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**International & European  
Criminal Law Observatory**

ON CULTURAL ISSUES, HUMAN RIGHTS AND SECURITY

## **MONTHLY WRAP NOVEMBER 2024**

### **UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL**

#### [S/RES/2758\(2024\)](#)

On 13 November the Security Council decided to renew for 12 months a travel ban and assets freeze imposed on certain designated individuals and entities in Yemen and to extend for 13 months the mandate of the Panel of Experts tasked with assisting the Council's Yemen Sanctions Committee. The Council, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, unanimously adopted resolution 2758 (2024) and decided to renew, until 15 November 2025, the above measures, which were initially imposed by resolution 2140 (2014).

Further, the Council decided to extend the mandate of the Panel of Experts established by that resolution until 15 December 2025, also expressing its intention to review this mandate and take appropriate action regarding further extension no later than 15 November 2025.

Through the resolution, the 15-nation organ additionally requested the Panel of Experts to provide a midterm update to the relevant committee no later than 15 April 2025 as well as a final report to the Council no later than 15 October 2025 that includes information related to the illicit transfer and diversion of conventional weapons and to commercially available components used by designated individuals or entities to assemble certain weapons systems.

#### [ICC Prosecutor appeals for global support to bring Libyan war criminals to justice](#)

The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) on 19 November called on the UN Security Council to help execute arrest warrants against suspects allegedly linked to a brutal Libyan militia blamed for committing atrocity crimes in the town of Tarhuna, where mass graves were discovered in 2020. The Prosecutor called for the assistance of the Security Council, State Parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC, and other non-State Parties to ensure that the suspects are apprehended and brought to justice, in an independent, free and fair trial.

The six who remain at large were either key members or associated with the Al Kaniyat militia that controlled Tarhuna from at least 2015 to June 2020, when government forces ousted them from the city, which is located about 65 kilometers southeast of Tripoli.

### **UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL**



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### [UN welcomes ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon](#)

In a statement issued by his spokesperson, Secretary-General António Guterres expressed hope that the agreement “can put an end to the violence, destruction and suffering the people of both countries have been experiencing.”

“The Secretary-General urges the parties to fully respect and swiftly implement all of their commitments made under this agreement,” the statement noted.

He also urged the parties to undertake immediate steps towards the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). The Security Council resolution, adopted in the aftermath of the 2006 conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, calls for a cessation of hostilities as well as respect for the “Blue Line” of separation between Israeli and Lebanese armed forces.

“The UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) both stand ready to support the implementation of this agreement, in line with their respective mandates,” the statement added.

The ceasefire agreement comes after more than a year of heightened tensions along the Blue Line. Civilians on both sides have borne the brunt of the violence, with thousands killed and tens of thousands displaced.

### **UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (UNODC)**

#### [Global raids rescue 3,200 potential victims of human trafficking and identify 17,800 irregular migrants](#)

The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) are working together to enhance international cooperation, facilitate intelligence sharing, and take unified action against these global threats.

INTERPOL announced the results of Operation Liberterra II in Glasgow, its largest ever operation against human trafficking and migrant smuggling, supported by UNODC in real time.

The operation, which was carried out across 116 countries between 29 September to 4 October 2024, led to the rescue of 3,222 potential trafficking victims and identified 17,800 irregular migrants.

During the operation, UNODC experts in different regions of the world brought together law enforcement officers and prosecutors to facilitate real-time ongoing case identification and cross-border judicial cooperation.

Authorities around the world conducted police raids, reinforced strategic border points, monitored nearly 24,000 flights and deployed officers to known trafficking and smuggling hotspots. Globally, nearly 8 million checks were carried out against INTERPOL’s databases.



