the largest collective trial ever held in the country, known as the “[UAE 94](#).”

## Case Background

Mr. Al-Khaja was arrested at his home on August 28, 2012 and was forcibly disappeared until his first court appearance in March 2013, where he was accused of belonging to an underground organization. Throughout his secret detention, he was subjected to humiliating and inhumane treatment: placement in isolation, denial of visits, inability to meet or communicate with his lawyer, and deprivation of several fundamental rights.

On July 2, 2013, the Federal Supreme Court of Abu Dhabi sentenced 56 people, including Mr. Al-Khaja, to ten years in prison with an additional three years of surveillance for “membership in an illegal underground organization.” He was tried as a member of the group widely known as the “UAE 94.”

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After his sentencing, violations against him continued in Al-Razeen Prison, including prolonged isolation, prohibition from accessing sunlight, practicing sports, participating in collective religious rites such as Friday prayers, and long periods of denied visits, without any valid reason.

Although Mr. Al-Khaja completed his full sentence on August 28, 2022, the Emirati authorities refused to release him and maintained him in arbitrary detention, transferring him to the prison’s “rehabilitation” center under the pretext that he posed a terrorist threat, without giving him the opportunity to challenge this decision.

In early December 2023, the authorities again initiated proceedings against Mr. Al-Khaja and 83 other Emirati citizens, referring them to the State Security Chamber of the Abu Dhabi Court of Appeal for “creating and supporting a terrorist organization,” according to human rights sources. This new trial, known as the “UAE 84,” began on December 7, 2023.

In response to this situation, seventeen UN experts [issued a statement](#) on January 19, 2024, condemning this initiative and expressing deep concern that the trial of “84 civil society members based on false terrorism-related charges could result in the death penalty or long prison sentences.” They noted that most of the accused were already serving, or had served, sentences for acts allegedly committed between 2010 and 2011, during the Arab Spring.

The statement emphasizes that these prosecutions are part of “a growing campaign of repression by the UAE against individuals and organizations calling for peaceful political reforms, which has led to long prison sentences under the Penal Code.”

### **Alkarama’s Action**

Alkarama has followed the case of Mr. Ali Abdullah Al-Khaja and several other political prisoners in the UAE over all these years, repeatedly highlighting the seriousness of their situation. In May 2024, Alkarama vigorously condemned the new decision by Emirati authorities [to retry dozens of political prisoners](#) who had already served their full sentences, despite multiple opinions from the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention condemning these practices and demanding their release.

This statement followed the decision of the Emirati Attorney General [to refer 84 political prisoners](#) to the Federal Court of Abu Dhabi, accusing most of them of belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood, an organization banned in the country, and of “creating a new clandestine structure intended to commit acts of violence and terrorism.” In a [statement](#) relayed by official media, the prosecutor claimed that “the accused had concealed this alleged crime and its evidence prior to their arrest and trial in Case No. 17 of 2013 – State Security.”

For Me Rachid Mesli, Alkarama’s director, this new trial constitutes “a major farce and total disregard for justice.” He emphasizes that it is “a clear violation of the principle prohibiting double jeopardy after a final judgment,” particularly as the individuals had already served their

sentences following a trial marred by irregularities. According to him, this approach only “aggravates the violations suffered by the detainees,” amounting to “slow execution,” while allowing the authorities to evade their international obligations, including their duty to cooperate in good faith with UN special procedures. The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has issued multiple opinions confirming the arbitrary nature of their detention and calling for their release and reparations.

Me Mesli also points out that the Abu Dhabi authorities do not merely ignore these international opinions: they have created “an absurd situation where the rule of law is emptied of all meaning, while coercion becomes the norm.”

On July 10, 2024, the official news agency WAM announced that the Federal Court of Appeal of Abu Dhabi had convicted 53 defendants as well as six companies.

Alkarama reiterates that the continued detention of political prisoners in the UAE constitutes a clear violation of the country’s international obligations. Alkarama also emphasizes that the repetition of trials against these detainees amounts to a form of psychological torture: after spending many years hoping for release and the chance to resume a normal life, the victims face the authorities’ decision to extend their imprisonment indefinitely. This practice illustrates the UAE’s persistent disregard for the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention’s opinions, as well as for the recommendations of the Committee Against Torture.

During its initial review, to which Alkarama contributed through a [parallel report](#) and [participation in an NGO briefing](#) at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva, the Committee Against Torture made several recommendations in August 2022. These included the requirement that anti-terrorism legislation and State Security laws fully comply with international human rights standards. The Committee stressed the need to guarantee all fundamental legal safeguards outlined in paragraph 13 of General Comment No. 2 (2007), as well as the importance of investigating and sanctioning security and law enforcement agents involved in acts of torture.

The Committee also recommended that detention in “rehabilitation” centers be strictly regulated by clear and legally defined criteria, that its duration be limited and explicitly set, and that detainees be able to challenge the legality of their detention at any time.

It further urged the State to make greater efforts to align detention conditions with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), investigate all forms of ill-treatment or cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment, and prosecute those responsible for such violations.

In its concluding observations, the Committee emphasized the importance of strengthened cooperation with UN human rights mechanisms, including allowing visits by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and other experts and special procedures.

It should be recalled that Emirati authorities still hold more than sixty political prisoners, most of whom have already served their sentences since July 2022 but remain incarcerated under the guise of “rehabilitation.” Some have even been retried and again heavily sentenced, following a succession of violations, ill-treatment, torture, and unfair trials.



## **Yemen: Free Forcibly Disappeared Journalist Naseh Shaker**

17 December 2025

The [United Arab Emirates](#)-backed Southern Transitional Council (STC) and the [Yemeni](#) government should immediately provide information on the whereabouts of the journalist Naseh Shaker and unconditionally release him, 35 organizations including ALKARAMA said in a letter today to the president and vice president of Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council.



Shaker, 35, is a Yemeni journalist who was forcibly disappeared by STC authorities on November 21, 2023, on his way to Beirut to attend a training organized by the Samir Kassir Foundation. The STC controls several governorates in Yemen, including the temporary capital Aden. The authorities have not revealed his whereabouts to his family, legal representatives, or local and international organizations, despite repeated inquiries.

“The Southern Transitional Council should end its repeated practice of harassing, arbitrarily detaining, and forcibly disappearing journalists and human rights defenders,” said Niku Jafarnia, Yemen and Bahrain researcher at Human Rights Watch.

**Letter text:**

Mr. Rashad al-Alimi  
President of Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council

Mr. Aidarus al-Zoubaidi  
Vice President of Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council

Aden, Yemen

We, the undersigned organizations, write to respectfully urge the Yemeni authorities in Aden—represented by the internationally recognized government led by the Presidential Leadership Council (PLC) and the de facto authority of the Southern Transitional Council (STC)—to immediately and unconditionally release Yemeni freelance journalist Naseh Shaker, who has now spent more than two years in detention.

On November 21, 2023, Mr. Shaker was scheduled to travel to Beirut to attend a Hostile Environment and First Aid Training course organized by the Samir Kassir Foundation. He last communicated with his family on November 19, after traveling overnight from his home in Sanaa to Aden to catch his flight. He never arrived at the training and has been subjected to enforced disappearance since that time, as the authorities have refused to reveal his whereabouts when asked.

Repeated inquiries by his family, legal representatives, and local and international organizations went unanswered until February 2025, when a released detainee informed the family that Mr. Shaker was being held at al-Nasr Brigade's prison—an STC-affiliated Security Belt Forces facility in Aden that serves as an unofficial detention center. He was later transferred to the notorious Beir Ahmed prison.

The released detainee also informed the family that Shaker is being tried by the Specialized Criminal Appeals Prosecution in Aden, which—according to official charging documents reviewed by the Committee to Protect Journalists—has accused him of “using his status as a journalist and local and international media outlets to spread false news, incite against public

order, harm national interests, and provide media support to the Houthi group.”

These accusations are wholly inconsistent with Mr. Shaker’s professional record and the editorial standards of the internationally recognized media outlets to which he contributes. These include the U.S. Congress–funded international broadcaster Voice of America, the U.S.-based Middle East news platform Al-Monitor, and the U.K.-based media outlet The New Arab, the London-based news website Middle East Eye, as well as Al-Jazeera English. He has also provided expert analysis on CNN, and his work has been published in the online magazine of the DC think tank Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft.

Mr. Shaker’s continued imprisonment, the lack of transparency surrounding his detention, and the serious due-process concerns raised by his case violate Yemen’s obligations under international human rights law and undermine broader efforts to restore stability and public trust in state institutions. His immediate release would demonstrate a meaningful commitment to justice, rule of law, and the protection of independent journalism.

We respectfully call on your offices to:

Release Naseh Shaker immediately and unconditionally, along with all other arbitrarily detained journalists.

Ensure he receives urgent medical care and full access to his family and legal representatives.

End the use of unofficial detention facilities, arbitrary detention, and enforced disappearance, and ensure all detentions comply with Yemeni and international law.

Affirm that journalists may work freely and without fear of enforced disappearance, arbitrary arrest, or retaliation.

As Yemen continues to navigate a critical political moment, independent journalists like Mr. Shaker play an essential role in informing the public and the international community. His safe return to his family and his profession is both necessary and long overdue.

### **Signatories:**

Abductees ' Mothers Association

Alkarama for human rights – Geneva

American Center for Justice

Article 19

Bahth Foundation for Development and Human Rights

Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)

CIVICUS

Committee to Protect Journalists

DAWN

Dameer Foundation for Human Rights

Defense Foundation for Rights and Freedom

Freedom House

Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR)

Human Rights Watch

HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement

IFEX

International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

International Federation of Journalists – IFJ

Law and Democracy Support Foundation (LDSF)

Mansa Foundation for Media and Development Studies

Media village for development and Information

Musawah Organization for Rights and Freedoms

Mwatana for Human Rights

Robert and Ethel Kennedy Human Rights Center

Rights Radar for Human Rights

Rory Peck Trust

SAM Organization for Rights and Liberties

Samir Kassir Foundation

The National Organization of Yemeni Reporters SADA

Women Journalists Without Chains (WJWC)  
World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)  
Wujoh Foundation for Media and Development  
Yemeni Journalists Syndicate  
Yemeni Media Freedom Observatory (YMFO)



# Maghreb Region

## Libya: Evidence of torture in “Qarnada” Prison highlights the urgent need to end impunity

14 January 2025

Recently released video footage has exposed harrowing scenes of torture perpetrated within "Qarnada" Prison, located in the city of Shahat in northeastern Libya, an area under the control of forces loyal to retired General Khalifa Haftar.

Alkarama has called for an immediate and impartial investigation into these acts, deeming them egregious violations of the [Convention Against Torture](#), ratified by Libya in May 1989.



The leaked footage depicts acts of brutality against detainees, which activists assert date back to 2020 during the military offensive by Haftar's forces against the capital, Tripoli. The victims are reported to be political opponents of Haftar. The videos reveal various methods of torture, including severe beatings with sticks, whips, and hands, likely resulting in significant injuries such as bruising, fractures, and other forms of physical trauma.

According to former detainees of "Qarnada" Prison, inmates are subjected to electric shocks applied to multiple parts of their bodies. They are also repeatedly deprived of sleep for extended periods, as well as access to adequate food and clean drinking water, which has led to serious health deterioration.

Libyan activists informed Alkarama that many of the perpetrators featured in the footage are identifiable individuals who remain at large. Despite calls from the internationally recognized government in Tripoli to open an investigation, the authorities in eastern Libya have failed to initiate any inquiries into the matter.

Previous [reports](#) by United Nations mechanisms have documented acts of torture across Libya, including in "Qarnada" Prison. These reports also identified numerous detention facilities in eastern, western, and southern Libya—such as "Mitiga," "Al-Hadba," and "Sorman" prisons—where similar violations occur. "Qarnada" Prison is notably used to detain political opponents of Khalifa Haftar, who serves as the commander of the Libyan National Army.

Alkarama underscores its commitment to monitoring the human rights situation in Libya and has [submitted](#) multiple complaints to United Nations special procedures on behalf of victims of such abuses. Alkarama has also drawn attention to crimes [perpetrated](#) by Haftar's forces, often with the backing of certain Arab governments.

In light of the prevailing circumstances, Alkarama urges Libya to accede to the [Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture](#), which mandates the establishment of national preventive mechanisms to ensure accountability and effectively combat torture and related abuses.

## Libya: Two enforced disappearances reported to the UN Working Group

21 January 2025

On January 16, 2025, Alkarama submitted two cases to the United Nations Working Group on Enforced Disappearances ([WGEID](#)) concerning Mare Salih Mohammed Mohamed Al Arifi and Abdulrahman Khaled Abdulrahman Sulayman. Both Libyan nationals disappeared after being arrested by members of the "Stability Support Authority," a militia led by Abdel Ghani Al Kikli, also known as "Ghniwa."



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### Arrests in the Abu Slim district under Ghniwa's control

Abdulrahman Sulayman was arrested on November 10, 2022, around noon, in the Al-Hadba neighborhood of Abu Slim, an area dominated by the "Stability Support Authority" (SSA), a militia that has pledged allegiance to the Tripoli government and is theoretically under the Ministry of Interior. Witness accounts indicate that men in civilian clothing, traveling in multiple vehicles, forcibly took Sulayman without offering any explanation for his arrest or disclosing where he was being taken.

Almost two years later, on August 9, 2024, Mare Salih Mohammed Al Arifi was arrested under similar circumstances in the same neighborhood. Once again, men in civilian clothing, identified as members of the same militia, forcibly took him to an undisclosed location.

## **Silence from local authorities**

Despite the families' efforts, including contacting various local institutions such as the Office of the Attorney General, no information has been disclosed regarding the fate of the two men.

Given the absence of any response, Alkarama, acting on behalf of the families of the disappeared, filed two urgent appeals with the United Nations [WGEID](#), urging the Libyan authorities to clarify the fate of the missing individuals.



## **Libya/Italy: Alkarama denounces the release of Osama Njeim despite ICC arrest warrant for his involvement in human rights violations**

25 January 2025

In a letter addressed to the Italian Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva, Alkarama strongly condemned the Italian authorities for allowing Osama Njeim al-Masri, head of the Judicial Police Authority in Libya and accused of crimes against humanity, to evade justice after being arrested pursuant to an International Criminal Court (ICC) warrant.



Osama Njeim, a senior commander of the Radaa Forces militia and director of Mitiga Prison, had traveled to Turin, Italy, to attend a football match and was staying at a hotel when the ICC requested his arrest. The Italian police initially detained him, but he was soon released and sent back to Tripoli at the Italian government's expense, citing a procedural error in his arrest.

In this context, Alkarama's Director, lawyer Rachid Mesli, stated: "Allowing a suspect accused of human rights crimes to escape accountability is a dangerous precedent and a blatant disregard for the Rome Statute of the ICC, which derives its name from the Italian capital." He added: "Italy, as a State Party to the Statute, should be among the most committed to upholding this humanitarian legacy, which it has now abandoned."

Mr. Mesli expressed his dismay at this outcome, emphasizing that “allowing a suspect accused of serious human rights violations to evade justice sends an encouraging message to perpetrators to continue their abuses. Simultaneously, it deeply disheartens victims and their families, represents a true setback for justice, and blatantly reinforces the culture of impunity.”

## **Arrest Warrant**

Regarding Osama Njeim al-Masri, the ICC’s Pre-Trial Chamber I issued a warrant for his arrest on 18 January 2025, with a majority of its judges, in relation to the situation in Libya. Al-Masri is suspected of crimes against humanity and war crimes, including murder, torture, rape, and sexual violence, from February 2015 onward, during his supervision of prison facilities in Tripoli, where thousands were detained for prolonged periods.

The [warrant](#) specifies war crimes such as severe humiliation to human dignity under Article 8(2)(c)(2) of the Rome Statute, cruel treatment under Article 8(2)(c)(1), torture under Article 8(2)(c)(1), rape and sexual violence under Article 8(2)(e)(6), and murder under Article 8(2)(c)(1). It also lists crimes against humanity, including imprisonment under Article 7(1)(e), torture under Article 7(1)(f), rape and sexual violence under Article 7(1)(g), murder under Article 7(1)(a), and persecution under Article 7(1)(h), all of which were committed in Mitiga Prison from 15 February 2015 onward.

The Pre-Trial Chamber found that these crimes were committed personally by Osama Njeim al-Masri, on his orders, or with the assistance of members of the Special Deterrence Force (SDF/RADA).

According to the warrant, the crimes were committed in Mitiga Prison against individuals detained for religious reasons or suspected of affiliation with other groups.

On the same day, the ICC Registry, in consultation with the Office of the Prosecutor and under the supervision of the Pre-Trial Chamber, issued a request for the suspect’s arrest to six States Parties, including Italy. This request was transmitted through official channels after consultation and

coordination to ensure proper implementation. The ICC also requested Interpol to issue a “red notice” for the suspect’s tracking.

In the early hours of Sunday, 19 January 2025, the suspect was located in Turin, Italy, and successfully arrested by the Italian authorities. He was held pending the completion of local legal procedures related to his arrest and transfer to the ICC.

At the request of the Italian authorities and out of respect for them, the ICC refrained from making any public statements about the arrest. Meanwhile, the ICC continued its coordination with the Italian authorities to ensure all necessary procedures were carried out in compliance with the Rome Statute.

On 21 January 2025, it was announced that Osama Njeim al-Masri had been released without prior notice or consultation with the ICC and had been returned to Libya, a matter the ICC is currently verifying through communication with the Italian authorities.

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In a [statement](#), the ICC reminded all States Parties of their obligation to fully cooperate with the Court in its investigations and prosecutions of crimes.

### **Alkarama's Action**

Alkarama has [documented](#) dozens of cases of torture, enforced disappearances, and arbitrary detention in Mitiga Prison, which is under the control of the Radaa Forces militia in Libya. It has submitted individual complaints to the UN Special Procedures, and UN experts have issued decisions in some cases, confirming the arbitrary nature of the detention and condemning the Radaa Forces militia.

For example, the case of [Abdelhakim Embarek](#) “Al Mecheri,” who regained his freedom after eight years of arbitrary detention in this notorious prison, was recognized by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ([WGAD](#)) in [Opinion No. 62/2021](#). The Working Group found the detention of Libyan

citizens Abdelhakim Embarek Mohamed Ali “Al Mecheri” and Suleiman Mohamed Salem Suleiman [to be arbitrary](#).

This decision followed a complaint filed by Alkarama on 11 August 2021, in which UN experts expressed concern over widespread arbitrary detentions in Libya. They noted that “under certain circumstances, widespread or systematic imprisonment or other severe deprivation of liberty may constitute crimes against humanity.”

In a related context, Libyan Member of Parliament Hassan Salem al-Farjani and his brother Mohamed Salem remain detained at the Mitiga Airport Base. Alkarama [referred](#) their case to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention on 10 July 2024. They were arrested by the Radaa Special Forces militia.

## **Background**

It should be noted that the situation in Libya was referred to the ICC Prosecutor by the UN Security Council under Resolution 1970 on 26 February 2011. On 3 March 2011, the Prosecutor announced the decision to open an investigation into the situation in Libya.

There are still seven outstanding arrest warrants in this context, including those for Abdul Rahim Khalifa Abdul Rahim al-Shakaki, Makhlof Makhlof Rahuma Duma, Nasser Mohamed Muftah Daw, Mohamed Mohamed al-Saleheen al-Salmi, Abdul Bari Ayad Ramadan al-Shakaki, Fathi Faraj Mohamed Salem al-Zankal, and Saif al-Islam Gaddafi.

## Algeria: UN condemns continued repression of human rights defenders

31 January 2025

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Ms. Mary Lawlor, expressed her deep disappointment over the continued arbitrary detention, judicial harassment, intimidation, and criminalization of human rights defenders in Algeria due to their peaceful activities under vaguely worded provisions such as "harming state security."



This comes as Alkarama continues to document numerous cases of repression and violations taking place in the country and to submit complaints regarding them to the United Nations special procedures on human rights. In a statement, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Ms. Mary Lawlor, highlighted the cases of several human rights defenders.

Ms. Lawlor stressed that the arrest of Mr. Toufik Bellala, Sofiane Wali, and Mr. Omar Boussaq is "no less concerning." She pointed out that Mr. Bellala was summoned for interrogation three times since April 2024 and was ultimately charged with spreading false information that could threaten state security before being released under judicial supervision.

The UN Special Rapporteur also mentioned several cases she had followed, such as that of lawyer Mr. Sofiane Wali, who was taken from his home in a violent police raid and placed in detention along with 14 others. They were charged under Article 87 bis of the Penal Code, "a vaguely worded counterterrorism provision that is often misused to suppress freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly."

The UN expert added that other restrictive provisions of the Penal Code have long been used to accuse lawyer Mr. Omar Boussaq of "inciting an unarmed gathering" and "contempt for an official body" after he published posts on Facebook.

Ms. Lawlor also drew attention to the case of the "Association of the Families of the Disappeared," an organization founded during the Algerian war of the 1990s, which has been repeatedly prevented from holding events by large police units surrounding its office in Algiers. She stated that its lawyers and members, many of whom are mothers of disappeared persons, have been mistreated and forced to leave the premises on such occasions.

The Special Rapporteur stated: "I want to reiterate that I have met almost all of these human rights defenders. None of them were in any way seeking to commit acts of violence. They all must be treated in accordance with international human rights law, which Algeria is bound to respect."

Ms. Lawlor visited Algeria more than a year ago, where she also met with several officials, but the country has seen no improvement in terms of human rights.

## **Alkarama's Work**

For years, Alkarama has documented numerous cases of violations and acts of repression against human rights defenders, including peaceful protest activists in the country.

Alkarama has submitted complaints before UN human rights experts, denouncing Algeria's repeated failures to fulfill its international obligations, particularly those stipulated in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Algeria acceded to in 1989.

## Libya: Alkarama refers the case of five Syrians detained in Benghazi to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

26 February 2025

On 18 February 2025, Alkarama submitted a communication to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention concerning the case of five Syrians who have been arbitrarily detained since their arrest on 11 December 2024, by the Benghazi Internal Security Forces.

Messrs. Ahmad Alothman, Ali Alsalkhadi, Anas Mohammed Ali Alsalkhadi, Khaled Alsalkhadi, and Osama Mohammed Sayfeddeen Alshadidi are among the millions of Syrians who fled the war ravaging their country. They legally entered Libya with valid Syrian passports and regular entry visas.



Settled in Benghazi, they worked and lived there in a stable manner. Like many Syrians around the world, they expressed their joy after the departure of Bashar Al-Assad, fostering hope for a return to their homeland. It was in this context that they participated in a peaceful gathering, before being arrested without a warrant, in the middle of the street, by plainclothes security officers.

After their arrest, their families were left without news, plunged into anguish and uncertainty regarding their fate. It was only thanks to the testimony of a former co-detainee that they were finally able to learn of their detention at the Gharnada center, the deterioration of their health, and the acts of torture they endured. Accused without evidence of belonging to a terrorist group, they were forced, under torture, to sign confessions.

### **Families call upon Alkarama**

Faced with the denial of the Libyan authorities and the lack of official information regarding the fate of their relatives, the families mandated Alkarama to bring the case before UN mechanisms.

In its communication to the UN Working Group, Alkarama first highlighted the arbitrary nature of their detention from multiple angles.

Alkarama argued that their arrest was devoid of any legal basis: apprehended without a warrant, they were never informed of the reasons for their detention and remain deprived of any prospect of a trial. It was emphasised that this deprivation of liberty directly stems from the exercise of fundamental rights, namely freedom of opinion and freedom of peaceful assembly, as guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

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Moreover, the victims were denied any legal assistance and never had access to an independent body to challenge the legality of their detention, in manifest violation of their right to a fair trial. Finally, this detention is based on a discriminatory basis, as their mere Syrian origin led the Benghazi authorities to wrongfully associate them with a terrorist group.

For these reasons, Alkarama called on the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to recognize the arbitrary nature of this detention and to demand the immediate release of the five victims, as well as the respect of their fundamental rights.

## Tunisia: The disappearance of Walid Hosni, a call for justice

5 March 2025

On 20 September 2009, Mr. Walid Hosni, a third-year student at the Higher School of Medical Sciences in Tunis, disappeared under circumstances that remain unclear to this day.

Mr. Hosni, 22 years old, left his home at 6:30 AM as usual to run daily errands, without carrying any identification or a significant amount of money. Since then, his family has had no news of him and remains completely unaware of his fate, despite numerous attempts to obtain information from various authorities.



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Mandated by the family, Alkarama brought this disappearance to the attention of the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances ([WGEID](#)) on 2 October 2009.

Serious suspicions persist regarding the responsibility of the State's security services at the time of Mr. Hosni's enforced disappearance, given their past practices of abduction and arbitrary detention of Tunisian citizens. However, due to the political changes that have since taken place, the victim's family has the right to hope that a full investigation will finally shed light on Mr. Hosni's fate through an impartial and independent process.

Tunisia, as a State Party to the International [Convention](#) for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance since the 2011 revolution, has a legal obligation to conduct an effective and thorough investigation whenever a person is subjected to enforced disappearance. The Tunisian State must provide clear and transparent answers to the UN Working Group regarding Mr. Hosni's suspicious disappearance, whose fate remains unknown to this day.

As a State Party to the Convention, the Tunisian authorities must redouble their efforts to uncover the truth behind enforced disappearances and other serious human rights violations from a past that Tunisian civil society hopes is now behind them.



## Libya: NGOs call on UN committees to resume periodic reviews

25 March 2025

On 19 March 2025, [Al Shahed](#) – Public Liberties and Human Rights and the [Libyan Organisation for Truth and Justice](#), in collaboration with Alkarama, issued a joint appeal to UN committees, urging them to resume their respective reviews of the human rights situation in Libya.



The UN treaty bodies, which ensure compliance with international commitments by state parties, include, among others, the [Human Rights Committee](#) and the [Committee Against Torture](#). Composed of independent experts, these committees oversee the implementation of conventions ratified by member states. However, Libya has not been reviewed by these committees for many years.

Indeed, the country has not been assessed by the Committee Against Torture for over 26 years, despite having [ratified](#) the [Convention Against Torture](#) in 1989. Similarly, the Human Rights Committee, responsible for monitoring the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), ratified by Libya in 1970, has not conducted a review of the country for 18 years.

In this context, the NGOs have called on these treaty bodies to resume their examinations in order to hold Libya accountable for the situation on the ground.

## **A lever for justice and stability**

Since the fall of the Gaddafi regime in 2011, Libya has experienced a period of profound political and social instability, weakening its institutions and hindering its ability to meet its international obligations.

As the situation gradually stabilises, it is essential to relaunch a thorough review of the human rights situation in the country. Such monitoring is particularly important for assessing the current situation and encouraging the authorities to take measures to improve respect for fundamental rights and freedoms.

In their call to the committees, the NGOs emphasised that periodic reviews of Libya are crucial for combating impunity for serious human rights violations and for promoting an environment of justice, accountability, and lasting stability.

## Libya: MP Hassan Salem and his brother Mohamed regain their freedom

30 March 2025

Alkarama confirmed the release of Libyan parliament member from Tarhuna, Hassan Salem (also known as Hassan al-Farjani Salem Jaballah) and his brother Mohamed, as per a decision by the President of the Presidential Council, Mohamed al-Menfi. The two brothers are to remain under supervision.



Their family expressed its gratitude to Alkarama for its attention to the case through its engagement with UN procedures and media coverage of the issue.

On 10 July 2024, Alkarama [referred](#) the case of Hassan Salem, a member of the Libyan Parliament, and his brother Mohamed Salem to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ([WGAD](#)). The two were arrested by the Special Deterrence Force (RADAA) militia and detained at the Mitiga airbase under its control.

On 15 October 2024, Alkarama [addressed](#) again the Working Group regarding developments in the case after the Third Chamber of the Permanent Military Court in Tripoli sentenced Hassan Salem to 10 years and 6 months in prison on alleged charges of collaborating with members of the "Kaniyat" militia in the killing of eight people in an armed attack on the al-Rawajh area of Tarhuna in 2017. This charge was denied by social

figures, who issued a statement confirming that Salem had worked to end the fighting and mediate between the warring parties, contrary to the basis of the military court's sentence.

The family of the two brothers reported that the military court's sentence was based on confessions extracted under torture and witness testimonies, one of whom later recanted. They further stated that the victim had disclosed his torture to the judge in the military court, but the judge disregarded his complaints and proceeded with a non-appealable verdict.

## **Background of the Case**

On 27 February 2023, shortly after leaving the headquarters of the Libyan Administrative Control Authority in Tripoli, Hassan Salem was abducted in public by the RADAA militia without a warrant or explanation and was taken to Mitiga, where he was held incommunicado and deprived of any contact with the outside world for more than two months. His family was first allowed to visit him on 9 May 2023. They reported that they were allowed only one more visit, losing all contact with him since March 2024. Hassan Salem was also deprived of legal representation until his first hearing before the al-Farnaj Military Court on 22 May 2023.

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At this hearing, he was informed for the first time of the charges against him, including "joining a criminal gang." During this session, his lawyer raised the issue of his parliamentary immunity, presenting an official letter from the Libyan Parliament requesting his release and arguing that the military court had no jurisdiction over a civilian. Despite the prosecutor's request for his release, the court, under militia pressure, ordered his continued detention, which led to his sentencing.

## **Arrest of Brother Mohamed Salem**

On 31 September 2023, the RADAA militia arrested Mohamed Salem upon his arrival at the al-Farnaj Military Court to attend his brother's trial. He was immediately taken to Mitiga prison, where he was held incommunicado until 19 January 2024—three months—before his first

family visit. During this visit, his family noticed signs of beating and injuries on his face and hands. He was allowed only four visits during his detention, and the last contact his family had with him was in late May 2024. His family-appointed lawyer was not allowed to visit him or review his case file. The prosecution claimed it had no record of his detention, and he had not undergone any judicial procedures.

### **Alkarama's Action**

Given the severe violations of the basic rights of both victims, their families had no choice but to turn to Alkarama to request the intervention of UN experts and call on the Libyan government for their release. Alkarama emphasized in its report that the deprivation of the two brothers' liberty had no legal basis and was in violation of both international and Libyan law. Alkarama highlighted all the violations the two brothers had faced since their arrest and urged the independent experts of the Working Group to recognize the arbitrary nature of their detention.

### **Responsibility of the State for the Violations of the RADAA Militia**

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In similar [cases](#), Alkarama has called on the Working Group to recognize the Libyan government's responsibility for the actions of the RADAA militia. Although the militia has its own command structure, it is under the authority of the Ministry of Interior and the Prosecutor General, and it receives funding from the government. Therefore, the government is fully responsible for its actions.

Alkarama has consistently called on the Libyan government to ensure that the militia and all unofficial detention sites fall under its effective control.

## Morocco: Belgian-Moroccan detainee Abdelkader Belliraj released after 17 years of arbitrary detention

2 April 2025

The Moroccan authorities have proceeded with the release of Belgian-Moroccan detainee Abdelkader Belliraj, who had been sentenced to life imprisonment, pursuant to a royal pardon granted on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr, after seventeen years of detention.

This release comes while the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ([WGAD](#)), in its [Opinion No. 27/2016](#) adopted on 23 August 2016, had [concluded](#) that his deprivation of liberty was arbitrary and had urged the Moroccan authorities to proceed with his [immediate release](#).



### Case Background

Abdelkader Belliraj's trial was marked by serious violations of his fundamental rights, drawing strong criticism from [human rights organisations](#).

Arrested on 18 January 2008 in Marrakech without a judicial warrant and without being informed of any charges against him, he was subjected to secret detention for twenty-eight days, during which he endured acts of torture and was coerced into signing statements without being able to review them and without legal assistance.

The statements drafted at the end of this detention retrospectively altered the date, location, and circumstances of his arrest, falsely placing it on 16 February 2008 at Casablanca airport. His family was not informed of his whereabouts until 20 February 2008, when the then-Minister of the Interior, Chakib Benmoussa, announced at a press conference the dismantling of an alleged "terrorist cell linked to Al-Qaeda", which was said to have been created in 1992 under the leadership of Belliraj. However, the majority of individuals arrested in connection with this case had no connection to Belliraj or to each other. Among those detained were members of the Socialist Party, five journalists, and individuals from Islamist movements.

Accused of allegedly leading this group, Abdelkader Belliraj was sentenced to life imprisonment on 29 July 2009, a sentence later upheld on appeal and by the Court of Cassation. However, at no point did Moroccan courts take into account the allegations of enforced disappearance, secret detention, torture, and falsification of statements, nor did they open an investigation into these claims, in contradiction with Morocco's international human rights obligations.

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It is noteworthy that the statements obtained during Belliraj's secret detention implicated him in the assassination of Dr Wabrane in Belgium on 3 October 1989. This accusation led the victim's widow to request the reopening of the case by Belgian authorities. However, after thoroughly reviewing the circumstances under which Belliraj's confessions were obtained, the Belgian public prosecutor concluded that there was no basis for prosecution, emphasising that his statements had been extracted under torture and thus could not be considered valid evidence. On 17 April 2015, the Belgian Court of First Instance also recognised the invalidity of these statements.

### **Recognition of the Arbitrary Nature of the Detention**

The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention characterised Belliraj's arrest and detention as arbitrary. In its [Opinion No. 27/2016](#), it highlighted multiple violations of his right to a fair trial, from his arrest to his final conviction. The Group reiterated that the prohibition of torture is

absolute under international law and that any statements obtained through such means are inadmissible as evidence.

