

## INTRODUCTION

This **thirtieth *Annual Report*** of the **Network of Concerned Historians (NCH)** contains news about the domain where history and human rights intersect, in particular about the censorship of history and the persecution of historians, archivists, and archaeologists around the globe, as reported by various human rights organizations and other sources. It mainly covers events and developments of 2023 and 2024.

*Disclaimer.* The fact that the NCH presents this news does *not* imply that it shares the views and beliefs of the historians and others mentioned in it.

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<a href="#">2014</a>	<a href="#">2013</a>	<a href="#">2012</a>	<a href="#">2011</a>	<a href="#">2010</a>	<a href="#">2009</a>	<a href="#">2008</a>	<a href="#">2007</a>	<a href="#">2006</a>	<a href="#">2005</a>
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## AFGHANISTAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2016, 2018, 2021–2023.

In July 2023, restrictions were imposed on the Ashura commemoration (a day of mourning for Husayn, the Prophet Muhammad’s grandson), which is mainly observed by Shia Muslims, citing security reasons. On 28 July, four Shia Hazaras, including a child and a woman, were killed and six others were wounded by Taliban forces shooting to disperse Ashura commemorations in Ghazni province.<sup>1</sup>

In late July 2023, following a decree by the Ministry of Higher Education, the National Examination Authority (NEXA) banned all female students, including students of history, archaeology and archival sciences, from participating in the university entrance examination for the next academic year [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*].<sup>2</sup>

In February 2024, researchers from the University of Chicago’s Center for Cultural Heritage Preservation analyzed satellite imagery of archaeological sites and identified 162 ancient settlements (mainly mounds, fortresses, caravanserais, and canal systems) that had been “devastated at an astonishing rate of one a week” between 2018 and 2021, a practice that continued at 37 sites under the Taliban regime. The sites had been bulldozed to allow systematic looting. Most of the sites identified were in northern Afghanistan’s Balkh region, the heartland of the ancient civilization of Bactria (third millennium BCE–first century CE). It was unclear who was behind the destruction. The Taliban’s Acting Deputy Minister for Information and Culture, Atiqullah Azizi, rejected the claims that looting was taking place. The Taliban’s defense ministry also said that three people had been arrested in September 2023, accused of trying to smuggle a stash of antiquities worth about US\$27 million (£21.4 million), including statues, mummies, a golden crown, a book and swords, and that the items were handed over to the national museum while an investigation was continuing.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 72.

<sup>2</sup> “[Only Male Students Will be Taking University Entrance Examination: Official](#),” *TOLO News* (19 July 2023).

<sup>3</sup> Kawoon Khamoosh, “[Afghanistan: Archaeological Sites ‘Bulldozed for Looting’](#),” *BBC News* (21 February 2024).

## ALBANIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 2012, 2015–2023.

On 3 July 2023, the European Union ambassador to Tirana, Christiane Hohmann, urged members of parliament from the Partia Socialiste e Shqipërisë (PSSH; Socialist Party) to review proposed changes to two laws on archival access to documents about the Communist-era security police Sigurimi (1944–1991) [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2023*], urging them to be aligned with criteria outlined by the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission. The legal changes had been criticized for allegedly targeting former President Ilir Meta (in office between 2017–2022) and for not including the declassification of and access to all the Sigurimi documents [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*].<sup>4</sup>

See also North Macedonia.

## ALGERIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 2001–2019, 2021–2023.

In August 2023, authorities promulgated Law 23–14 on information. It included vague and broad provisions that banned journalists from, among other things, publishing “false information” or information that might “advocate colonialism, undermine national memory and the symbols of the war of national liberation [1954–1962].”<sup>5</sup>

On 20 August 2023, according to the National Committee for the Liberation of Detainees, at least forty activists were arrested to prevent a peaceful gathering in Ifri in eastern Algeria to commemorate the 1956 Soummam Congress, a historic event in Algeria’s fight for independence (1954–1962). They were released later that day. There was no official commemoration day for the Soummam Congress, despite its importance in formulating a set of foundational principles for the to-be independent Algerian State. Some argued that this was the case, because one of the principles – “the primacy of politics over the military” – could be read as a criticism of the power of the military in current-day Algerian politics.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Gjergj Erebara, “[Albania Ruling Party Postpones Controversial Lustration Legislation](#),” *Balkan Insight* (10 July 2023).

<sup>5</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 75.

<sup>6</sup> Belkacem Elguettaa, “[The Military’s Political Role in the New Algeria](#),” *Carnegie Middle East Center* (17 March 2021); Hichem Aboud, “[Algeria: Prison for a Journalist and a Researcher, and Kidnapping of a Former Gendarme](#),” *Atalayar* (24 August 2023); Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 76.