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## INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

### [Ntaganda case: ICC Appeals Chamber delivers judgment on reparative justice](#)

On 1 November 2024, the Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Court (“ICC” or “Court”) delivered its judgment on the appeals of the common legal representative of the victims of the attacks and the Defence of Mr Bosco Ntaganda against Trial Chamber II’s “Addendum to the Reparations Order of 8 March 2021, ICC-01/04-02/06-2659” in the case of The Prosecutor v. Bosco Ntaganda. A summary of the judgment was read in open court by Presiding Judge Gocha Lordkipanidze. Subject to one amendment, the Appeals Chamber unanimously confirmed Trial Chamber II’s decision. On the eligibility the Trial Chamber decided to make its assessment on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the victim's personal circumstances. The Appeals Chamber also rejected that the Defence's appeal on the Trial Chamber's alleged failure to provide it with a meaningful opportunity to assess and make submissions on the dossiers of the victims. The Appeals Chamber also dismissed the Defence's appeal on alleged errors in the application of the "do not harm" principle during the implementation of the Initial Draft Implementation Plan. The Appeals Chamber also rejected the appeals based on alleged errors in the estimation of the number of potential beneficiaries of reparations amongst the victims of the attacks and on alleged errors in determining the cost to repair for the victims of the attacks

### [Mr Al Hassan sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment](#)

Trial Chamber X of the ICC sentenced Al Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz Ag Mohamed Ag Mahmoud to 10 years of imprisonment following the Trial Judgment in which the Chamber found him guilty of some of the charges brought against him of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed between early May 2012 and 29 January 2013 in Timbuktu, northern Mali.

### [Situation in the State of Palestine: ICC Pre-Trial Chamber I issues warrant of arrest for Mohammed Diab Ibrahim Al-Masri \(Deif\)](#)

Pre-Trial Chamber I of the ICC issued a warrant of arrest for Mr Mohammed Diab Ibrahim Al-Masri, commonly known as ‘Deif’, for alleged crimes against humanity and war crimes committed on the territory of the State of Israel and the State of Palestine from at least 7 October 2023. The Chamber found reasonable grounds to believe that Mr Deif the highest commander of the military wing of Hamas (known as the al-Qassam Brigades) at the time of the alleged conduct, is responsible for the crimes against humanity of murder; extermination; torture; and rape and other form of sexual



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violence; as well as the war crimes of murder, cruel treatment, torture,; taking hostages; outrages upon personal dignity; and rape and other form of sexual violence. The Chamber found reasonable grounds to believe that Mr Deif bears criminal responsibility for the aforementioned crimes.

[Situation in the State of Palestine: ICC Pre-Trial Chamber I rejects the State of Israel’s challenges to jurisdiction and issues warrants of arrest for Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant](#)

Pre-Trial Chamber I of the ICC issued two decisions rejecting challenges by the State of Israel (‘Israel’) brought under articles 18 and 19 of the Rome Statute. It also issued warrants of arrest for Mr Benjamin Netanyahu and Mr Yoav Gallant. The arrest warrants have been issued for their conduct concerned the activities of Israeli government bodies and the armed forces against the civilian population in Palestine, such as the disruption of the ability of humanitarian organisations to provide food and other essential goods to the population in need in Gaza.

## **UNITED NATIONS *AD HOC* TRIBUNALS**

[Opening of Januzi Et Al. Trial](#)

The hearings in the trial of Sabit Januzi, Ismet Bahtijari, and Haxhi Shala, initially scheduled for 14 and 15 November 2024, have been postponed at the request of the parties. Further updates will be provided. The accused are charged with obstructing official duties and intimidation during criminal proceedings. The indictment alleges that between 5–12 April 2023, Januzi and Bahtijari, under Shala’s direction, met with a witness on two occasions to pressure them to withdraw or withhold evidence, using threats and promises of benefits.

## **AFRICAN COURT ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES’ RIGHTS**

[Tembo Hussein v. United Republic of Tanzania \(application no. 001/2018\)](#)

Tembo Hussein is a national of the United Republic of Tanzania. At the time of filing the Application he was serving a death sentence, having been tried, convicted and sentenced to death by hanging for the offence of murder. He alleges violation of his rights during the proceedings before the national courts. The Application is filed against the United Republic of Tanzania. Tembo Hussein was arrested on September the 27<sup>th</sup> 2006 and charged with murder for the killing of Angelina Hungwi. He was convicted of murder and sentenced to death by hanging by the High Court sitting at Tabora on 11 October 2013. Tembo Hussein filed an appeal before the Court of Appeal sitting at Tabora which was



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dismissed on 15 March 2014, later, an application for review of the Court of Appeal's decision filed by Tembo Hussein, before the Court of Appeal, was dismissed on 7 August 2017. Tembo Hussein alleges that proceedings against him before domestic courts breached the rule against bias. Accordingly, Tembo Hussein alleges that Tanzania violated his right to a fair trial, guaranteed under Article 7 of the Charter and the right to equality before the law and to equal protection of the law guaranteed under Article 3(1) and (2) of the Charter. On 11 February 2019, the Court issued an order for provisional measures proprio motu directing Tanzania to stay the execution of the death sentence against Tembo Hussein, subject to the decision on the main Application. The Court orders that the proceedings in this application.