UN experts further stressed that, at the very least, Moroccan courts should have conducted an independent and impartial investigation to establish the facts. Additionally, they referred the case to the [Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers](#), as well as the [Special Rapporteur on torture](#), to bring attention to this matter.

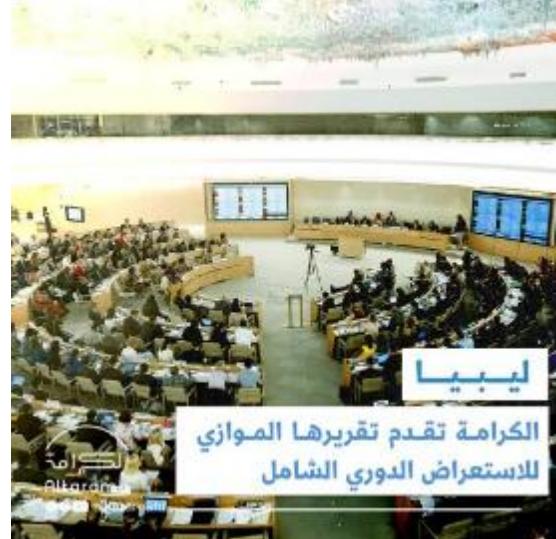
Despite the Working Group's recommendations for an immediate release and compensation for the harm suffered, Abdelkader Belliraj remained incarcerated until his recent release, granted as part of a royal pardon.

## Libya: Alkarama submits its report for the Universal Periodic Review

10 April 2025

On 7 April 2025, Alkarama submitted its report to the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council as part of the 4th cycle of Libya's Universal Periodic Review ([UPR](#)).

This unique UN mechanism allows for the assessment of human rights situations in each UN member state every four to five years, with concrete recommendations made to improve the protection of fundamental freedoms.



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Through this report, Alkarama provides a thorough analysis of the human rights situation in Libya, based on its field expertise and numerous cases it has documented and followed in recent years.

In this context, Alkarama had recently [called](#) on the UN Committees against Torture and Human Rights to resume the examination of Libya's reports, which have been suspended for many years.

### Ongoing Violations

In its report to the [Human Rights Council](#), Alkarama condemned the persistence of serious violations, supported by concrete cases of victims it has assisted through its [on-the-ground work](#). Arbitrary arrests, prolonged detention without trial, acts of torture, and enforced disappearances: these practices continue in an environment of total impunity, largely due

to the collapse of judicial institutions and the uncontrolled influence of armed groups integrated into state structures.

The report highlights the authorities' inability and lack of will to guarantee even the most basic rights, such as the right to a fair trial, protection from torture, and freedom of expression. Alkarama also underscores the absence of effective remedies for victims and their families, who often encounter a wall of silence or threats when attempting to assert their rights.

As a result, Alkarama has called for urgent structural reforms, including the end of arbitrary detention, the dissolution of armed groups operating outside any legal framework, their eventual integration into state security forces, and the restoration of an independent judicial system.

Through this report, Alkarama hopes to alert the international community to the urgency of the situation in Libya and encourage member states to make ambitious recommendations that lead to tangible action.



## A human rights and media seminar on the second anniversary of the arrest of Professor Rached Ghannouchi

17 April 2025



At the initiative of the Geneva Association of Victims of Torture, we invite you to a special seminar commemorating the second anniversary of the arrest of the Speaker of the Tunisian Parliament and leader of the Ennahda Movement, Professor Rached Ghannouchi, on Thursday, April 17, 2025 – the same date he was arrested two years ago.

Thursday, April 17, 2025, at 6:00 PM Swiss time

Live stream on AVTT's Facebook and YouTube pages

The symposium will feature presentations by a number of prominent human rights, legal, and media figures:

- Mr. Abdel Nasser Nait Liman, President of the Association of Victims of Torture – Geneva
- Mr. Belkacem Hassan, human rights and political activist (who moderated the Ramadan symposium in which Professor Rached Ghannouchi participated on the night of his arrest)
- Dr. Abdelmajid Mrari, Head of the Middle East and North Africa Department at AFD International
- Mr. Mokhtar Jemaï, member of the defense team for Professor Rached Ghannouchi
- Mr. Mahmoud Jaber, President of the Justice for Human Rights Organization
- Mr. Mohamed Al-Ahmadi, legal researcher at Alkarama for Human Rights – Geneva
- Mr. Khalaf Al-Bayoumi, President of the Shihab for Human Rights Organization
- Dr. Ahmed Al-Omari, President of the Free Voice Organization

The symposium will conclude with an open dialogue and discussion with media professionals and journalists, allowing them to ask questions and participate in the debate.

Be there and join us for this important human rights event in defense of freedom and justice.

## Tunisia: Bhiri and dozens of political opponents victim of a new judicial massacre

22 April 2025

Alkarama strongly condemns the unjust and politically motivated verdicts issued on 19 April 2025 by the Court of First Instance in the Tunisian capital, Tunis, against over thirty leading opposition figures, following trials that fall far short of basic standards of justice and due process. Among those convicted is senior Ennahda leader and former Minister of Justice, Noureddine Bhiri, who has been sentenced to 43 years in prison in the so-called “conspiracy against state security” case.



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According to Alkarama’s legal director, Rachid Mesli, “these sentences amount to a judicial massacre carried out by the Tunisian authorities under President Kais Saied, who has monopolised all powers and is pursuing a systematic campaign of retaliation against all political opponents in the country, regardless of their political orientation.” He added, “these rulings epitomise the grave political and human rights crisis that Tunisia is now facing — a regression into repression, authoritarianism, and the erosion of freedoms and rights, despite the progress achieved in the aftermath of the so-called Arab Spring which began in Tunisia.”

The judicial proceedings, which began in February 2023, targeted figures from the National Salvation Front and its president, as well as senior members of Ennahda, former ministers, secretaries-general of political

parties, and renowned human rights defenders who have been peacefully active for the past four decades.

### **Alkarama's continued monitoring**

Alkarama is deeply concerned about the ongoing repression and judicial persecution being carried out by the Tunisian authorities against political opponents in general, and leaders of the Ennahda movement in particular. On 5 June 2024, the Court of First Instance in Tunis held a trial session for the former Minister of Justice and [Ennahda](#) Vice-President Noureddine Bhiri, over a Facebook post. Bhiri has been imprisoned since 13 February 2023 and is being prosecuted over a Facebook post that, according to a court-appointed expert, does not exist.

Previously, on 31 December 2021, the Tunisian authorities had arrested Mr Bhiri, only to [release](#) him on Monday evening, 7 March 2022, after 67 days of detention. During this period, Alkarama and the Tunisian Association of Torture Victims (AVTT) had submitted his case to relevant United Nations human rights experts. Mr Bhiri spent most of this arbitrary detention in Bizerte Hospital, without any formal charges brought against him, and was only released after a serious deterioration in his health. He was re-arrested on 13 February 2023 and remains in custody to date.

On 6 January 2022, Alkarama, the AVTT, Free Voice, and AFD International [filed a complaint](#) with the [United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture](#) regarding the cases of Mr Noureddine Bhiri and Mr Fathi Beldi, a former adviser at the Ministry of the Interior, on the grounds that both men were subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment during their arrest on 31 December 2021 by security forces.

Subsequently, Alkarama, AVTT, Free Voice, and AFD International also [submitted](#) the case of Mr Bhiri and Mr Beldi to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ([WGAD](#)). The two men had been placed under arbitrary house arrest following their violent arrest by security agents on 31 December 2021.

## **An authoritarian repressive regime**

Tunisia has witnessed a deeply alarming decline in political and civil liberties since 25 July 2021, when President Kais Saied dismissed the Prime Minister, suspended all parliamentary activity, and lifted MPs' immunity, citing a misinterpretation of Article 80 of the Constitution. In further breach of the Constitution, he declared that he would assume all executive, legislative, and judicial powers, with the assistance of a Prime Minister and ministers of his own choosing.

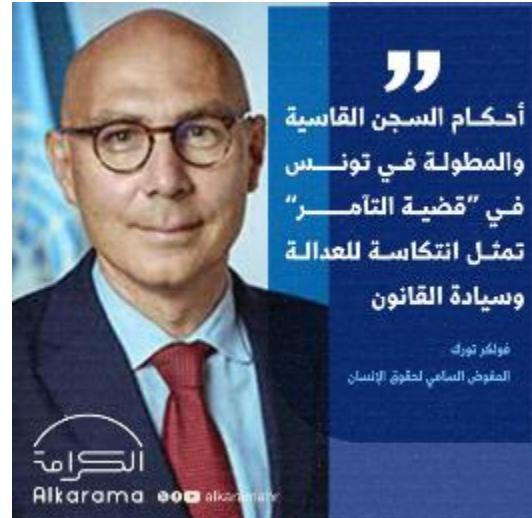
This was followed by a series of violations of individual and collective freedoms, including arbitrary arrests and unlawful house arrests of MPs and senior officials — including judges and political figures. The number of dismissals by presidential decree has also increased since 25 July 2021, affecting numerous senior administrative and judicial officials, some of whom were placed under house arrest by simple administrative order.

## Tunisia: Harsh and lengthy prison sentences are a setback for justice and the rule of law

24 April 2025

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, said that the harsh and lengthy prison sentences recently handed down to 37 people in Tunisia in the "conspiracy case" represent a setback for justice and the rule of law.

He added in a statement issued by his office on Thursday: "The process was marred by violations of fair trial rights and due process, raising serious concerns about political motives."



The statement indicated that the defendants, most of whom are well-known public and political figures, were tried under Tunisia's counterterrorism and criminal laws.

The "vague and broad charges" included forming a terrorist organization, intent to commit a terrorist act, financing terrorism, and conspiring against the internal and external security of the state. Sentences ranged from four to 66 years in prison.

The statement urged Tunisia to refrain from using broad national security and counterterrorism legislation to silence dissent and restrict civic space, adding that all such legislation should be reviewed to ensure its compliance with international human rights law standards.

Türk said, “Tunisia was a model and an inspiration to many countries in the region after the 2011 political transition, and I hope the country will return to the path of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.”



## Morocco: Alkarama Submits Its Contribution to the Human Rights Committee in Preparation for the State Party's Report Examination

6 May 2025

In the context of the procedure known as the "List of Issues to Address" before the submission of the Kingdom of [Morocco's report to the Human Rights Committee](#), Alkarama submitted a contribution to UN experts on April 28, 2025, highlighting the persistent violations of the State Party's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ([ICCPR](#)).



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In this submission, Alkarama raised several key issues, including:

### A Weakened Judiciary Under Executive Control

Despite the 2011 constitutional reform and the expressed intent to align with international standards, the independence of the judiciary remains severely compromised. The presidency of the Higher Council of the Judiciary by the King, as well as the majority composition of its members appointed by the executive, hinders any real autonomy.

The case of Me Mohamed Zian, 81 years old, former Minister for Human Rights and former Bar President of Rabat, sentenced to three years in prison in November 2022 following an unfair trial for criticizing government

members, illustrates the instrumentalization of the judiciary as a tool of political repression.

Following Alkarama's submission to the Human Rights Committee in February 2024, the Committee issued [urgent interim measures](#), which the State Party, however, refrained from implementing, thus demonstrating its refusal to cooperate with the UN body.

## **Torture and Ill-Treatment in Detention: Persistent Practices**

Despite Morocco's adherence to the [Convention against Torture](#) and its Optional Protocol, Alkarama has reported the continuation of ill-treatment in detention. The National Human Rights Council (CNDH), designated as the [national prevention mechanism](#) in 2018, suffers from a lack of independence, which prevents it from acting efficiently.

The case of Mohamed Hajib, tortured and then convicted after an unfair trial based solely on confessions extracted under torture, remains emblematic. In 2022, the relevant Committee [recognized the State's responsibility](#) for the treatment inflicted on Hajib, but none of the investigative or remedial measures requested from Morocco have been implemented to date.

## **Fundamental Freedoms: Rights Guaranteed but Not Protected**

Violations of the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association continue.

Activists such as [Mohamed Attaoui](#), an environmental defender targeted for denouncing the massacre of Atlas cedars and the trafficking of cedar wood, or [Driss Sedraoui](#), arrested after a public speech in 2021, illustrate the repression of any voice that contests the authorities.

Critical organizations such as Racines are dissolved on arbitrary grounds, further shrinking the civic space into silence.

## **Counter-Terrorism: A Misused Legal Framework**

The anti-terrorism law, adopted in 2003 and aggravated in 2015, continues to be invoked to repress peaceful opinions or expressions, under the pretext of "glorification" or "incitement to terrorism." The ambiguity surrounding these concepts allows the authorities to repress even peaceful political or media activities and seriously undermines the exercise of fundamental freedoms, fostering an atmosphere of surveillance and censorship.

Through this contribution, Alkarama aims to open the door for a thorough examination of the situation in Morocco and also seeks to encourage the authorities to take concrete measures to improve the human rights situation in the country.

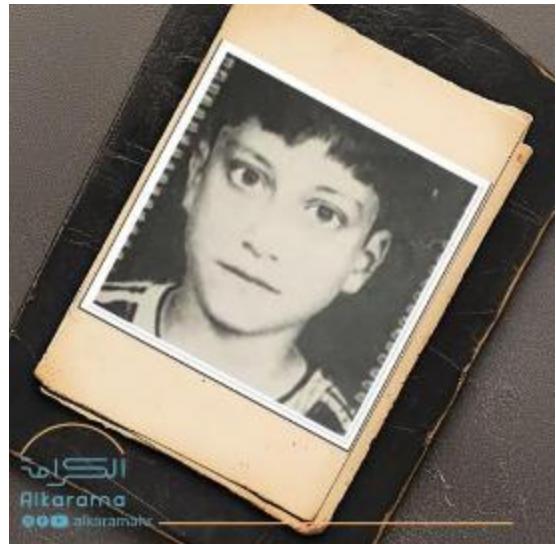
In this regard, Alkarama remains committed to continuing its efforts in this direction through collaboration with UN mechanisms and concerned actors.

## Libya: Alkarama Submits to the UN the Case of Wael Al Malki, Abducted as a Schoolboy at Age 16 by Haftar's Militias

7 May 2025

On 6 May 2025, Alkarama submitted the case of Wael Mansour Abdeljawad Al Malki to the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances ([WGEID](#)).

Wael, a young Libyan sixth-form student, has been missing in Benghazi for over ten years. Wael was only 16 years old when he was abducted on 4 June 2014 in front of the Bab Al-Salam mosque, in the Al Salam district of Benghazi, by members of an armed militia affiliated with General Khalifa Haftar. No warrant was presented during this violent arrest.



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Among those involved are individuals known locally: Iyad Al-Fassi, Khaled Boulghaib Al-Agouri, and Salah Boulghaib Al-Agouri.

Since that day, Wael has not been officially seen. His family has been unable to initiate any legal proceedings for fear of reprisals, a frequent occurrence in eastern Libya. However, a recently released former detainee testified to having seen Wael in detention in March 2025, nearly 11 years after his disappearance. He was unable to identify the exact location but specified that it was a facility under the control of Haftar's militias.

This testimony has revived hope that Wael may still be alive, but also underscores the gravity of the ongoing human rights violations carried out with impunity.

Through this submission, Alkarama calls on the United Nations to intervene urgently to clarify Wael's fate and demand accountability from the de facto authorities in eastern Libya.

Alkarama regularly submits [similar cases of enforced disappearance](#) to UN mechanisms, particularly in eastern Libya, where armed militias continue to operate with total impunity.

## Libya: The Reappearance of Forcibly Disappeared Persons in Militia Prisons – Alkarama Supports Measures to End Abuses

15 May 2025

Alkarama has informed the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances ([WGEID](#)) of the reappearance of a number of victims of enforced disappearance in Libya, whose cases had previously been submitted by Alkarama. The victims were recently freed by government authorities from several secret prisons formerly controlled by armed militias.



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Among the reported cases is that of Mr. [Mare Salih Mohammed AL ARIFI](#), who was found along with several other detainees in Al-Hadika Prison, near the presidential palaces. This prison was previously under the control of Abdul Ghani Belkacem Khalifa Al-Kikli also known as Ghnewa Al-Kikli, who reportedly died under mysterious circumstances.

Mr. AL ARIFI's case is one of dozens involving victims of enforced disappearance at the hands of armed militias in Libya. Some of these militias were nominally integrated into state institutions but continued to pledge allegiance to warlords, committing widespread human rights violations and operating private prisons outside the oversight of judicial and prosecutorial authorities.

Among these militias is the Abu Salim Brigade, established by Al-Kikli and later merged into the Stabilization Support Apparatus. On 12 May 2025, armed clashes broke out, after which government forces succeeded in asserting control over the Abu Salim area in southern Tripoli, which includes the main headquarters and most of the facilities of the Stabilization Support Apparatus. Authorities confirmed that government forces continue to work to ensure sustainable security and stability in the capital.

Alkarama reiterates the urgent need to end the human rights abuses perpetrated by armed militias, to regulate their conduct, and to ensure that all detention facilities are placed under judicial oversight. Alkarama expresses its support for all government measures that align with recommendations previously made by itself and other human rights organizations and bodies. These include [recent decisions](#) issued by the Head of the Presidential Council aimed at restoring state authority, upholding the rule of law, ending militia abuses, and assigning security responsibilities exclusively to official state institutions—primarily the police and judicial bodies.

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These decisions included transferring the authority of the Facilities and Installations Security Authority to the Ministry of Interior and establishing an emergency committee to monitor the situation in prisons. This committee is chaired by the Minister of Interior and includes the Deputy Minister of Justice and a representative of the High Judicial Council. It has been tasked with monitoring conditions in prisons and detention centers, ensuring humane treatment, reviewing the legality of arrests and detentions, identifying individuals detained without legal basis or for whom release orders have not been implemented, and submitting a detailed report to the Council of Ministers within seven days of beginning its work.

Alkarama also commends the Government of National Unity for its commitment to strengthening state institutions, promoting justice and the rule of law, and ensuring the respect of citizens' fundamental rights.

## Morocco: Lawyer Mohamed Ziane – "The Pursuit of Truth Is More Important Than Freedom Itself"

20 May 2025

Alkarama received a report from the lawyer of Mr. Mohamed Ziane — former Minister of Human Rights, former President of the Rabat Bar Association, and founder and leader of the Moroccan Liberal Party — who has been detained for nearly 30 months in Arjate prison. The report confirms that Mr. Ziane has filed a cassation appeal against Decision No. 8 issued by the Financial Criminal Appeals Chamber of the Rabat Court of Appeal on May 7, 2025, which sentenced him to three years of effective imprisonment. His lawyer calls for his immediate release, stating that he is "a victim of injustice and has suffered severe harm."



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The report adds that "filing the appeal is a legitimate step, as refraining from doing so would amount to an admission of the alleged crimes — crimes that he has continuously denied throughout the investigation, trial, and appeals, and continues to reject as described in the verdict."

It further states that "this decision deprives him of the possibility to merge the sentences, resulting in the extension of his detention and continued incarceration for an indefinite period. He insists that the pursuit of truth is more important than freedom itself."

In turn, Alkarama has informed the United Nations human rights mechanisms of these developments and once again called for their urgent

intervention to secure Mr. Ziane's immediate release and to put an end to the violations he is facing.

The Court of Appeal had upheld the charges against lawyer Ziane but reduced the sentence — a decision Ziane rejects, asserting that he is the victim of reprisals and violations due to his role in defending political prisoners and exposing repressive practices committed by government officials.

## **Alkarama's Advocacy**

Mr. Ziane was arrested on November 21, 2022, and sentenced by the Rabat Court of Appeal to three years in prison on 11 unrelated charges.

In this context, Alkarama [submitted](#) Mr. Mohamed Ziane's case (82) to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ([WGAD](#)) on May 14, 2024. Previously, on February 24, 2024, Alkarama had submitted an initial communication to the [UN Human Rights Committee](#), which subsequently [called on the State party](#) on February 28 to adopt urgent interim measures, particularly by amending the judgment.

Given the increasing violations of Mr. Ziane's fundamental rights and the political reprisals he faces, Alkarama, on behalf of his family, also decided to present his case to the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to seek recognition of the arbitrary nature of his deprivation of liberty.

## **Mr. Ziane: A Victim of Reprisals**

Mr. Ziane has always been a staunch defender of fundamental rights and freedoms in his country. He has defended numerous prisoners of conscience before Moroccan courts and provided information to UN human rights mechanisms through international NGOs, including Alkarama.

In its complaints to UN special procedures, Alkarama [stressed](#) the need for the Working Group's experts to examine all violations of Mr. Ziane's rights and fundamental freedoms throughout all stages of domestic proceedings.

His criticism of the country's security apparatus, as a human rights defender and political opponent, has exposed him to reprisals and intimidation by state security services.

It was also noted that some of the charges against him — including those raised after his imprisonment — are closely linked to his peaceful political activities. Other charges stem from practices documented by civil society and independent UN experts, such as the use of sexual allegations by intelligence services to discredit and defame political opponents, journalists, and other peaceful activists.

### **Arbitrary Deprivation of Liberty Without Legal Basis**

Mr. Ziane's deprivation of liberty is considered arbitrary under international law, even if it complies with domestic legislation, if it is found to be "inappropriate, unjust, unforeseeable, unreasonable, or disproportionate, and therefore incompatible with fundamental judicial guarantees."

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In Mr. Ziane's case, he was arrested on the same day the Rabat Court of Appeal issued its in absentia ruling — November 21, 2022 — without a referral order being read at the hearing. This fundamental omission constitutes a flagrant violation of the legal procedures outlined in Article 392 of the Moroccan Code of Criminal Procedure.

Additionally, the fact that the public prosecutor's office only delivered the detention order to Mr. Ziane's lawyer eight days after his arrest, in an attempt to retroactively justify the detention, also constitutes a violation of the constitutional provisions of Article 23 and the requirements of the Moroccan criminal procedure law, which explicitly demand precise and transparent grounds for any deprivation of liberty.

Therefore, there is no doubt that Mr. Ziane's arrest and detention, in disregard of legal requirements, indicate the absence of any legal basis for his imprisonment. Furthermore, the complete lack of connection between the various charges brought against him, along with the absence of a clear

and detailed description of the facts supporting the conviction, underscores the political nature of the case.

Mr. Ziane was placed in pre-trial detention immediately, despite having been at liberty during his trial and posing no threat. Although detention should be the exception and for the shortest possible duration, the authorities showed no hesitation in detaining him, despite his advanced age and fragile health.

Despite the [Human Rights Committee's decision](#) urging authorities to promptly review the ruling against him as a precautionary measure, a new detention order was issued against Mr. Ziane on March 7 of this year, based on similarly false and unfounded charges.

# Libya: UN Calls for Urgent Investigation into Torture and Bodies Found in Militia-Controlled Detention Centers in Tripoli

9 June 2025

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, said he was shocked by the grave human rights violations recently uncovered in both official and unofficial detention centers operated by the Stability Support Apparatus in Tripoli. He called for the immediate closure of these facilities and the launch of urgent, independent, impartial, and transparent investigations by the Libyan authorities.



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These UN calls echo longstanding demands from Alkarama, which has been advocating for years for the protection of human rights in Libya. Alkarama emphasizes the need to reinforce state control over the actions of armed groups, to place all detention sites under judicial supervision, to end arbitrary arrests, and to clarify the fate of those forcibly disappeared.

In his statement, the High Commissioner indicated that these discoveries confirm previous findings by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the former UN Independent Fact-Finding Mission, as well as numerous eyewitness testimonies. They reveal the existence of such sites and the scale of violations committed there, including torture and enforced disappearances.

“Our worst held fears are being confirmed: dozens of bodies have been discovered at these sites, along with the discovery of suspected instruments of torture and abuse, and potential evidence of extrajudicial killings” Türk stated. He reaffirmed the absolute necessity of closing these sites and preserving all evidence to support immediate accountability efforts. He also emphasized the importance of bringing those responsible for these atrocities to justice without delay, in accordance with international standards.

Türk also voiced concern over reports that the Libyan authorities tasked with exhuming the bodies and identifying the victims—particularly the criminal investigation services—had yet to be granted the necessary access to the sites. He urged the authorities to ensure full and unhindered access to all relevant locations.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights reported that, between May 18 and 21, it received information indicating the retrieval of ten charred bodies from the headquarters of the Stability Support Apparatus in Abu Salim, as well as the discovery of 67 bodies stored in morgues at Abu Salim and Al-Khadhra hospitals. Some of the remains had begun to decompose due to power outages. The identities of the victims have not yet been confirmed. Additionally, a mass grave was reportedly found at the Tripoli Zoo, also under the control of the Stability Support Apparatus.

These revelations came in the wake of the death last month of the head of this force, Abdelghani al-Kikli, known as “Ghniwa.” Subsequent clashes between state security forces and armed groups triggered public protests calling for an end to violence in Tripoli.

The High Commissioner urged all political and security stakeholders in Libya to use their authority to protect and uphold the human rights of all citizens. He also called on these actors and their influencers to intensify efforts to end the cycle of repeated transitional arrangements and to establish a full and inclusive democracy.

## Alkarama's Action

In May, Alkarama informed the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances ([WGEID](#)) of the reappearance of several victims of enforced disappearance in Libya. These individuals were among the cases for which the organization had previously submitted complaints. Some were recently released by the authorities from secret prisons controlled by the militias of the Stability Support Apparatus following the death of their leader, Abdelghani al-Kikli, known as “Ghniwa.”

In its latest correspondence with the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ([WGAD](#)), Alkarama shared updates regarding individuals held arbitrarily or forcibly disappeared in Libya. The Working Group expressed interest in these developments and continues to monitor the cases submitted by Alkarama, including those involving arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances by pro-government militias in western Libya—particularly the so-called Deterrence Forces—as well as violations committed by forces loyal to retired General Khalifa Haftar and his sons in eastern Libya.

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Alkarama once again underscores the urgent need to end abusive practices by armed militias, to bring all detention centers under judicial oversight, and to shut down secret prisons. It also reaffirms its support for all measures undertaken by the government in response to the recommendations made by Alkarama and other human rights bodies. These include recent decisions by the Prime Minister aimed at restoring state authority, upholding the rule of law, ending militia abuses, and assigning security functions exclusively to official state institutions—chiefly the police and competent judicial bodies.



## Libya: Alkarama Issues Urgent Appeal Regarding Five Syrian Citizens Abducted by Haftar Forces in Benghazi

19 June 2025

On 18 June 2025, Alkarama submitted an urgent appeal to the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances ([WGEID](#)), as well as to other UN mechanisms, concerning five Syrian citizens abducted by the internal security forces loyal to General Khalifa Haftar and his affiliates in Benghazi, eastern Libya, on 11 December 2024.



Alkarama also contacted the UN [Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants](#) and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya ([UNSMIL](#)).

This marks the second initiative undertaken by Alkarama regarding the five missing Syrian nationals, whose families have been left without news or any form of contact since their abduction. Their last known whereabouts were at the Gharnada military prison.

The victims are: Ahmad Alothman, Ali Alsalkhadi, Anas Mohammed Ali Alsalkhadi, Khaled Alsalkhadi, and Osama Mohammed Sayfeddeen Alshadidi.

They are among the millions of Syrians who fled the war ravaging their country. They legally entered Libya with valid Syrian passports and regular entry visas. Settled in Benghazi, they worked and lived there in a stable manner.

Like many Syrians around the world, they expressed their joy after the departure of Bashar Al-Assad, fostering hope for a return to their homeland. It was in this context that they participated in a peaceful gathering, before being arrested without a warrant, in the middle of the street, by plainclothes security officers.

After their arrest, their families were left without news, plunged into anguish and uncertainty regarding their fate. It was only thanks to the testimony of a former co-detainee that they were finally able to learn of their detention at the Gharnada center, the deterioration of their health, and the acts of torture they endured. Accused without evidence of belonging to a terrorist group, they were forced, under torture, to sign confessions.

### **Alkarama's Action**

On [18 February 2025](#), Alkarama had already filed a complaint with the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ([WGAD](#)) regarding the case, initially highlighting the arbitrary nature of their detention from several angles.

Alkarama argued that their arrest was devoid of any legal basis: apprehended without a warrant, they were never informed of the reasons for their detention and remain deprived of any prospect of a trial. It was emphasised that this deprivation of liberty directly stems from the exercise of fundamental rights, namely freedom of opinion and freedom of peaceful assembly, as guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Moreover, the victims were denied any legal assistance and never had access to an independent body to challenge the legality of their detention, in manifest violation of their right to a fair trial. Finally, this detention is based on a discriminatory basis, as their mere Syrian origin led the Benghazi authorities to wrongfully associate them with a terrorist group.

For all these reasons, Alkarama urged the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to initiate dialogue with the Libyan authorities

in order to obtain official information on the fate and whereabouts of the five missing individuals, and to demand their immediate release and full respect for their fundamental rights.

## Tunisia: UN experts call on the government to immediately release Judge Bechir Akremi

7 July 2025

United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ([WGAD](#)) issues [Opinion No. 2/2025](#) regarding Judge Bechir Akremi, former Attorney General and academic, arbitrarily detained in Tunisia.

On [January 31, 2024](#), Alkarama and the Association of Victims of Torture in Tunisia (AVTT) submitted the case of Mr. Bechir Akremi to the WGAD. He has been arbitrarily detained since February 2023.



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In its decision, the Working Group emphasized that the detention of a judge due to the exercise of his functions undermines the very essence of the rule of law.

It further noted that the circumstances surrounding Mr. Akremi's case — including his arrest following his refusal to yield to external pressures in sensitive cases, his unjustified placement in a psychiatric hospital, and prosecutions on matters already dismissed or closed — reflect a worrying pattern of judicial intimidation that goes beyond his personal case and threatens not only his rights but the integrity of the entire Tunisian judicial system. These measures send a chilling message of intimidation to all judges who continue to defend their independence against political pressure.

The Working Group referred this case to the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers. It also found that Mr. Akremi's deprivation of liberty was arbitrary, violating Articles 3, 9, and 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as Articles 9 and 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This detention falls under categories I and III of the classification of arbitrary deprivation of liberty.

The Working Group called for Mr. Akremi's immediate release and the guarantee of his right to remedy, including compensation, in accordance with international law. It also urged the Tunisian government to conduct a thorough and independent investigation into the circumstances of this arbitrary detention and to take necessary measures against those responsible for these violations. The Working Group requested that the government use all available means to widely disseminate this opinion.

## **Background of the case**

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Mr. Bechir Akremi was arrested on February 12, 2023, around 5 p.m. by about twenty plainclothes officers from the anti-terrorism brigade, who searched his home without a judicial warrant or notification of the reasons for his arrest. He was charged with several offenses mainly based on the controversial anti-terrorism law and placed in detention in complete violation of legislation and his fundamental rights.

Alkarama initially submitted his case to the UN [Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers](#) in a communication dated [February 7, 2023](#). Then, given the conditions of his detention, Alkarama also seized the [Special Rapporteur on torture](#) in a letter dated [April 12, 2023](#).

Subsequently, Mr. Akremi's detention was extended for four more months without legal justification or apparent necessity, confirming the political nature of the proceedings against him.

## **Alkarama seizes the Working Group**

In view of these developments, Alkarama, in collaboration with AVTT, decided to bring the case of Judge Akremi — unjustly imprisoned for refusing to succumb to political threats and pressure — before the UN mechanisms.

In its communication, Alkarama emphasized that Mr. Akremi's deprivation of liberty, based on an anti-terrorism law that does not respect the principle of legality, renders his detention arbitrary. Many UN experts have already denounced the incompatibility of this law with international standards and called on Tunisia to reform its legislation.

However, the authorities continue to use this law to justify arbitrary arrests and detentions targeting political figures, lawyers, or judges, despite the peaceful nature of their activities and the lack of material evidence. Mr. Akremi is thus detained in total violation of his right to a fair trial, on the basis of facts already judged or subject to final decisions of dismissal or non-suit.

Alkarama reiterated its concern about the lack of judicial independence, severely compromised by the unilateral decisions of the current president, Kaïs Saïed, who exerts total control over the judicial system. Today, Mr. Akremi faces a judicial system entirely subordinated to the executive power, with no effective recourse to assert his rights.

For these reasons, Alkarama requested that the detention of Mr. Akremi be recognized as arbitrary, that the Tunisian authorities be ordered to cease the persecution and reprisals against this honest judge, and that his immediate release be ordered.

Alkarama will continue to monitor this case and inform the Working Group of any developments, including concrete measures the Tunisian government will take to implement this UN opinion.

Finally, Alkarama reminds that the Human Rights Council has called on all States to cooperate with the Working Group, to take its opinions into account, to work to end all situations of arbitrary detention, and to inform it of measures taken in this regard.

## Libya: The disappearance of Youssef Al Arfi, a Syrian teenager, brought before the UN

13 August 2025

In pursuit of a better life, Youssef Al Arfi, a young Syrian national, went missing in conflict-torn Libya.

Like many Syrians escaping war and instability, he had hoped to find safety in Europe but was forced to take dangerous migration routes due to the continuing insecurity in his home country.



In March 2024, he departed from the coastal city of Zuwara, aiming to reach Italy through a smuggling network, after a failed attempt in 2023. On 7 March 2024, he called his family for the last time, informing them of his imminent departure. A few days later, he was intercepted at sea by the Libyan Coast Guard.

For more than a year, his family received no information about his fate. It was only on 23 June 2025 that they were contacted by an individual claiming to have been detained for a long period at the Mitiga detention centre alongside Youssef, after both men were handed over by the Coast Guard to the Al-Radaa militia (Deterrence Forces) in March 2024.