On 28 August 2023, Swiss judicial authorities issued an indictment against former Defense Minister (1990–1993) Khaled Nezzar for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the Civil War (1992–2002) under the principle of universal jurisdiction [See NCH *Annual Report 2013, 2018*]. The trial was considered the only chance at justice for victims of the Civil War, also due to the 1999 Civil Concord Law and the 2006 Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation providing amnesty for security forces and members of armed groups [See NCH *Annual Reports 2006–2009, 2011–2013, 2017, 2019*].<sup>7</sup>

## ANGOLA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2003, 2009, 2017, 2020, 2023.

In August 2023, the government-led Comissão para a Implementação do Plano de Reconciliação em Memória das Vítimas dos Conflitos Políticos (CIVICOP; Commission for the Implementation of Measures of Reconciliation and Memory for the Victims of Political Conflict) stirred up controversy after a delegation set out for a televised mission to locate the remains of disfavored members of the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA; National Union for the Total Independence of Angola; the current opposition party), who were killed on the orders of UNITA founder and former leader Jonas Savimbi (1934–2002) during the Civil War (1975–2002). CIVICOP had been established by presidential decree in 2019 to provide reconciliation and honor the victims of the Civil War. Although President João Lourenço was praised for the initiative, considered by many as long overdue, CIVICOP was also criticized for the overrepresentation of government officials, its short mandate (initially two years) and lack of transparency, the influence of the M27 group [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*], and the lack of attention to other Civil War victims. The delegation was perceived by some as further evidence that CIVICOP was mostly focused on crimes committed by UNITA members, strengthened by the fact that UNITA representatives at CIVICOP claimed not to have been aware of the delegation’s mission. Additionally, the fact that the mission was led by the head of the security services (SINSE) was considered a sign of the politicized nature of CIVICOP, even more so since the SINSE had played a leading role in the 27 May 1977 massacre [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*].

On 15 January 2024, various United Nations Special Rapporteurs expressed concern about the reported excessive representation and influence of government officials in CIVICOP and the lack of transparency and communication in its operations, as well as about the reports regarding the reliability

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<sup>7</sup> Julia Crawford, “[Assad and Nezzar: Swiss Justice Finally Moving, but Not so Convincingly](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (2 October 2023).

of the process of exhumation and identification of remains of alleged victims of the 27 May 1977 killings.<sup>8</sup>

## ARGENTINA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997–2023.

In the lead-up to the 22 October 2023 presidential election, far-right candidate Javier Milei repeatedly questioned the number of victims of the military dictatorship (1976–1983), during which approximately 30,000 people were killed. His comments were severely criticized by NGOs and human rights activists, including the Madres de Plaza de Mayo (Mothers of May Square), a human rights association set up in 1977 to demand the return of their disappeared children [See NCH *Annual Reports* 2001, 2003, 2012–2015, 2017]. Milei’s running mate, Victoria Villarruel, had been a defense lawyer for multiple military officials accused of human rights violations during the dictatorship, and had publicly attacked groups such as the Madres. Villarruel’s father had participated in so-called anti-guerrilla operations, and her uncle had been an intelligence officer in a clandestine prison. Milei and Villarruel’s remarks had immediate effects, when in early October vandals spray-painted “Videla volv e” (“Videla come back,” after the military dictator Jorge Rafael Videla [in power between 1976–1981]) on a Buenos Aires college. After Milei won the elections on 22 October, Villarruel was expected to become minister of defense, security and justice. On social media, Milei supporters sent photos of green Ford Falcons without license plates (the vehicles used by security forces in abductions under the dictatorship) to people critical of Milei.<sup>9</sup>

On 17 March 2024, the non-fiction publishing house Marea (established 2003), specializing in journalism and human rights, became the victim of a troll attack on its Facebook account. The aim of the attack was to discredit the biography *Delia, basti n de la resistencia* (Delia, bastion of resistance), by Soledad Iparraguirre, about Delia Giovanola (1926–2022), one of the founders of the group Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo (Grandmothers of May Square). The attack, which consisted of more than 800 hate messages and comments, occurred on the eve of the Day of Commemoration for Truth and Justice on 24 March (commemorating the 24 March 1976 military coup). The majority of these messages defended the military dictatorship (1976–1983), supported the new President Javier Milei, contained hate speech against the

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<sup>8</sup> Maarten van Munster & Joris van Wijk, “[Polarized Reconciliation in Angola](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (9 October 2023); United Nations Special Rapporteurs, [Allegations Letter AL AGO 3/2023](#) (15 January 2024).

<sup>9</sup> Tom Philips & Uki Go ni, “[Argentina’s Far-Right Frontrunner Reopens Wounds of Dictatorship](#),” *Guardian* (19 October 2023); Amy Booth, “[Argentina’s Milei Ushers in Atrocity Denialism, Trolling and Attacks on the Media](#),” *Index on Censorship* (22 November 2023).

Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo, and included threats of disappearance or death against the editor or the contributors.<sup>10</sup>

On 27 March 2024, Defense Minister Luis Petri dismissed ten out of thirteen collaborators of the Equipos de Relevamiento y Análisis (EryA; Survey and Analysis Teams of the army archives). Established in 2010, the EryA had combed the archives for forensic evidence of crimes against humanity committed under the military dictatorship (1976–1983). Petri declared that the military had been demonized for their operations during the dictatorship and that EryA’s tasks would be taken over by officials of his ministry. The measure, widely criticized at home and abroad, was seen as an attempt by the new government of President Javier Milei to halt the process of transitional justice in the country.<sup>11</sup>

On 11 April 2024, the highest criminal court, Cámara Federal de Casación Penal, ruled that the Shia militant organization Hezbollah carried out the 1994 bombing of the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA) Jewish community center [See NCH *Annual Reports 2011, 2014, 2016–2021*], following a “political and strategic design” of the Iranian government. The ruling was hailed as “historic” by representatives of the Jewish community and was considered to open the possibility of filing lawsuits against the Iranian regime.<sup>12</sup>

*See also* Italy, Mexico.

## ARMENIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2005–2006, 2010, 2014–2016.

*See also* Azerbaijan, Türkiye.