## **INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

### [SRFOE Reaffirms Urgent Call to Combat Violence and Impunity in Crimes Against Journalists](#)

On the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists, the SRFOE of the IACHR reaffirms its urgent call for States to strengthen their efforts to prevent, investigate, and punish crimes against journalists in the region. According to the Office of the Special Rapporteur at least 537 journalists have been killed in the Americas since 1998, highlighting the persistence of systematic violence against media workers and communicators, this situation of extreme vulnerability is further aggravated when crimes remain unpunished, potentially leading to the recurrence of similar acts. The IACHR and its Special Rapporteur have pointed out that violence against journalists represents one of the most extreme violations of freedom of expression, not only because it threatens the life and integrity of victims but also due to multiple adverse effects. On the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists, the Office of the Special Rapporteur emphatically calls on States to strengthen their efforts in prevention, protection, and justice procurement in these cases. Without decisive action to combat impunity, ensure journalists' safety, and guarantee the full exercise of freedom of expression, democracies will continue to face the silencing of voices essential to public debate and society's right to be informed.

### [The SRFOE condemns acts of violence against journalists and media outlets in Mexico](#)

The SRFOE of the IACHR condemns the acts of violence against journalists and media outlets in Mexico, calling on the State to carry out diligent and exhaustive investigations, as well as to identify and punish those responsible, expressing also its willingness to dialogue with government representatives on the serious situation of violence faced by journalists in the country. In 2024, the



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Office of the Special Rapporteur has recorded with concern the murder of at least seven media professionals. The Office of the Special Rapporteur emphasizes that the murder of journalists is the most extreme form of censorship and cannot be tolerated in democratic societies, and that the duty of States to prevent and investigate these crimes, punish those responsible and guarantee adequate reparations to the victims. The SRFOE has pointed out that these acts generate an effect of self-censorship that inhibits journalistic work and compromises the right of people to access and share information and ideas of all kinds. In addition to these crimes, there are reports of aggressions, threats, kidnappings and attacks against the press and its facilities. Journalists and communicators have directly informed the Office of the Special Rapporteur about deficiencies in the effectiveness of the protection measures assigned, as well as the weaknesses of the Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists. This set of factors has generated a generalized feeling of fear, insecurity and lack of protection among press professionals, which in many cases has led them to self-censor, go into exile or abandon their profession. This, in turn, has contributed to the formation of zones of information silence in the country. Faced with these facts, the SRFOE reiterates its call to the Mexican authorities to carry out diligent, thorough and impartial investigations in cases of crimes against journalists and attacks on the media. The Office of the Special Rapporteur takes note of the efforts of the Government of Mexico to strengthen the Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, as well as initiatives at the federal and state levels to address violence against journalists. However, monitoring and reports received by this Office suggest that these efforts may be insufficient. The Office of the Special Rapporteur expresses its willingness to dialogue with government representatives to learn about the actions being implemented and to contribute to the strengthening of the measures adopted by the new administration to address the phenomenon of violence against journalists in Mexico. In this context, it also urges the Mexican State to maintain and deepen the efforts of the Working Group for the Strengthening of the Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists.

## [IACHR: Trinidad and Tobago Must Adopt Urgent Measures to Prevent Gender-Based Violence Against Women](#)

The IACHR expresses its concern over the situation of gender-based violence against women in Trinidad and Tobago and calls on the State to adopt urgent measures to prevent and eradicate it, particularly that perpetrated in the family and intimate partner context. These measures should incorporate a gender and intersectional approach, ensure the effective protection of survivors and promote the transformation of socio-cultural patterns that normalize gender-based violence against women.