### Case submitted to the UN

Acting on behalf of the family, Alkarama submitted his case to the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances ([WGEID](#)) in an

effort to clarify his fate and whereabouts. Despite repeated requests to the Libyan embassy in Amman, the family, currently residing in Jordan, has received no official response.

The case is now before the UN, raising hopes that the truth about Al Arfi's fate and location will finally come to light.

## Algeria/Morocco: CAT warns of impunity and reprisals in the Guellil and Hajib cases

24 August 2025

Alkarama brought the cases of Lakhdar Guellil (Algeria) and Mohamed Hajib (Morocco) before the [United Nations Committee Against Torture](#). The Committee officially recognised the two men as victims of torture.

Mr Guellil, a taxi driver from Djelfa, was arrested on 31 July 1996 and subjected to horrific abuse by the Aïn Oussara gendarmerie, including being burned with a blowtorch, which led to the amputation of his left arm. Following an unfair trial, he was convicted in February 1998 and sentenced to 15 years in prison. He was released in March 2006 in a gravely deteriorated state of health. As there were no effective legal remedies available to him in Algeria, Alkarama referred his case to the Committee on 29 January 2016.

Meanwhile, Mohamed Hajib, a German-Moroccan citizen, was arrested in Casablanca on 17 February 2010 upon his return from Pakistan. He was then held incommunicado and tortured for 12 days in an attempt to force him to confess. He was sentenced to ten years in prison (reduced to five on appeal) and served his sentence under conditions marked by ill-treatment. Alkarama submitted his case to the Committee Against Torture on 30 October 2018.



On 19 November 2021, the Committee adopted its decision in the case of Guellil v. Algeria ([communication no. 736/2016](#)). Then, on 22 July 2022, the Committee ruled on the case of Hajib v. Morocco ([communication no. 928/2019](#)). In both cases, the Committee required the opening of independent investigations, the prosecution of those responsible, and the granting of full reparation.

Yet, as highlighted in the latest follow-up report adopted at its 78th session (30 October – 24 November 2023) and published on 8 August 2024, none of these measures has been implemented in either country. In a letter dated 11 August 2025, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights confirmed the transmission to the Algerian government of Alkarama's observations, submitted on 9 November 2023, along with the follow-up report for comments.

### **Inaction fuels impunity**

In Algeria, the Committee had requested the repeal of Articles 45 and 46 of the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, which enshrine impunity for State agents involved in serious violations. However, no reform has been initiated and no investigation has been opened in the Guellil case, nearly three years after the decision.

In Morocco, despite the official recognition of the acts of torture suffered by Mohamed Hajib, no reparation has been granted to him. Worse still, he continues to face threats and intimidation, which the Committee describes as reprisals for exercising his right to petition the UN. Here again, more than two years after the decision, no measures have been taken by Rabat. By refusing to implement these decisions, Algeria and Morocco place themselves in a situation of continuous violation of the Convention against Torture and fail in their fundamental obligation to cooperate in good faith with international human rights protection mechanisms.

Faced with this inertia, the Committee has decided to keep international follow-up open for both cases, sending a strong signal: neither impunity nor reprisals can substitute justice and reparation, to which victims of torture are entitled.

# Tunisia: The Arbitrary Detention of Mr. Noureddine BHIRI, Former Minister of Justice, Brought Before the UN Working Group

25 September 2025

Alkarama and the Association of Victims of Torture in Tunisia ([AVTT](#)) have submitted a joint complaint to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ([WGAD](#)) concerning Mr. Noureddine BHIRI, lawyer, former Member of Parliament and former Tunisian Minister of Justice, who has been detained on political grounds since his arrest on 13 February 2023.



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## Arrest and Judicial Harassment of an Opposition Figure

Mr. BHIRI was arrested at his home by around ten security officers, subjected to violence and a shoulder fracture, before being taken to the Bouchoucha barracks and then placed in detention. Despite medical advice, he was sent back to prison, where he has faced harsh detention conditions and very limited access to healthcare.

Since then, Mr. BHIRI has faced several charges, including the alleged granting of Tunisian nationality to foreigners linked to terrorist networks, involvement in the death of a former MP and accusations of conspiracy against state security. Part of these accusations is based on a fake Facebook post attributed to him, reflecting persecution linked to his political opinions. Other charges rely on Tunisia's problematic counterterrorism

legislation, drafted in overly broad and vague terms and used to repress peaceful opposition.

To this day, Mr. BHIRI remains detained in Mornaguia prison, despite his age and fragile health. The aftereffects of his shoulder fracture, combined with repeated hunger strikes, significantly increase the risks to his health and life.

### **Violations of Fundamental Rights and Arbitrary Deprivation of Liberty**

In their submission, Alkarama and AVTT demonstrated that the proceedings against Mr. BHIRI fall far short of international fair trial standards. They recalled that the independence of the judiciary has been undermined by the concentration of powers in the hands of President Kaïs Saïed, the subordination of the Supreme Judicial Council and the dismissal of independent judges.

In this context, the executive branch also publicly declared Mr. BHIRI's guilt before any trial took place, while his lawyer, the Bar Association President Abderrazzak Kilani, himself targeted by multiple charges before a military court, was forced to leave the country. Mr. BHIRI has therefore not been judged by an impartial tribunal and has been denied full guarantees of defense.

His detention is in fact part of a broader pattern of political persecution: repeated arrests, arbitrary proceedings and baseless convictions appear aimed at punishing his political views and mere affiliation with the opposition, in the context of systematic repression of dissenting voices in Tunisia since 2021.

### **Call for Immediate and Unconditional Release**

In light of the gravity of these violations and the manifestly arbitrary nature of his detention, Alkarama and AVTT urged the UN Working Group to acknowledge the arbitrariness of Mr. BHIRI's deprivation of liberty and above all, to urge Tunisia to secure his immediate and unconditional release, to conduct an independent investigation into the abuses and to provide full redress for the harm he has endured.



## Libya and Saudi Arabia: Alkarama denounces the authorities' persistent inaction in response to WGAD opinions

14 October 2025

In a follow-up report addressed to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ([WGAD](#)), Alkarama denounced the persistent inaction of Libya and Saudi Arabia regarding the implementation of opinions issued between 2023 and 2025 concerning several cases of arbitrary detention.

Despite the findings of UN experts establishing serious violations of the right to liberty and calling for the immediate release of the victims, the provision of reparations, and the opening of independent investigations, no measures have been taken.

Families, as the sole sources of information in the face of the authorities' silence, confirm the persistence of systematic violations: prolonged detention without charge or trial, inhumane prison conditions, denial of medical care, and a total absence of judicial safeguards.

### Libya: institutionalized arbitrariness

In Libya, the emblematic case of [Abdurrahman Abduljalil Mohamed Al-Farjani](#), arrested at the age of 17 and held without trial since 2014, illustrates the State's persistent inability to comply with its international obligations. Despite the Working Group's opinion calling for his release, he



remains incarcerated in Al-Koufiya prison near Benghazi. The alarming deterioration of his health, due to the lack of medical care, reflects the drift of a penitentiary system that tramples human dignity and openly defies international law.

## **Saudi Arabia: criminalization of dissent**

In Saudi Arabia, several emblematic cases reveal a clear political will to suppress any dissent and silence critical voices. The repression first targets leading religious figures, such as [Salman Alodah](#), incarcerated for several years. Deprived of regular contact with his relatives and subjected to arbitrary restrictions, he suffers a blatant violation of his right to family life and communication.

It then extends to intellectuals and academics, such as Dr. [Awad Al-Qarni](#), held in isolation under particularly harsh conditions and threatened with the death penalty for peacefully exercising his freedom of expression on social media. His case illustrates the direct criminalization of opinion and public debate.

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The same repressive logic also affects foreign nationals, such as [Bassam Al-Jalladi](#), a Yemeni citizen detained without a fair trial. Deprived of all contact with his family for over a year, he is denied both his fundamental procedural guarantees and his right to dignity.

Finally, the case of [Mohsen Al-Awlaqi](#) confirms the instrumentalization of the judicial system for repressive purposes. Even if his conviction is partially amended on appeal, it will still have been rendered in violation of the fundamental right to a fair trial. This illustrates how the judicial system is being exploited to lend an appearance of legality to the royal authorities' arbitrariness.

## **A challenge to international law**

These situations, far from being “isolated cases,” reveal a systematic pattern of violations reflecting an outright disregard for international law and obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political

Rights ([ICCPR](#)). By refusing to implement the Working Group's opinions, Libya and Saudi Arabia undermine not only the fundamental rights of the victims but also the very credibility of the multilateral human rights protection system.

Alkarama emphasizes that the lack of cooperation from the States concerned constitutes a direct affront to international mechanisms and unnecessarily prolongs the suffering of the victims.

Through its follow-up report, Alkarama called on the Working Group to urge the States to immediately and unconditionally release all persons arbitrarily detained, to remind authorities of their international obligations, and to promote structural reforms to prevent the recurrence of such violations.

## Morocco: Alkarama Submits the Case of Activist Saida EL ALAMI to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

20 October 2025

On 16 October 2025, Alkarama referred the case of Ms. Saida EL ALAMI to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ([WGAD](#)), a Moroccan blogger and human rights activist actively engaged in defending fundamental freedoms. Very active on social media, she regularly denounces human rights violations and comments on political and social developments in Morocco.



Her activism has led to repeated targeting by the authorities, notably for her peaceful criticism of institutions and security forces.

### Abducted In the Street

On 1 July 2025, Ms. EL ALAMI was abducted in the street in Casablanca by plainclothes police officers, without a warrant or explanation. Her detention was only acknowledged 24 hours later, after her worrying disappearance had been reported by her family. This arrest followed a live video she broadcast during a protest held after the death of a detainee due to poor prison conditions, in which she denounced the authorities' responsibility.

During her detention and interrogation, she was denied access to a lawyer and was not allowed to read the transcripts of her hearing, which she refused to sign. She was charged with “spreading false allegations” and “insulting public institutions,” accusations directly linked to her publications on social media.

Her trial before the Casablanca Court of First Instance marred by violations of international fair trial standards and repeated unjustified adjournments resulted, on 16 September 2025, in her sentencing to three years’ imprisonment.

### **Targeted for Her Peaceful Activism**

Since being incarcerated in Oukacha Prison in Casablanca, Ms. EL ALAMI has been subjected to abuse by co-detainees reportedly used by the prison administration. After denouncing this ill-treatment and launching a hunger strike, she was placed in disciplinary solitary confinement. She was only able to contact her family twenty days after her arrest, and visits remain limited and irregular.

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### **Alkarama Seizes the Working Group**

Mandated by Ms. EL ALAMI’s family, Alkarama filed a complaint before the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ([WGAD](#)).

In its submission, Alkarama demonstrated that Ms. EL ALAMI’s detention constitutes an arbitrary deprivation of liberty solely motivated by her peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression and her civic engagement. This targeted persecution reflects a clear intention by the authorities to silence her because of her views and activism and is part of a broader context of repression of any critical voices in the country.

Denouncing serious violations of her fundamental rights, Alkarama called for Ms. EL ALAMI’s unconditional release and for recognition of the arbitrary nature of her deprivation of liberty.



## **Algeria: Alkarama Seizes the United Nations Human Rights Committee on Behalf of Ms. Nawal Kara Bouslama**

30 October 2025

On 26 August 2025, Alkarama submitted an individual complaint to the United Nations Human Rights Committee ([CCPR](#)) in Geneva on behalf of Ms. Nawal Kara Bouslama, a Franco-Algerian businesswoman. This approach aims to denounce serious and repeated violations of her fundamental rights in Algeria, directly linked to state-level corruption practices.



### **Victim of reprisals for refusing corruption**

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Ms. Kara Bouslama was targeted after she refused to pay 2 million euros to the person in charge of a real estate project of the Ministry of National Defence, a payment demanded as a condition for the awarding of a real estate contract that had been legally obtained.

Her refusal led to the arbitrary suspension of her contracts, the freezing of her assets, repeated threats and, according to several medical reports, an attempted assassination by poisoning. These attacks seriously affected her physical and mental integrity as well as her freedom to pursue her professional activities.

Despite numerous complaints and alerts, Algerian authorities have opened no investigation nor taken any protective measures. This lack of action has enabled the continuation of the violations, leading in particular to the

premature dissolution of her company and extensive harm to her relatives, including her husband, falsely accused in a baseless case.

### **Alkarama brings the case before the Human Rights Committee**

Acting on behalf of Ms. Kara Bouslama, Alkarama submitted an individual communication to the UN Human Rights Committee. In this complaint, Alkarama stressed that the violations suffered by Ms. Kara Bouslama infringe upon the rights guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ([ICCPR](#)).

The complaint details the grave breaches of Ms. Kara Bouslama's fundamental rights, including, among others, the right to life and personal security, physical and mental integrity, freedom of expression and professional participation, as well as the right to an effective remedy against abuses and corruption.

Alkarama particularly emphasized the impact of corruption on the exercise of these rights and pointed out that, despite Algeria's international obligations, the protection of fundamental rights remains systematically deficient. These violations were analyzed in light of Algeria's obligations to combat corruption under the United Nations Convention against Corruption ([UNCAC](#)). As a State Party to UNCAC, Algeria is required to prevent, detect and sanction corruption, while protecting the fundamental rights of victims of corruption-related abuses.

### **Ms. Kara Bouslama's case brought before the Conference of States Parties to the Convention**

In this context, Ms. Kara Bouslama's case will be brought to the attention of the Secretariat of the United Nations [Convention against Corruption](#) through a written submission that Alkarama will present at the Conference of States Parties to the Convention ([CoSP](#)), to be held in Doha from 14 to 19 December 2025 ([11th session](#)).

This conference, convened every two years, aims to monitor and assess States Parties' implementation of their obligations under the Convention, particularly regarding the prevention and repression of corruption.

In this framework, Ms. Bouslama's case will serve as an example to document Algeria's deficiencies in implementing the Convention and to call for enhanced scrutiny of the State's fulfillment of its obligations under the Convention.

## Tunisia: Political Prisoners and Prisoners of Conscience Between Death and Slow Agony – Joint Statement

15 November 2025

The signatory human rights organizations express their deep concern and strong dissatisfaction regarding the alarming deterioration of public freedoms and human rights in [Tunisia](#). This situation unfolds in a context where repressive policies are intensifying, the judiciary is being instrumentalized to eliminate opponents and dissenting voices and violence against peaceful social movements is escalating, as exemplified by the city of Gabès, which is facing a severe environmental and health crisis.



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### The situation of activist Jawher Ben Mohamed Ben Mabrouk and his hunger strike

We strongly condemn the violent assault suffered by the activist and justice defender Jawher Ben Mabrouk, who is imprisoned in what the authorities describe as a “case of conspiracy against state security.” He was beaten by both prison officers and common-law inmates in the presence of the prison administration, which failed to intervene to protect him. This attack caused serious injuries and loss of consciousness, while he enters his third week of hunger strike.

We hold the de facto authorities fully responsible for this assault and the flagrant violation it represents—which is not subject to limitation—and call on bodies responsible for the prevention of torture to intervene urgently. Furthermore, we condemn the persistent attitude of the prison administration, which refuses to assume responsibility, denies Jawher Ben Mabrouk's hunger strike and the alarming deterioration of his health and targets the lawyers who exposed these facts to the public, falsely accusing them of spreading misinformation.

We express our grave concern regarding the health of Jawher Ben Mabrouk and other hunger strikers, who are subjected to arbitrary detention, deliberate harassment and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

At the same time, we recall the worrying deterioration of the health of the activist and Speaker of the Tunisian Parliament, [Rached Ghannouchi](#), who recently announced he would begin an unlimited hunger strike in solidarity with Jawher Ben Mabrouk, despite his advanced age and pre-existing health conditions. Several opposition political leaders have joined this initiative.

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We alert the de facto authorities: persisting in ignoring their legitimate demands, refusing to ensure a fair and transparent trial, access to proper medical care and dignified detention conditions gravely endangers their lives and demonstrates a blatant disregard for fundamental human rights and Tunisia's international commitments.

### **Instrumentalized prosecutions and collapse of minimum standards of justice**

Tunisia is undergoing a phase marked by a series of politically motivated trials, conducted in blatant violation of the basic standards of fairness, impartiality and judicial independence. Cases are handled under direct executive pressure and follow a logic of retaliation against independent voices. These trials are accompanied by severe violations, including:

1. Undermining the right to defense, with restrictions imposed on lawyers, sometimes preventing them from accessing case files or communicating freely with their clients;
2. Absence of defendants at hearings, depriving them of their fundamental right to defend themselves;
3. Refusal to ensure public access to trials, despite legal and normative foundations, in direct contradiction with the principle of judicial transparency;
4. Hasty issuance of judgments without allowing the defense to present arguments—as in the case of Maître Ahmed Souab—which has deeply shocked public opinion and independent judicial bodies.

## **Inhumane prison conditions**

Since the July 25, 2021, coup, the situation in Tunisian prisons has seriously deteriorated, particularly concerning political prisoners and those arrested for their opinions.

The annual report of the National Authority for the Prevention of Torture indicates that overcrowding exceeds 160% in several facilities, notably in Mornaguia and Borj El Amri. According to the Authority, this makes it impossible to respect minimal conditions of human dignity. Local and international organizations have also highlighted systematic violations, including:

- Prolonged isolation of numerous political prisoners in single cells for 23 hours a day, without any judicial justification;
- Denial of medical care, despite some detainees suffering from serious chronic illnesses—cardiac, diabetic, rheumatic, or cancerous—leading to alarming deterioration of their health;
- Insufficient food and lack of drinking water in several facilities;
- Arbitrary restrictions on family visits and meetings with lawyers, sometimes including confiscation of defense documents, in clear violation of fair trial guarantees;
- Abusive prison transfers documented by Avocats Sans Frontières, used as a form of punishment or isolation, intended to psychologically weaken detainees.

All these elements testify to a catastrophic prison situation, in direct contradiction with international standards, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Nelson Mandela Rules on the treatment of prisoners.

The signatory organizations alert the de facto authorities to the gravity of these practices, which represent a major drift of the judicial system and a violation of Articles 27 and 108 of the Tunisian Constitution, as well as the country's international obligations. They assert that these measures clearly aim to silence dissenting voices, repress opponents, and intimidate civil society and independent media.

### **Aggravation of the environmental crisis in Gabès and violence against residents**

Continuing a policy of intimidation, terror and shirking responsibility, the de facto authorities have ignored the environmental and health disaster that has affected the Gabès governorate for several weeks. This crisis stems from emissions of gases and toxic substances from the chemical complex, causing severe air pollution and a notable increase in fainting and respiratory distress, especially among students and children in schools.

Residents who organized peaceful demonstrations to demand their right to a healthy environment and a dignified life faced violent repression: brutal dispersals, arrests, injuries, and cases of trampling among protesters.

The situation has worsened with authorities' attempts to discredit these mobilizations, accusing civil actors and human rights defenders of inciting chaos or conspiring against the state—a strategy aimed at criminalizing legitimate demands and concealing chronic environmental failures affecting Gabès.

Consequently, the signatory organizations and associations call for:

1. The immediate and unconditional release of Jawher Ben Mabrouk and all prisoners of conscience;
2. The opening of an independent investigation into the conditions of detention of Jawher Ben Mabrouk, the assault he suffered, and the acts of torture endured, while he has been on hunger strike for more than two weeks;
3. The cessation of arbitrary trials, ensuring judicial independence, public hearings, and full respect for the right to defense;
4. Holding accountable those responsible for police violence against peaceful protesters in Gabès and ensuring such practices do not recur;
5. An urgent appeal to national and international bodies to protect the lives of detainees and uphold the right to freedom, dignity and a healthy environment.

## **Signatory organizations**

1. Sawt Horr Organization for the Defense of Human Rights – Paris
2. Association of Torture Victims – Geneva
3. IFED International – Brussels
4. Al-Shehab Center for Human Rights – London
5. Alkarama for Human Rights – Geneva
6. SAM Organization for Rights and Freedoms – Geneva
7. Solidarity for Human Rights
8. Organization Justice for Human Rights (JHR)
9. Organization Association for the Defense of Justice in Tunisia – Paris

## Algeria: Alkarama is calling on the Human Rights Committee to urgently review the country's human rights situation.

16 December 2025

In view of the deteriorating human rights situation in Algeria, Alkarama called on the [Human Rights Committee](#) to urgently schedule the examination of the situation and to urge Algeria to submit its overdue periodic report.

This situation must be considered in the broader context in which it arises. Since the military seized power in the 1990s, Algeria has experienced sustained political repression. Nevertheless, the popular Hirak movement in 2019 raised hopes of a democratic opening. However, rather than moving in that direction, the following years were characterised by an intensification of repressive practices, including the arbitrary arrest of demonstrators, journalists and human rights defenders, the systematic use of emergency legislation and a subservient judiciary, severe restrictions on fundamental freedoms, and documented cases of torture and ill-treatment.



None of the recommendations made by experts [during Algeria's last periodic review](#) have been implemented by the state; in fact, it has moved in the opposite direction by generalising violations of Algerian citizens' fundamental freedoms and reinstating practices that were believed to have been consigned to the past since the civil war of the 1990s.

Notably, the Algerian authorities have extended the application of [Article 87 bis of the Penal Code](#), in violation of UN expert recommendations, by using it against journalists, members of the political opposition, human rights defenders and individuals expressing critical opinions of the political authorities on social media. Nevertheless, the Human Rights Committee urged the Algiers authorities to 'define acts of terrorism precisely and ensure that counter-terrorism provisions are not used to limit the rights enshrined in the Covenant, particularly against human rights defenders and journalists'.

Moreover, in the context of following up on its decisions, the Human Rights Committee urged the State party "to cooperate in good faith with the Committee under the individual communications procedure and [...] to take all necessary measures to establish appropriate procedures to give full effect to the Committee's views, in order to guarantee an effective remedy in the event of a violation of the Covenant".

However, the Algerian authorities have not implemented any of the Committee's decisions, flagrantly violating their international obligations. In fact, reprisals have been taken against certain complainants or members of their families to deter individuals from cooperating with the Committee or resorting to its complaints mechanism.

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Against this backdrop, on 1 December 2025, Alkarama submitted a detailed and updated report to the UN body, identifying all instances in which the State party has failed to comply with its international obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Furthermore, during its 2018 review, the Committee called on the Algerian authorities to 'ensure the unconditional release of any person arbitrarily detained and to open effective and independent investigations into any allegation of arbitrary arrest'.

It should be emphasised that several dozen individuals, who were sentenced to lengthy prison terms in the 1990s following unfair trials before exceptional jurisdictions (special courts) based solely on confessions extracted under torture, continue to be detained in inhumane conditions after more than 30 years.

Djameleddine Laskri, a 65-year-old architect, has been detained for 33 years following his conviction on 26 May 1993 by the Algiers Special Court. This conviction was based solely on confessions extracted under torture during two months of incommunicado detention. Despite this, [a decision was adopted by the United Nations Working Group](#) on 30 April 2014 recognising the arbitrary nature of his detention and ordering his immediate and unconditional release.

This persistent refusal to implement the Committee's decisions, as well as those of all other UN mechanisms in favour of victims, consolidates a system of impunity that has become structural. The lack of serious attempts to comply with international obligations is an alarming sign of the erosion of the rule of law in the country. Current violations are not isolated incidents, but part of a continuum of deeply entrenched repressive methods and structures.

In the absence of guarantees of non-repetition, independent oversight, or institutional reforms, Algerian citizens remain exposed to a real risk of repetition of these violations, including the most serious ones. The total refusal to execute the Committee's decisions is not merely a legal failure, but also directly contributes to the normalisation and repetition of these abuses.

Alkarama reaffirms its determination to continue its work of documentation, legal assistance and engagement with international human rights mechanisms in order to contribute to the effective realisation of the rights enshrined in the Covenant in Algeria.

## Libya: Militias Affiliated with General Khalifa Haftar Condition the Release of Syrian Nationals on Political Recognition

24 December 2025

Alkarama has learned from its sources that several militias affiliated with General Khalifa Haftar are holding Syrian nationals hostage and conditioning their release on official recognition by the new Syrian government. This situation concerns in particular five young men whose cases had already been [submitted by Alkarama](#) to the relevant United Nations special procedures.



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The new Syrian government has established, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a commission tasked with monitoring the situation of its nationals detained in Libya. This commission travelled to Tripoli and Benghazi. However, according to consistent sources, the efforts undertaken to secure the release of Syrian citizens have encountered political demands and conditions imposed by several militias affiliated with General Khalifa Haftar in Benghazi, which further reinforces the conclusion that the detention of these Syrians lacks any legal basis.

For its part, Alkarama has once again referred these developments to United Nations human rights mechanisms.

By way of reminder, on Wednesday, 18 June 2025, Alkarama submitted an [urgent appeal](#) to the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or

Involuntary Disappearances ([WGEID](#)), as well as to other UN mechanisms, concerning five Syrian nationals abducted on 11 December 2024 in Benghazi, eastern Libya, by several militias affiliated with General Khalifa Haftar and his sons.

Alkarama also seized, in this regard, the [Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants](#), as well as the United Nations Support Mission in Libya ([UNSMIL](#)).

This constitutes the second action undertaken by Alkarama concerning these five Syrian citizens, who remain without news and deprived of all contact with their families, and whose last known location is the Qarnada military prison.

The victims—namely Ahmad ALOTHMAN, Ali ALSALKHADI, Anas Mohammed Ali ALSALKHADI, Khaled ALSALKHADI, and Osama Mohammed Sayfeddeen ALSHADIDI—are among the millions of Syrians who fled the armed conflict in their country. They entered Libya through regular channels, holding valid Syrian passports and ordinary entry visas, before settling in Benghazi, where they lived and worked in a stable manner.

Like many Syrians around the world, they expressed their joy following the departure of Bashar al-Assad, reviving hopes of an imminent return to Syria. It was in this context that they participated in a peaceful gathering, before being arrested without a warrant by plainclothes security agents.

Following their arrest, their families were left without any news, plunged into deep anxiety regarding their fate. It was only through the testimony of a former detainee that they eventually learned of their detention at the Qarnada facility, the deterioration of their health, and the acts of torture to which they had been subjected. They were accused, without any evidence, of belonging to a terrorist group and were forced, under torture, to make confessions.

## Alkarama's Advocacy

On 18 February 2025, Alkarama submitted a [communication](#) to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ([WGAD](#)) concerning this case, initially highlighting the arbitrary nature of the victims' detention on several grounds.

Alkarama emphasized that their arrest lacked any legal basis: the victims were arrested without a warrant, were not informed of the reasons for their arrest, and were deprived of legal representation or any appearance before a judicial authority. It stressed that this deprivation of liberty resulted directly from the exercise of fundamental rights, in particular freedom of opinion and the right to peaceful assembly, as guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Moreover, the victims were denied any legal assistance and never had access to an independent authority to challenge the legality of their detention, in clear violation of their right to a fair trial. Finally, this detention rests on a discriminatory basis, as their Syrian origin alone led the militias to wrongly associate them with a terrorist group.

For all these reasons, Alkarama called on the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to engage with the Libyan authorities in order to obtain official information on the fate and whereabouts of the five disappeared persons, and to demand their immediate release as well as full respect for their fundamental rights.

## Morocco: Ill-treatment and reprisals against activist Saida El Alami in detention

31 December 2025

The Moroccan activist Saida El Alami, currently detained at El Oukacha Prison in Casablanca, has recently been subjected to serious ill-treatment by prison staff, in a context revealing acts of reprisals linked to her recourse to United Nations mechanisms.

By a judgment rendered on 17 December, the Casablanca Court of Appeal upheld the three-year prison sentence imposed on Ms. El Alami at first instance.

The incidents occurred in the days following this decision, at a time when her situation was already the subject of an international procedure, as Alkarama had submitted a request for an opinion to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ([WGAD](#)) on 16 October.

### Saida El Alami, victim of ill-treatment in detention

On 25 December, during a routine search, Ms. El Alami was questioned by female prison guards about the referral of her case by Alkarama to the WGAD. After confirming these steps, she was physically assaulted by several guards, in front of other detainees and was subjected to explicit threats of further judicial proceedings. Her clothes and personal belongings



were deliberately torn and soaked, leaving her without any possibility of changing.

These events occurred after Alkarama had submitted a request for an opinion to the WGAD and after the Moroccan State had been officially notified of this communication within the framework of the adversarial procedure. The context, chronology and very nature of the violence clearly establish that Ms. El Alami was deliberately targeted in direct reprisal for having exercised her legitimate right to seek recourse to international human rights protection mechanisms.

### **Failure by Morocco to comply with its conventional obligations**

Such acts constitute serious violations of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ([ICCPR](#)), in particular the provisions prohibiting cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, as well as the Nelson Mandela Rules, which guarantee the protection of the physical integrity and dignity of persons deprived of their liberty. They also engage the international responsibility of Morocco under the Convention against Torture, to which it is a State Party.

Alkarama is closely monitoring the situation of Ms. Saida El Alami and recalls that Morocco is required, under its international commitments, to prevent, investigate and punish any act of torture, ill-treatment and any measure of reprisal.

In the absence of effective guarantees, and should these violations continue or worsen, the victim reserves the right to refer the matter to the United Nations Committee against Torture ([CAT](#)), a body that has already examined similar failures by Morocco in the implementation of its international obligations.



# Mashreq Region

## Palestine: UN condemnation of systematic Israeli targeting of hospitals and medical staff

3 January 2025

A [report](#) published by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has concluded that the pattern of deadly Israeli attacks on Gaza hospitals and their surroundings, along with related combat operations, has pushed the healthcare system to the brink of total collapse. This has had catastrophic effects on Palestinians' access to medical and healthcare services. The report stated that the documented attacks between October 12, 2023, and June 30, 2024, raise serious concerns about Israel's compliance with international law. Medical personnel and hospitals are granted special protection under international humanitarian law.



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The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, said: "As if the relentless bombardment and the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza were not enough, the very sanctuary where Palestinians should feel safe has turned into a death trap. Protecting hospitals during war is of utmost importance, and all parties must uphold this principle at all times."

The report noted that during the reporting period, at least 136 airstrikes targeted no fewer than 27 hospitals and 12 other medical facilities, causing significant losses among doctors, nurses, paramedics, and other civilians. The attacks also inflicted severe damage on civilian infrastructure, destroying some facilities entirely. It added that, under certain

circumstances, the deliberate destruction of healthcare facilities could amount to a form of collective punishment, potentially constituting a war crime. The report highlighted that many of these actions, if committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against the civilian population pursuant to a state or organizational policy, could also rise to the level of crimes against humanity. The report called for the immediate release of all arbitrarily detained medical personnel.

In the same context, [two independent UN experts](#) called for an end to the "blatant disregard" for the right to health in Gaza following the storming of Kamal Adwan Hospital last week and the "arbitrary arrest and detention" of the hospital's director, Dr. Hossam Abu Safiya.

In a joint press release, Francesca Albanese, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, and Tlaleng Mofokeng, the Special Rapporteur on the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, stated: "The blatant assault by Israel on the right to health in Gaza and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories, more than a year after the genocide, is leading to new levels of impunity."

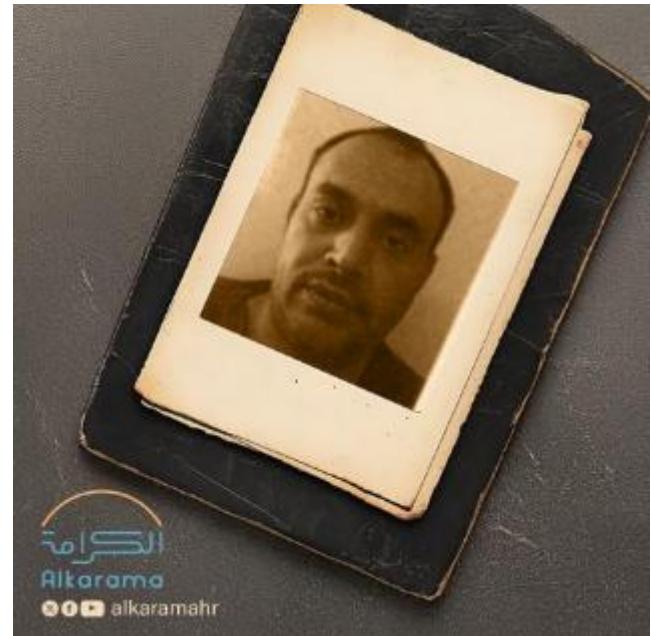
The experts expressed deep concern over reports from northern Gaza, particularly the attack on healthcare workers. They added: "We are gravely concerned about the fate of Dr. Hossam Abu Safiya, yet another doctor abducted and arbitrarily detained by occupation forces—this time for defying evacuation orders and refusing to abandon his patients and colleagues."

## IRAQ: Disappearance of Ayesh AL HARBY while in detention, Alkarama urgently appeals to the CED

20 January 2025

On January 16, 2025, Alkarama submitted a request for urgent intervention to the United Nations Committee on Enforced Disappearances ([CED](#)) regarding the disappearance of Mr. Ayesh Al Harby, a Saudi national currently detained in Al Rusafa prison in Baghdad, Iraq.

### Ayesh Al Harby: Disappeared During Detention



Detained since 2009, Mr. Ayesh Al Harby has faced multiple extradition requests to Saudi Arabia, where he risks being subjected to enforced disappearance, torture, or even execution.

Alkarama, which has been closely monitoring his case for more than ten years, has raised his situation with various United Nations special procedures.

In an urgent appeal dated November 20, 2013, his case was submitted to the [Special Rapporteur on Torture](#) and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. Both special procedures subsequently sent an [allegation letter](#) to the Iraqi government, requesting detailed information about the victim's situation. However, no response was provided. While the Iraqi authorities

refrained from extraditing him at the time, they failed to address his case meaningfully.