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<sup>10</sup> Silvina Frieria, “[Un atentado digital contra una editorial especializada en derechos humanos](#),” *Página 12* (20 March 2024); PEN International, “[Argentina: Milei’s First Six Months Threaten Freedom of Expression and Cultural Rights](#),” *Ifex* (10 June 2024).

<sup>11</sup> Luciana Bertoia, “[Denuncia internacional contra Luis Petri por obstaculizar las investigaciones sobre los crímenes de la dictadura](#),” *Página 12* (7 April 2024); International Council on Archives Section on Archives and Human Rights, “Note of Concern about the Measures Taken by the Argentine Government Concerning the Archives of the Ministry of Defense” (12 April 2024); “[Javier Milei desmantela un área clave que aporta pruebas en juicios por los crímenes de la dictadura argentina](#),” *El País* (15 April 2024); Luciana Bertoia, “[Otra denuncia internacional contra Luis Petri por obstaculizar las investigaciones por crímenes de la dictadura](#),” *Página 12* (17 April 2024).

<sup>12</sup> “[Argentina Court Blames Iran for Deadly 1994 Bombing of Jewish Center](#),” *Guardian* (12 April 2024).

## AUSTRALIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 2001, 2003, 2007–2009, 2014–2016, 2018–2023.

On 8 August 2023, the Western Australia government scrapped the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act, which had come into force on 1 July, because its “complicated regulations” and placed a “burden on everyday property owners.” The decision was criticized by the Puutu Kunti Kurrama and Pinikura (PKKP) Aboriginal Corporation. The law had been drafted following the 2020 destruction of the 46,000-year old Juukan Gorge caves by the Rio Tinto mining firm [See NCH *Annual Reports 2020–2022*].<sup>13</sup>

On 25 January 2024, on the eve of Australia Day (marking the anniversary of the arrival of Britain’s first settlers on 26 January 1788), a statue of Captain James Cook (1728–1779) was cut down and a monument for Queen Victoria (1819–1901) covered in red paint in Melbourne. The vandals wrote “The colony will fall” on the Cook statue’s plinth. In 2018 the statue (erected in 1914) had been graffitied with the words “no pride” and an Aboriginal flag placed next to it; in 2022 it had been splashed in red paint. Many indigenous Australians and others said that it was wrong to celebrate a date which represented the displacement and dispossession of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; they called Australia Day “Invasion Day” [See NCH *Annual Reports 2016, 2018* under Australia; NCH *Annual Report 2020* under New Zealand; NCH *Annual Report 2017* under United Kingdom].<sup>14</sup>

On 14 May 2024, former military lawyer and whistleblower David McBride ([1964]–) was sentenced to five years and eight months of prison on charges of stealing Commonwealth property, breaching the Defence Act and disclosing confidential information that endangered national security and foreign policy. McBride had helped expose allegations of Australian war crimes in Afghanistan between 2007 and 2013 and pleaded guilty to stealing and leaking military secrets revealing these crimes to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), calling it his moral duty after his internal complaints had been in vain [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2023*]. In 2017, ABC journalists Dan Oakes and Sam Clarke had published a series of reports (“The Afghan Files”) based on McBride’s leaked records. After a 2019 raid of ABC’s headquarters to seize documents, a case was started against the journalists, then dropped as not being in the public interest.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> [“Western Australia to Scrap New Law Protecting Aboriginal Heritage Sites,”](#) *Al Jazeera* (8 August 2023).

<sup>14</sup> Hannah Ritchie, [“Captain Cook Statue Vandalised in Melbourne on Eve of Australia Day,”](#) *BBC News* (25 January 2024); Hannah Ritchie, [“Australia Day: The ‘Quiet Rebranding’ of a Controversial National Holiday,”](#) *BBC News* (26 January 2024).

<sup>15</sup> Tiffanie Turnbull, [“David McBride: Australian Army Whistleblower Jailed for Leaking Documents,”](#) *BBC News* (14 May 2024); [“The Afghan Files,”](#) *ABC* (10 July 2017; updated 11 July 2017).

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*See also* Russia, United Kingdom.

## AUSTRIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2001, 2005–2007, 2009, 2018, 2020.

## AZERBAIJAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 1997–1998, 2008–2013, 2015–2023.

### *Nagorno-Karabakh*

A June 2024 report by Caucasus Heritage Watch found a 75% increase in the destruction of cultural heritage sites and a 29% increase in sites under threat in the Nagorno-Karabakh region since ethnic Armenian forces agreed to be disarmed and disbanded in a ceasefire agreement in September 2023. These included the destruction of the Ghuze T'agh Cemetery near Garabulag/Aknaghbyur; the Ghazanchetsots Cemetery in Shusha/Shushi; and the threat to the Ptkat'aghi Vank' cemetery and its adjacent seventeenth-century church and to the Surb Astvatsatsin village cemetery and its adjacent nineteenth-century church by the construction of a mosque.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ian Lindsay and Others, *Caucasus Heritage Watch: Monitoring Report #7* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Caucasus Heritage Watch, 2024), 7–8, 17, 27, 35; Michael Ertl, "[Nagorno-Karabakh: Conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenians Explained](#)," *BBC News* (28 September 2023).