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## COUNCIL OF EUROPE

[Moldova's well-managed presidential run-off offered voters genuine choice, despite legal deficiencies, unbalanced media coverage and impact of foreign interference, international observers say](#)

The 3 November second round of Moldova's presidential election was administered efficiently and offered voters a choice between genuine political alternatives. Candidates were able to campaign freely, but the campaign was marked by an increase in negative rhetoric, often spread through online social networks. The challenges posed by foreign interference and vote-buying continued to reverberate during the run-off campaign. The run-off was held amid continuing investigations into interference from abroad and vote-buying schemes intended to influence the outcomes of the first-round, and the constitutional referendum that was held simultaneously. Overall, the media provided voters with sufficient information to make an informed choice, including through a debate between the two candidates. Election day was generally calm and well-organized, and the voting process was assessed overwhelmingly positively by the observers, with only a few procedural problems noted. The vote count and tabulation were assessed positively overall.

[Congress Secretary General in Armenia discusses progress in local democracy ahead of monitoring mission](#)

As Armenia prepares to celebrate the 28<sup>th</sup> local Self-Government Day on November the 11<sup>th</sup> 2024, Congress Secretary General Mathieu Mori visited Armenia and participated in a public discussion on social policy in the context of decentralisation. In bilateral meetings with Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure Gnel Sarosyan and Minister of Labour and Social Issues Narek Mkrchtyan, the authorities confirmed their commitment to further decentralisation as a means of strengthening local government and delivering quality public services accessible to citizens.

[The Council of Europe at 75 'can be proud of its achievements' says PACE President at Rome ceremony](#)

"The Council of Europe can be proud of its achievements", PACE President Theodoros Rousopoulos has said at a special ceremony to mark the 75th anniversaries of the Council of Europe and NATO. The President traced the early history of the Council and summarised its achievements. "The values it establishes and promotes through its various bodies set moral and political benchmarks not only in Europe but around the world."



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### [Moldova: Anti-Racism Commission calls for further action against hate speech and hate crime](#)

In a new report the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) praises the Moldovan authorities for their efforts to improve the equality and hate crime legislation, and better integrate migrants. However, further action is needed to address hate speech and hate crime as well as inequalities, including against Roma.

### [Azerbaijan is multi-ethnic but possibilities to enjoy national minority rights must be improved, say Council of Europe experts](#)

Restrictions on the freedoms of expression, assembly and association limit the possibilities of persons belonging to national minorities to effectively enjoy their rights, and immediate action must be taken to address the situation following the Karabakh conflict. The Advisory Committee urges the authorities to create the political, legal and practical conditions necessary for safe, unimpeded and sustainable return of displaced Armenians from Karabakh and to set up a dedicated mechanism to deal with property issues. The authorities are also urged to inventory, protect and preserve all Armenian religious and cultural sites and artefacts and to investigate all allegations of vandalism, destruction and alteration of historic and cultural monuments and cemeteries used by ethnic Armenians in the region. The Advisory Committee also urges the authorities to refrain from and condemn firmly any manifestation of intolerance and spreading of ethnic hatred against persons belonging to the Armenian community, in order to facilitate the reconciliation process.

## **EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

### [Miron v. Romania \(application no. 37324/16\)](#)

In the case of Miron v. Romania (application no. 37324/16) the Court held, that there had been no violation of Article 6 § 1 of the Convention. The applicant alleged that the trial court which had convicted her had not taken evidence directly from either the witnesses or her co-defendants. The Court found that the courts' use of a recording of the other witness testimonies in reaching their decisions was compatible with the requirements of the applicant's right to a fair trial and had not impaired the essence of that right. Moreover, the availability of the audio recording in addition to the written record of those other witness testimonies had, in the present case, been able to provide an additional safeguard.

### [Lindholm and the Estate after Leif Lindholm v. Denmark \(application no. 25636/22\)](#)



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The applicants are Lilian Elisabeth Lindholm and the estate of her late husband, Leif Ingolf Lindholm, both are/were Jehovah's Witnesses. Ms Lindholm's husband died on October the 21<sup>st</sup> 2014, after having had spent the previous month in hospital due to a two-metre fall through a roof, first disoriented and then unconscious. The case concerns a blood transfusion administered to him, despite his carrying a "blood-refusal card" at the time of the accident. Ms Lindholm unsuccessfully brought legal proceedings to complain that the blood transfusion had been against her husband's will. In 2022 the Supreme Court found in particular that doctors had avoided giving Mr Lindholm blood until they had considered it necessary to save him; and, that there had been a legal basis for that decision in national law, which provided that a patient's refusal of a blood transfusion had to be "current and informed". The applicants complain that the Supreme Court judgment finding the blood transfusion lawful, despite Mr Lindholm's previously stated refusal of the procedure on account of his religious beliefs, was in violation of Articles 8 and 9 of Convention. The Court found no violation of Article 8 read in the light of Article 9