In 2022, Mr. Al Harby was referred to the Al Rusafa court, which, following a summary trial, approved Saudi Arabia's extradition request. Following an appeal supported by UNHCR, which intervened by assembling a legal team, the Iraqi Supreme Court, the highest judicial authority in the country, annulled the extradition decision on June 16, 2022, and rejected Saudi Arabia's request.

Despite this final and binding decision, Mr. Al Harby was unexpectedly referred again to the Al Rusafa court on October 10, 2024. During another summary trial, where the presiding judge denied requests to postpone the hearing and allow Mr. Al Harby to appoint a lawyer of his choice, it was decided that he would be extradited to Saudi Arabia.

On October 16, 2024, Alkarama [submitted](#) an urgent request to the [Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions](#) and other UN special procedures, urging their immediate intervention with the Iraqi authorities to ensure the safety of Mr. Ayesh Al Harby, particularly by preventing his extradition. Unfortunately, on November 25, 2024, Alkarama lost all contact with Mr. Ayesh Al Harby. Shortly thereafter, it was reported by one of his fellow detainees that Mr. Al Harby had been removed from his cell and had not been seen in the prison since.

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## **Alkarama Appeals to the CED**

On January 16, 2025, Alkarama submitted an urgent appeal to the CED, calling on the UN body to urge the Iraqi authorities to locate Mr. Ayesh Al Harby and to provide official information on his current situation.

As a party to the International [Convention](#) for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance since 2011, the Iraqi state has an obligation to take all necessary measures to prevent enforced disappearances and to guarantee the right of any disappeared person to be located and to receive clear and official information regarding their situation.

## Arab organizations: US support for ethnically cleansing Palestinians reflects its disdain for Arab countries ravaged by tyranny

9 February 2025

The undersigned Arab human rights organizations condemn US President Donald Trump's adoption of the policy of ethnic cleansing against the Palestinian people and his intent to implement this policy by imposing control over the Gaza Strip by armed force. Trump summoned the King of Jordan and the President of Egypt for urgent meetings that will begin next week in Washington DC, with the aim of compelling the two countries to receive about two million new Palestinian refugees.



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The organizations call for the officials of Jordan and Egypt to categorically reject the American government's proposed ethnic cleansing policy. The organizations urge all countries of the world to declare their rejection of this latest colonial settlement approach, in line with the initiatives of France, Britain, Germany, Spain, Belgium and Australia to reject Trump's statements on this matter.

In July 2024, the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion obliged all states, including the United States and Arab states, to 'not recognize the legitimacy of the situation resulting from the illegal presence of Israel in

the occupied Palestinian territory... not to render aid or assistance in maintaining that situation, and to ensure that any impediment to the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination is brought to an end. All States Parties to the Geneva Conventions are obliged to ensure Israel's compliance with international humanitarian law as set out in the Convention'. Israel's continued occupation of Palestine together with its crimes of ethnic cleansing and apartheid, followed by its commission of crime of genocide against the Palestinians of Gaza after 7 October 2023, not only constitute egregious violations of international law but are dire threats to any prospect for regional and global peace and prosperity.

The organizations affirm the need for States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, including Jordan, to comply with the arrest warrants of Israeli officials accused of war crimes in Gaza. We call on States that have not joined the Statute, such as Egypt, to declare their position on receiving indicted Israeli officials. We further call on Arab countries to officially join the lawsuit filed by South Africa against Israel before the International Court of Justice, and to implement the decisions of international courts, including the International Criminal Court, not only against Israeli officials, but also against Libyan, Sudanese, Syrian and Lebanese officials accused of international crimes such as war crimes and genocide against the peoples of the region.

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The US President continues to be brazenly impudent in attacking the sovereignty of states and the self-determination of peoples and while flagrantly disregarding the suffering of millions of people. Trump has repeatedly declared that the statements of the King of Jordan and the President of Egypt rejecting displacement are neither serious nor steadfast, in line with his overall mockery of Arab leaders that has been prominent since his first presidential term, reflecting the disdain with which he views Arab countries, as fragile and subservient to American and Israeli policy and whims. Arab leaders must begin to act in a way that defies Trump's view of their fragility, and that begins with empowering their peoples by turning towards the building of democratic institutions at homes.

Arab states have lost politically all their wars against Israel while turning their weapons against their own people. Countries in the region have collapsed or are experiencing widespread crisis as a result of tyranny, corruption, and resource squandering while devastation and poverty spread. The last hope to escape tyranny and deprivation for many peoples in the region is through deadly journeys in flimsy boats across the Mediterranean.

The only solution to these fragile internal political, economic and social conditions, and the only means of protecting the people in the Arab region from external hegemony and brutal policies and practices of major powers, is to build democratic systems that respect international law and human rights. The rule of law must be enshrined, and effective popular participation of all citizens in decision-making ensured, regardless of their race, religion, and in solidarity with those countries across the world that uphold the principles of justice, democracy, and human dignity.

### **Signatories:**

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1. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (Regional)
2. Adala for All (Libya)
3. ALKARAMA – GENÈVE (Regional)
4. Dameer Foundation for Rights and Freedoms (Yemen)
5. Egyptian Front for Human Rights (Egypt)
6. Egyptian Human Rights Forum (Egypt)
7. Ensaf Organization for Rights and Freedoms (Yemen)
8. Ibtykar Movement (Algeria)
9. Independent Organization for Human Rights (Libya)
10. Justitia Center for Legal Protection of Human Rights in Algeria (Algeria)
11. Law and Democracy Support Foundation (Egypt)
12. Libya Crimes Watch (Libya)
13. Libyan Center for Freedom of Press-LCFP (Libya)
14. Palestinian Human Rights Organization (Palestine)
15. Palm Beach Development Organization (Libya)
16. PASS\_Foundation Peace\_for\_Sustainable\_Societies (Yemen)
17. Refugees Platform in Egypt (Egypt)

18. SAM Organization for Rights and Liberties (Regioanl)
19. Sawt For Human Rights (Libya)
20. Solidarity for Women Supporting and Empowerment (Libya)
21. Thought Pioneers Organization for Cultural and Social Work Matters (Libya)
22. Trabulusna Team (Libya)
23. Tunisian Association Defending Individual Liberties (Tunisia)
24. Union of Health Care Committees (Palestine)
25. Watch for Human Rights (Watch4HR) (Yemen)
26. Wojood Community (Yemen)
27. Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counselling (Palestine)
28. Yemeni Women Union (Yemen)
29. Youth for Tawergha Organization (Libya)

## Palestine: UN condemns escalating Israeli operation in the northern West Bank

15 February 2025

The United Nations condemned the escalating Israeli operation in the northern West Bank, calling for an immediate end to this dangerous wave of violence and mass displacement.



The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory said that Israeli occupation forces have so far killed 44 Palestinians since the start of the operation on January 21, which has affected the governorates of Jenin, Tulkarm, Tubas and four refugee camps in those areas. Many of them were unarmed and did not pose a threat to life or risk causing serious injury. Among the dead victims were five children and two women.

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The UN office said the operation also raises concerns about unprecedented levels of mass displacement in the occupied West Bank for decades, with the Israeli operation having displaced nearly 40,000 Palestinians, according to UNRWA.

## Syria: Formation of an independent commission of inquiry into the events that took place on the Syrian coast

12 March 2025

The United Nations welcomed the announcement by the new Syrian government of the formation of an independent commission of inquiry into the events that took place on the Syrian coast, calling for assurances that the investigations will be swift, thorough, independent, and impartial. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights urged accountability for all crimes committed, stressing the need to hold all those responsible for violations accountable, regardless of their affiliations, in accordance with the rules and standards of international law.



In a media briefing in Geneva on Tuesday, the spokesperson for the commission stated that many of the documented cases were summary executions, "apparently carried out on a sectarian basis, in the governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Hama, by unidentified armed individuals, members of armed groups allegedly supporting the security forces of the caretaker authorities, and elements linked to the former government (the Bashar al-Assad regime)."

The UN statement said that between March 6 and 7, armed men affiliated with the former regime reportedly raided several hospitals in Latakia, Tartus and Banias, clashing with security forces of the caretaker authorities, resulting in dozens of civilian casualties, including patients, doctors and medical students, as well as damage to the hospitals themselves.

## Palestine: Israeli occupation resumes genocidal war in Gaza

18 March 2025

International condemnations continue to pour in for the horrific massacres perpetrated by the Israeli occupation against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, following its resumption of the genocidal war since dawn on Tuesday, March 17, 2025, as the heavy raids on various areas in the Strip have resulted in the killing of more than 400 people, most of them children and women, and the injury of more than 500 others.



UN Secretary-General António Guterres expressed his shock at the Israeli airstrikes on Gaza, confirming that they had killed a large number of civilians. Guterres strongly appealed for respect for the ceasefire and the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid, while the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, stressed that Israel's resort to further military force would only exacerbate the suffering of the Palestinian people.



## **Jordan: Alkarama files a complaint with the UN over the case of the student convicted of "promoting illegal content".**

23 March 2025

Alkarama submitted a communication to the [United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention \(WGAD\)](#) on 18 March 2025 concerning Mahmoud Aletewi, a Jordanian student who was arrested by the General Intelligence Services in Zarqa on 26 February 2024 and accused of visiting websites considered by the authorities to be 'non-compliant'.



After his arrest, Mahmoud Al Etewi was taken to the Jandawil intelligence station in Amman and held incommunicado for 81 days. It was not until 16 May 2024 that he first appeared before a military prosecutor and was formally charged. During this period, he was tortured and subjected to inhumane conditions of detention which seriously affected his psychological state.

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He is currently detained in Al-Muwaqqar 2 prison, where his family, who have finally been able to visit him, have noted that his general condition has deteriorated considerably as a result of the ill-treatment to which he has been subjected, which is why his father has filed a complaint of torture with the judicial authorities, which has so far had no effect.

It should be noted that the victim's trial took place before a special court, the State Security Court - a court composed of two military judges and one civilian judge, whose independence and impartiality are regularly questioned by human rights organisations. His trial, which was marred by

serious irregularities, ended with his sentencing on 2 February 2025 to three years' imprisonment for "apologising for terrorism", a charge often used in Jordan to repress journalists, political opponents and activists on social networks.

In his communication to the experts of the UN Working Group, Alkarama denounced the torture to which the victim was subjected in order to extract a confession and raised serious violations of his fundamental right to a fair trial by an independent and impartial tribunal.

The Working Group was asked to recognise the arbitrary nature of Mahmoud Al Etewi's deprivation of liberty and to urge the Jordanian authorities to quash his conviction and release him immediately.

## Iraq: Alkarama submits its follow-up report regarding the recommendations of the UN Human Rights Committee

27 March 2025

On 25 March 2025, Alkarama submitted its follow-up report to the United Nations [Human Rights Committee](#) regarding Iraq's implementation of the recommendations made during its [sixth periodic review](#), which took place in March 2022 in Geneva. These recommendations focus on crucial issues such as the fight against terrorism and the prohibition of torture.



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The Human Rights Committee, composed of independent experts, is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ([ICCPR](#)) by state parties, a treaty Iraq ratified in 1971. Through its periodic reviews, the Committee urges states to align their national practices with international standards, while identifying gaps and encouraging states to address them.

Following its [6th review](#), Iraq was called upon to submit a follow-up report on the implementation of the recommendations issued. This process also allows non-governmental organisations to contribute by providing additional information, ensuring a comprehensive and objective evaluation of the human rights situation in the country.

In this context, Alkarama presented its follow-up report, highlighting Iraq's ongoing failure to meet its human rights commitments.

## **Lack of Reform and Systematic Violations**

Despite the Committee's recommendations for legislative reforms, Iraq has taken no significant action to improve human rights in its fight against terrorism or to eradicate torture.

The current anti-terrorism legislation remains inconsistent with international norms, and its vague provisions allow for arbitrary decisions and death sentences without guarantees of fair trials. Meanwhile, executions continue at an alarming pace. It is currently estimated that more than 8,000 people are awaiting execution, while political leaders openly call for an acceleration of these executions.

In October 2024, mass executions were carried out under pressure from political leaders and militias for sectarian reasons. These executions, following unfair trials, caused outrage among human rights organisations, with reports of dozens of executions in just a few weeks.

Torture and ill-treatment remain widespread in Iraqi detention centres, where prisoners suffer physical violence, enforced disappearances, and inhuman detention conditions. Despite well-documented evidence of these practices, no independent inspections of detention facilities take place, and confessions obtained under duress are still used in court. This impunity contributes to the isolation and marginalisation of detainees, who are often denied adequate medical care and subjected to food deprivation.

## **Alkarama Calls for Urgent Action**

In its report, Alkarama condemns Iraq's inaction, which has allowed these severe human rights violations to continue. The lack of legislative reforms has fostered an environment where torture, ill-treatment, and unfair trials can persist without effective oversight. Confessions obtained under duress continue to be used in courts, perpetuating a climate of disrespect for fundamental rights. This situation is exacerbated by the severe polarisation

of society and the absence of independent monitoring mechanisms, creating a cycle of violence and impunity.

In light of these findings, Alkarama has called on the Committee to urge Iraq to take immediate action on these issues, align its laws with international standards, and demonstrate a sustained commitment to human rights and accountability, in order to end the current cycle of abuse.

## Iraq/USA: The endless quest for justice against US-Enforced disappearances

29 April 2025

During its 135th session, held in Geneva from 27 to 31 January 2025, the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances ([WGEID](#)) reviewed several concerning cases of disappearances worldwide. Among these were the cases of Essam Al Obaidi, Jabbar Ali Jaro Aati Al Suhayli, Ali Hamid Abdul Wahab Al Jeyali, and Wissam Salam Kamal Al Hashimi—four Iraqi nationals who vanished following their arrests by US forces.



These cases were submitted to the Working Group by Alkarama and the Wissam Al Humanitarian Assembly between 2014 and 2015. They form part of a broader pattern of impunity for crimes committed during the US occupation of Iraq, leaving families in a state of perpetual anguish as they desperately seek answers. Recently, the Working Group referred these cases to US authorities, emphasising the United States' responsibility for the disappearance of these Iraqi citizens. They also took note of the official response recently provided by the US government.

### An inadequate response from the US

In its response, the US government claimed that it had found no information regarding the four missing individuals and could offer no new details about their fate. This mirrors the response from 2017, when

Washington also stated that it could not locate these individuals in its archives. Despite these answers, the cases remain unresolved and continue to be reviewed by the UN Working Group.

## Case overview

Ali Hamid Abdul Wahab Al Jeyali, an Iraqi police officer, and Jabbar Ali Jaro Aati Al Suhayli, a civilian employee, were arrested on 16 October 2005, at the Babel Hotel by US forces without an arrest warrant or explanation. Their fate remains unknown.

Essam Al Obaidi, a police officer, was arrested on 20 December 2006, while en route to work. Witnesses reported that US soldiers apprehended him in Baghdad's Al-Saydiya district during a wave of arrests following an explosion in the area.

Wissam Salam Kamal Al Hashimi, an Iraqi contractor who had worked for US forces, was arrested on 16 October 2005, at the Babel Hotel in Baghdad by US troops. He was last seen in August 2011 at Camp Cropper detention centre before the US military closed the base.

His father, Salam Al Hashimi, a long-time Iraqi human rights activist and director of the Wissam Al Humanitarian Assembly, collaborated with Alkarama to submit these cases of enforced disappearances to the UN mechanisms.

## The heartbreaking testimony of Mr. Salam Al Hashimi

It is with heartbreaking depth that Mr. Salam Al Hashimi speaks of the disappearance of his son, Wissam—a memory that, despite two decades, remains as vivid as the first day: *"As a father and a husband, I have lost a dear one. For twenty years, wherever my wife and I are, at every moment, we have never stopped—and we will never stop—thinking of our dear Wissam."*

The words he chooses to describe his wife's suffering resonate deeply, reflecting a pain shared by countless families whose lives have been

shattered by the disappearance of a loved one: "*It is hard to believe, but my wife has not found peace since Wissam's disappearance. No medication has been able to calm her, and her mind, exhausted, now shows signs of deep amnesia.*"

He echoes the tragic condition of thousands of families whose lives have been forever altered by the loss of their loved ones: "*Our jewels of the past are now nothing but the broken reflection of hundreds of thousands of other families, also engulfed in pain, sadness, poverty, need, hunger, loss, and wandering. No word or language can describe the extent of these sufferings.*" Yet, despite the overwhelming sorrow, hope persists—like a beacon defying the waves of despair.

Mr. Al Hashimi makes a solemn appeal to the international community, a cry for justice for all the disappeared innocents, hoping that one day the truth will emerge and provide the long-awaited answer: "*We have made an appeal to the international community and the relevant United Nations bodies to intervene on this purely humanitarian issue and finally shed light on the fate of hundreds of thousands of innocent people. Their families have the right to know, to learn their fate, rather than continue hoping for a return that may never come.*"

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### **Alkarama's unwavering commitment**

Since submitting these cases to the UN mechanisms, Alkarama has tirelessly worked to uncover the truth behind these enforced disappearances and demand accountability from those responsible. As per the standard procedure, the cases were also referred to the Iraqi government, which, like the US, has failed to provide any meaningful response. The absence of any substantive reply from the United States, despite its direct involvement in these arrests, is a clear violation of its international human rights obligations.

Alkarama remains resolute in its efforts and will continue to fight until the truth is revealed, and justice is served for the victims and their families.



## Palestine: The genocidal war in Gaza continues

27 May 2025

The Israeli occupation army continues its genocidal war in Gaza relentlessly amid appalling international inaction, at a time when the scope of famine is widening due to the imposed siege.

The scene of the child Ward Jalal Al-Sheikh Khalil fleeing from the midst of hell as a result of an Israeli raid, while all members of her family died, embodies the "Holocaust" that the residents of the Gaza Strip are living through, and it is a scene that was considered one of the most painful and cruel scenes since the start of the Israeli aggression on Gaza 19 months ago.



## International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression: A Poignant Reminder of Shattered Childhoods in Gaza

4 June 2025

June 4 marks the [International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression](#), a commemoration that takes on particularly tragic significance this year, as the children of Gaza endure a daily nightmare. Israeli deadly attacks pursue them even into displacement zones, the streets, tents, and even their hospital beds.



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On this occasion, Alkarama calls on the international community to fully assume its responsibilities: to protect the children of Gaza, to bring the perpetrators to justice, and to work concretely toward the establishment of a safe environment that guarantees Palestinian children their rights to life, dignity, education, and proper healthcare.

### A Day Established by the United Nations

On August 19, 1982, during the seventh emergency special session of the United Nations General Assembly dedicated to the question of Palestine, the UN expressed its deep outrage at “the large number of innocent Palestinian and Lebanese children who have been victims of acts of aggression by Israel.” This led to the [proclamation](#) of June 4 as the International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression.

This day seeks to acknowledge the suffering of children around the world who are exposed to physical, psychological, and emotional violence. It also reaffirms the commitment of the United Nations to defending the rights of the child, in accordance with the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), the most rapidly ratified human rights treaty in history.

## **A Childhood Sacrificed in Gaza**

Despite these international commitments, children in many conflict zones — including the Arab world — continue to suffer serious and systematic violations. In Gaza, the [most recent figures](#) are horrifying: from the start of the war on October 7, 2023, until May 2025, more than 16,500 children have been killed, including 908 infants who had not yet reached their first birthday.

According to UNICEF, [more than](#) 50,000 children have been killed or injured in Gaza since the beginning of the conflict, revealing the dramatic scale of the humanitarian catastrophe affecting the territory's child population. These already alarming statistics may actually underestimate the true toll due to difficulties in accessing certain areas and the inability to recover bodies still buried under the rubble.

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As the UN reminds us: “Every day, children living in conflict-ravaged regions face unspeakable terror. Nowhere is safe for them — not in their homes, not in the streets, not at school, not even in the hospital.”

The UN adds: “Trapped between frontlines, children are exposed to extreme levels of violence: killings, injuries, abductions, sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals, as well as the denial of access to life-saving humanitarian aid.”

## Lebanon: Seven Years of Enacting a Torture Law without Effective Implementation- Joint Statement

26 June 2025

On the occasion of 26 June, the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture- which symbolizes the global commitment to ending the practice of torture and other ill-treatment- we, the undersigned organizations, express our deep concern over the ongoing impunity for the crime of torture in Lebanon and the lack of effective implementation of the Anti-Torture Law enacted in 2017.



Despite Lebanon's accession to the United Nations Convention against Torture (CAT) in 2000, along with its Optional Protocol in 2008, and its enactment of Law No. 65/2017, practical steps to ensure the prevention of torture and other ill-treatment and hold perpetrators accountable remain very limited. Furthermore, the Istanbul Protocol has not yet been adopted as a national reference for documenting and investigating cases of torture and other ill-treatment.

On 19 September 2017, the Lebanese Parliament passed [Law No. 65/2017](#), which criminalizes torture, but requires significant amendments to comply with Lebanon's international obligations under the CAT. Specifically, the [Committee Against Torture](#) has called on Lebanon to amend the anti-torture law to remove the statute of limitations, ensure the penalties reflect the grave nature of the crime, and include a complete definition of

torture that comply with the CAT . The Committee also noted high levels of impunity around the crime of torture.

More than seven years after passing the anti-torture law, no serious prosecutions of alleged perpetrators have been recorded, and most of the complaints citing the anti-torture law have not been investigated. Victims' complaints are often ignored or referred to the military court, in violation of the principle of an independent and impartial judiciary.

In July 2019, the government appointed members of the [National Human Rights](#) Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture established under the Optional Protocol. However, the Commission remains unable to perform its duties due to the failure to issue the necessary implementing decrees and the lack of funding and administrative facilities.

### **The Case of Bashar Abed Saud**

On 31 August 2022, Bashar Abed Saud, a Syrian refugee, died just one day after his arrest by the State Security Directorate. [Reports](#) indicated that he was tortured by an officer and four low rank officers at the General Directorate of State Security in Tebnine . Despite the arrest of the five officers, the case was referred to the military court, in violation of Lebanon's domestic and international obligations.

On 01 November 2024, nearly two years after his death, the Beirut military court issued its verdict in the case: all defendants were sentenced to time served after the court reduced the nature of their crime from felony to misdemeanor, dropped the felony charges under the anti-torture law and replaced them with the Article 166 of the Code of Military Justice that prohibits violating regulations, orders and general instructions.

This verdict was issued without sufficient justification, despite the presence of substantial evidence proving that the torture Abed Saud endured during his detention was the direct cause of his death. This ruling contradicted the findings of two forensic doctors appointed by the judicial authorities, who

concluded that his death resulted from the severe beatings inflicted on him while in custody.

### **The Case of Abdulrahman Al-Qaradawi**

On 28 December 2024, poet and political dissident Abdulrahman Al-Qaradawi was arrested in Lebanon upon returning from Syria based on an [Arab Interior Ministers Council](#) warrant triggered by politically motivated charges from Egypt and the UAE.

Al-Qaradawi, known for his critical stance toward both regimes and his vocal defense of democratic freedoms, was accused of inciting unrest and spreading false information. Lebanese authorities interrogated him and reviewed extradition requests from both Egypt and the UAE.

Despite legal appeals and urgent interventions by human rights organisations and the [UN Special Rapporteurs](#)—Lebanon deported Al-Qaradawi to the UAE on 8 January 2025. He has been held incommunicado ever since, prohibited from contacting his family except for one time when he was allowed to place a one-minute call to his family. He also remains denied legal counsel of his choice.

In deporting Al-Qaradawi, Lebanon violated its obligations under the Convention against Torture and the customary international legal principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits the deportation of any person to a country where they face the real risk of torture or other serious human rights violations. The deportation, despite a pending appeal and substantial evidence of potential torture or other ill-treatment, underscores growing concerns about the misuse of judicial cooperation mechanisms in the region to suppress dissent.

In light of his ongoing enforced disappearance since January 2025 and Lebanon's obligations under the principle of non-refoulement and the Convention against Torture, authorities must conduct a transparent review of the deportation of Abdulrahman Al-Qaradawi and formally engage with the Emirati authorities to ensure his safety, disclose his fate and whereabouts, and guarantee his access to legal counsel and family contact.

## Recommendations

We, the undersigned, urge the Lebanese authorities to take the following immediate actions:

- Respect international obligations under the Convention against Torture and its Optional Protocol, and implement the recommendations issued by the UN Committee against Torture.
- Recognize the authority of the UN Committee Against Torture to receive individual complaints under Article 22 of the Convention and enhance grievance mechanisms.
- Refer all torture cases to regular courts in accordance with Article 15 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, ensuring fair and transparent trials.
- Conduct prompt, independent, effective, and impartial investigations into all complaints of torture and other ill-treatment.
- Adopt a law on the independence of the judiciary in accordance with international standards to ensure the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary, including in cases of torture and other ill-treatment.
- Publish reports from the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture regarding Lebanon to promote transparency and accountability.
- Adopt the Istanbul Protocol as a mandatory reference in medical and judicial investigations, and train judges and forensic doctors on its content.
- Amend Law No. 65/2017 on the Punishment of Torture to include a more precise and comprehensive definition of the crime, abolish the statute of limitations, impose appropriately serious penalties, and restrict jurisdiction over torture cases to regular courts.
- Empower the National Human Rights Commission to perform its duties immediately by issuing executive decrees and providing adequate resources.
- Provide support and rehabilitation programs specifically for torture survivors, as well as for refugees who have been subjected to forced deportation, and ensure their access to medical, psychological, and legal services.

## **Signatories:**

1. ACAT- France
2. Access Center for Human Rights (ACHR)
3. Alkarama Foundation
4. Amnesty International
5. Association For Victims of Torture (AVT)
6. Cedar Centre for Legal Studies (CCLS)
7. Egyptian Human Rights Forum (EHRF)
8. EuroMed Rights Network
9. HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement
10. Justice for Human Rights
11. MENA Rights Group (MRG)
12. Omega Research Foundation
13. Proud Lebanon
14. The Legal Agenda
15. The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP)
16. Tawasol Organization for Human Rights
17. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)

## Palestine: In Gaza, starvation openly used as a tool of genocide

21 July 2025

In the devastated Gaza Strip, suffering goes far beyond the relentless roar of bombings and Israeli air raids. Another war is raging—quieter but equally ruthless: a war of starvation, systematic and deadly.

“What is happening in Gaza is far more than a food crisis or a mere shortage of supplies. We are witnessing a grim chapter in the history of international crimes, where the Israeli occupation is weaponizing hunger as a tool of domination, aiming to subjugate an entire population and force them into exile, in blatant violation of international humanitarian law,” said Maître Rachid Mesli, director of Alkarama.



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For years, over two million people have lived under a suffocating siege, during which food and medicine have become scarce commodities, and clean drinking water has turned into a distant dream. The blockade has intensified in recent months. As survival chances dwindle, the Israeli occupying forces continue to impose severe restrictions on humanitarian aid, disregarding all international norms and laws.

At the beginning of July, several Gaza hospitals reported the deaths of infants suffering from severe malnutrition, according to local medical sources corroborated by United Nations reports. In a harrowing display of

the disaster's scale, parents have been forced to grind wild herbs to feed their children, while queues for a piece of bread have turned into shooting zones for occupation soldiers.

In response to the worsening crisis, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, through Commissioner Volker Türk, issued a [solemn warning](#): maintaining the blockade on food aid risks constituting “the use of starvation as a method of warfare,” a crime strictly prohibited under international law.

### **A declared genocide**

Accusations against Israel now go beyond excessive use of force, reaching a far graver charge: genocide. In November 2024, a [UN Special Committee concluded](#) that “the methods used by Israel in its aggression against Gaza display the characteristics of genocide, including a policy of systematic starvation.”

In an unprecedented legal move, the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to take immediate measures to prevent famine, recognizing that the situation in Gaza surpasses a traditional blockade and constitutes some of the gravest international crimes.

On July 12, 2025, the United Nations General Assembly [adopted a resolution](#) demanding an immediate end to the use of hunger as a weapon of war, affirming that depriving civilians of essential needs is a flagrant violation of the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian principles.

Yet this resolution has brought no changes on the ground. On the contrary, reports from humanitarian organizations indicate that Israel has tightened restrictions on aid trucks entering northern Gaza, where thousands survive on crumbs of bread and contaminated water.

Meanwhile, Francesca Albanese, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories, declared: “What is happening in

Gaza is not merely a humanitarian crisis but a systematic campaign of extermination that must stop immediately."

Despite these calls and UN reports, Israel continues its daily crimes relentlessly, and the specter of hunger keeps spreading, weighing heavily on the bodies of children and women amid the silence of many influential capitals.

One haunting question remains: how long must lives be counted before the international community awakens? How many massacres must occur before justice is finally served?

## Lebanon: Alkarama submitted its contribution to the Human Rights Council as part of the 4th UPR

23 July 2025

On July 17, 2025, Alkarama submitted its contribution for [the fourth cycle](#) of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Lebanon, which will take place in Geneva from November 3 to 14, 2025 before the United Nations Human Rights Council. This report, highlighting violations of fundamental rights documented since the last 2020 cycle, addresses relevant recommendations to the Lebanese authorities.



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The UPR is a [mechanism](#) of the Human Rights Council that examines, every four to five years, the human rights situation in each UN member country. In this context, Alkarama contributed to Lebanon's evaluation based on its years of documentation and advocacy work.

### Torture, judicial repression, and inhumane detention conditions

In its report, Alkarama denounced the persistence of torture, despite its prohibition under national law and Lebanon's international commitments. Torture remains commonly used, especially during police custody, to obtain confessions. In 2024, Alkarama submitted to the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture [a report](#) highlighting the systematic nature of these practices, as well as the inaction of the National Preventive Mechanism, which has been legally established since 2016 but remains non-operational.

Alkarama also raised alarms about inhumane detention conditions, particularly at [Roumieh prison](#). In January 2024, two inmates died there due to lack of medical care, despite calls from Alkarama and other NGOs. Earlier in the year, Alkarama had demanded [urgent measures](#) to address prison overcrowding and the deterioration of health services.

On the judicial front, Alkarama denounced the systematic use of military courts to try civilians, including activists, journalists, and lawyers, in violation of the right to a fair trial. Alkarama recalled the emblematic case of lawyer and human rights defender Mr. [Mohamed Sablouh](#), who has been targeted by threats and harassment due to his anti-torture activism.

### **Abusive restrictions on fundamental freedoms**

Alkarama also highlighted the increase in violations of freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly. Journalists, lawyers, activists, and ordinary citizens have been prosecuted or arrested for expressing critical opinions, notably on social media. The Cybercrime Bureau has summoned many individuals for remarks deemed offensive or defamatory, in a climate of growing repression.

Finally, Alkarama criticized the anti-terrorism legislation adopted in 2015, which is based on a vague and particularly broad definition of terrorism, opening the door to arbitrary arrests, prolonged detention without trial, and violations of basic procedural guarantees.

### **Urgent call for reform**

Through this contribution, Alkarama emphasized the urgent need to align Lebanese legislation with international standards, ensure judicial independence, protect human rights defenders, and restore monitoring and remedy mechanisms concerning deprivation of liberty.

Alkarama called on the Lebanese authorities to take concrete structural measures to end impunity and effectively protect fundamental rights.



## Palestine: Alkarama and Human Rights Organizations condemn the U.S. envoy's denial of famine in Gaza

4 August 2025

The undersigned international legal and human rights organizations express their deep outrage and categorical rejection of the recent statements made by the U.S. Envoy to the Middle East, Mr. Steve Whitkoff, in which he denied the existence of famine in the Gaza Strip.

Such remarks blatantly ignore the well-documented realities on the ground and the numerous international reports confirming an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe that threatens the lives of over two million Palestinians.



In response to this denial of reality, we affirm the following:

- **Evidence cannot be erased by statements:** Famine in Gaza is an undeniable reality, having claimed the lives of 159 people, including 90 children, a documented toll that illustrates the scale of a crime that no rhetoric can justify or erase. This humanitarian tragedy spares no one, not even Israeli captives, who have been visibly affected by hunger and malnutrition, as shown in circulated footage.
- **Call for an international fact-finding mission:** We urge the United Nations and the Security Council to urgently dispatch an independent international fact-finding mission to Gaza to directly assess the

humanitarian disaster on the ground and investigate the systematic use of famine, which constitutes a war crime.

- **Immediate legal action:** We call on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to accelerate its investigations into war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Gaza, including the use of starvation as a weapon, and to hold all perpetrators accountable.
- **Immediate and lasting ceasefire:** We urge the international community to enforce an immediate and lasting ceasefire, which is essential to ensure unimpeded humanitarian access and to protect civilians, rescue teams, and medical personnel.
- **Access for journalists:** We call on the international community to exert immediate pressure on the Israeli occupation authorities to lift the media blackout that has been in place for over ten months and to allow unrestricted access for international journalists and media correspondents to Gaza, so the truth about the famine and genocide can be exposed.
- **Call to complicit governments:** We issue a clear call to governments that support or enable the starvation policy, or that obstruct the delivery of aid—such as the United States—to assume their legal and moral responsibilities and ensure the unhindered delivery of vital humanitarian assistance.