## BAHRAIN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2004, 2008–2012, 2015–2017, 2021–2022.

In February 2023, the government summoned several family members of Bahrainis imprisoned or killed in the past by government forces and warned them against protesting around the anniversary of the 2011 uprising.<sup>17</sup>

On [10] November 2023, historian Jassim Hussein Al-Abbas was arrested on charges of “working to stir up sedition and threaten civil peace.” Two days later he was detained for one week. His arrest was reportedly related to a 2 October 2023 lecture about the Ancient History of Bahrain and the emergence of Islam and Shiism. Following the 7 October 2023 Hamas attacks on Israel and the ensuing Israel–Gaza War (2023–), he had also authored a series of articles about crimes committed by Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip on his popular blog “Sanawat Al-Jareesh.” In December 2023, authorities issued Al-Abbas with a travel ban.<sup>18</sup>

## BANGLADESH

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999, 2001, 2004–2006, 2008–2019, 2021–2023.

On 5 June 2022, the NGO Affairs Bureau refused to renew the license of Odhikar – a human rights group set up in 1994 to record extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances allegedly perpetrated by security forces and working closely with the United Nations (UN) – accusing it of “tarnishing the image of the state to the world.” In December 2021, Odhikar had documented alleged human rights violations by the Rapid Action Battalion, which had been accused of involvement in hundreds of disappearances and nearly 600 extrajudicial killings since 2018. The bureau’s decision was fiercely criticized by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

On 14 September 2023, a Dhaka court sentenced the two leaders of Odhikar, Adilur Rahman Khan and Nasiruddin Elan, to two years in prison on charges of “publishing and circulating false information, hurting religious sentiments and undermining the image of the State” in relation to a report on extrajudicial

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<sup>17</sup> Amnesty International, *The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024* (London: AI, 2024), 90–91.

<sup>18</sup> “[Authorities Arrest Owner of ‘Sanawat Al-Jareesh’ Account after Summoning Him to CID](#),” *Bahrain Mirror* (11 November 2023); “[BCHR: MoI Statement on Jassim Al-Abbas Arrest against Law](#),” *Bahrain Mirror* (15 November 2023); “[ADHRB Condemns Arrest of Bahraini Researcher Jassim Al Abbas, Demands His Release](#),” *Bahrain Mirror* (15 November 2023); “[Security Authorities Arrest 4 Citizens, Renew Detention of Ayatollah Qassim’s Grandson and Prevent Jassim Al Abbas from Traveling](#),” *Bahrain Mirror* (12 December 2023).

killings they compiled in 2013.

On 30 August, the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, human rights groups stated that more than 600 people had disappeared since the Awami League government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had come to power in 2009. On 5 September, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk called on authorities to create a “safe and enabling environment” for civil society organizations and activists.<sup>19</sup>

On 7 October 2022, during a memorial ceremony for a student who was beaten to death in 2019 by the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL; the student wing of the ruling party Awami League), BCL members attacked members of the political student group Chhatra Odhikar Parishad with sticks and metal pipes. At least twelve people were injured and fifteen detained.<sup>20</sup>

On 23 July 2024, Hridoy Chandra Tarua ([2002/3]–2024), a third-year student of the Chittagong University history department, died in a Dhaka hospital after being hit on 18 July by bullets while protesting at Baddarhat, a suburb of Chittagong, during the so-called quota protests. The protests, which cost at least 300 lives (the tally on 4 August 2024), started peacefully in early July 2024 but turned violent on 16 July. They were directed against the government jobs quota system that disproportionately benefited the descendants of the 1971 liberation war fighters.<sup>21</sup>

## BARBADOS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

On 1 August 2023 – also known as Emancipation Day marking the end of slavery in the British Empire in 1834 – Barbados, Jamaica and other former British colonies renewed their calls for reparations and fuller recognition of the legacies of slavery [See NCH *Annual Report 2022*]. The call followed a conference in late July, attended by representatives from Caribbean and African nations in Bridgetown, on the effects of slavery, colonialism and racism on Black people around the world. Already in 2013 the

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<sup>19</sup> Faisal Mahmud, [“Bangladesh Scrapping Rights Group’s Licence a ‘Chilling Message’](#),” *Al Jazeera* (8 June 2022); Faisal Mahmud, [“‘Wait Never Ends’ for Families of the Forcibly Disappeared in Bangladesh](#),” *Al Jazeera* (30 August 2023); [“UN ‘Concerned’ by Harassment of Human Rights Defenders in Bangladesh](#),” *Al Jazeera* (5 September 2023); [“Bangladesh Court Jails Prominent Rights Activists for Two Years](#),” *Al Jazeera* (15 September 2023).

<sup>20</sup> Scholars at Risk, [Free to Think 2023: Report of the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project](#) (New York: SAR, 2023).

<sup>21</sup> [“Quota Reform Movement: Death Toll Reaches 197 as CU Student Dies under Treatment](#),” *Prothom Alo* (24 July 2024); [“Quota Protests: Ctg Student, 2 Others Die from Wounds](#),” *Daily Star* (24 July 2024).