*Zahariev v. North Macedonia (application no. 26760/22)*

The applicant, Borislav Zahariev, is a Bulgarian national who was born in 1965 and lives in Sofia. The case concerns the indictment of Mr Zahariev in February 2013 and his subsequent trial for abuse of office and tax evasion. He asserts that he had immunity from prosecution at that time as his wife was an official at the Bulgarian Cultural and Information Centre attached to the Bulgarian embassy in Skopje. Relying on Article 6 § 1 of the Convention, Mr Zahariev complains about the way the courts of North Macedonia dealt with his arguments related to his alleged immunity from prosecution under the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. The Court found a violation of Article 6 § 1, holding that the finding of a violation constituted sufficient just satisfaction for the non-pecuniary damage sustained by Mr Zahariev.

*Rybářství Třeboň a.s. and Rybářství Třeboň Hld. a.s. v. the Czech Republic (applications nos. 18037/19 and 33175/22)*

The applicants, Rybářství Třeboň a.s. and Rybářství Třeboň Hld. a.s., are two companies registered in the Czech Republic. In the 1990s some fishponds and land located in Novosedly nad Nežárkou and Lutová which had been seized by the government from two Catholic Church parishes were privatised and came into the ownership of the applicant companies. The case concerns the annulment without compensation of the privatisation and the property's return to the Catholic Church. Relying on Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 to the Convention and Article 6 § 1 of the Convention, the applicant companies



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complain of the dispossession of the property, and of inadequate reasoning in the relevant court decisions. The Court found no violation of Article 1 of Protocol No. 1

### *Bakradze v. Georgia* (application no. 20592/21)

The applicant, Maia Bakradze, is a Georgian national who lives in Tbilisi. She was a judge on the Tbilisi Court of Appeal and a founding member, and the President of a non-governmental organisation called The Unity of Judges of Georgia. The case concerns Ms Bakradze's failure in two judicial competitions in Georgia, which she alleges was the result of discrimination due to her role in The Unity of Judges of Georgia. That NGO had as its aim the promotion of independence and transparency of the judiciary in the State. She relies on Articles 10 and 11 of the Convention in conjunction with Article 14, and on Article 1 of Protocol No. 12 to the Convention. The Court found a violation of Article 14 in conjunction with Articles 10 and 11 and has ordered Georgia to pay €4'500 in non-pecuniary damage to Ms Bakradze.

### Applications concerning independence and impartiality of Polish Supreme Court struck out

In its decisions in the cases of *Dudek and Lazur v. Poland* and *I.G. v. Poland* and 19 other applications (applications nos. 41097/20, 39577/22, 42668/21 and 19 others) the Court has struck the applications off its list of cases. The cases concerned proceedings involving the applicants decided by formations of the Polish Supreme Court, which they alleged had not been "independent and impartial". The applications came in the context of the reorganisation of the judicial system in Poland in what had been described by many observers as a "rule-of-law crisis". In *Dudek and Lazur* the Court accepted unilateral declarations by the Government, including an admission of a breach of Article 6 of the Convention and an offer of compensation. In the other cases, the Court accepted the friendly settlement agreed between the parties. As there was no reason to continue examination, the Court struck the applications off its list. Currently around 700 cases against Poland on the Court's docket concern the alleged breach of the right to an "independent and impartial tribunal established by law".

### *M.I. v. Switzerland* (application no. 56390/21)

The applicant, Mr M.I., is an Iranian national who was born in 1990 and lives in Zurich. Mr M.I. is a homosexual and alleges that he had to leave Iran when his family found out about his sexuality. The case concerns the Swiss authorities' rejection of his asylum application. They concluded that he would not be at risk if expelled to Iran if he continued to live his private life there in a discreet manner upon his return. His expulsion was stayed in November 2022 pending the proceedings before the



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European Court, following its granting his request for interim measures under Rule 39 of the Rules of Court. Relying on Articles 2 and 3, the applicant alleges that he would face a real and imminent risk of arrest, ill-treatment or death at the hands of the authorities, of his family or of society at large. He argues that the Swiss authorities failed to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the risks of his expulsion to a country where homophobia and discrimination against LGBTI persons was widespread. He also relies on Articles 13 and 14. The Court found a violation of Article 3 – should the applicant be returned to Iran without a fresh assessment of the risk of ill treatment. The Court held that the finding of a violation constituted sufficient just satisfaction for the non-pecuniary damage sustained by the applicant and that the respondent State was to pay him €7'000 for costs and expenses.