*Signatories:*

1. Dhamir Network (International Network against Genocide, Displacement, Blockade, and Normalization)
2. Voix Libre for Human Rights – France
3. Al-Shehab for Human Rights – London
4. Alkarama for Human Rights – Geneva
5. Association of Victims of Torture – Geneva
6. Justice Foundation for Human Rights – Istanbul
7. IFDD International Organization – Belgium
8. Tawasol for Human Rights – The Hague
9. Human Rights Monitor – London
10. Cedar for Human Rights – Lebanon
11. Solidarity for Human Rights – Geneva
12. Egyptian Rights Council – Geneva

13. Arab Center for Media Freedom
14. Egyptian Coordination for Rights and Freedoms
15. Najda Organization for Human Rights



# Palestine: The Israeli Occupation Army Murders the Truth through the Deliberate Execution of Journalist Anas Al-Sharif and his Colleagues – Joint Statement

11 August 2025

We, the undersigned human rights organizations, strongly condemn the heinous crime committed by the Israeli occupation on the evening of Sunday, August 10, 2025. This was the premeditated assassination of the Al Jazeera news team in the Gaza Strip, which claimed the lives of journalist Anas Al-Sharif and his colleagues Mohammed Qreiga, Ibrahim Zaher, Moamen Al-Aiwa, and Mohammed Noufal, and wounded journalist Mohammed Sobeh, following a direct airstrike targeting the journalists' tent set up in front of Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City.



The public acknowledgment by the Israeli occupation of this targeting, coupled with openly boasting about the act after months of pursuing and issuing explicit threats against Anas Al-Sharif, constitutes irrefutable evidence of the premeditated nature of these crimes. It confirms that the elimination of journalists in Gaza is part of a deliberate policy aimed at silencing the truth, erasing witnesses to the massive violations committed against civilians, and concealing war crimes from the international public.

According to credible local and international reports, more than 220 journalists have been killed in Gaza since October 2023 by the occupation forces, making this conflict the deadliest war for journalists in modern

history. These facts place the occupation under international criminal responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity, in accordance with the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

We express our deep outrage and anger at this criminal act and recall that targeting journalists in the course of their work constitutes a flagrant violation of Article 79 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as all international norms protecting journalists in conflict zones.

Accordingly, we demand:

1. The urgent opening of an independent international investigation, under the auspices of the United Nations, into the assassination of the Al Jazeera team and all killings of journalists in Gaza;
2. The prosecution before the International Criminal Court of the leaders of the Israeli occupation and the military officials involved in these crimes;
3. The immediate imposition of international sanctions against the occupying state, including a total arms embargo, in order to put an end to its crimes against journalists and civilians;
4. The establishment of effective and immediate international protection for journalists and media institutions operating in Gaza. We warn that the continued silence of the international community in the face of these repeated crimes amounts to tacit complicity, encourages the continuation of massacres, and undermines both press freedom and the fundamental right of peoples to access the truth.

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*Signatory organizations:*

- Voix Libre Organization for the Defense of Human Rights – Paris
- Association of Victims of Torture – Geneva
- Alkarama for Human Rights – Geneva
- Al-Shehab Center for Human Rights – London
- Al-Tadamon for Human Rights Avocats Sans Frontières International
- JHR – Justice for Human Rights
- Foundation Human Rights Monitor – London

- CEDAR for Human Rights – Lebanon
- Tawassol for Human Rights – The Hague
- Council for Egyptians' Rights – Geneva
- Arab Observatory for Press Freedom
- Najda Foundation

## On World Humanitarian Day... Gaza is dying of hunger

19 August 2025

On 11 December 2008, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming 19 August of each year as "[World Humanitarian Day](#)", "to further raise public awareness of humanitarian assistance activities worldwide and the importance of international cooperation in this regard, to pay tribute to all humanitarian workers as well as UN personnel and associated individuals who work for the humanitarian cause, and to commemorate those who lost their lives while carrying out their missions."



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This year, the day falls while the Arab region, and in particular the Gaza Strip, is experiencing one of the most severe humanitarian crises in its recent history. Gaza is starving and living under a suffocating siege, amidst systematic destruction, at the heart of a war of extermination, while humanitarian organizations face unprecedented challenges in carrying out their missions.

Gaza suffers from deliberate famine and the near-total collapse of infrastructure, including health and educational facilities, resulting in the loss of the most basic living conditions and leaving more than two million people facing a worsening humanitarian catastrophe day by day. The targeting of hospitals, schools, mosques, as well as water and electricity facilities, constitutes not only a blatant violation of international

humanitarian law but also a direct attack on the very foundations of humanitarian action.

Under these extremely difficult conditions, humanitarian organizations face severe restrictions that hinder their efforts and prevent them from delivering essential aid. Blocking access to food, medicine, and water, as well as restricting freedom of movement, are additional violations that worsen the suffering of Gaza's population and undermine all the principles that World Humanitarian Day seeks to uphold.

Consequently, Alkarama calls on the international community—states and organizations, particularly the UN and regional and international bodies—to act urgently and effectively to:

- Immediately lift the siege and allow humanitarian aid to reach the people of Gaza without obstruction;
- Ensure the protection of health and educational facilities and respect their protected status under international humanitarian law;
- Provide legal and practical protection for humanitarian workers and enable them to carry out their missions safely and freely;
- Take immediate measures to end the war that threatens civilians' lives and creates an unprecedented humanitarian crisis.

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Commemorating World Humanitarian Day in the context of Gaza's indescribable suffering must be far more than a symbolic occasion; it is a pressing call to renew collective commitment to fundamental humanitarian values, to respect international law, and to protect human dignity everywhere and at all times.

## Palestine: Targeted Executions of the Witnesses of Truth Continue in Gaza – Joint Statement

27 August 2025

We, the undersigned human rights organizations, express our deep indignation and profound outrage at the heinous crime perpetrated on August 25, 2025, by the Israeli occupation, whose airstrikes targeted the Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis, resulting in the death of dozens of civilians, including five journalists carrying out their professional and humanitarian duty of conveying the truth and documenting violations.



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According to media and human rights sources, the journalists killed are:

- Mariam Abu Daqa – Independent journalist,
- Mohamed Salama – Photographer at Al Jazeera,
- Hossam Al-Masri – Photographer at Reuters
- Moaz Abu Taha – Collaborating journalist with NBC,
- Ahmad Abu Aziz – Field journalist.

This crime comes only a few days after the targeted and premeditated assassination of journalist Anas Al-Sharif, Al Jazeera correspondent, who was executed along with four of his colleagues during the bombing of the journalists' tent in front of Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza. The total number of journalists thus executed has now exceeded 244.

This reality confirms, without a shred of doubt, that the targeting of journalists has become a deliberate and systematic policy of the

occupation, aimed at silencing every free voice, erasing the truth, and eliminating witnesses. It is deplorable that such crimes continue to unfold amidst the guilty silence of the international community and international organizations.

We underline the following: the intentional targeting of civilian journalists constitutes a clear war crime, in flagrant violation of the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law. The immunity granted to journalists and humanitarian actors is expressly guaranteed under international law, and any attack against them constitutes a crime that is not subject to any statute of limitations.

Accordingly, the undersigned organizations demand:

- The urgent opening of an international, independent investigation into these repeated crimes, and the prosecution of those responsible before the International Criminal Court;
- The immediate establishment of international protection mechanisms for journalists and media institutions in the occupied Palestinian territories;
- The intervention of international human rights organizations and professional bodies, in particular the International Federation of Journalists and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), to take rapid and concrete action beyond mere condemnations, including at minimum the proclamation of a worldwide general strike by the press;
- The full accountability of the international community, and in particular of the States that support the occupation, for their complicity in covering up these crimes and providing political protection to their perpetrators.

The targeting of journalists in Gaza reflects a desperate attempt to muzzle the truth and conceal the crimes committed. Yet such assaults will not silence the free voice: the blood of the murdered journalists remains an irrefutable testimony to the failure of the occupation to suppress the truth.

## **Signatory Organizations:**

1. Voix Libre Organization for the Defense of Human Rights — France
2. International AFDI (International EFDI) — Belgium
3. Al-Shehab Center for Human Rights — London
4. Association of Victims of Torture — Geneva
5. Alkarama for Human Rights — Geneva
6. Al-Tadamun for Human Rights
7. Justice for Human Rights (JHR)
8. Human Rights Monitor — London
9. Cedar for Human Rights — Lebanon
10. Tawasul for Human Rights — The Hague
11. Egyptian Rights Council — Geneva
12. Arab Observatory for Media Freedom
13. Najda Foundation



## Human rights groups support UN staff's demand to characterize events in Gaza as genocide – Joint statement

29 August 2025



We, the undersigned human rights organizations, express our full support for the courageous action taken by hundreds of staff members of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in which they called upon Mr. Volker Türk to name the crimes committed by the Israeli occupation against civilians in the Gaza Strip by their true name: ongoing genocide.

While we appreciate the courage of more than 500 employees within the United Nations system who raised the voice of professional and humanitarian conscience, we affirm that silence or ambiguity in describing the facts is not in line with the spirit of international law or with the mission of the United Nations itself.

Major international organizations have already adopted this precise legal characterization, as has the UN Special Rapporteur, Francesca Albanese, who deemed the events in Gaza genocide based on the scale and systematic nature of the crimes. Therefore, the High Commissioner's hesitation in adopting this characterization undermines the credibility of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and brings to mind the UN's historic failure during the Rwandan genocide in 1994.

We call on the Commission's staff to continue to exert professional and ethical pressure on their leadership, to stand firm and courageously on their position to the end, and not to give in to any attempts to back down or silence their voices.

We also call upon the High Commissioner to rise to the level of moral and legal responsibility entrusted to him by taking a clear and unequivocal stance.

We emphasize that the international community, and all United Nations institutions, foremost among them the Human Rights Council and the International Court of Justice, must build upon this initiative and support it with practical and concrete steps to stop the ongoing genocide and hold its perpetrators accountable.

History will not forgive those who fail to call crimes by their names, nor will it pardon the international institutions that have chosen silence in the face of documented genocide perpetrated by the Israeli occupation in Gaza for nearly two years. Meanwhile, it will be to the credit of the United Nations staff members who have dared to speak the truth, and those who will follow their example, that they have embodied the very essence of the humanitarian values upon which the United Nations was founded.

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### **Signatory Organizations:**

1. Association of Victims of Torture — Geneva
2. Al-Shehab Center for Human Rights — London
3. Voix Libre Organization for the Defense of Human Rights — France
4. Justice for Human Rights (JHR)
5. International AFDI (International EFDI) — Belgium
6. Tawasul for Human Rights — The Hague
7. Cedar for Human Rights — Lebanon
8. Egyptian Rights Council — Geneva
9. Najda Foundation
10. Human Rights Monitor — London
11. Arab Observatory for Media Freedom
12. Alkarama for Human Rights — Geneva
13. SAM for Rights and Liberties — Geneva

## Palestine: UN Commission Unequivocally Recognizes That Israel Committed Genocide in Gaza

16 September 2025

The United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory stated in a [report](#) published on Tuesday, 16 September 2025, that the State of Israel has committed genocide against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. It urged Israel, as well as all states, to comply with their legal obligations under international law “in order to put an end to this genocide and hold those responsible accountable.”



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Established by the United Nations [Human Rights Council](#) on 27 May 2021, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and on Israel, had the mandate “to investigate (...) all alleged violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, occurring before 13 April 2021 and since that date.”

In a [press release](#), the Commission indicated that it conducted investigations into the events of 7 October 2023 and subsequent developments over the past two years.

The report, made public on Tuesday, 16 September 2025, concludes that Israeli authorities and security forces have committed four of the five genocidal acts defined by the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, namely "killing, causing serious bodily or mental harm, deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about the destruction of the Palestinians in whole or in part, and imposing measures intended to prevent births."

The Commission emphasizes that explicit statements from Israeli civil and military authorities, combined with the systematic practices of the security forces, demonstrate that the acts of genocide were carried out with "the intent to destroy" in whole or in part, the Palestinian people as a group in the Gaza Strip.

Navi Pillay, Chair of the Commission, stated: "The responsibility for these heinous crimes lies with the highest levels of Israeli authorities, who have orchestrated a genocidal campaign for nearly two years, with the specific intent to destroy the Palestinian group in Gaza."

She added that the Commission also concluded that Israel had "failed" to prevent the genocide and punish its perpetrators due to its "absence of action" in investigating and prosecuting the alleged offenders.

To establish the existence of genocidal intent, the Commission applied the standard of the "only reasonable inference" used by the International Court of Justice in the *Bosnia v. Serbia* case. It analyzed public statements made by Israeli authorities and determined that they constitute direct evidence of "genocidal intent." An examination of the actions of Israeli authorities and forces in Gaza including the imposed starvation of Palestinians and submission to inhumane living conditions confirmed that that "genocidal intent was the only reasonable inference that could be concluded from the nature of their operations".

In its recommendations, the Commission urges the Israeli government to immediately comply with its international obligations, particularly by ending the genocide in the Gaza Strip and fully implementing the provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice.

It emphasizes the urgent need for Israel to end the policy of starvation, lift the blockade and ensure broad, swift and unhindered humanitarian access. This includes granting access to all United Nations personnel notably those from UNRWA and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights as well as all recognized international humanitarian agencies responsible for providing and coordinating aid.

Finally, the Commission calls on UN member states to halt all transfers of arms and equipment that could be used to commit genocide to Israel to ensure that neither individuals nor entities within their territories or under their jurisdiction participate, directly or indirectly, in committing or inciting genocide and to implement accountability mechanisms, including through investigations and judicial proceedings against those individuals and companies involved.

## Palestine: Alkarama and Several NGOs Denounce an Act of State Piracy by Israel and Demand the Immediate Release of the Resilience Flotilla Activists

2 October 2025

The signatory organizations express their strong indignation and firmly reject the operation carried out on the evening of Tuesday, October 1, by Israeli occupation forces, who forcibly intercepted and detained civilian ships of the Resilience Flotilla while they were sailing in international waters. These vessels were heading towards the Gaza Strip as part of a humanitarian mission aimed at breaking the blockade, carrying nearly 500 activists from more than fifty countries.



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Such an act constitutes a clear violation of freedom of navigation and, under international law, amounts to an act of piracy committed by an occupying power, showing total disregard for the safety of hundreds of activists.

This attack is part of a continuing policy of collective punishment carried out by the occupation against any humanitarian initiative seeking to end the illegal blockade imposed on Gaza.

## **Position and Legal Condemnation**

The signatory organizations strongly condemn this criminal act. The capture of unarmed civilians on the high seas represents a flagrant violation of the Geneva Conventions and a serious infringement of human rights and fundamental principles of international law, illustrating once again Israel's disregard for international legality.

## **Demands and Actions Requested**

While holding the occupation authorities fully and directly responsible for the safety and physical integrity of all passengers, as well as for any harm or cases of enforced disappearance that may occur, we make the following requests:

1. Immediate protection and release: Ensure the safety of all flotilla participants and proceed without delay or conditions to their release, along with the release of the seized vessels;
2. Resumption of navigation: Allow the ships to continue on their original route to Gaza to deliver the humanitarian aid on board;
3. Implementation of international accountability: Launch an independent investigation, under the authority or support of the International Criminal Court, to document the act of piracy and violations of international humanitarian law and prosecute those responsible;
4. Referral to the Security Council: Request an urgent convening of the United Nations Security Council to examine this crime, which endangers international peace and security;
5. Diplomatic action: Call on the states of which the activists are nationals to intervene immediately to protect their citizens from risks of torture or enforced disappearance.

The impunity enjoyed by the occupation has encouraged the repetition of such serious acts, placing the international community before its duty to fully assume its legal and moral responsibilities. Remaining silent in the face of such violations is tantamount to becoming complicit and endorsing a state act of piracy in complete breach of international law.

## **Signatory Organizations**

1. Free Voice for Human Rights – France
2. Association of Torture Victims – Geneva
3. Alkarama for Human Rights – Geneva
4. Justice Foundation for Human Rights – Istanbul
5. IFDI International – Belgium
6. Al Shehab for Human Rights – London
7. Tawasol for Human Rights – The Hague
8. Human Rights Monitor – London
9. Cedar for Human Rights – Lebanon
10. Al-Tadamun for Human Rights – Geneva
11. Council for the Rights of Egyptians – Geneva
12. Arab Observatory for Press and Media
13. Freedom Najda
14. Foundation Moroccan Organization for Human Rights – Rabat, Morocco (AMDH)
15. SAM for Rights and Liberties – Geneva

## International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists / Journalists in Gaza: Targets of a Genocide

2 November 2025

On the occasion of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists, Alkarama renews its call to the international community to end the ongoing violations and persistent impunity suffered by media professionals. Alkarama warns of alarming global trends and of Gaza's transformation into one of the deadliest places for journalists in modern history.



Alkarama recalls the [message of the United Nations Secretary-General](#), who emphasized that the growing dangers faced by journalists — intimidation, judicial harassment, threats, and even assassinations — demand firm commitment to ending impunity and ensuring the protection of journalism, a cornerstone of democracy and the public's right to information.

The Secretary-General urged States to respond to the increase in attacks, legal harassment, and digital threats against journalists. For its part, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) [reiterated](#) that journalists are civilians protected under all circumstances, and that attacks against them or their media outlets may constitute war crimes.

According to [UNESCO's alarming data](#), since 2006, 85% of journalist killings have gone unpunished. In 2024 alone, at least 68 journalists and media workers were killed in the line of duty, more than 60% of them in conflict zones — the highest figure in over a decade. These numbers highlight a deep gap between international commitments and the reality on the ground.

## **Gaza, A Damning Test of International Law**

Since 7 October 2023, the Gaza Strip has become the most dangerous place in the world to practice journalism. On [6 June 2025](#), the OHCHR confirmed the deaths of 227 Palestinian journalists since the beginning of the conflict, reaffirming their status as civilians protected under international humanitarian law.

UN experts have [repeatedly called](#) for independent and credible investigations into these killings and attacks targeting journalists in Gaza, while denouncing censorship and repression policies. Recent estimates from journalistic and human rights sources suggest that the real toll is likely much higher.

This recurring pattern — killings during field reporting, strikes on homes and media offices, arbitrary arrests — constitutes serious violations that may amount to war crimes.

Press freedom organizations report that Palestinian journalists have been subjected to threats, violence, arbitrary detention, and torture. Restrictions imposed on foreign media have further increased the vulnerability of local teams, who are left to cover the conflict on their own. The cumulative data clearly show that this is the deadliest conflict for journalists ever recorded, fully consistent with the severity of the documented facts.

Moreover, the [use of famine](#) as a weapon of war, which has affected journalists in Gaza just like the civilian population, constitutes a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law.

## Legal and Human Rights Implications

The systematic and repeated violations — killings, deliberate targeting, detention, torture — when proven to be widespread or systematic, as in [Israel's](#) conduct in Gaza, fall within the category of the most serious international crimes, entailing both individual criminal responsibility and state responsibility. Obstructing access to independent information further deepens human suffering and worsens the impact of the conflict.

International humanitarian law imposes strict obligations: journalists must be respected and protected as civilians. The United Nations repeatedly reaffirms this standard and condemns all violations of it. Impunity fuels recurrence: according to UNESCO, the absence of prosecutions in 85% of cases perpetuates violence against the media and undermines both freedom of expression and the right to information.

Therefore, Alkarama calls for the opening of independent and effective criminal investigations into all murders and attacks against journalists in Gaza and elsewhere, for full cooperation by States with UN mechanisms and for unhindered access by experts to sites of violations.

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As for Arab governments, Alkarama urges them to adopt and implement national journalist protection plans, including early warning mechanisms, safety protocols during conflict, psychological support and safe refuge programs, in accordance with the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.

To combat impunity, Alkarama advocates for strengthening both national and international jurisdictions, including the application of universal jurisdiction, so that perpetrators of grave crimes against journalists are held accountable. Alkarama also calls for an end to defamation and hate campaigns that precede or accompany assaults, and for the criminalization of threats, digital harassment and judicial harassment targeting media professionals.

## **Alkarama's Advocacy**

Alkarama continues to monitor numerous cases of violations committed against journalists across the Arab world.

In cooperation with UN mechanisms and special procedures, it works to strengthen accountability and prevention, particularly through monitoring systematic violations during conflicts, submitting international complaints and supporting victims and their families.

## Syria: The arrest of Emirati activist Jassem Al-Shamsi and the prospect of his extradition raise serious concern

12 November 2025

The fate of Emirati activist Jassem bin Rashid Al-Shamsi remains unknown following his arrest in Syria on Thursday, November 6, 2025, at a checkpoint in the capital, Damascus. He was reportedly taken to a security facility without a judicial warrant or clear charges, and all contact with him has since been severed.



Lawyer Rachid Mesli, director of Alkarama, stated: "*The arrest by the new Syrian government of an Emirati dissident known for his support of the Syrian people's struggle against the crimes of the former regime could signal a lack of respect by the new authorities in Damascus for their obligations under international human rights law. Moreover, if they were to hand him over to a country where torture is systematically practiced, it would be an indelible stain and a great disappointment.*" Mr. Mesli added that "*Such actions risk undermining the new government's efforts to build a state governed by the rule of law, and send negative signals about the extent to which the new Syria respects its international commitments on human rights and the treaties to which it is party.*"

Mr. Al-Shamsi arrived in Syria with his Syrian wife and children before the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime. He holds no nationality other than Emirati, which raises serious concerns that the new Syrian authorities might

consider handing him over to his country of origin, a flagrant violation of Article 3 of the [Convention against Torture](#), ratified by Syria.

That article states that “No State Party shall expel, return (“refouler”) or extradite a person to another State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture.”

### **A troubling record of torture in the UAE**

It is widely acknowledged that the [United Arab Emirates](#) has a serious record of torture and ill-treatment. Alkarama and other human rights organizations have documented numerous cases, including those occurring outside the UAE’s borders. Abu Dhabi reportedly operates secret detention centers in several Arab countries, such as Yemen, where particularly cruel forms of torture have been exposed through [videos](#) and victims’ [testimonies](#).

Serious concerns persist regarding possible Emirati pressure on the new Syrian government to obtain Mr. Al-Shamsi’s extradition, especially given previous abductions and renditions of Emirati dissidents abroad notably that of [Khalaf Abdulrahman Al-Rumaithi](#), a Turkish citizen handed over to the UAE by Jordan, who has since disappeared.

After spending ten years in Turkey, Mr. Al-Shamsi moved to Syria with his wife and children. He is recognized as one of the most prominent Arab activists supporting the Syrian revolution that led to the downfall of the former regime.

According to Emirati human rights sources, Al-Shamsi is among the defendants in the political cases known as “[UAE 94](#)” and “Justice and Dignity”, and was sentenced first to 15 years in prison, then to life imprisonment, following trials marred by serious violations of the right to a fair trial.

Alkarama filed a complaint before the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention regarding this group of dissidents, which resulted in [Opinion No.](#)

[60/2013](#), declaring their detention arbitrary and calling for their release as well as reparation for the harm caused by their detention and ill-treatment.

### Alkarama's Action

Regarding the Syrian situation, Alkarama has been involved since 2004 in numerous cases of forced returns of foreigners in violation of Article 3 of the Convention against Torture. Alkarama regularly contributes to the work of the Committee against Torture, which monitors States' compliance with their obligations, and has submitted hundreds of individual complaints concerning enforced disappearances in Syria, which are considered a form of torture.

In this context, Alkarama recalls the recommendations issued by the Committee against Torture during its 44th session in May 2010, which remain valid and inseparable from Syria's international obligations, regardless of the governing authorities.

The Committee said it was seriously concerned “*by the numerous reports of expulsion, return or deportation, including several cases concerning recognized refugees or asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR, in violation of the non-refoulement principle contained in article 3 of the Convention.*”

The Committee expressed further concern about “*reports that the participation of the Syrian Arab Republic in the so-called “war on terror” has resulted in secret detentions and renditions of terrorism suspects, in breach of the principle of non-refoulement (art. 3).*”

In its concluding observations, the Committee stressed that the State Party must ensure full compliance “*with article 3 of the Convention, including guaranteed fair treatment at all stages of the proceedings and an opportunity for effective, independent and impartial review of decisions on expulsion, return or extradition. Under no circumstances should the State party expel, return or extradite a person to a State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture or ill-treatment.*”

The Committee also recommended that the State Party “ensure protection from refoulement, including by refraining from expelling or forcibly returning persons who hold a UNHCR Refugee Certificate or Asylum Seeker Certificate. Furthermore, the State party should establish an independent investigation to follow up on allegations of its involvement in “extraordinary renditions” and inform the Committee of the outcome of such investigation in its next periodic report.”

Alkarama also recalls the concluding observations of the Committee against Torture following its special review on Syria, published on June 1, 2012, in which the Committee expressly requested that the Syrian Arab Republic submit a special follow-up report on the measures taken to implement the recommendations by August 31, 2012. The former regime failed to do so, prompting Alkarama to contribute to the review with an alternative report on systematic and widespread torture in Syria, as well as to participate in the NGO briefing session preceding the review.

Finally, in its report to the Human Rights Council during the second Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on March 24, 2016, Alkarama denounced the widespread and systematic use of torture in all detention centers under the control of the regime and its allied forces, fueled by a climate of impunity, a finding that Alkarama reiterates today in light of the new authorities in Syria.



# **International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People: Human Rights NGOs Call for the Prosecution of Occupation Leaders (Joint Statement)**

29 November 2025

The undersigned human rights organizations commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1977 through Resolution [32/40 B](#).

This observance comes at an extraordinarily critical moment, as Palestinians—particularly those in the Gaza Strip—face one of the most severe humanitarian tragedies in modern history. The Israeli occupation continues to pursue a policy of widespread destruction, blockade, deliberate starvation, and systematic annihilation of residential infrastructure and essential services.

This day is observed amid a fragile truce, insufficient to end the humanitarian catastrophe affecting more than two million people in the Gaza Strip. The population remains deprived of the most basic necessities: food, water, healthcare, electricity, and shelter. Hundreds of thousands now live in the open or among the rubble, following the complete destruction of entire neighborhoods due to intense Israeli bombardment.



## **“Hind Rajab”: A Symbol of the Brutality of the Occupation**

In accordance with Resolution [60/37](#) adopted by the General Assembly in 2005, this year’s activities marking the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People continue and are set to conclude on 4 December with the screening of the documentary “The Voice of Hind Rajab” at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Directed by the Oscar-nominated Tunisian filmmaker Kaouther Ben Hania, the film recounts the harrowing story of the Palestinian child Hind Rajab, who was killed in January 2024 in the Tel Al-Hawa neighborhood in southern Gaza, after the Israeli occupation army targeted the vehicle she was traveling in with her family. All of her companions were killed instantly, leaving Hind trapped alone among their bodies for several days.

Although she repeatedly called for rescue, the occupation forces attacked the medical team attempting to reach her. The child was found only twelve days later, lifeless.

Hind’s tragedy—one among thousands—vividly illustrates the scale of violence and the flagrant violations of international humanitarian law: targeting civilians, obstructing humanitarian aid, and impeding rescue operations. These acts constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity.

### **Demands of the Human Rights Organizations**

On this occasion, the undersigned organizations reaffirm the following:

- Expressions of solidarity or routine commemorative activities are no longer sufficient in the face of the ongoing Israeli occupation and its repressive policies. The occupation remains the root cause of the suffering of the Palestinian people; no lasting peace can be achieved without fully ending it and holding its leaders accountable.
- The ongoing events in the Palestinian territories, particularly in the Gaza Strip since 7 October 2023, constitute an unequivocal genocide under the [1948 Convention](#) on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, necessitating urgent, decisive, and binding international action.

- Governments worldwide and international organizations must fully assume their responsibilities by pressuring the Israeli occupation authorities to respect international humanitarian law, immediately cease attacks on civilians, and allow unconditional and unhindered access for humanitarian aid and rescue teams to the Gaza Strip.
- It is essential to support UN initiatives that organize solidarity activities, including the annual exhibition on the rights of the Palestinian people, highlighting the violations committed against them, and encouraging states to ensure extensive media coverage of this day.
- The measures ordered by the [International Court of Justice](#) in the case brought against Israel must be supported, and the [arrest warrants](#) issued by the [International Criminal Court](#) against occupation leaders must be executed without delay, holding them accountable for the use of starvation as a method of warfare, as well as for other crimes against humanity, including deliberate killings, persecution, and other inhumane acts.
- The inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to establish an independent state across the entirety of Palestinian territory, with Jerusalem as its capital, is reaffirmed—a right that is imprescriptible and cannot be nullified by the passage of time.
- The undersigned organizations commend the meticulously documented UN reports on the [genocidal crimes](#) committed by Israel in the Gaza Strip and express their solidarity with human rights experts facing intimidation while fulfilling their international mandates, particularly Ms. [Francesca Albanese](#), the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territory, whose tireless efforts to uncover the truth and expose misleading narratives are recognized and praised.

In conclusion, we, the human rights organizations, emphasize that the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is not merely a symbolic observance but a global call to renew moral and legal commitments toward a people subjected for decades to the most extreme forms of occupation, violence, and blockade.

The organizations reaffirm that genuine solidarity begins with unequivocally condemning violations, actively combating impunity, and supporting the Palestinian people's right to establish a fully sovereign state, end the occupation, and live in dignity and security on their land.

### **Signatory Organizations:**

1. Alkarama for Human Rights – Geneva
2. Association of Victims of Torture – Geneva
3. Al-Shehab Center for Human Rights – London
4. Sawt Hor Organization (Free Voice)
5. EFDI International
6. Justice for Human Rights Organization – JHR
7. Al-Tadamun for Human Rights

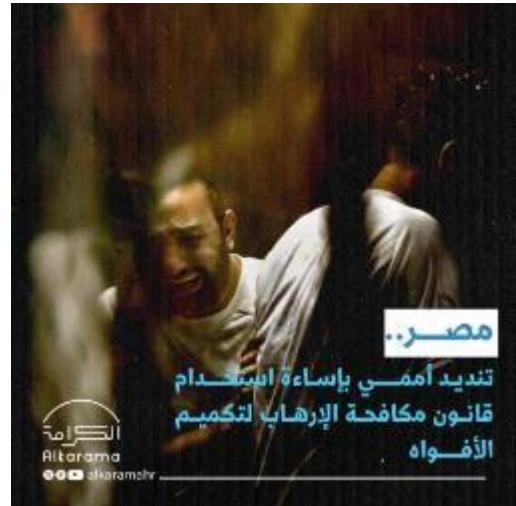


# Nile Region

## Egypt: UN denounces misuse of counter-terrorism legislation to repress human rights defenders

17 January 2025

The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Ms [Mary Lawlor](#), has expressed deep concern over the persistent application of Egypt's counter-terrorism legislation to detain human rights defenders. She highlighted several cases, including that of Mr Ibrahim Metwally, whose case Alkarama previously supported by submitting a complaint to the UN Special Procedures.



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This statement was issued in a [press release](#) endorsed by other independent human rights experts, including Ms Margaret Satterthwaite, Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, and Mr Ben Saul, Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights while Countering Terrorism.

The Special Rapporteur emphasised that "Egypt persists in routinely misusing counter-terrorism legislation and recycling criminal charges against human rights defenders." She added, "What is particularly striking is the continued detention of human rights defenders past their release date by repeatedly charging them with similar, if not identical, terrorism-related accusations, in a practice commonly known as "rotation" or "recycling."

Ms Lawlor previously raised her concerns on this issue in 22 communications addressed to the Egyptian Government since May 2020.

Additionally, the Human Rights Committee drew attention to the practice of "rotation" in its concluding observations during Egypt's most recent review in March 2023.

### **Three Specific Cases of Concern**

The Special Rapporteur voiced particular apprehension regarding the use of the "rotation" practice to detain three human rights defenders for prolonged periods:

- Ms Huda Abdel Moneim, a human rights lawyer, who completed her sentence in November 2023, yet faced retrial shortly thereafter;
- Ms Aisha El-Shater, prosecuted alongside Huda Abdel Moneim in the same case and serving a 10-year sentence for identical charges;
- Mr Ibrahim Metwally, a human rights defender and lawyer, who has been subjected to arbitrary detention without trial for over four years.

### **Alkarama's Advocacy**

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Mr Ibrahim Metwally was forcibly [disappeared](#) on 10 September 2017 at Cairo International Airport while en route to Geneva to attend a meeting with the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

Mr Metwally, a lawyer, serves as coordinator for the Association of Families of the Disappeared, an NGO he founded after the disappearance of his son, Omar Ibrahim Abdel Moneim, in July 2013. Omar remains missing to this day.

Following two days of enforced disappearance, Mr Metwally was brought before a State Security Court, where he faced charges of "establishing an unauthorised association, disseminating false information, and collaborating with foreign entities, including the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances." The court ordered his detention pending investigation at Tora Maximum Security Prison, commonly known as Scorpion Prison.

In response, on 11 September 2017, Alkarama submitted an urgent appeal to the Working Group and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, urging their intervention in Mr Metwally's case. On 13 September, Alkarama informed the UN Special Procedures of his reappearance and renewed its call for urgent action, demanding that Egyptian authorities ensure his immediate release and safeguard his right to freedom of movement within and outside the country without fear of retaliation.

Over the years, Alkarama has persistently pursued Mr Metwally's case, including its [submission](#) as part of a report to the UN [Secretary-General](#) for his annual report on reprisals against individuals cooperating with the United Nations.

Alkarama reiterates the pressing need to cease the Egyptian authorities' systemic misuse of counter-terrorism legislation to suppress civil liberties and silence human rights defenders. Alkarama calls for the immediate release of prisoners of conscience, political opponents, and human rights activists.

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Alkarama also conveys its profound concern for the wellbeing of the aforementioned defenders, given the dire conditions of their detention. All three have suffered severe health complications since their imprisonment and have been systematically denied adequate medical treatment, despite the gravity of their conditions – acts that may amount to both physical and psychological mistreatment.