Caribbean Community (CARICOM) had set up a reparations committee and formulated a ten-point plan calling for a formal apology by the former colonizer, debt relief, and support for public health services. In February 2023, the African Union decided to create a similar “program of action.”<sup>22</sup>

## BELARUS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–2000, 2005–2007, 2009–2011, 2014–2023.

On 5 January 2022, President Aliaksandr Lukashenko signed the Law “On the Genocide of the Belarusian People.” The law stated that “atrocities committed by Nazi criminals and their accomplices ... during the Great Patriotic War [1941–1944] and the post-war period” amounted to genocide, as they “aimed at the systematic physical destruction of the Belarusian people.” The law was introduced by deputy Lilia Ananich “in order to preserve historical memory, strengthen national security and combat falsification of events and results of World War II,” and obliged the Council of the Republic to “preserve the memory of the victims of the genocide of the Belarussian people,” “to condemn the genocide ... at the international level,” and to “disseminate reliable information ... as well as to educate citizens.” The law was severely criticized for establishing an official monopoly on the interpretation of history, stifling the freedom of historical debate, creating tools to criminally prosecute contrary opinions; using vague language (leaving open, for example, whether discussion of crimes committed by Soviet authorities or antisemitism in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics [USSR] could be prosecuted as “denial”), and equating crimes committed against the Belarussian people to the Holocaust.

In August 2023, officials of the Education Ministry issued recommendations for the 2023/2024 academic year. These included advising teachers to discuss the “genocide of the Belarussian people” to students of grades V–XI, including in non-history courses; and selecting material for courses as varied as Social Studies and History, computer science and chemistry, that contributed to “the formation of a sense of patriotism... [and] respect for the historical past.” The Education Ministry further adopted a resolution outlining excursions for students grades I–IX to foster “patriotism” and “respect for the cultural and historical heritage of their people,” the “Great Patriotic War” and the “genocide of the Belarusian people” [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2023*].<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> “[Former British Colonies Renew Calls for Reparations on Emancipation Day](#),” *Al Jazeera* (1 August 2023).

<sup>23</sup> Liza Rozovsky, “[Belarus under Fire for Law Equating Holocaust With Nazi Crimes against Nationals](#),” *Haaretz* (19 December 2021); “[‘On the Genocide of Belarusian People’ – Legal Overview of the New Law](#),” *Human Constanta* (13 July 2022); “[Теноцид - тут, патриотизм - там: как идеология проникает в школьные предметы](#),” *Euroradio* (9 August 2023); Asveta, *Digest of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya’s Office on Education and Science* (August 2023), 6–7; Asveta, *Digest of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya’s Office on Education and Science* (September 2023), 6.

The dismissal, arrest and detention of historians and history producers, in the context of the protests against President Aliaksandr Lukashenko's landslide 9 August 2020 re-election, which the opposition and many governments had denounced as fraudulent, continued throughout 2023 [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2023*]:

- On 23 May 2023, ten people were detained in Navapolatsk, including Viktor Chareuka, a candidate of history and associate professor at the Polatsk State University Department of History and Tourism.<sup>24</sup>
- In late July 2023, Alexei Batyukov, historian and former director of the Mogilev History Museum, was detained. The reasons for his detention were unknown. He had previously been detained in 2020 and fined for “participation in an unauthorized mass event.” In 2021, his contract at the Mogilev History Museum was not renewed.<sup>25</sup>
- On 16 August 2023, officers from the State Security Committee of the Republic of Belarus (KGB) detained at least seven people at the National Historical Archives of Belarus, including the Deputy Director for Research and the heads of several departments.<sup>26</sup>
- On 31 August 2023, journalist, historian and cultural activist Larysa Shchyryakova ([1973]–), was sentenced by the Homel Regional Court to 3,5 years in a general-security penal colony for discrediting Belarus and promoting “extremist activities of the Viasna information resource and the Belsat extremist formation,” under the form of allegedly disseminating disinformation online. She was also fined 1,365 euros. The trial, which lasted four days, was held behind closed doors [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2023*].<sup>27</sup>

In June 2023, libraries across the country removed the books from 2015 Nobel Laureate in Literature and oral historian Svetlana Alexievich from the shelves [See NCH *Annual Reports 2016, 2021, 2023*].<sup>28</sup>

On 17 August 2023, the prosecutor's office in Minsk announced that two poems, *The Winds are Floating* and *Conversation of an Elderly Man*, by Vincent Dunin-Martynkevich (1808–1884), relating to the January 1863 nationalist uprising against the Russian Empire, were declared “extremist materials,” along with a foreword to the author's collected works by literary critic Yazep Yanushkevich [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2023*].<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> M. Zafranski & L. Dauhulevich, [State of Belarusian Academia 2023](#) (No place: Belarusian Students' Association [2024]), 9.

<sup>25</sup> Asveta, *Digest of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's Office on Education and Science* (August 2023), 4.

<sup>26</sup> Asveta, *Digest of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's Office on Education and Science* (August 2023), 4.

<sup>27</sup> “[Belarus: Solidarity with Larysa Shchyryakova, Imprisoned on Fabricated Charges](#),” *European Federation of Journalists* (6 September 2023).

<sup>28</sup> PEN International, [War, Censorship and Persecution: PEN International Case List 2023/2024](#) (London: PEN, 2024), 74.

<sup>29</sup> Robert Greenall, “[Belarus Declares 19th Century Nationalist Poems ‘Extremist’](#),” *BBC News* (17 August 2023).

On 25 January 2024, the Republican Council for Historical Policy signed a memorandum of understanding with the Interdepartmental Commission for Historical Education of the Russian Federation with the aim of creating unified history textbooks for elementary and high school education. Senior analyst of education at the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies in Lithuania, Andrei Lavruhin, called the memorandum a “colonization of history” and warned for the erasure of historical periods that would not fit the idea of the historical affinity of Russian and Belarussian people, such as the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (1236–1795).<sup>30</sup>

*See also* Poland.