*Afgan Mammadov v. Azerbaijan (application no. 43327/14)*

The applicant, Afgan Mammad oglu Mammadov, is an Azerbaijani national who was born in 1962 and lives in Baku. The applicant was a lawyer and a member of the Azerbaijani Bar Association (“the ABA”). The case concerns his disbarment in 2013. Disciplinary proceedings had been brought against him after he had made a complaint to the Presidium of the ABA accusing another lawyer of corruption and abuse of power – notably selling warrants to the investigating authorities. He had refused to participate in those proceedings in person, calling into question the legitimacy of the Presidium and its chairman. The national courts endorsed the Presidium’s findings that the applicant’s actions had been incompatible with advocacy and legal-professional ethics. Relying on Article 10 of the Convention, the applicant alleges that the disciplinary proceedings against him and his disbarment were in violation of his rights. Lastly, relying on Article 46 of the Convention, the applicant asked the Court to request that his membership of the ABA be restored. The Court found a violation of Article 10, and it held Azerbaijan to pay the applicant €5'000 in non-pecuniary damage and €1'000 in regard to costs and expenses.

## EUROPEAN COUNCIL

[Israel/Lebanon: Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the ceasefire agreement](#)

The EU welcomes the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Lebanon, praising the mediation efforts of France and the United States. This is a significant achievement that the EU and its Member States have consistently advocated for. It is essential that the ceasefire holds to ensure the safety of people in both countries and allow displaced individuals to return home. Both sides must commit to



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respecting each other's sovereignty and ceasing all cross-border attacks. The EU urges regional and international stakeholders to support the ceasefire, aiming for lasting regional peace and stability. The EU and its Member States will mobilize instruments, including the European Peace Facility, to support the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL in implementing UNSC resolution 1701. Additionally, the EU will continue its humanitarian assistance and early recovery efforts to aid the Lebanese people, especially displaced individuals, while strengthening Lebanese state-building. Lebanese leaders must seize this opportunity to resolve the political and economic crisis. The EU calls for the swift election of a President, ending the two-year vacancy, to rebuild a strong, sovereign, and prosperous Lebanese State.

## **EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

### [Human rights breaches in Hong Kong, Iran and Cambodia](#)

The European Parliament adopted three resolutions addressing human rights issues in Hong Kong, Iran and Cambodia. Hong Kong: MEPs demand the immediate release of pro-democracy activists and journalists, including Jimmy Lai and Chung Pui-Ken, convicted under the National Security Law. They call for the law's repeal, condemning its violation of international law and fundamental freedoms. MEPs urge sanctions on Chinese and Hong Kong officials, a review of Hong Kong's trade status, and action against its role in evading international sanctions on Russia, Iran, and North Korea. Iran: The Parliament condemns the repression of women, highlighting Ahoon Daryaei's case and calling her psychiatric confinement an act of torture. MEPs demand the repeal of discriminatory laws, the dismantling of the morality police, and the release of detained women's rights defenders and minorities. They reiterate the call to designate the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organization and insist on granting UN access to investigate human rights abuses. Cambodia: MEPs call for an end to the repression of civil society and demand the release of political prisoners. They urge reforms to Cambodia's laws on trade unions and NGOs to align with international standards and stress that respect for human rights is a prerequisite for trade and investment. Companies sourcing from Cambodia must ensure human rights due diligence in supply chains. They also recommend reassessing Cambodia's eligibility for the "Everything but Arms" trade scheme.