## Egypt: A global campaign coinciding with the Universal Periodic Review of Egypt's human rights record at the United Nations

20 January 2025



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More than 15 international human rights NGOs are launching a global campaign to coincide with Egypt's Universal Periodic Review at the United Nations.

The "Save Them" campaign aims to:

- Support victims of torture and detainees in Egypt.
- Demand the immediate release of detained women.
- Pressure Egyptian authorities to halt the ongoing deterioration of civil, political, economic, and social human rights.

We invite you to participate:

- To uncover the fate of the forcibly disappeared in Egypt.
- To stand up for human rights in every way possible.

## Egypt: Review of human rights record during the Universal Periodic Review - "Joint Statement"

22 January 2025

On 28th January 2025, Egypt will undergo a review of its human rights record over the past four years under the Universal Periodic Review ([UPR](#)) mechanism of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

On this occasion, more than 15 international human rights organisations, including AlKarama, have launched a campaign to draw attention to the human rights situation in Egypt, particularly for political prisoners, of whom there are more than 60,000.



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The campaign calls for an end to unjust death sentences, protection for victims of torture in detention centres and prisons, the immediate release of imprisoned women, and for the cessation of the ongoing deterioration of civil, political, economic, and social rights.

It also advocates for the defence of the rights of human rights defenders, workers, marginalised individuals, victims of medical neglect, lack of healthcare, poor educational quality, and the fight against school dropouts, among other violated rights.

The organisations signing this statement call on all free individuals to join this campaign on humanitarian grounds.

Be the voice of the victims and defend human rights. The organisations also call on the states participating in the UPR, who will review Egypt's human rights situation, to deliver justice for the oppressed.

They urge them not to spare Egypt or turn a blind eye to the ongoing and systematic human rights violations, and to remind Egypt of the recommendations made by the UPR working group.

The human rights organisations also draw the attention of over 300 global stakeholders involved in this process to the detailed reports that have been submitted concerning human rights in Egypt, which have meticulously documented and described a multitude of human rights and legal violations in the country.

Thus, the recommendations and condemnations issued by these countries will have a significant impact in improving the human rights situation in Egypt.

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Save them.

#Egypt\_Behind\_Bars

## Sudan: UN condemns crimes committed by the Rapid Support Forces in North Darfur

29 April 2025

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Turk, condemned the attacks carried out by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), supported by the United Arab Emirates, and the widespread violations they are committing in the city of Al-Fasher and its surrounding areas in North Darfur, [Sudan](#).

A [statement](#) issued by the UN office mentioned that recent days have seen an increase in civilian casualties, attacks on humanitarian workers, and a disturbing rise in cases of sexual violence, as the RSF intensifies its assaults on the city and nearby displaced persons' camps.



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The High Commissioner's office confirmed that at least 129 civilians were killed between 20 and 24 April 2025 in Al-Fasher, the Um Kadada area, and the Abu Shouk displaced persons camp.

The office also stated that at least 481 civilians have been killed in North Darfur since 10 April, although the actual death toll is likely much higher. Furthermore, the recent attacks have caused the displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians, most of whom have been displaced for the second or third time after being previously forced out during earlier rounds of conflict. These displaced persons are facing [dire humanitarian conditions](#) in areas like Tola, Dar Al-Salam, and other towns, as restrictions on the delivery of life-saving aid continue.

The High Commissioner expressed alarm over the increasing number of civilian casualties and widespread reports of sexual violence, describing these as horrific. He also voiced deep concern over the ongoing attacks on humanitarian and medical workers, which violate international law and exacerbate the difficulty of accessing healthcare services.

Turk further reported that testimonies have been received about the abduction of individuals from the Zamzam displaced persons camp and about women, girls, and boys being raped both individually and collectively inside the camp or while attempting to flee the attacks.

He added that the fate of many people trapped inside the camp remains unknown. Turk stressed the need to allow civilians "to leave Al-Fasher and surrounding areas safely and must be protected wherever they go."

Since April 2023, Sudan has been embroiled in a war due to a power struggle between the regular army leadership and the RSF. On 6 March 2025, the Sudanese government filed a complaint with the International Court of Justice in The Hague, accusing the UAE of violating the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide by providing military, financial, and logistical support to the RSF, which is accused of committing genocide and crimes against humanity against the Masalit group in the Darfur region, including mass killings, rape, forced displacement, and sieges.

# **Egypt: Alkarama and Human Rights Organizations Condemn Escalating Crackdown on Gaza Solidarity**

14 June 2025

The undersigned human rights organizations express their strong condemnation and profound concern over the escalating campaign of repression against freedom of expression and solidarity with the people of Gaza in Egypt.

This campaign has recently manifested in the detention of Turkish international lawyer Mehmet Akif Can , three Algerian lawyers — Mustafaoui Samir, Mohammed Atef Briki, and Abbas Abdulnour — who traveled to Egypt in solidarity with Gaza, as well as the denial of entry to European delegations, the detention of other citizens from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, and the expulsion of numerous participants in the "Convoy of Steadfastness."

These repressive measures, which extend beyond individuals to target delegations of various nationalities, send a dangerous message regarding the Egyptian authorities' stance toward any form of humanitarian solidarity with the Palestinian cause.

The undersigned organizations demand that the Egyptian authorities provide immediate and transparent clarification regarding the whereabouts of international lawyer Mehmet Akif Can , the reasons for his arrest, and the full guarantee of his legal rights.



The detention of a prominent international lawyer known for his human rights work and advocacy for humanitarian causes, along with others standing in solidarity with Gaza's people—who are enduring catastrophic humanitarian conditions—sends an extremely negative message about the environment for legal and human rights work in Egypt.

Freedom of expression, the right to peaceful assembly, and solidarity with just humanitarian causes are fundamental and non-negotiable rights, enshrined in international laws and constitutions to which Egypt is a signatory.

**The undersigned organizations demand that the Egyptian authorities:**

- Immediately and unconditionally release lawyer Mehmet Akif Can and all detained individuals held solely for their peaceful solidarity with Gaza, unless credible evidence of internationally recognized crimes is presented.
- Disclose their detention locations promptly and allow them to communicate with their lawyers, families, and consular representatives.
- Ensure their physical and psychological safety throughout detention.
- Halt all restrictions on the rights to expression, peaceful assembly, and humanitarian solidarity.
- Cease targeting lawyers, activists, and human rights defenders, ensuring a safe environment for them to operate without fear of reprisal.

The undersigned human rights organizations call on the international community, including the United Nations, intergovernmental organizations, and member states, to pressure the Egyptian government to uphold human rights, including lawyers' freedom to perform their duties independently, and to end all suppression of humanitarian solidarity—particularly amid the ongoing crisis in Gaza.

## **Signed International Human Rights Organizations:**

- EFDI International – Belgium
- Victims of Torture – Geneva
- Justice for Human Rights – Turkey
- Tawasul for Human Rights – Netherlands
- El-Shehab for Human Rights – London
- Free Voice – Paris
- Human Rights Monitor – London
- Alkarama for Human Rights – Geneva
- Arab Observatory for Media Freedom – London
- Egyptian Rights Council – Geneva
- Najda for Human Rights – London
- Solidarity for Human Rights – Geneva

## Egypt: "The Lives of Political Prisoners at Badr 3 Prison in Imminent Danger" – Joint Statement

15 July 2025

The undersigned human rights organizations strongly condemn the severe and systematic deterioration of detention conditions at Badr 3 prison, which poses an immediate threat to the lives of political prisoners in Egypt and constitutes a blatant violation of fundamental humanitarian standards as well as national and international laws.



During the Criminal Court hearings at Badr prison in July 2025, shocking and horrific facts came to our attention, revealing a true human tragedy and sounding an alarm. On July 12, several lawyers present reported that detainee Mohamed Anis Mohamed Al-Sharif attempted to cut the veins of both hands inside the defendants' box. This desperate act reflects the extreme psychological pressure suffered by political prisoners. Even more disturbing was the evident inaction of the judges, who neither ensured immediate medical care nor opened an urgent investigation to determine the real reasons behind this desperate act.

At the hearing on July 5, detainee Khaled Al-Azhari, former Minister of Labor, cried out in anguish, with the words reported as follows: "We live in graves... we see neither sun nor light... at my age, to have to cut my veins... it is because I can no longer bear it." By confirming his suicide attempt and showing an injury on his hand, he highlighted the profound despair prevailing within the prison.

Furthermore, Hassan Al-Barnes, academic and former Vice-Governor of Alexandria, and Ahmed Abu Baraka, lawyer and former parliamentarian, both reported hearing loss caused by prolonged isolation and total silence imposed in solitary confinement cells. These testimonies reveal severe physical and psychological harm caused by the systematic denial of medical care, as well as the prohibition of family and legal visits. Other detainees also confirmed repeated suicide attempts among prisoners, protesting the “deadly conditions” in which they are forced to live.

## **Flagrant Violations of National and International Laws**

What is happening at Badr 3 prison is not a mere oversight but a systematic and deliberate violation of human rights, in blatant contradiction with the Egyptian Constitution and international human rights law. The refusal to allow visits and contacts with family members and lawyers — fundamental rights guaranteed notably by Article 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Rule 58 of the Nelson Mandela Rules on the treatment of prisoners — constitutes a serious breach.

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The United Nations Convention Against Torture has recognized that prolonged deprivation of contact with the outside world may amount to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, or even torture. Likewise, Article 55 of the Egyptian Constitution explicitly prohibits torture and any form of inhuman or degrading treatment. Prolonged isolation, extreme overcrowding, lack of essential medical care, as well as denial of exposure to sunlight and adequate ventilation, are all forms of cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment inflicted on detainees.

## **Urgent Requests to Egyptian Authorities and the International Community**

The signatory organizations urgently call on the Egyptian authorities, including the Public Prosecutor’s Office, the judiciary, and the Ministry of Interior, to:

1. Open an immediate investigation and ensure accountability: Conduct a transparent and independent inquiry into all documented allegations of torture and suicide attempts at Badr 3 prison, and prosecute all responsible parties in accordance with the law.
2. Ensure comprehensive medical care: Provide urgent and nondiscriminatory medical and psychological treatment to all detainees, guaranteeing access to specialists and necessary medications.
3. End severe isolation: Immediately cease the policy of strict and prolonged isolation, and allow detainees to benefit from daily outdoor walks and human contact with fellow prisoners.
4. Guarantee the right to visits: Authorize family and legal visits unconditionally and remove all barriers to the exercise of this fundamental right.
5. Open detention facilities to oversight: Allow independent international and national commissions, including representatives of human rights organizations, unrestricted access to visit Badr 3 prison and all detention centers to assess conditions on site.
6. Release arbitrary detainees: Immediately review all pretrial detention cases and release those who have served their legal sentence or for whom there is insufficient evidence to justify continued detention.

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The lives of detainees are in immediate danger. Desperate calls from inside the prisons demand urgent and resolute intervention. The signatory organizations call on the international community as a whole — including United Nations special mechanisms, governments, and human rights institutions — to exert maximum diplomatic and legal pressure on Egyptian authorities to end these severe violations of fundamental rights and ensure justice and dignity for all detainees in Egypt.

### **Signatory Organizations:**

1. Justice Human Rights Foundation (JHR) – Istanbul
2. AFD International – Belgium
3. Association des Victimes de la Torture (AVTT) – Geneva, Switzerland
4. Human Rights Monitor (HRM) – London

5. Tawasul for Human Rights (THR) – The Hague, Netherlands
6. Human Rights Solidarity (HRS) – Geneva, Switzerland
7. Al-Shihab Center for Human Rights (SHR) – London
8. Sawt Hur for Human Rights – Paris
9. Egyptian Rights Council – Geneva
10. Cedar for Human Rights – Lebanon
11. Alkarama for Human Rights – Geneva, Switzerland

*Addendum:* It should be recalled that Alkarama has submitted [several parallel reports](#) during Egypt's reviews before United Nations mechanisms, notably before the Committee Against Torture (October 2023) and the Human Rights Committee. These reports highlight human rights violations in Egypt, particularly the abusive use of restrictive laws under the pretext of combating terrorism, as well as the inhumane detention conditions of opponents, journalists, and human rights defenders.

Alkarama has also submitted [follow-up reports](#) to the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), particularly before the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA), calling for the downgrade of the status of the Egyptian National Human Rights Council due to its lack of effective independence and its failure to address serious violations such as torture, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, as well as repression of freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

## Egypt: 'New Valley' Prison: A Graveyard for the Living Behind Bars – Joint Statement

1 August 2025

The undersigned human rights organisations express their deep concern regarding the ongoing situation at Al-Wadi Al-Jadid Prison in Egypt, also known as the 'Death Prison', in light of the open-ended hunger strike launched by dozens of detainees in Ward 4. The strike is in protest at inhumane detention conditions and treatment amounting to collective psychological and physical torture.



In recent days, we have received reports and testimonies confirming the following:

- Deprivation of detainees from adequate water, food and basic healthcare;
- Cells stripped of all personal belongings, including hygiene items;
- A complete ban on family and lawyer visits, in clear violation of the Egyptian Constitution and international law;
- Arbitrary and punitive transfers to solitary disciplinary cells without referral to prosecution or any legal justification;

Ongoing medical neglect and abuse endangering the lives of detainees. The legal basis for these violations is unclear.

These practices violate Article 55 of the Egyptian Constitution, which states that 'Anyone who is arrested, detained, or whose freedom is restricted shall be treated in a manner that preserves their dignity.'

These practices also clearly breach Article 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which states that 'All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity'.

Furthermore, these practices contravene the Nelson Mandela Rules (the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners) and the Convention Against Torture, which Egypt ratified in 1986. This convention obliges Egypt to prevent all forms of torture and ill-treatment in prisons and detention centres.

Accordingly, we call for the following:

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- An urgent and independent investigation into detention conditions in Al-Wadi Al-Jadid Prison;
- Authorisation for a delegation of international and local human rights organisations to visit and inspect the conditions of the detainees;
- Immediate access to medical care for hunger-striking detainees;
- Accountability for those responsible for these violations under both Egyptian and international law;
- Guarantees to end collective punishments and psychological and physical torture inside Egyptian prisons;
- The immediate release of all individuals who have been arbitrarily detained or convicted in unfair trials, in accordance with international legal standards.

## **Signatory organisations:**

- Sawt Hor Organization for the Defence of Human Rights – Paris
- JHR – Justice for Human Rights Foundation
- El-Shehab Centre for Human Rights, London
- Association of Victims of Torture – Geneva
- Human Rights Solidarity
- AFD International
- Alkarama Foundation, Geneva
- Human Rights Monitor, London
- Cedar for Human Rights, Lebanon
- Tawasol for Human Rights, The Hague
- Council for the Rights of Egyptians, Geneva
- Arab Observatory for Media Freedom
- Najda Foundation

## Egypt/Malaysia: Warning against extraditing an Egyptian student in solidarity with Gaza to his country - Joint Statement

2 August 2025

In a case that has triggered widespread concern among human rights organizations, Malaysian authorities have detained Egyptian national Marwan Mohamed Magdy Osman Ahmed, a university student residing in Malaysia, after he wrote protest slogans on the outer walls of the Egyptian embassy in Kuala Lumpur. His messages called for opening the Rafah border crossing and showed solidarity with the people of Gaza under siege.



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Marwan's peaceful protest was a symbolic expression of support for civilians in Gaza. However, the Egyptian embassy described his action as a "threat to national security" and filed a formal complaint accusing him of "high treason," according to statements made by the Malaysian police.

Marwan is currently being held by Malaysian authorities, while legal proceedings are reportedly underway that may result in his forcible return to Egypt — a move the undersigned organizations view as a grave violation of the principle of non-refoulement. Such an act would likely expose him to arbitrary detention, torture, and an unfair trial, especially given Egypt's internationally documented record of widespread human rights violations,

including the routine use of torture, enforced disappearances, and the lack of fair trial guarantees for political detainees.

As international human rights organizations, we call on the Malaysian government to uphold its obligations under international law, particularly the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, to which Malaysia is a state party.

We specifically urge Malaysia to comply with Article 3(1) of the Convention, which states:

"No State Party shall expel, return ('refouler') or extradite a person to another State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture."

Given the high risk of torture and ill-treatment Marwan faces if returned to Egypt, the Malaysian government bears full responsibility for his safety and well-being.

The signatories of this statement demand that Malaysia immediately halt any extradition procedures and refrain from handing Marwan over to Egyptian authorities, in order to avoid complicity in what would constitute a serious and unprecedented human rights violation.

### **Signatory Organizations:**

- ◆ AVTT – Association of Victims of Torture – Geneva
- ◆ EFDI International – Belgium
- ◆ JHR – Justice for Human Rights – Turkey
- ◆ Alkarama for Human Rights – Geneva
- ◆ SHR – El-Shehab for Human Rights – London
- ◆ CEDAR Center for Legal Studies – Lebanon
- ◆ Human Rights Solidarity – Geneva
- ◆ Human Rights Monitor – London
- ◆ Free Voice – France
- ◆ Tawasul for Human Rights – Netherlands
- ◆ Egyptian Rights Council – Geneva

## Together to save the detainees of "Badr" prison in Egypt

17 August 2025

### المؤتمر الدولي

### تحت شعار: "معًا لإنقاذ معتقلين بدر"

الذي سيشارك فيه محامون دوليون، وعدد من المنظمات الحقوقية الدولية،  
لمناقشة أوضاع المعتقلين في سجن "بدر"



المحامي خالد بيومي



المحامي محمود جابر



المحامي عيسى جولانتس



المحامي عبد المجيد المراري



محمد الأحمدى  
باحث قانوني في  
الكرامة لحقوق الإنسان



عادل الماجري  
أمين عام منظمة ضحايا التعذيب



يوسف شهاب  
رئيس إقدي الدولية



AVTT



SHR



الكرامة  
Alkarama



JHR

عبر برنامج  
 zoom

20:00 بتوقيت القاهرة  
19:00 بتوقيت أوروبا



الأحد 17 أغسطس 2025



## Nigeria / Egypt: Call to Suspend the Extradition of an Egyptian Citizen to His Country – Joint Statement

10 September 2025

We, the international human rights organizations listed below, express our deep concern regarding the detention of Egyptian citizen Ali Mahmoud Abdel-Wanis in Nigeria and the increasing risk of his forced extradition to Egypt. We are preparing to submit a complaint to the United Nations Special Procedures to request their intervention to prevent the extradition of Ali Mahmoud Abdel-Wanis. We also urge the Nigerian authorities to immediately suspend any extradition measures, given that Mr. Abdel-Wanis would face a real risk of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment, which would constitute a clear violation of Nigeria's international obligations.



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### Background of the Case

Ali Abdel-Wanis was arrested in Nigeria on the basis of a conviction in absentia issued against him in Egypt, sentencing him to fifteen years in prison. Human rights organizations consider that this case shows clear political motivations and does not meet the minimum standards of a fair trial. His extradition to a country known for mistreating political opponents would pose a direct threat to his safety and life, particularly in light of multiple reports documenting the use of torture as a tool of political repression.

## **Legal Basis and Requests**

The extradition of Ali Abdel-Wanis to Egypt would constitute a direct violation of the principle of non-refoulement, a fundamental principle of international human rights law. It would also contravene Article 3 of the United Nations Convention against Torture, which prohibits any State from returning a person when there are substantial grounds to believe they would be at risk of torture. As a State party to this Convention, Nigeria has a legal obligation to protect individuals from such risk.

Accordingly, we request that the Nigerian authorities:

1. Immediately and definitively suspend the extradition process of Ali Mahmoud Abdel-Wanis;
2. Release him without delay and allow him either to leave the country or to seek asylum, according to his choice;
3. Fully comply with their international obligations under the Convention against Torture and international human rights law.

## **Call to the International Community**

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We call on the international community and the competent United Nations bodies to urgently intervene and exert pressure on the Nigerian government to ensure the safety of Ali Abdel-Wanis and the respect of his right to protection. Safeguarding individuals against torture and inhuman or degrading treatment is a non-negotiable obligation and represents a true test of States' respect for international law.

### ***Signatory Organizations:***

1. FDDI International – Belgium
2. Victims of Torture – Geneva
3. Justice for Human Rights – Turkey
4. Tawasul for Human Rights – The Hague
5. Human Rights Monitor – London
6. Solidarity for Human Rights – Geneva
7. Council of Egyptian Rights – Geneva
8. Alkarama for Human Rights – Geneva

9. CEDAR for Human Rights – Lebanon
10. Al Shihab for Human Rights – London
11. Free Voice for Human Rights – Paris
12. Ngued for Human Rights – London
13. International Lawyers Organization
14. SAM for Rights and Freedoms – Geneva

## Sudan: UN Condemnation of Crimes Committed by the Rapid Support Forces in North Kordofan

29 October 2025

The United Nations has condemned the heinous crimes committed by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), backed by the United Arab Emirates, following their takeover of large parts of the city of Bara, in North Kordofan, as well as several areas of the besieged city of El Fasher, in North Darfur. These acts, perpetrated in recent days, constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity under international humanitarian law and the Rome Statute. They include summary executions, enforced disappearances, acts of torture, and arbitrary detentions in areas under RSF control.



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Alkarama considers that the nature, geographical scope, recurrence, and systematic character of these violations reveal the existence of an organized policy directly targeting civilians. This demands the establishment of independent and effective international investigations, as well as the adoption of binding measures to ensure criminal accountability not only for the direct perpetrators but also for the governments that have supplied weapons, military, and logistical support to the RSF throughout the conflict.

In this context, Alkarama recalls reports from international organizations and human rights groups documenting the involvement of the United Arab Emirates in providing military support to the RSF, an assistance that has

enabled them to continue committing large-scale violations. This situation engages the international responsibility of the State concerned, under the principle of complicity in the commission of international crimes.

Volunteer field teams from Alkarama have documented several violations in different regions of [Sudan](#), including cases of enforced disappearances where victims were later found in detention centers controlled by the RSF and subsequently released. The testimonies and information gathered confirm that these violations are systematic and grave, justifying an urgent judicial intervention.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, [stated](#): “In El Fasher, initial reports indicate an extremely precarious situation since the RSF yesterday announced its takeover of the army’s 6th Infantry Division.” Mr. Türk [warned](#) of an increasing risk of large-scale, ethnically motivated atrocities in El Fasher and called for immediate and concrete measures to protect civilians and to ensure safe humanitarian corridors for those attempting to flee.

For his part, UN Secretary-General António Guterres described the RSF’s takeover of El Fasher as a “terrifying escalation of the conflict”, urging the international community to speak clearly to all States intervening in the war and supplying arms to the parties involved, and to ensure that they cease all interference. Mr. Guterres added that the problem lies not only in the fighting between the Sudanese army and the RSF but also in the growing foreign interference that undermines efforts to reach a ceasefire and a sustainable political solution.

The UN Human Rights Office reported receiving accounts of summary executions of civilians attempting to flee, driven by tribal motives, as well as killings of individuals who had ceased to take part in hostilities.

Alarming videos show dozens of unarmed men being shot or lying lifeless on the ground, surrounded by RSF fighters accusing them of being Sudanese army soldiers.

Other reports mention the detention of hundreds of civilians, including a journalist, as they tried to escape. Given the history of the Darfur and Kordofan regions, the risk of sexual violence against women and girls is considered extremely high.

The Human Rights Office also reported numerous civilian casualties, including local humanitarian volunteers, killed by heavy artillery fire between 22 and 26 October. The exact number of victims remains unknown due to communication blackouts and the large number of displaced persons.

In light of this situation, Alkarama calls for the crimes committed by the RSF in North Kordofan and other regions of Sudan to be referred to the competent international jurisdictions, including the International Criminal Court, and for targeted sanctions to be imposed on the leaders involved and their complicit supporters.

Alkarama also calls for the immediate protection of civilians, unrestricted humanitarian access for independent organizations, and support for mechanisms aimed at locating the disappeared and revealing the fate of all victims of enforced disappearance. Alkarama stresses that any complacency toward these violations would constitute a serious breach of international obligations and reaffirms that accountability for these crimes must not be subject to prescription.

Alkarama will continue documenting and monitoring these crimes before the competent international bodies until justice is served for the victims and impunity comes to an end in Sudan.



# Miscellaneous



## **A virtual seminar organized by twenty human rights organizations in support of Abdul Rahman Yusuf al-Qaradawi**

6 January 2025

Today, Alkarama participated in a virtual seminar organized by twenty human rights organizations to support activist and poet Abdul Rahman Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, who is detained in Lebanon following extradition requests from Egypt and the UAE.

The seminar included a presentation by Mohammad Sablouh, the lawyer appointed by the family to follow up on the case with the Lebanese authorities, regarding developments in the case. Several representatives of organizations also spoke, warning Lebanon against violating the Convention against Torture, which it has ratified, particularly Article 3.



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It is worth noting that Alkarama is in the process of notifying the UN Special Procedures on Human Rights regarding Mr. Qaradawi. It is also considering submitting a request to the Committee against Torture to open an investigation into the case under Article 20, which authorizes the Committee to conduct a confidential investigation if it receives credible information containing substantial grounds to suggest that a systematic violation has been committed in the territory of a State Party. This could apply to Lebanon, which has previously extradited opposition activists to other countries despite the risk of them being subjected to torture.

## The United States: Oman receives 11 Yemeni detainees from Guantanamo and Tunisia repatriates one of its citizens

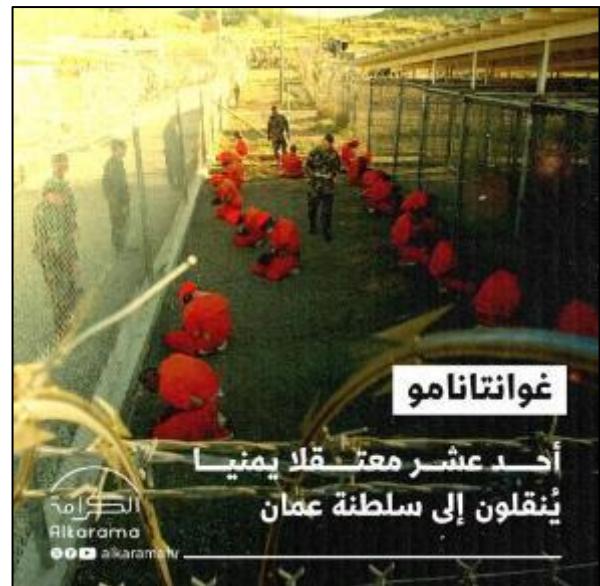
8 January 2025

### Oman Receives Yemeni Detainees

The Sultanate of Oman has received eleven Yemeni detainees from Guantanamo Bay, released by the United States after enduring over two decades of suffering characterised by severe violations that amount to crimes against humanity, including torture in CIA black sites.

The released Yemeni detainees are:

1. Abdulsalam al-Hila
2. Abdu Ali al-Haj Sharqawi
3. Khalid Ahmed Qasim
4. Othman Abdul Rahim Mohammed Othman
5. Moath Hamza Ahmed al-Alwi
6. Zuhair Abdo Anam Said al-Sharabi
7. Hani Saleh Rashid Abdullah
8. Omar Mohammed Ali al-Rammah
9. Tawfiq Nasser Ahmed al-Bihani
10. Sanad Yaslam al-Kazimi
11. Hassan Mohammed Ali bin Attash



According to the Pentagon, of the 15 detainees remaining at Guantanamo, three are eligible for immediate transfer to their home countries or third countries, while the cases of three others are under review for potential release. Seven have been formally charged, and two others have been convicted.

### **Tunisian Detainee Repatriated**

This follows the recent announcement of the transfer of Tunisian detainee [Ridha bin Saleh al-Yazidi](#) from Guantanamo to his home country. Al-Yazidi, born in 1965, was sent to Guantanamo in 2002. His whereabouts have remained unknown since his transfer to Tunisia, raising concerns about his rights.

Alkarama calls on the Tunisian authorities to uphold their legal obligations under both domestic and international law, ensure al-Yazidi's rights are respected, and allow him to resume his life with his family without restrictions.

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### **Oman and the UAE**

In December 2016, Oman also received ten Guantanamo detainees at the request of the United States, citing humanitarian concerns. The Omani Foreign Ministry stated that the arrangement was temporary and aimed at addressing their humanitarian needs. In contrast, Yemeni detainees sent to the UAE reportedly faced mistreatment. Families of those relocated to Oman have expressed satisfaction with the respectful treatment they received.

Between November 2015 and January 2017, the UAE received around 18 Yemeni detainees from Guantanamo, initially promising rehabilitation programmes lasting six to twelve months. However, they remained in UAE detention for years, reportedly facing abuses described as worse than those at Guantanamo itself. It was not until August 2021, following condemnation by UN human rights experts, that these detainees were released and returned to Yemen.

## Alkarama's Advocacy

For years, Alkarama has prioritised the issue of Guantanamo detainees, engaging in advocacy efforts alongside families and non-governmental organisations to highlight the plight of detainees and their loved ones. While the release of Yemeni detainees marks progress, Alkarama remains concerned about those still detained, calling for their immediate and unconditional release.

Alkarama also urges Yemeni authorities and the international community to assist former detainees in reintegrating into society, reuniting with their families, and addressing the harm they have endured. Furthermore, Alkarama stresses the need for the United States to fulfil its pledge to close Guantanamo by transferring cleared detainees and providing fair legal solutions for those still detained.

## United States: US bill against the International Criminal Court promotes impunity

12 January 2025

UN experts have expressed concern over the passage of a bill in the US House of Representatives seeking to impose sanctions and cut funding to the International Criminal Court following its issuance of arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant – accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza – and have urged the Senate to oppose it.



The experts stated, “Imposing sanctions on justice officials for fulfilling their professional responsibilities constitutes a flagrant violation of human rights and strikes at the very heart of judicial independence and the rule of law.”

They added, “The adoption of a bill that creates a blind spot for justice with regard to certain countries not only legitimizes double standards and impunity but also irreparably undermines the spirit of universality upon which the international justice system is based.”

They concluded, “Such measures erode public confidence in the integrity and independence of the justice system, set a dangerous precedent, politicize judicial functions, and weaken the global commitment to accountability and fairness.”

## On its International Day: What Does the Right to Education Look Like in an Arab World Torn by Armed Conflicts?

24 January 2025

January 24 marks the International Day of Education, which was declared on 3 December 2018, by [the United Nations General Assembly](#), “in celebration of the role of education for peace and development” and to recognize “education is a human right, a public good and a public responsibility.” [Many events](#) are organized on this occasion around the world.



Education is a human right, as enshrined in article 26 of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), which calls for free and compulsory elementary education, and the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), which stipulates that countries shall make higher education accessible to all. Good education is the fourth of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the UN is willing to achieve by 2030.

In the Arab world, the status of education varies from country to country. While Alkarama is pleased to note that in some Arab countries education is given high priority by specialised governmental and non-governmental bodies, it regrets the lack of attention paid to this vital sector in many Arab countries, which places them at the bottom of international rankings.

The situation is even worse in countries suffering from occupation, wars and violent conflicts, such as Palestine, Sudan, Syria and Yemen, due to the

disruption of the education system, the destruction of schools and educational facilities, the difficulty of access to education in the affected areas, displacement and migration, which expose children in camps or unstable areas to no or limited education.

Alkarama stresses the importance of education for the development of society and calls on governments to pay close attention to this vital sector, which determines the future of future generations, by providing human and material resources for quality education, enhancing the status of teachers in society and distancing education from ideological tensions and political agendas.

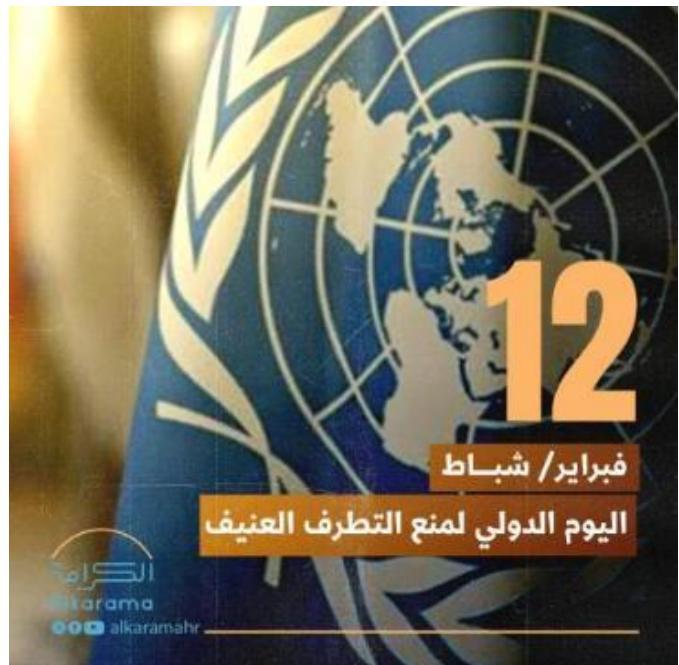
## International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism: An Opportunity to Reaffirm the Importance of Human Rights Work and Justice

12 February 2025

Through its [resolution 77/243](#), the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed February 12 as the International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism, with the aim of raising awareness about the threats associated with violent extremism and strengthening international cooperation in this regard.

In this context, the General Assembly reaffirmed the primary responsibility of Member States and their national institutions in combating terrorism. It also underscored the crucial role of intergovernmental organisations, civil society, academia, religious leaders, and the media in preventing violent extremism and countering terrorism.

Furthermore, the resolution reiterated that terrorism and violent extremism, when leading to terrorism, cannot and should not be associated with any particular religion, nationality, civilisation, or ethnic group.