## **BELGIUM**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002–2004, 2006, 2008, 2010–2012, 2021–2023.

On 30 January 2024, more than two hundred historians and others called upon the federal Parliament to officially publish the final 700–page report of the parliamentary Commission spéciale chargée d’examiner l’État Indépendant du Congo et le passé colonial de la Belgique au Congo, au Rwanda et au Burundi (Special Commission on the Colonial Past), including the numerous hearings and extensive experts’ reports on which it was based. On 19 December 2022, the commission’s work had ended inconclusively because no agreement could be reached over the 128 political recommendations in its report [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2023*]. Although meanwhile the report was ready for official publication, two parliamentarians who were commission rapporteurs refused to officially endorse the report because they disagreed with the recommendations, particularly the issuance of an official apology for colonial atrocities.<sup>31</sup>

## **BELIZE**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2014.

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<sup>30</sup> “[Эксперт: Агульня з Расіяй падручнікі па гісторыі — гэта прэтэнзія на будаўніцтва новай імперыі.](#)” *Novy Chas* (5 February 2024).

<sup>31</sup> “[L’Appel de plus de 200 personnalités pour la publication du rapport décolonisation.](#)” *Le Soir* (30 January 2024); Ketrin Johecová, “[Belgium Still Struggling with Its Colonial Ghosts.](#)” *Politico* (30 March 2024).

**BENIN**

Precious *Annual Report* entries: 2023.

**BOLIVIA**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2007, 2009–2023.

**BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2023.

In a report published on 23 November 2023, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Dunja Mijatović concluded that there was serious backsliding in efforts to deal with the past over recent years across the region of the Former Yugoslavia. Key challenges and trends that underpinned this backsliding were the denial of genocide and other atrocities, the glorification of war criminals and attempts to restore the credibility of persons convicted of war crimes in the 1990s, including at the highest political levels. Other negative trends included an increase in hate speech and interethnic violence, the teaching of polarized narratives about the past and segregation in schools, and a long-lasting failure to address the root causes of the wars of the 1990s. She added that local academics and historians contributed to keeping divisive and nationalist ideologies alive and engaged actively in historical revisionism, particularly around World War II, but also in the relativization of the atrocities committed in the region in the 1990s. Their media interventions aimed to legitimize narratives of ethnic-centered victimhood through a facade of pseudo-scientific and historical knowledge. An example cited was the Bosnian Serb Center for War Research, War Crimes and the Search for Missing Civilians. The Commissioner also noted that academics and historians had already played a critical role in crafting and spreading nationalist ideologies at the end of the 1980s and during the wars of the 1990s and that some of the twisted historical narratives they helped create were still reflected today, albeit to a lesser extent, in some textbooks and history teaching in the region.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, *Issue Paper: Dealing with the Past for a Better Future: Achieving Justice, Peace and Social Cohesion in the Region of the Former Yugoslavia* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2023), 59, 64; Vuk Tesija, "[Failure to Confront Wartime Past Imperils Peace in Balkans: Council of Europe](#)," *Balkan Insight* (23 November 2023).

On 23 May 2024, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution A/78/L.67/Rev.1, designating 11 July as the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica, by a vote of 84 in favor to 19 against, with 68 abstentions. The resolution, which had been initiated by Germany and Rwanda and co-sponsored by more than a dozen countries, condemned denial of the Srebrenica genocide, the glorification of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, and urged member states to “preserve the established facts, including through their educational systems.” The voting was initially to take place on 15 May, but drew strong opposition from Serbian President Alexander Vučić and Republika Srpska President Milorad Dodik. The latter denied that a genocide had taken place and said his administration would not recognize the resolution. At Montenegro’s request, the resolution contained a clause saying that culpability for the genocide is “individualized and cannot be attributed to any ethnic, religious or other group or community as a whole.” A previous resolution had been vetoed at the Security Council by Russia in 2015.<sup>33</sup>

*See also* Montenegro.

## **BOTSWANA**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2018.

## **BRAZIL**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999, 2001–2003, 2005–2023.

On 28 December 2023, a law curtailing indigenous people’s right to reclaim lands from which they were displaced came into force. The law upheld the *marco temporal* (timeframe) theory, stating that indigenous people could only lay claim to lands they physically occupied at the time of the promulgation of the current Constitution on 5 October 1988 – despite the fact that many indigenous groups had been displaced from their ancestral lands before that date, notably during the military dictatorship (1964–1985).

In September 2023, the Supreme Court had ruled the law unconstitutional in a 9–2 vote, and President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva had attempted to veto parts of the law. The environmental watchdog Climate

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<sup>33</sup> United Nations General Assembly, [International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica](#) (A/78/L.67/Rev.1; 20 May 2024); “[A UN Resolution on the Srebrenica Genocide Ignites Old Tensions](#),” *Al Jazeera* (14 May 2024); “[UN Approves Resolution to Commemorate 1995 Srebrenica Genocide](#),” *Al Jazeera* (23 May 2024).