## **EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE COOPERATION (EUROJUST)**

### [Action against criminal network smuggling Syrian migrants via Balkan route: 29 arrests](#)



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Eurojust and Europol have assisted the German authorities with the coordinated takedown of a smuggling network, which was illegally transporting Syrian migrants via the Balkan route. In total, 29 suspects involved in the smuggling of at least 750 migrants to Germany and the United Kingdom were arrested. Twenty arrests were made yesterday during a coordinated action. Last month, the Serbian authorities already arrested and charged nine suspects involved in the same organised crime group (OCG). Migrants paid between EUR 4 500 and EUR 12 000 per person to be transported irregularly to Europe by the OCG. At this stage, it is difficult to make an adequate assessment of the OCG's overall profits. The network arranged the further transport of Syrian migrants who had arrived on European shores mainly via the Balkan route, through Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, Czechia and Austria. On some journeys, around one hundred Syrian migrants were transported to their final destinations in Germany and the United Kingdom at the same time. The transports to the United Kingdom took place via the Netherlands, using different types of vehicles. Routes were often changed to avoid detection by law enforcement.

During the action day, 25 places were searched and vehicles, cash, various communication devices and data carriers were seized. More than 450 police officers were deployed in the countries involved as part of the operation.

## EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE (OLAF)

### JCO KHIONE: OLAF and EU Customs Authorities crack down on illegal trade in refrigerant gases

The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) led Joint Customs Operation KHIONE aimed at disrupting the illegal trade in refrigerant gases smuggled into the European Union. OLAF coordinated Joint Customs Operation KHIONE, codenamed after Greek goddess of snow, alongside customs authorities from 16 Member States as well as Türkiye and Ukraine. It focused on identification and monitoring of consignments of refrigerant gas for which the suspicion existed that the goods would be smuggled into the EU. The operation included inspections of warehouses and distributions centres where the illicit refrigerant gases were often stored for resale on the black market. Refrigerant gases are potent greenhouse gases that contribute significantly to climate change. Under the EU's F-Gas (fluorinated greenhouse gases) Regulation, strict quotas are imposed on the import and use of HFCs, with the goal of gradually phasing down their use in favour of more environmentally friendly alternatives. However, demand for these gases remains high, creating an opportunity for criminal networks to exploit the system and circumvent the rules. The operation underscores the importance of cooperation between European institutions and national authorities.



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## **EUROPEAN PUBLIC PROSECUTOR OFFICE (EPPO)**

### [Croatia: EPPO starts investigation against Minister of Health and seven others over medical robotics procurement](#)

The European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) in Zagreb (Croatia) has initiated an investigation against eight individuals, including the Minister of Health and the directors of two hospitals in Zagreb, and two companies on suspicion of accepting and giving bribes, abuse of position and authority and money laundering.

It is alleged that, between June 2022 and November 2024, the presumed head of this criminal group teamed up with four other members of a criminal organisation to secure undue financial gains for two companies where they served as business managers. Their goal was to ensure that one of the companies was allowed to sell medical robotic devices for several hospitals in Croatia. They are suspected of giving or promising monetary rewards to relevant stakeholders of the public health system in exchange for securing financing for the procurement of these devices at unreasonably inflated prices. They are also suspected of giving or promising rewards for the manipulation of the public procurement process in order to exclude market competition in favour of the targeted company, by creating technical documentation in which they incorporated requirements for the medical robotic devices that only that company could meet. To cover their traces, the members of the criminal association issued invoices with unreliable content on behalf of one of the suspected companies and thus created the appearance that the undue pecuniary gain was legitimately and legally transferred to the account of another suspect company. All suspects are presumed innocent until proven guilty in the competent Croatian courts.

## **EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGION**

### [Regions call for more support to address climate emergency at local and global level](#)

Following the devastating floods in Spain, which claimed over 200 lives, and other climate-related catastrophes that have caused extensive damage across Europe in recent months, local and regional leaders have emphasized the critical role of cohesion policy funds in strengthening resilience and implementing adaptation measures at the local level. Additionally, with negotiations at the COP29 climate summit entering their decisive final days, members of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) called for a bold agreement to bolster climate action both locally and globally.



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The CoR plenary session commenced today with a moment of silence to honor the victims of the floods in Spain. Statements were delivered by the presidents of the regions of Valencia, Castilla-La Mancha, Andalusia, and Catalonia, the areas most impacted by the disaster. Their remarks highlighted the urgent need for enhanced coordination among various levels of government and appealed for greater EU support for affected communities and territories, as well as for other regions and cities to strengthen their defenses against the severe impacts of climate change. On Thursday, the CoR is set to adopt an emergency resolution on Regional Emergency Support to Reconstruction (RESTORE) and EAFRD measures to assist Member States hit by natural disasters. The resolution urges the European Commission to swiftly propose additional financial resources for the impacted areas and to allocate increased funding to improve the readiness and resilience of regions and municipalities in the next multiannual EU financial framework.