According to the [United Nations' literature](#), violent extremism constitutes a violation of the objectives and principles of the United Nations. It undermines peace, security, human rights, and sustainable development, and no country or region is immune to its effects. As a multifaceted phenomenon lacking a precise definition, violent extremism is neither new nor confined to a specific region, nationality, or belief system. Nonetheless, various actors seek to systematically associate extremism and terrorism with a particular group of people, in a selective approach that contradicts UN principles, historical facts, and reality.

At Alkarama, we firmly believe that promoting human rights and upholding justice are the most civilised and cost-effective means of mitigating the tensions that fuel extremism leading to violence. Conversely, repressive policies and intimidation tactics targeting human rights defenders and organisations working in this field—under any pretext—only serve to exacerbate extremism and erode public trust in the rule of law and judicial institutions.

It is particularly concerning that some authoritarian regimes, especially in the Arab world, resort to enacting legislation with vague definitions of terrorism, deliberately used as tools to suppress any form of peaceful opposition.

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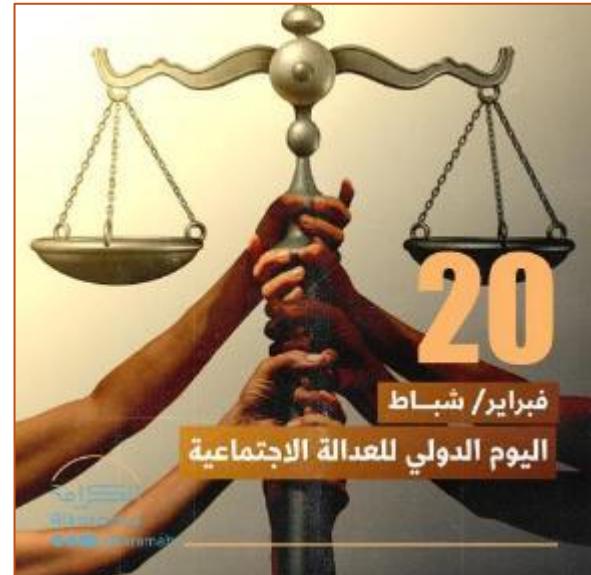
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Alkarama has taken on the responsibility of documenting these practices and confronting them through reports and complaints submitted to relevant UN human rights mechanisms. We also remind Arab governments of the imperative to review their national legislation to ensure its compliance with international human rights law.

## International Day of Social Justice: A Reminder of Equality in Human Rights

20 February 2025

Social justice constitutes a fundamental pillar for the protection and promotion of human rights. By ensuring social justice, individuals are granted access to the fundamental rights necessary to live in dignity. In this regard, since its establishment, [Alkarama](#) has been committed to advocating for those engaged in the struggle for social justice within Arab societies, including trade unionists, human rights defenders, political activists, journalists, scholars, and intellectuals.



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On [26 November 2007](#), the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution [proclaiming](#) that, as of its sixty-third session, 20 February would be observed annually as the International Day of Social Justice.

Subsequently, on 10 June 2008, the International Labour Organization (ILO) unanimously adopted the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, reaffirming the necessity of social justice as a prerequisite for equitable economic and social development.

According to the United Nations, social development and social justice are indispensable for [achieving and maintaining peace and security](#), both within states and in the international sphere. Consequently, neither social

development nor social justice can be attained in the absence of peace, security, and full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In this context, Alkarama underscores the intrinsic correlation between social justice and human rights, both of which serve as legal guarantees to ensure equality and dignity for all. Social justice aims to ensure an equitable distribution of resources and opportunities among all individuals, thereby mitigating poverty, combating discrimination, and promoting equal access to opportunities. Concurrently, human rights enshrine legal entitlements such as the right to education, healthcare, employment, political participation, and freedom of expression.

International legal instruments—including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights—explicitly affirm that the realization of social justice is an essential condition for the effective protection of human rights. Accordingly, the promotion of social justice is not merely a moral or political imperative but a legal necessity that ensures the protection of fundamental rights.

Likewise, the full realization of human rights is indispensable to fostering societies governed by justice, equality, and the rule of law.

## The 58th session of the Human Rights Council: A stage for Arab delegations to polish government reputations

4 March 2025

As usual, Arab government delegations exploit the sessions of the United Nations Human Rights Council as a platform for public relations campaigns and to improve their human rights records, rather than using interactive dialogues to develop a serious vision for improving the human rights situation and ending policies of repression and intimidation.



In this context, for example, the head of Saudi Arabia's official Human Rights Commission, Hala Al-Tuwaijri, reiterated the official rhetoric in [her speech](#) during the opening of the 58th regular session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. She repeated official narratives about alleged reforms through global events without addressing issues such as executions, arbitrary arrests, unfair sentences, and the lack of fair trials.

On March 6, 2025, the United Nations Human Rights Council is scheduled to review the [report](#) of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Mary Lawlor, following her visit to Algeria from November 25 to December 5, 2023. This report presents a crucial opportunity for states to remind Algerian authorities of their obligations regarding human rights.

Additionally, the Council is set to examine issues related to torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, including hostage-taking as a form of torture, in the context of the [report](#) by the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.

The Council will also review the protection of human rights by regional organizations in the context of counterterrorism, as well as issues related to civil society participation, sanctions, and military cooperation, in the report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism.

Among the countries whose human rights records will be reviewed is Qatar. The Human Rights Council will also examine the situation in Syria, particularly regarding arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, torture, and ill-treatment at the hands of the former regime.

During the interactive dialogue session, interventions also addressed the persecution of the Rohingya Muslim minority in Myanmar, calling for their protection. Additionally, the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories was discussed in light of the genocide and widespread violations committed by the Israeli occupation in Gaza, the West Bank, and other occupied Arab territories, including the occupied Golan Heights.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres [warned](#) in his opening speech at the session that human rights are being "strangled one by one" around the world due to wars that deprive people of their rights to food, water, and education, as well as the spread of autocrats and "warmongers."

Guterres stated that human rights are at stake and are suffering severe blows, posing a "direct threat" to all mechanisms and systems that have been "hard-won" and established over the past 80 years to protect and promote human rights. He highlighted how conflicts cause widespread human rights violations, emphasizing that abuses have significantly escalated in the occupied Palestinian territories since October 7, 2023, where Gaza has witnessed "intolerable" levels of death and destruction.

The UN official also expressed "gravely concerned by the rising violence in the occupied West Bank by Israeli settlers and other violations, as well as calls for annexation."



## Alkarama launches its 2024 Annual Report. Another bleak year in the Arab world, with Gaza genocide an open wound

6 March 2025

Alkarama for Human Rights, based in Geneva, has published its [2024 annual report](#), marking the 20th anniversary of the organization's founding. The report highlights the overall human rights situation across the four regions of the Arab world.

This year, Alkarama's annual report ([Arabic version](#)) is characterised by a qualitative addition, represented by the collection of all the human rights data that Alkarama has worked on throughout the past year. This includes data related to legal actions, such as individual complaints and parallel reports submitted by Alkarama to UN special procedures and treaty bodies, as well as advocacy statements and efforts to raise awareness about human rights during various events endorsed by the General Assembly to promote and disseminate a culture of human rights.



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Rachid Mesli, Alkarama's director declared: "Once again, Alkarama reaffirms its steadfast commitment to listening to the voices of victims across the Arab world and strengthening its bridges with the United Nations. This ensures that the voices of those whose rights have been violated, and those suffering from repression and intimidation, are heard. Through the careful collection of harrowing testimonies, rigorous factfinding and documentation, we provide accurate reports to international human rights bodies."

He added: "Despite the challenges, we remain relentless in our fight against all forms of dehumanisation, violations of the right to life, torture, enforced disappearance, and arbitrary detention. Our continuous pursuit of truth through the voices of victims, their families, and brave human rights defenders is an unwavering part of our mission."

[Alkarama's annual report](#) focuses on Israel's genocidal war against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, noting that despite the ceasefire agreement the suffering of the Palestinian people continues to worsen under the siege and unprecedented violence. Thousands of innocent and vulnerable lives shattered under the brute force of the genocidal war.

"This tragedy is not just that of a martyred land", stated lawyer Rachid Mesli about the situation in Gaza and continued: "but a dark mirror reflecting an Arab world where human rights violations occur with alarming regularity. The rights to life, security and liberty, as well as public freedoms, remain elusive phantoms, trampled underfoot in a deafening silence by regimes more concerned with preserving their grip on power than with seeking just and humane solutions."

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"Rather than embark on the path of reconciliation and reform, many Arab governments are choosing the path of heightened repression, stifling any expression of solidarity, especially with the Palestinian cause, silencing the voices of dissent, and condemning freedom of expression," noted Alkarama's director.

In its annual report, Alkarama provides a summary of the most prominent cases it has worked on, with reference to some examples and model cases to illustrate the context, nature and patterns of violations.

Alkarama is a Geneva-based human rights NGO founded in 2004 that works to help all people at risk of extrajudicial execution, enforced disappearance, torture and arbitrary detention. Alkarama acts as a bridge between individual victims and international human rights mechanisms, for an Arab world in which all people live in freedom and dignity, under the protection of the rule of law.

## International Women's Day - Forgotten Victims of the Arab World

8 March 2025

Every year on this date, the world celebrates [International Women's Day](#), as established by the United Nations. This occasion serves as an important moment to highlight the status of women globally and to reaffirm the necessity of strengthening laws that uphold women's rights and ensure their protection from all forms of violence. The primary focus is often on physical violence, while psychological violence, which affects millions of women through human rights violations worldwide, remains overlooked. These violations may be inflicted upon them directly or indirectly as wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters of victims of arbitrary detention, torture, and enforced disappearance.



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In the Arab world, women frequently endure the consequences of oppression, repression, and human rights violations perpetrated by authorities against men, particularly the deprivation of liberty. The ordeal begins from the moment victims are arrested without their families being informed of their detention, whereabouts, or the reasons for their arrest. This suffering extends to the relentless search undertaken by women for their husbands, sons, or relatives held in state prisons, in addition to the burden of providing for their families throughout an ordeal that may last for years.

The situation worsens in conflict zones, where women are directly targeted through killings, terror, and sexual violence, leading to displacement, homelessness, legal vulnerability, and economic and social hardship, as seen in Gaza, Sudan, Yemen, and Syria during the previous regime.

### **The Case of the Algerian Prisoner Djamel Eddine El-Askari**

At the end of January 2025, the wife of Algerian detainee Djameleddine Laskri passed away. He had been arrested in the summer of 1992 and prosecuted by a special court established by the military regime following the January 1992 coup. The legal proceedings against him failed to meet even the most basic fair trial guarantees, and to this day, he remains in detention. In 2014, Alkarama brought [his case](#) before the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, which subsequently issued [Opinion No. 17/2014](#), deeming his detention arbitrary and calling upon Algeria to release him unconditionally and grant him appropriate compensation. However, Algerian authorities have yet to comply with this request.

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The wife of Djameleddine Laskri epitomized the suffering and resilience of women living under regimes that systematically violate human rights. Her husband had been imprisoned for 33 years, leaving her to endure unimaginable hardships while raising their infant son alone and remaining a devoted and unwavering spouse. She visited her husband regularly in the various prisons to which he had been transferred, until she passed away at the beginning of this year. This courageous woman persevered for over three decades in her fight for her husband's release. In 2014, she declared: "I have exhausted all legal avenues and knocked on every door, yet the only response I have received is the silence of the authorities."

## International Day to Combat Islamophobia: Islamophobia as a Broad Gateway to Human Rights Violations

15 March 2025

On the occasion of the International Day to Combat Islamophobia, Alkarama emphasizes the grave consequences of Islamophobia and hate speech against Muslims, which manifest in serious violations of many of their fundamental rights, including the right to physical safety, the right to practice worship, freedom of expression, the right to non-discrimination based on religion, and the political rights of citizens of the Islamic faith.



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In this context, Alkarama stresses the necessity for governments in countries where Islamophobia is rampant to take preventive measures to curb this phenomenon, hold accountable those proven to be involved in hostile acts against Muslims due to their beliefs, and those who contribute to spreading hate speech within society. It also calls for efforts to promote values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

The United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 76/254 of 2022, declared March 15 as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia, inviting all member states, relevant UN system institutions, other international and regional organizations, civil society, the private sector,

and religious organizations to observe it. The General Assembly also expressed deep dismay at all acts of violence directed against individuals because of their religion or beliefs, as well as at acts targeting their places of worship.

Despite this UN effort to reduce Islamophobia, the phenomenon continues to escalate worldwide, particularly in Europe, America, and India. In 2024, Europe witnessed a noticeable increase in Islamophobia, as studies and official reports indicated a rise in discrimination and attacks against Muslims. This was highlighted in a report issued in October 2024 by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

Additionally, the Council on American-Islamic Relations reported that cases of discrimination and attacks against Muslims and Arabs in the United States reached a new record in 2024. The number of registered complaints related to anti-Muslim and anti-Arab incidents amounted to 8,658, marking a 7.4% increase in 2024—the highest number since the council began collecting data in 1996.

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In India, the Hate Lab India, which is part of the Center for the Study of Organized Hate in Washington, revealed in its report issued in February 2025 that incidents of hate speech targeting religious minorities—primarily Muslims—in India rose from 668 in 2023 to 1,165 in 2024, representing a staggering 74.4% increase. This surge is attributed to the extremist Hindu nationalist rhetoric promoted by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party.

Hate speech against Islam and Muslims has become normalized among political, media, and intellectual elites. While it was previously confined to far-right circles, it has now spread to the broader political and ideological spectrum, even reaching official state institutions.

The rhetoric and policies of the "war on terror" have played a significant role in exacerbating this phenomenon by primarily focusing on Muslims. This has reinforced public perceptions linking terrorism with Islam and Muslims, thereby creating the psychological and social conditions for hostile acts against Muslims and their places of worship.

Moreover, some authoritarian Arab governments —chief among them the [United Arab Emirates](#)— bear a significant responsibility for fueling Islamophobia in Europe as part of their fierce campaigns against Islamic movements, extending their fight from within Arab states to pursuing them abroad.

## International day for the elimination of racial discrimination: A reminder of the dangers of modern practices of apartheid

21 March 2025

Alkarama believes that equality among human beings is a great human value and represents the cornerstone of the human rights system.

Alkarama firmly assert that any violation or undermining of this value, whether theoretically or in practice, leads to countless violations and injustices. This is reflected in the literature of the United Nations. On December 21, 1965, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the International [Convention](#) on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination under Resolution 2106 (XX), marking an important step toward eradicating racism worldwide.



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As the first fundamental international treaty in the field of human rights, this convention paved the way for future progress in human rights. It affirms a firm commitment to eliminating racial discrimination and promoting equality, thereby supporting ongoing efforts to combat racist ideologies and practices, aiming to foster global understanding and unity free from racial segregation.

On October 26, 1966, the United Nations General Assembly issued Resolution 2142 (XXI), designating March 21 as the [International Day for](#)

the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, to be observed annually. On this day in 1960, police opened fire on a peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, South Africa, against the "pass laws," killing 69 people. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states in its first article: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

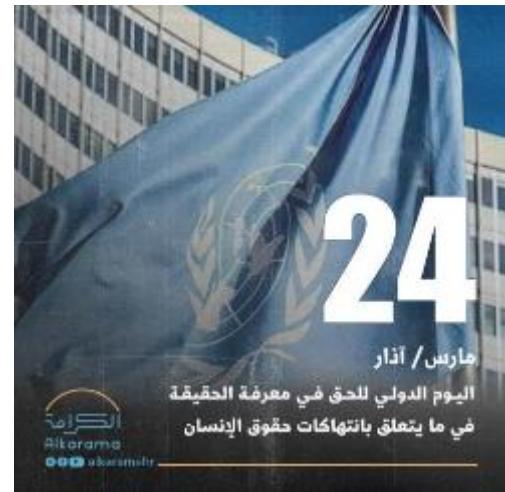
The literature of the United Nations General Assembly emphasizes that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and have the capacity to contribute constructively to the development of their societies. The General Assembly, in its latest resolution, also stresses that any principle of racial superiority is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust, and dangerous, and must be rejected, along with theories that attempt to define the existence of separate human races.

Nevertheless, the world continues to witness serious practices that violate the principle of equality and reflect a sense of racial superiority and alignment based on racial discrimination, as seen in the unlimited support of some Western governments for the Israeli occupation in Palestine, which itself constitutes a form of apartheid.

## Knowing the truth regarding gross human rights violations: A prerequisite for successful political transition

24 March 2025

Wars, armed conflicts, and authoritarian regimes often lead to severe human rights violations that may amount to war crimes or even crimes against humanity, such as systematic torture, enforced disappearances, horrific massacres of civilians, genocide, and ethnic cleansing, among others.



When the war ends or the repressive regime collapses in a society, the recovery of that society is contingent on the success of a transitional phase in which the new authorities' task is to design and implement a genuine reconciliation process that addresses the psychological and social impacts of war or repression, enabling the society to move forward toward a bright future. The reconciliation process is based on four pillars: (1) knowing the truth, (2) preserving memory, (3) achieving justice, and (4) practicing forgiveness. While the aim of achieving justice and practicing forgiveness is to restore dignity and return rights to the victims while avoiding a spirit of revenge, knowing the truth and preserving memory aim to ensure that gross human rights violations are not repeated.

On 21 December 2010, the United Nations General Assembly declared, in its [Resolution 65/196](#), 24 March as the [International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims](#). The aim is to commemorate the victims of gross and systematic

human rights violations and highlight the importance of the right to know the truth and to establish justice.

Alkarama places great importance on knowing the truth regarding gross human rights violations and works tirelessly to ensure respect for the dignity of victims. In this context, [Alkarama](#) has continuously worked on cases of the forcibly disappeared and missing persons, who number in the tens of thousands in several Arab countries such as Algeria, Iraq, and Syria.

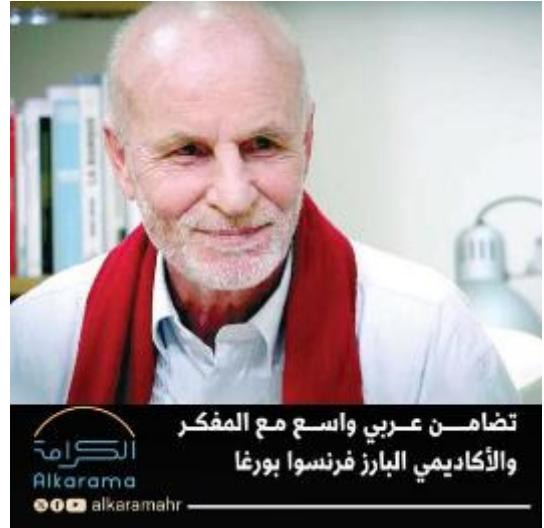
Alkarama has also worked on exposing the shortcomings of national reconciliation policies adopted by some Arab countries, which do not respect the basic standards of genuine reconciliation but rather work to reinforce impunity, criminalize the victims, and deprive them of the right to claim their legitimate rights.



## **Joint statement in solidarity with French researcher François Burgat in the face of attempts to silence in Europe voices for Palestinian rights**

14 April 2025

Alkarama and a group of human rights organisations have signed a joint statement in support of French researcher François Burgat, who is facing judicial harassment in France for his outspoken positions on the crimes committed against the Palestinian people, particularly in Gaza. Alkarama has also included the case of François Burgat in its report submitted today to Simon Walker, Chief of the Rule of Law and Democracy Section of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), on the implementation of UN General Assembly Resolution 78/210 on terrorism and human rights, adopted on 19 December 2007. Alkarama will also submit a communication on François Burgat to a number of UN human rights procedures, including the Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism.



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### **Text of the joint statement:**

The undersigned human rights organisations express their full solidarity with the prominent French academic and researcher François Burgat, a member of Alkarama's Advisory Committee, against attempts to silence him by prosecuting him on trumped up charges for defending the right of

the Palestinian people to exist and for rejecting the genocide they are being subjected to.

The researcher is due to appear before the French courts on 24 April 2025 on charges of “apology for terrorism” following the publication of statements in which he expressed his humanitarian and political position on the current offensive against Gaza. One of the charges is the republication of an excerpt from one of his books published in 2016, described by the prosecutor as “a long panegyric of Hamas”.

The trial follows a complaint filed by the European Jewish Organization, a French association that, under the guise of fighting “anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism and the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement”, is in fact fighting against any voice critical of the Israeli government's extremist policies.

We consider this trial to be a serious threat to freedom of opinion and expression, an attempt to criminalise solidarity with the Palestinian people and to silence free voices defending justice and human rights in the face of crimes against civilians in the Occupied Territories.

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François Burgat is one of the impartial intellectual and academic voices dedicated to understanding the Arab world and has always been a champion of human dignity, justice, the freedom of peoples and the rejection of tyranny. He has always been one of the few Western academic voices who dared to criticise the West and its colonial and arrogant view of the Islamic world, which has made him the target of systematic campaigns of disinformation and persecution.

#### **The undersigned organisations:**

- Strongly condemn this judicial persecution and consider it a retreat from the principles on which the French Republic is founded and the French government's obligations under international human rights law.
- Reject attempts to stifle freedom of expression and to criminalise sympathy for the victims of the Israeli occupation in occupied Palestine.

- Call on the French authorities to respect their international human rights obligations, in particular the right to freedom of opinion and expression.
- Declare its full solidarity with the academic researcher and thinker François Burgat, and call for the widest international campaign of solidarity with him.

Justice and Freedom for François Burgat and for all defenders of justice and human rights.

### **Signatory organisations:**

1. 1. Alkarama, Geneva
2. Sam for Rights and Freedoms, Geneva
3. International Media Network for Palestine, Istanbul
4. Najda for Human Rights, Birmingham
5. Yemeni Media Club, Istanbul
6. Association of Victims of Torture, Geneva
7. Al-Shehab Centre for Human Rights, London
8. Adalah Foundation for Human Rights – JHR
9. General Association for Human Rights, Democracy and Solidarity, France
10. Free Voice, France
11. Intersections, Amman, Jordan
12. National Society for Human Rights, Jordan
13. Canadian Observatory for Rights and Freedoms, Canada
14. Al-Aman Against Racial Discrimination, Libya
15. International Association of Syrian Jurists, Istanbul
16. Dar Al-Yaqeen Association, Jordan
17. Federation of Independent Trade Unions, Jordan
  1. AFD International Human Rights Organization, Brussels
19. Jordanian women's union- Jordan
20. Phenix center – Jordan
21. The International Humanitarian Law and Youth Initiative IHLYI
22. SAWT for Human Rights
23. International Commission of Jurists – Libya
24. Lawyers for Justice, Libya

## Repression under the guise of security: Dignity condemns counter-terrorism abuses in a UN report

17 April 2025

On April 14, 2025, Alkarama submitted its contribution to the UN Secretary-General in light of the preparation of his report on the level of implementation of Resolution 78/210. This document, which will be presented to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly, forms part of a broader international initiative to document human rights violations committed under the pretext of combating terrorism, a process to which Alkarama seeks to make a substantial and constructive contribution.



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General Assembly [resolution 78/210](#) calls upon States to respect their international human rights obligations in the context of combating terrorism. It mandates the Secretary-General to assess the extent to which national laws and practices comply with international standards, drawing in particular on the contributions of civil society actors, such as Alkarama.

In its report, Alkarama condemns the shortcomings of counter-terrorism legislation and its violation of international standards, particularly in the Arab world where it has been operating since 2004.

These laws, often vaguely worded or broadly defined, are used to criminalize peaceful dissent and reinforce state repression. The report highlights typical cases, such as Article 87 bis of the [Algerian](#) Penal Code,

and the “Munasaha” centers in Saudi Arabia and the [United Arab Emirates](#), which function as extrajudicial detention sites.

The report also highlights the invisible abuses associated with digital surveillance and control of financial transfers, perpetrated in the name of national security. In countries such as [Jordan](#), the [United Arab Emirates](#), and even France, these measures severely undermine the rights to privacy, freedom of expression, and freedom of association. The case of academic and political thinker [François Burgat](#)—who was prosecuted for “glorifying terrorism” based on a quote taken out of context from one of his works—exemplifies the dangers of loosely defined legislation, where the line between critical analysis and incitement to violence becomes dangerously blurred.

Regarding foreign fighters, Alkarama points to [Guantanamo](#) as a persistent symbol of abuses: detention without trial, torture, and the absence of legal protection. Transfers of detainees to some Arab countries, particularly the United Arab Emirates, are carried out without safeguards, exposing individuals to further abuses and offering no opportunity for reintegration.

Despite [repeated calls](#) from international organizations and civil society, many countries continue to [refuse to reform their counterterrorism laws](#). This refusal, often justified by rigid security rhetoric, reflects a political will to maintain emergency measures in peacetime under the guise of combating terrorism.

Furthermore, national human rights institutions, which are supposed to monitor and uphold fundamental rights, rarely fulfill their role. Often used as a tool or stripped of meaningful authority, they serve as [institutional facades](#) whose silence or inaction contributes to the normalization of violations.

In light of these circumstances, Alkarama calls for fundamental legal reforms, the strengthening of standards and civil rights, and genuine international accountability. It also calls for a counter-terrorism strategy based on the rule of law, transparency, and respect for human rights.

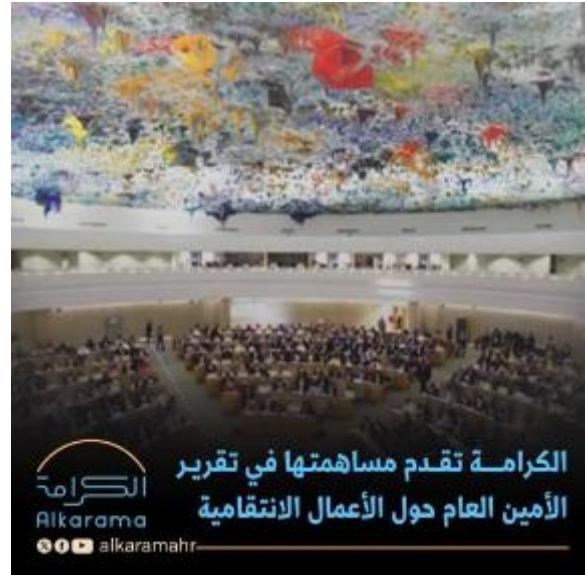


## Report on reprisals: Alkarama's contribution to the UN Secretary-General's 2025 report

18 April 2025

On April 15, 2025, Alkarama submitted its contribution to the forthcoming report of the UN Secretary-General on reprisals against individuals and entities cooperating with UN human rights mechanisms.

This report, adopted pursuant to Human Rights Council [resolution 12/2](#), seeks to document measures of intimidation or reprisal directed against those who engage with the United Nations in support of international human rights standards.



In line with its unwavering commitment to defending fundamental freedoms, Alkarama this year highlights two symbolic cases that underscore the scope and severity of reprisals: the case of Mohamed Attaoui, the Moroccan environmental activist, and Safar Al-Hawali, the Saudi intellectual arbitrarily detained for extended periods. Together, these cases exemplify the immense risks faced by those who dare to demand their rights on the international stage.

### Morocco – Mohamed Attaoui

Mohamed Attaoui was actively involved in the conservation of the cedar forests of the Moroccan Atlas Mountains and was subjected to a pattern of reprisals following his public condemnation of the illegal exploitation of

these natural resources. As the founder of a local civil society organization, Mr. Attaoui suffered arbitrary arrests, physical violence, malicious prosecutions, and professional disciplinary measures, including suspension from his position.

Following his involvement with Alkarama – which referred his case in [August 2023](#) to the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment – reprisals against him escalated significantly. These included repeated summonses for questioning, an eight-month prison sentence, the suspension of his salary, and the confiscation of personal property. This intensification of reprisals appears to be a calculated effort to suppress dissent and was brought to the attention of the Secretary-General in this year's report.

### **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – Safar Al-Hawali**

Safar Al-Hawali, who has been detained since 2018 for his critical writings, was the subject of an [individual communication](#) submitted by Alkarama to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Committee [concluded](#) that his fundamental rights had indeed been violated. However, instead of implementing the Committee's recommendations, the Saudi authorities embarked on a course of retaliatory behavior: denying Mr. Al-Hawali's recognized disability, subsequently bringing terrorism-related charges against him, and targeting members of his immediate circle for their cooperation with UN mechanisms.

Four of his sons, his brother, and a close associate were arrested and subsequently sentenced to lengthy prison terms—up to seventeen years—in proceedings marked by a lack of due process and fair trial guarantees. The Saudi government's official response to the Commission, submitted in November 2024, is itself an act of reprisal. This not only denies the factual findings of the UN Commission but also seeks to delegitimize Mr. Al-Hawali, thereby undermining the credibility of the UN human rights system.

## **A worrying international trend: Fear beyond borders**

Alkarama expresses its deep concern regarding the alarming increase in reprisals against the families of Arab citizens living in exile, particularly in Europe and North America.

These transnational acts of coercion are increasingly deterring these families from engaging with civil society organizations due to credible threats of intimidation and reprisals from their relatives still in their countries of origin.

This pattern of transnational repression seriously undermines the integrity and effectiveness of the UN human rights system, which relies fundamentally on the free, voluntary, and safe participation of victims and their representatives.

Accordingly, Alkarama urges the international community to adopt robust and legally binding protection mechanisms to safeguard the families of victims in exile, who are often key interlocutors for civil society actors and international human rights mechanisms.

## Comoros: President Ahmed Sambi was detained for seven years by his political rival

6 June 2025

On 3 June 2025, within the framework of the procedure initiated before the [United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention](#), Alkarama submitted a new follow-up report aimed at denouncing the Comorian President, Mr Azali Assoumani's, persistent refusal to release the former president and political rival, Mr Ahmed Abdallah Mohamed Sambi, by implementing [Opinion No. 65/2018](#), which concluded that his detention was arbitrary.



Seven years after the adoption of this opinion, Mr Sambi remains detained in undignified conditions. Deprived of contact with his family and isolated, he is today locked up in a state of institutionalised abandonment, in clear violation of international standards.

These conditions amount to inhuman and degrading treatment, contradicting the Comorian state's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). This situation reveals the current President's clear desire to silence a political rival in the long term, outside of any legal framework.

Alkarama has worked tirelessly for several years to denounce this unacceptable situation. Since Mr Sambi's arrest, Alkarama has made numerous representations to the relevant UN mechanisms, documented the violations he has suffered, and called for his release on several occasions. Despite these efforts and repeated appeals, the Comorian

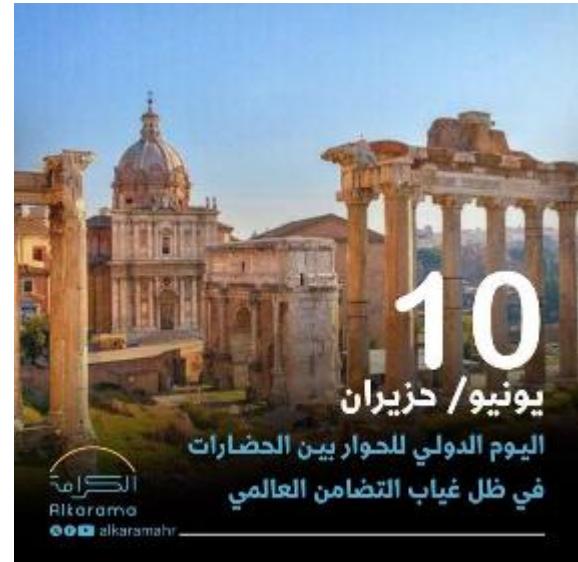
authorities have not taken any concrete measures to comply with the Working Group's opinion or to guarantee Mr Sambi's fundamental rights. According to those close to him, his health remains alarming.

In light of this ongoing inaction and disregard for the Union of the Comoros's international commitments, Alkarama reaffirms its commitment to continuing its efforts until justice is served to Mr Ahmed Abdallah Mohamed Sambi and the grave violations of his fundamental rights cease.

## International Day for Dialogue Among Civilizations in the absence of global solidarity

10 June 2025

In its [resolution A/RES/78/286](#) of 7 June 2024, the United Nations General Assembly designated 10 June as the [International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations](#), "to raise awareness of the value of the diversity of civilizations and to promote dialogue, mutual respect, tolerance and global solidarity." The celebration of this day aims to replace the narrative of a "clash of civilizations" with one of an "alliance of civilizations" and constructive dialogue among them.



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In a world marked by escalating global tensions, cultural misunderstandings, rising nationalism, ideological extremism, and geopolitical conflict, this celebration has become more important than ever. However, the stance of most world governments regarding the events in Gaza, their turning a blind eye to the Israeli government's genocidal campaign against the Palestinian people, and the lack of official empathy for the victims of the Israeli military machine all point to a vast gap between the aspirations of the United Nations and the realities of the world today.

In light of these facts, it must be emphasized that the International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations should not be merely a symbolic celebration but a call to action to achieve its objectives. Governments must support policies and initiatives that prioritize intercultural understanding and work to establish international relations based not on the logic of power but on the principles of justice, equality among peoples, and respect for and guarantee of human dignity and rights for all.

## International Day for Countering Hate Speech: The Need to Act on All Fronts

18 June 2025

United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. [A/RES/75/309](#), dated 21 July 2021, on the “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance in countering hate speech,” proclaimed 18 June as the [International Day for Countering Hate Speech](#). The resolution recognizes the urgent need to combat discrimination, xenophobia, and hate speech, and calls on all relevant stakeholders, including States, to intensify their efforts to address this phenomenon, in line with international human rights law.