President Vasco Alves Cordeiro, who led the CoR delegation at COP29 in Baku last week, extended his condolences to the victims of the Spanish tragedy and emphasized that prioritizing preparedness for the climate emergency must remain central to our agenda. Members who attended COP29 addressed the plenary, with Juan Manuel Moreno Bonilla (ES/EPP), President of Andalusia, joining remotely from Baku. As the negotiations approach their critical conclusion, and with certain national governments contemplating withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, the delegation reiterated the pivotal role of local and regional authorities in combating climate change and stressed the need for adequate financial support at the global level. The assembly of EU regions and cities also approved updated recommendations for revitalizing the EU's climate strategy. The opinion, prepared by Markku Markkula (FI/EPP), President of the Helsinki Region, advocates for the incoming European Commission to spearhead a systematic transformation in which cities and regions play a leading role in driving innovation, engaging citizens in climate action, and fostering sustainable production and consumption practices. It further highlights the importance of creating new mechanisms to mobilize significant private investment and enhancing the efficiency of EU cohesion and research funding to support both mitigation and adaptation initiatives related to climate change.

## **EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR CYBERSECURITY (ENISA)**

### [Prioritising eHealth cybersecurity against emerging challenges](#)

This year, the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) organises the 9th edition of the eHealth Security conference, in collaboration with the National Cybersecurity Centre of Hungary and Semmelweis University.



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The rising digitalisation and interconnectedness in healthcare has significantly increased the sector's exposure to cyber threats and raised concerns regarding medical data being targeted by cybercrime. According to the 2024 ENISA Threat Landscape report, 487 incidents out of the total reported incidents analysed refer to the health sector, with 45% of them being ransomware attacks and 28% being data breaches.

Highlighted by the recent regulatory developments, such as the NIS2 transposition and the forthcoming European Health Data Space (EHDS), cybersecurity in the health sector and issues surrounding health data sharing have gained prominence. The subject was further emphasised in the political guidelines set for the European Commission 2024-2029, which commit the new Commission to developing a European action plan for the cybersecurity of hospitals and healthcare providers.

## COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (CJEU)

### Facilitation of unauthorised entry carried out for a humanitarian purpose

Directive 2002/90 requires Member States to penalize individuals who intentionally assist third-country nationals in unlawfully entering their territory. However, the directive allows Member States to refrain from imposing penalties if the assistance is provided for humanitarian purposes. Italian law implements this directive by criminalizing the facilitation of unauthorized entry, regardless of financial gain, and imposes strict penalties, including imprisonment (2–6 years) and a €15,000 fine per person. The Bologna District Court must decide on the case of a third-country national who facilitated the unauthorized entry of her daughter and niece using false documents. The court questions the directive's validity, arguing that it disproportionately infringes fundamental rights, particularly where the facilitation arises from humanitarian motives or family obligations.

In his opinion, Advocate General Jean Richard de la Tour makes several points:

- **Scope of Criminalization:** The facilitation of unauthorized entry applies to any act where a person deliberately assists such entry, regardless of motives.
- **Legality of Criminalization:** The directive aligns with Article 49(1) of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, as it forms part of harmonized EU and national legislation. The directive itself does not create criminal liability; Member States must ensure the criminalization meets standards of legal clarity and proportionality.
- **Principle of Proportionality:** The criminalization of unauthorized entry facilitation is proportionate under Article 49(3). It addresses public order, border security, and the risks faced by migrants. While acts of assistance may not always be profit-driven, surveillance is



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necessary to prevent abuses disguised as humanitarian or familial acts. National courts must assess motives and determine if overriding interests justify exoneration, exemption, or sentence reduction.

- National Judicial Discretion: Italian law must allow courts to balance interests and impose proportionate sentences. The principle of proportionality precludes systems where courts cannot distinguish between acts committed out of humanity or necessity and those driven by criminal intent or financial gain.
- The Advocate General emphasizes that it is for national courts to ensure proportionality, especially in cases involving humanitarian motives.



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