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On this day, Alkarama firmly reaffirms its commitment to raising awareness of human rights and opposing all forms of incitement to hatred and racism. Alkarama especially warns of the alarming rise in anti-Muslim hate speech, which is growing in many societies and threatening the fundamental values of justice, coexistence, and peace.

Hate speech against Muslims goes beyond words: it also manifests in crimes and systematic acts of discrimination, which fuel fear, isolation, and foster extremist and violent tendencies. Such discourse undermines social cohesion and deepens cultural and religious divides, in blatant violation of the principles of human rights and human dignity.

In France, for example, Muslims have recently been victims of several tragic incidents resulting from the growing prevalence of hate speech in the public sphere—disseminated by the far right and even by parts of the so-called moderate right—highlighting the urgency of confronting this scourge.

On 25 April 2025, Aboubakar Sissè, a young Muslim of Malian origin, was stabbed to death inside the Khadija Mosque in La Grand-Combe. The perpetrator filmed the murder on his phone, boasted about it, and threatened to repeat the act—clearly demonstrating the destructive influence of hate speech on individuals.

On 31 May 2025, [Hichem Miraoui](#), a 46-year-old Tunisian barber, was the victim of a racist attack in Puget-sur-Argens, in southern France. He was shot five times in front of his shop, resulting in his death, while his Turkish neighbor was slightly injured. Investigations revealed that the assailant had posted videos on social media before and after the attack, expressing hatred of foreigners, inciting violence, and endorsing far-right ideologies. He also showcased firearms in the videos and promised to continue violent actions against Muslims and foreigners.

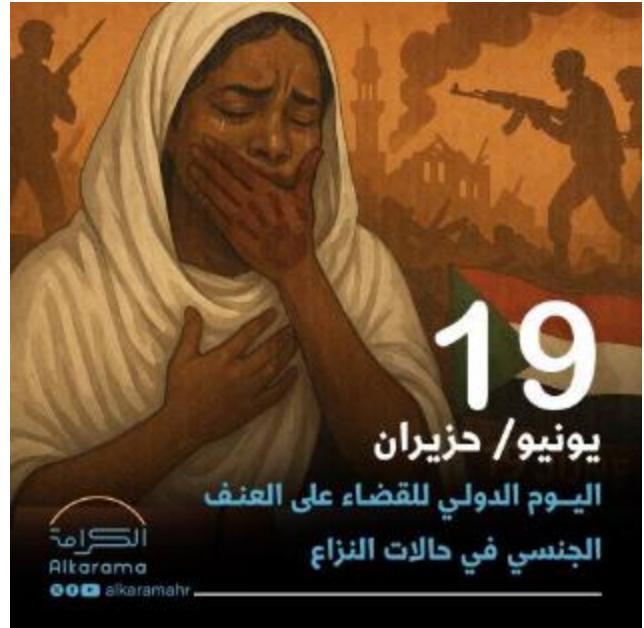
Alkarama urges the international community to adopt firm measures to counter hate speech, particularly that which targets Muslims. It emphasizes the need for effective implementation of national and international legal frameworks that criminalize incitement to hatred, while ensuring that freedom of expression is not misused to justify discrimination and racism.

Alkarama also highlights the responsibility of official institutions and the media to expose the sources of hate and to promote an alternative discourse based on respect and diversity, with the goal of building just, equal societies free from hatred and racism, founded on respect for human dignity and the rights of all, without exception.

## International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict: The Arab World on the Front Line

19 June 2025

Ten years ago, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed, through its resolution [A/RES/69/293](#) dated 19 June 2015, the [International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict](#), observed each year on 19 June. This day aims to “to raise awareness of the need to put an end to conflict-related sexual violence, to honour the victims and survivors of sexual violence around the world and to pay tribute to all those who have courageously devoted their lives to and lost their lives in standing up for the eradication of these crimes.”



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According to the United Nations, sexual violence in conflict includes rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, forced sterilization, forced marriage, and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity, committed against women, men, girls, or boys, directly or indirectly linked to a conflict. The term also covers trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual violence or exploitation in the context of conflict.

In a message on the occasion, UN Secretary-General António Guterres [stated](#): “Too often, perpetrators walk free, cloaked in impunity, while survivors often bear the impossible burden of stigma and trauma. The pain

does not end with them. It stretches across lifetimes, ravaging generations of families, and forces the inherited legacy of trauma and suffering on the descendants of survivors.”

The Arab world, torn by multiple violent conflicts, has become one of the primary theatres for this kind of violence. In recent years, there has been a troubling rise in sexual violence cases in several Arab countries, where such acts are used as weapons of war to terrorize civilians and assert control.

During her briefing to the UN Security Council on 23 April 2024, presenting the [fifteenth annual report](#) of the Secretary-General on sexual violence in conflict, Pramila Patten, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, stated that such violations had increased by 50% in 2023 compared to the previous year. The report covers several Arab countries, including Palestine, Libya, Yemen, Sudan, Iraq, and Syria.

In this context, Alkarama warns of the seriousness of this heinous crime, used as a weapon of war to spread terror among civilian populations and tear apart the social fabric. This issue is particularly alarming in the ongoing conflict in Sudan. Thanks to the efforts of its volunteer monitoring teams on the ground, Alkarama has collected numerous harrowing testimonies documenting sexual violence against women and girls, especially in areas experiencing intense fighting or under the control of the Rapid Support Forces, backed by the United Arab Emirates.

Alkarama therefore considers that sexual violence in armed conflicts across Arab countries constitutes a grave crime and an urgent issue requiring a coordinated response from governments, civil society, and, in particular, human rights organizations. It is imperative to strengthen accountability mechanisms, provide support to victims, and prevent the use of sexual violence as a tool of war.



## **Victims of Torture in the Arab World Await Justice**

26 June 2025

On this day, the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture (26 June), the undersigned human rights organizations reaffirm that the crime of torture continues to be practiced systematically in several Arab countries, in blatant violation of human dignity and international law—especially the UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which most Arab governments have ratified.



We hereby launch a wide-reaching human rights campaign to shed light on the suffering of victims, support their right to justice and rehabilitation, and hold governments accountable for fostering an environment of impunity for these crimes against humanity.

We strongly condemn the ongoing use of torture by authorities in several Arab states as a systematic tool of political repression, aimed at intimidating opponents, silencing dissent, and punishing human rights defenders and arbitrarily detained individuals—while perpetrators enjoy near-total impunity.

In occupied Palestine, Palestinian detainees—including children—are subjected to brutal physical and psychological torture by Israeli occupation forces in interrogation centers and prisons, with no meaningful

accountability, in violation of international humanitarian law and the Convention Against Torture.

In Egypt, torture is practiced as a state policy within detention facilities and prisons, involving beatings, electric shocks, and prolonged suspension, leading in many cases to deaths in custody. Authorities have taken no effective steps to ensure independent investigations or hold perpetrators accountable.

In Tunisia, despite human rights gains following the revolution, torture has resurfaced amid escalating political arrests and the referral of civilians to military courts. The situation is exacerbated by the spread of chronic and serious illnesses in Tunisian prisons and the absence of fair trial guarantees. In Algeria, numerous testimonies confirm grave violations against detainees from the Hirak protest movement and political prisoners, including degrading treatment and psychological torture in detention centers. This occurs in an increasingly repressive climate against freedom of expression and assembly.

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These ongoing brutal practices, coupled with international silence and inaction, represent a stain on the face of international justice and threaten the very foundations of the human rights system. The blatant lack of national accountability mechanisms and the continued shielding of perpetrators further entrench a culture of impunity and consolidate torture as a permanent tool in the hands of authoritarian regimes.

As we honor the resilience of torture victims across the Arab world and their advocates, we:

1. Call on all relevant Arab governments to end all forms of torture and fully implement the UN Convention Against Torture and its Optional Protocols, including enforcing serious penalties on those found guilty of such crimes.
2. Demand independent and transparent investigations into all allegations of torture and the prompt prosecution of those responsible.
3. Stress the need to open places of detention to visits by international organizations and independent monitoring bodies.

4. Urge the international community, particularly UN mechanisms, to apply genuine pressure to stop torture in the aforementioned countries, including invoking universal jurisdiction where applicable.
5. Call for comprehensive reparation for victims, including compensation, medical and psychological care, and guarantees of non-repetition.

In conclusion, while we honor the perseverance of torture victims and their supporters, we affirm that the fight against torture cannot be separated from the broader struggle for good governance, judicial independence, freedom of expression, and human dignity—all of which are essential pillars of genuine democratic transformation and a just Arab region.

### **Signatory Organizations:**

- Association of Victims of Torture – Geneva
- Alkarama for Human Rights – Geneva
- Justice for Human Rights Foundation – Istanbul
- AFD International – Belgium
- El-Shehab for Human Rights – London
- Tawasol for Human Rights – The Hague
- Human Rights Monitor – London
- Cedar for Human Rights – Lebanon
- Solidarity for Human Rights – Geneva
- Free Voice for Human Rights – France
- Egyptian Rights Council – Geneva



## **The U.S. targeting of the UN expert Ms. Francesca Albanese is a violation of international law**

10 July 2025

Alkarama expresses deep concern and strongly condemns the unjust sanctions imposed by the government of the United States of America against Ms. Francesca Albanese, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories. These measures follow her latest report, in which she courageously and responsibly exposed the systematic crimes committed by Israel against the Palestinian people, as well as the active complicity of major Western corporations profiting from this ongoing genocidal war.



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These sanctions are part of a continuing series of pressures and attacks orchestrated by the Israeli government and its allies against free voices and committed consciences within the UN system, in a vain and desperate attempt to silence those who denounce serious violations and expose the falsity of their narratives.

### **Targeting a UN expert is an act of arrogance**

Targeting a Special Rapporteur solely for independently carrying out her mandate and fulfilling her obligations under international law illustrates the pressures exerted by Western states, foremost among them the United States of America. Through such practices, they lose all moral and legal

legitimacy to claim to defend humanitarian values and human rights. In reality, they become instruments of oppression, trampling on the principles of international law and human rights, while displaying blind support for the Israeli occupying state and openly encouraging its impunity.

In this context, Alkarama reaffirms its full solidarity with Ms. Albanese and praises her courage for exposing these crimes despite the smear campaigns and threats she faces. It should be noted that the U.S. approach is not an isolated case: it is part of a series of similar attacks, notably against the International Criminal Court, aimed at intimidating international bodies and deterring them from fulfilling their mission to prosecute war criminals. In this regard, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Volker Türk, recently condemned these sanctions, describing them as a dangerous precedent threatening the foundations of the international system based on legality and legitimacy.

In her latest report, Ms. Francesca Albanese highlighted the involvement of international companies in what she terms the “economy of genocide” in Palestine, marking a major turning point in revealing the extent of institutional support for the Israeli aggression. During her address to the United Nations Human Rights Council, Ms. Albanese denounced the support of certain states for Israel’s project of hegemony and expulsion of Palestinians and called for the suspension of all trade agreements with Israel that fuel this “genocidal war” in Gaza.

She also revealed that international arms companies supplied Israel with 35,000 tons of explosives used in the Gaza Strip, an explosive power equivalent to six times that of the nuclear bomb dropped on Hiroshima. The report also highlights the role of companies such as Microsoft, Alphabet (Google), and Amazon in providing the Israeli army with sophisticated surveillance and espionage systems. It further mentions the involvement of arms companies like Lockheed Martin, as well as firms specializing in heavy equipment and engineering.

## **U.S. sanctions: A violation of international law**

It is important to emphasize that these U.S. measures constitute a blatant violation of international agreements protecting Special Rapporteurs and independent experts, notably the “Host Country Agreement” concluded in 1946 between the UN and the host state, which guarantees full immunity and independence of officials and experts in the exercise of their functions, prohibiting any form of pressure, threat, or sanction against them.

These actions also contravene the legal obligations enshrined in the United Nations Charter, particularly articles 100 and 105, which ensure the independence of international officials and experts and forbid any attempts by member states to influence or retaliate against them because of their reports or positions.

Alkarama calls on the international community, UN bodies, and all human rights defenders to strongly condemn these measures, demand the immediate lifting of the sanctions and guarantee the protection of UN Rapporteurs so they can carry out their missions with full freedom and independence, free from any form of blackmail or political pressure.

Furthermore, Alkarama holds Western states, especially the United States of America, fully morally and legally responsible for the consequences of this targeting and urges them to review their policies, which entrench double standards and undermine their credibility before the peoples of the world.

## International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief

22 August 2025

The [International Day](#) Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief is observed today, 22 August, pursuant to [Resolution 73/296](#) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 28 May 2019.

On this occasion, Alkarama expresses its deep concern over the resurgence of violence and discrimination targeting individuals on the basis of their religion or beliefs worldwide, with a particular focus on the situation of Muslims in Europe, North America, and Asia during the past year, where they have been subjected to systematic targeting and an intensification of violations.



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International reports have highlighted an alarming rise in Islamophobia, especially in Europe, where Muslims are increasingly exposed to various forms of discrimination, hate crimes, as well as physical and verbal assaults.

According to the 2024 [annual report](#) of the Collective for the Fight against Islamophobia in Europe, “anti-Muslim discourse in Europe has never reached such a level of normalization, which marked the end of 2024. Islamophobia has become an intrinsic part of public discourse, fueled by

the growing campaigns of the far right, requiring increased vigilance on the part of all those who uphold the values of freedom and equality.”

This phenomenon is not limited to Europe: similar reports have documented a rise in attacks against Muslims in the United States and Canada, as well as in several Asian countries such as India, China, and Myanmar, where an expanding body of legislation and inciteful rhetoric targets Muslim communities, stripping them of their legal and civil rights.

In this context, Alkarama reaffirms its full solidarity with all victims of violence based on religion or belief, and calls for:

- Governments to assume their legal responsibilities to protect all religious communities without discrimination, and to ensure the rule of law and equal opportunities for all;
- The swift adoption and implementation of deterrent legislation against hate crimes and religious violence, the prosecution of perpetrators, and the repeal of all discriminatory laws and practices against any religious or ethnic community;
- Sustained political and cultural efforts to counter hate speech and extremism, eliminate the roots of racism, and promote universal human values through educational curricula, media discourse, and cultural institutions’ programs.

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In the face of growing challenges threatening peaceful coexistence worldwide, Alkarama renews its commitment to rejecting all forms of discrimination and violence, and to working towards a world that is more just, equitable, and respectful of human dignity, regardless of religion or belief.

## Enforced Disappearances in the Arab World: Forgotten Victims, Unpunished Crime – Joint Statement

30 August 2025

On the occasion of the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, Arab and international human rights organizations express their deep concern over the persistence and spread of this scourge in several Arab countries, making the region one of the world's epicenters of this practice.

Decades after the disclosure of thousands of cases, many victims remain missing, while enforced disappearances continue to be committed systematically. This phenomenon has worsened in contexts marked by states of emergency and armed conflicts, becoming a political tool of repression aimed at silencing dissent and intimidating societies.

In Egypt, in the absence of official data due to the clandestine nature of this crime, human rights organizations estimate that around 19,000 people have been subjected to enforced disappearance since 2013, with nearly 300 still missing to this day. Hundreds of new cases are documented every year, affecting journalists, students, activists, and political leaders. These practices form part of a systematic policy designed to suppress all forms of expression and civic engagement.



In [Algeria](#), the fate of thousands of people who disappeared during the “Black Decade” of the 1990s remains unknown, in a climate marked by official denial and lack of justice.

In [Iraq](#), successive wars and the actions of sectarian militias have resulted in thousands of enforced disappearances.

In [Libya](#), the phenomenon persists amid armed clashes between rival groups and the collapse of state institutions.

In [Yemen](#), secret prisons run by the Houthi movement, along with other detention centers operated by forces backed by the United Arab Emirates in the south of the country, have become opaque sites where numerous disappeared persons are held.

In [Syria](#), despite political changes, the fate of tens of thousands of disappeared persons held in the prisons of the former regime remains an open wound in the conscience of the world. It is now incumbent upon the new Syrian authorities to take concrete measures to clarify the fate of the victims, hold perpetrators accountable, and guarantee truth, justice, and reparation.

In the [United Arab Emirates](#) and Saudi Arabia, behind the image of modernity and prosperity lies a reality of injustice and impunity, where prisoners of conscience and political opponents have been subjected to enforced disappearances, particularly at the time of their arrest.

Enforced disappearance, which is not subject to any statute of limitations under international law, constitutes a crime against humanity when practiced in a widespread or systematic manner. Yet despite the clarity of international legal obligations, the absence of political will and effective accountability mechanisms continues to hinder justice and reparation for the victims.

On this occasion, the signatory organizations:

- Call on Arab governments, particularly the states concerned, to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and to establish independent national mechanisms tasked with investigating and disclosing the fate of the disappeared;
- Reaffirm the inalienable right of the families of victims to know the truth, to obtain justice, and to receive full reparation, both material and moral;
- Urge the international community to exert effective pressure to put an end to this crime, to strengthen support for the relevant United Nations mechanisms – notably the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances – and to apply universal jurisdiction in order to prosecute those responsible;
- Highlight the crucial role of civil society in documentation, advocacy, and mobilization of public opinion, and stress the urgent need to ensure real protection for human rights defenders working on this issue.

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We emphasize that silence in the face of these crimes only deepens the suffering of victims and their families. Ending enforced disappearance requires genuine political will, independent justice, and a firm commitment from the international community.

***Signatory organizations:***

1. Adala for Human Rights, Istanbul
2. Organization of Victims of Torture, Geneva
3. IFED International, Belgium
4. Alkarama for Human Rights, Geneva
5. Human Rights Monitor, London
6. Cedar for Human Rights, Lebanon
7. Tawasul for Human Rights, The Hague
8. Sawt Horr for Human Rights Organization, Paris
9. Egyptian Human Rights Council, Geneva
10. Al-Tadamun for Human Rights, Geneva

## International Day of Democracy: The shrinking space for civil and political liberties in the Arab world

17 September 2025

The world celebrated the [International Day of Democracy](#) on September 15, 2025, an occasion established by the United Nations General Assembly [Resolution 62/7](#) of November 8, 2007, to promote democratic systems, particularly in countries undergoing political transition. Democracy is closely linked to human rights, especially [civil and political rights](#), such as freedom of expression, association, free elections, and judicial independence.



In the Arab world, most regimes remain authoritarian and despotic, suppressing freedoms and closing off political and media spaces. This occurs amidst Western support for these regimes to protect its own interests, creating a sense among Arab citizens of Western double standards regarding democracy.

Since its founding, Alkarama has strived to promote civil and political rights in the Arab world. It provides legal counsel to victims, files complaints with UN human rights mechanisms, and raises awareness of human rights culture in the Arab world.

Democracy is not merely a system of government; it is a human and societal necessity that guarantees dignity and equality and empowers people to participate in decision-making. Despite the challenges facing the Arab world, achieving democracy is a collective responsibility that requires working towards a system that respects the will of the people and ensures participation, justice, and accountability.

## International Day of Peace – Peace Remains Elusive in a World of Double Standards

21 September 2025

September 21, 2025, marks the [International Day of Peace](#), established by United Nations General Assembly [Resolution 55/282](#) (7 September 2001) dedicated to the cessation of hostilities worldwide, the rejection of violence and the promotion of a culture of peace based on education, awareness and international cooperation.



On this occasion, Alkarama affirms that peace can only be achieved through respect for human rights and human dignity as well as ensuring equality before the law and equal opportunities. These principles, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights are fundamental. Lasting peace remains impossible as long as the logic of force prevails and the values of justice are marginalized.

While the United Nations has adopted the slogan this year “Act Now for a Peaceful World”, the organization itself remains marginalized in managing international security and peace issues. Even more concerning, its representatives, humanitarian and human rights agencies and international organizations cooperating with it are repeatedly targeted by

attacks and pressures, notably against UNRWA, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Ms. Francesca Albanese and the International Criminal Court.

## **Regional Context**

Moreover, the reality on the ground shows that many Arab countries continue to face severe human rights violations whether through direct violence linked to armed conflicts (Yemen, Libya, Sudan) or structural violence resulting from the absence of policies ensuring dignified living conditions for their populations.

## **Palestine**

On this occasion, it is essential to recall that the Palestinian people are subjected to some of the most extreme forms of violence and international crimes perpetrated by the Israeli occupation authorities, amounting to war crimes and genocide under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Over the past two years, military offensives have caused more than 65,000 deaths and 165,000 injuries, deliberately targeting civilians and infrastructure in Gaza and the West Bank. These assaults are accompanied by repeated attacks against Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Qatar, and Iran, seriously threatening regional and international peace and security.

The inaction of the international community, remaining silent in the face of well-documented violations, constitutes a clear breach of the United Nations Charter and the obligations of States Parties to the Geneva Conventions. Furthermore, pressures exerted on UN mechanisms, such as UNRWA and Special Rapporteurs, undermine the very effectiveness of the international human rights protection system.

Despite this inertia, some positive positions have emerged from governments rejecting the policies of the Israeli occupation. At the same time, unprecedented global popular mobilizations have arisen to denounce these violations, ranging from demonstrations and sit-ins to various peaceful civil initiatives, including the Freedom Flotilla heading to the coasts of Gaza.

## **Conclusion**

As grim as the situation may seem, the outcome will inevitably depend on respect for justice, dignity and indivisible human rights. Alkarama emphasizes that respecting these principles remains the only path to achieving a true and lasting global peace. Alkarama also stresses that the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of international crimes poses a direct threat to the entire international legal order.



## **On the occasion of the International Day of Non-Violence, Alkarama reaffirms its commitment to defending victims of violence in the Arab countries**

2 October 2025

On October 2, the world celebrates the [International Day of Non-Violence](#), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in its [resolution 61/271](#) of June 15, 2007, with the aim of promoting a culture of peace, tolerance, understanding and non-violence.

Alkarama emphasizes that it is difficult to strengthen human rights in a context marked by the violence prevailing in the Arab world in its multiple forms: from direct violence that threatens the life and safety of civilians, to structural violence that prevents the enjoyment of fundamental rights, to cultural violence that legitimizes injustice.



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The Palestinian people have been subjected for the past two years to the most extreme forms of systematic violence by the Israeli occupation forces. At the same time, many Arab countries are affected by internal wars and sectarian or political conflicts, often supported by regional and international actors. Populations live under authoritarian and corrupt regimes that deprive them of their fundamental rights and freedoms, frequently resorting to excessive violence against any peaceful demonstration advocating legitimate rights.

On this day, Alkarama calls for the promotion of non-violent means of struggle and the protection of victims of extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances, torture and arbitrary detention.

Alkarama reaffirms the importance of building states where justice, freedom, and security prevail under the rule of law, while denouncing any discourse or policy that is authoritarian and contrary to the values of dignity and justice. For more than two decades, Alkarama's commitment has aimed to reduce violence and defend human rights in the Arab world.

## UN Report Confirms Alkarama's Concerns Over Transnational Reprisals

22 October 2025

The annual report of the United Nations Secretary-General on intimidation and reprisals against individuals cooperating with the UN, recently [released](#), has confirmed Alkarama's observations regarding the growing trend of transnational repression and reprisals targeting organizations and individuals in exile or residing in third countries due to their collaboration with the United Nations. These practices are described as a systematic method employed by certain States to silence their opponents.



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The report notes that transnational persecution whether in the form of fabricated criminal charges related to security and terrorism, electronic surveillance, refusal to renew passports, harassment, direct threats against relatives or attempts to extradite or forcibly return recognized refugees undermines the very essence of cooperation with the United Nations. Such practices have a chilling effect, discouraging victims and human rights defenders from engaging with international mechanisms.

### Acts of Reprisal

In its latest [submission](#), Alkarama drew attention to the gravity of these transnational threats, expressing deep concern over the alarming increase

in acts of reprisal targeting the families of Arab citizens living in exile, particularly in Europe and North America.

It further noted that these forms of transnational coercion increasingly discourage such families from collaborating with civil society organizations, due to credible threats of intimidation and reprisals against their relatives remaining in their countries of origin.

Alkarama affirmed that this transnational repressive model gravely undermines the integrity and effectiveness of the UN human rights system, which fundamentally depends on the free, voluntary and secure participation of victims and their representatives.

Consequently, Alkarama called on the international community to establish robust and legally binding protection mechanisms to safeguard the families of victims in exile, who often play a key intermediary role between civil society and international human rights mechanisms.

In his latest annual report, the Secretary-General also recalled several cases previously mentioned in earlier reports submitted by Alkarama either as part of its contributions to the annual report on acts of reprisal or in complaints addressed to special procedures. Among these cases are those of Saudi academic Mohammed bin Fahd al-Qahtani and lawyer Issa al-Nukhaifi, both released earlier this year, as well as those of Egyptian lawyer [Ibrahim Abdelmoneim Metwally Hegazy](#), Emirati lawyer Ahmed Mansoor and Lebanese citizen [Ahmad Ali Mekkaoui](#) in the United Arab Emirates, among others.

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## **Alkarama's Contribution**

On 15 April 2025, Alkarama submitted its contribution to the UN Secretary-General's report on acts of reprisal against individuals and entities cooperating with UN human rights mechanisms. This report, prepared in accordance with Human Rights Council [Resolution 12/2](#), aims to document acts of intimidation or reprisals against those who engage with the UN to promote international human rights standards.

In keeping with its unwavering commitment to the defense of fundamental freedoms, Alkarama this year highlighted two emblematic cases illustrating the scale and severity of acts of reprisal: that of Moroccan environmental activist [Mohamed Attaoui](#), and that of Saudi thinker [Safar al-Hawali](#), who has been arbitrarily detained for many years. These two cases exemplify the significant risks faced by those who dare to assert their rights on the international stage.



## Alkarama's Concerns Included in the UN Secretary-General's Report on Terrorism and Human Rights

25 October 2025

The latest [annual report](#) issued by the United Nations Secretary-General on terrorism and human rights has addressed many of the concerns raised by Alkarama in its submission to UN human rights mechanisms.

Alkarama provided a brief yet significant [contribution](#) highlighting major human rights violations committed in the name of the “war on terror” particularly in the Arab world but also globally. Alkarama denounced practices that undermine core human rights principles, such as the vague legal definitions of terrorism, the lack of fair trial guarantees and due process and the increasing misuse of the term “terrorism” to target activities unrelated to violence including civic engagement and migration issues.



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The [UN report](#) echoed Alkarama’s concerns regarding overly broad counter-terrorism laws in several states, which criminalize ill-defined acts under the label of terrorism, enabling the repression of peaceful dissent and freedom of expression. It notes that some governments use these laws to restrict press freedom, the right to peaceful assembly and human rights advocacy while disregarding fair trial safeguards.

The Secretary-General also stresses that counter-terrorism efforts must fully comply with international human rights law and international humanitarian law. He warns that security measures must not become tools

of repression targeting civil society and peaceful opposition a longstanding concern at the heart of Alkarama's mandate since its creation.

The report further expresses growing alarm at the normalization of the “terrorist” label to criminalize non-violent conduct such as opinion expression, journalism or activism. Such misuse undermines the credibility of counter-terrorism strategies and leads to serious violations of civil and political rights. The Secretary-General therefore calls for a precise legal definition of terrorism that prevents arbitrary expansion of the concept. The report makes clear that such a definition must exclude criticism of or peaceful opposition to governments.

The report also examines the complex relationship between counter-terrorism policies and the protection of human rights. Many states particularly in the Arab region have adopted security measures invoking national safety that, in practice, violate international standards. Drawing on field research and UN documentation, the report demonstrates how these exceptional laws are being used to restrict freedoms and silence independent voices.

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## **Alkarama's Contribution**

Alkarama submitted its [contribution](#) on 14 April 2025 as part of the preparation of the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of [Resolution 78/210](#). This document, to be presented to both the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly, is part of a broader international initiative to document violations committed under the guise of counter-terrorism.

Resolution 78/210, adopted by the General Assembly, calls on states to respect their international human rights obligations in the context of counter-terrorism. It mandates the Secretary-General to assess the compliance of national legislation and practices with international standards, drawing in particular on contributions from civil society organizations such as Alkarama.

In its [submission](#), Alkarama highlights structural flaws in counter-terrorism legislation and its incompatibility with international human rights norms, especially in the Arab world where the organization has been active since 2004. It emphasizes that these laws often drafted in vague or ambiguous terms serve to criminalize peaceful opposition and reinforce state repression. The organization cites emblematic examples, including Article 87 bis of [Algeria's](#) Penal Code, and the “rehabilitation” centers in Saudi Arabia and the [United Arab Emirates](#) that function as de facto extrajudicial detention facilities.

The [submission](#) also sheds light on less visible violations linked to digital surveillance and financial controls carried out under national security pretexts. In countries such as [Jordan](#), the [UAE](#) and even France, such measures severely infringe upon privacy, freedom of expression and freedom of association. The case of academic and political scientist, François Burgat, prosecuted for “glorifying terrorism” based on an excerpt taken out of context illustrates the dangers of loosely defined offenses, where the line between critical analysis and incitement to violence becomes perilously blurred.

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On the issue of foreign fighters also addressed in the Secretary-General's report, Alkarama recalls the symbolic example of former [Guantánamo](#) detainees, who continue to suffer from detention without trial, torture, and the absence of legal protection. The organization also highlights the transfer of detainees to certain Arab states notably the UAE without adequate safeguards, exposing them to further abuse and depriving them of any prospect of reintegration. This reality is mentioned in the UN report in general terms but without detailing the cases.

Despite [repeated calls](#) from NGOs and civil society, many states [still refuse to reform](#) their counter-terrorism frameworks. This refusal justified by rigid security discourse reflects a political will to maintain exceptional measures during peacetime under the pretext of combating terrorism.

Finally, Alkarama welcomes that the Secretary-General's team has largely incorporated its recommendations and observations and fully supports his renewed call for deep legal reforms, the strengthening of civil and political

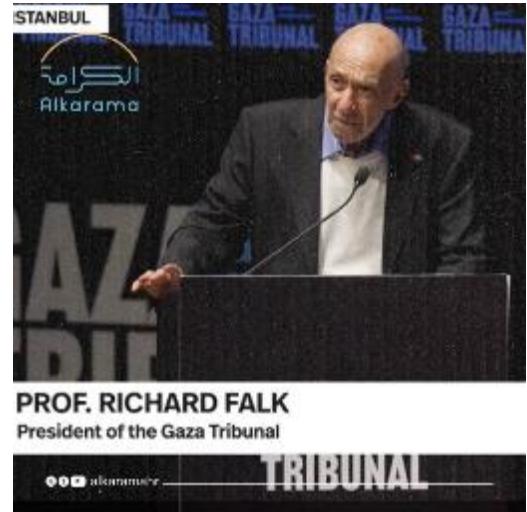
rights, genuine international accountability and a counter-terrorism strategy grounded in the rule of law, transparency and respect for human rights.



## **Prominent academic Richard Falk, a member of Alkarama's Advisory Committee, was detained at Toronto airport in Canada**

17 November 2025

Alkarama condemns the detention of Richard Falk, a prominent academic and former UN Special Rapporteur and member of its Advisory Committee, for several hours by customs authorities at Toronto Airport on Thursday, November 13, 2025, as he was en route to participate in a People's Tribunal discussing Canada's responsibility for violations against Palestinians.



Falk, 95, reported that his passport was confiscated and that he and his wife were questioned about his views and participation in the conference before being released after four hours of interrogation.

Alkarama emphasizes that targeting human rights defenders and undermining freedom of expression is contrary to Canada's international obligations.

## International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women: Alkarama Reaffirms Its Commitment

25 November 2025

Today, we observe the [International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women](#), established by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution [A/RES/54/134](#) of 17 December 1999, to encourage reflection on the progress made and the efforts undertaken to eradicate all forms of violence against women. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted on 20 December 1993 ([A/RES/48/104](#)), specifies that such violence includes physical, sexual, and psychological abuse: occurring within the family, taking place in the wider community, or perpetrated or condoned by the State, in any context.



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Despite international initiatives, many regions in the Arab world continue to face serious violations of women's rights, often linked to political violence and judicial repression.

### Alkarama's Action

Alkarama continues to work towards the promotion and protection of human rights in the Arab world, regardless of the victims' ethnicity, religion or gender. Particular attention is given to violations targeting women,

especially when committed by State institutions against citizens peacefully advocating for human rights.

In 2025, on 26 August, Alkarama filed an individual complaint with the United Nations Human Rights Committee (CCPR) in Geneva on behalf of Ms [Nawal Kara Bouslama](#), a Franco-Algerian businesswoman, to denounce the serious and repeated violations of her fundamental rights in Algeria, closely linked to corrupt practices within State institutions.

Furthermore, on 16 October 2025, Alkarama submitted the case of Ms [Saïda El Alami](#) to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. This Moroccan blogger and human rights activist is known for her steadfast defence of fundamental freedoms and her active presence on social media, where she regularly highlights human rights violations and comments on political and social developments in Morocco.

## On Human Rights Day: Widespread Abuses Amid International Silence – Joint Statement

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.

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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.

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In May 2025, a video circulated showing Member of Parliament Ibrahim Abou 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.

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## **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**

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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:**

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1. EFDI International – Belgium
2. Association of Torture Victims – Geneva
3. Justice for Human Rights Organization – Turkey
4. Tawasol Human Rights Organization – The Netherlands
5. Cedar Human Rights – Lebanon
6. Free Voice for Human Rights – Paris
7. Al-Shehab Human Rights Center – London
8. Egyptian Rights Council – Geneva
9. AlKarama for Human Rights – Geneva
10. Solidarity for Human Rights – Geneva
11. Human Rights Monitor – London