Observatory dubbed it the “indigenous genocide law” for the detrimental impact it would have on indigenous lands, due to the rights of mining, dam construction and agricultural and infrastructural projects it stipulated. indigenous organizations, leftist political parties, and the Minister for indigenous peoples vowed to ask the Supreme Court to block the law.<sup>34</sup>

On 25 January 2024, the Mãe Oxum monument, a historical and cultural site of followers of Afro-Brazilian spiritual traditions in Porto Alegre, was vandalized with graffiti saying “pagan” and “Christ lives.” The perpetrators were not identified by the police. Bàbá Hendrix de Òrúnmilà, a historian, afro-theologian and babalorixá (priest), called the rise in violence against these traditions “religious racism.”<sup>35</sup>

On the sixtieth anniversary of the 1964 coup d’état that installed a military dictatorship (1964–1985), 31 March 2024, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva blocked attempts to organize official commemorations. During a cabinet meeting, Minister of Human Rights Silvio Almeida had proposed a ceremony and awareness campaign with the slogan “Without remembrance there is no future.” However, Lula had reportedly given explicit orders against any national commemoration, supposedly to avoid upsetting the military, some of whose senior figures were on trial for plotting to overturn the 2023 Presidential election results and keeping former President Jair Bolsonaro in power. In an interview leading up to the anniversary, Lula stated: “I’m more worried about the January 2023 coup [when supporters of Bolsonaro stormed the Presidential palace, Congress and the Supreme Court] than the 1964 one ... This belongs to history now.” Human rights groups, academics and relatives of the victims of the military dictatorship expressed disbelief over Lula’s decision. João Roberto Martins Filho, a history professor at the Universidade Federal de São Carlos, said that the decision had caused “unanimous dissatisfaction” among academics. Relatives of the deceased were further angered, because a special investigative commission into political deaths and disappearances, which had been dismantled by Bolsonaro shortly before his departure from office, had not yet been reinstated by Lula.<sup>36</sup>

## BULGARIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–1998, 2002, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015–2017, 2019–2020, 2022.

On 12 December 2023, authorities decided to remove the Monument to the Soviet Army in Sofia, citing

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<sup>34</sup> Constance Malleret, “[Controversial Brazil Law Curbing Indigenous Rights Comes into Force](#),” *Guardian* (28 December 2023).

<sup>35</sup> Simone Dias Marques, “Silencing the Faithful,” *Index on Censorship*, 53 no. 1 (2024), 26–27.

<sup>36</sup> Tom Philips, “[Lula Dismays Relatives of Dictatorship’s Victims by Ignoring Coup Anniversary](#),” *Guardian* (29 March 2024).

the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces. The monument had been erected in 1954, to commemorate the entering of the Red Army in Bulgaria in 1944. The authorities' decision was accompanied by demonstrations in favor and against the removal. Already in [February] 2022, a plaque had been vandalized and part of the monument painted red. It was unclear what would happen with the 37-meter high statue.<sup>37</sup>

## **BURKINA FASO**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001, 2004, 2005, 2013, 2015–2018, 2021–2023.

## **BURUNDI**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999, 2001–2003, 2005–2015, 2017–2021, 2023.

In March 2023, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission [See *NCH Annual Report 2023*] began public hearings. Its president told the media that the role of these hearings was to “reinforce and confirm the truth already found in the archives through mass graves and testimonies, but also in doctrine and published works” and to allow more people to express themselves. Accusations of bias against the commission, due to its focus on the 1972 Ikiza (“Catastrophe”) or Ubwicanyi (“killings”) – a series of mass killings, often characterized as a genocide, by the Tutsi dominated armed forces against primarily the Hutu population, leading to the deaths of between 100,000 and 300,000 people – continued.<sup>38</sup>

*See also* Belgium.

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<sup>37</sup> Svetoslav Todorov, “[After 30 Years of Debate, Bulgaria Dismantles Red Army Monument](#),” *Balkan Insight* (12 December 2023).

<sup>38</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World's Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 114.

## CAMBODIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999–2018, 2020–2023.

## CAMEROON

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2010, 2012–2014, 2016, 2020–2021, 2023.

## CANADA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2000, 2002–2003, 2005–2006, 2008–2009, 2012–2023.

In 2023, the Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites recommended the creation of a legal framework to protect unmarked graves and support indigenous-led search operations for missing children. Despite a legal agreement in April 2023 providing a framework for the search of burial sites, the Kanien'kehá:ka Kahnistensera (Mohawk Mothers) experienced difficulties in accessing the necessary archives and a lack of collaboration from stakeholders [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2022*].<sup>39</sup>

In May 2024, the graphic novel, *Rocking Spurs: The Anti-Bullying Tour*, investigating indigenous identity in Canada and produced within the framework of a third-year history seminar at Dalhousie University, Halifax, taught by historian Lisa Binkley, prompted outrage from Métis groups. The Métis – one of the three indigenous peoples, alongside Inuit and First Nations, recognized in the Constitution Act – said that the novel, sent to schools across Canada, undermined their history and represented an attack on their sovereignty. The Métis National Council would ask schools to remove the novel. There was a controversy over the question whether the Eastern Métis, to which Binkley belonged, should be recognized as Métis.<sup>40</sup>

*See also* China, Eritrea, Poland, Rwanda, Syria, United States.

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<sup>39</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World's Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 120–121.

<sup>40</sup> Leyland Cecco, [“‘One Hell of a Storm Is Coming’: Canadian Graphic Novel about Indigenous Identity Sparks Outrage,”](#) *Guardian* (19 May 2024).

## CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2006–2009, 2011–2012, 2014–2023.

On 21 September 2023, former President François Bozizé was among twenty individuals who were sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment with hard labor on charges of “conspiracy,” “rebellion,” and “murder.” The indictment did not specify the timeframe within which the accusations had taken place. Bozizé, who had become president through a coup d’état in 2003, lived in exile in Chad and later Guinea-Bissau after he had been deposed in 2013 by the Union des Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement (Union of Democratic Forces for Unity) in the context of the Bush War (2004–2007) and the Civil War (2012–). In exile, Bozizé presided over the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement (Coalition of Patriots for Change), a coalition consisting mostly of Christian and animist armed groups. In August 2022, the United Nations Independent Expert on Human Rights in the Central African Republic had urged all parties to engage in political dialogue and to ensure accountability under the auspices of the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission (CVJRR).

On 27 February 2024, the Bangui-based Cour pénale spéciale de la République Centrafricaine (CPS; Special Criminal Court), a hybrid court set up in 2015 and backed by the United Nations, issued a separate arrest warrant for Bozizé on charges of crimes against humanity, including murder, enforced disappearance, torture, rape and other inhumane acts, committed by his presidential guard between February 2009 and March 2013. The CPS called on the government of Guinea-Bissau to extradite Bozizé.

On 16 June 2023, the CPS had passed its first decision on reparation for victims in the trial against three members of the Return, Reclamation and Rehabilitation armed group (known as 3R). The defendants had been convicted in November 2022 of crimes against humanity and war crimes committed during the massacre of at least 46 civilians in 2019. In October 2023, they were ordered to pay compensation to the victims or their heirs.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, “[Central African Republic: UN Expert Calls for End to Impunity, Urges Armed Groups to Lay Down Arms](#)” (press release; 5 August 2022); “[CAR Authorities: Former President Bozize Sentenced in Absentia](#),” *VOA Africa* (22 September 2023); “[Central African Republic Sentences Ex-President Bozizé to Life Imprisonment](#),” *Africa News* (22 September 2023); “[Arrest Warrant Issued for Central African Republic’s Former President over Crimes against Humanity](#),” *Guardian* (30 April 2024); Amnesty International, *The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024* (London: AI, 2024), 32, 123.

## CHAD

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2012, 2015–2016, 2023.

On 20 October 2023, the first year anniversary of the 2022 crackdown on demonstrators protesting against the extension of military rule (2021–), Amnesty International called on the government to ensure justice by conducting an investigation and fair trials. The Commission nationale des droits de l’homme (CNDH; National Human Rights Commission) estimated that 128 people died during the crackdown, with nearly a thousand injured. On 23 November 2023, the National Transitional Council adopted a general amnesty law for those involved in the demonstrations and the ensuing crackdown. Though presented as a step toward “national reconciliation,” the law sparked outcry among NGOs and the opposition who accused the government of shielding police and military personnel from accountability for the crackdown.<sup>42</sup>

In early January 2024, the headquarters of the Direction de la documentation et de la sécurité (DDS; Directorate of Documentation and Security), the political police of dictator Hissène Habré (1982–1990), were demolished despite the government’s repeated promises to thousands of victims–survivors of the dictatorship to turn it into a site of memory and museum.<sup>43</sup>

See also Central African Republic

## CHILE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998–2023.

In 2023, a bill was introduced to conditionally lift the secrecy over the testimonies of torture victims collected by the Valech Commission, a national commission mandated to document political detentions and torture during the Pinochet era (1973–1990) [See NCH *Annual Reports 2010–2012, 2016, 2018*].<sup>44</sup>

In July 2023, Amira Arratia, head of the Documentation Department of Televisión Nacional de Chile (TVN; National Television of Chile), was celebrated because fifty years previously, she had started organizing the rescue of TVN audiovisual archives at risk of destruction. The footage regarded events

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<sup>42</sup> “[Chad: Amnesty Calls for ‘Justice’ One Year after Bloody Demonstration](#),” *Africa News* (20 October 2023); “[Chadians Seek Justice One Year after Deadly Protests against Junta](#),” *Africa News* (21 October 2023); “[Demonstration Bloodily Repressed in Chad in 2022: General Amnesty](#),” *Africa News* (24 November 2023).

<sup>43</sup> “[Au Tchad, le siège de la DDS rasé, la ‘piscine’ d’Hissène Habré encore présente](#),” *RFI* (5 January 2024).

<sup>44</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 126.

during the Unidad Popular government (1970–1973) and the repression under the military dictatorship (1973–1990).<sup>45</sup>

In the lead-up to the fiftieth anniversary of the 11 September 1973 coup that overthrew and led to the death of the democratically elected President Salvador Allende (1908–1973) and established a junta (1973–1990) led by General Augusto Pinochet (1915–2006), the government of President Gabriel Boric called on the United States to release the remaining classified records related to the coup that were “important for us to reconstruct our own history.” The call was supported by the director of the National Security Archive’s Chile Documentation Project Peter Kornbluh [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*, under United States].

On 25 August 2023, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) released the President’s Daily Brief (PDB) of 11 September 1973, considered among the most historically relevant PDBs related to the coup, and partially released another PDB dated 8 September 1973. The move was hailed, but pleas for further declassification remained.

On 30 August 2023, the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, Boric unveiled the National Search Plan, which confirmed Chile’s state responsibility for uncovering the whereabouts of the remains of the disappeared and the identity of perpetrators [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*]. The quest for justice was complicated by the 1978 amnesty law, that had exonerated perpetrators and accomplices of all crimes committed between 11 September 1973 and 10 March 1978.<sup>46</sup>

In the lead-up to the 11 September 2023 anniversary of the 1973 coup, it emerged that a growing number of people approved the coup, while some even justified, minimized or denied the crimes that had taken place under the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship (1973–1990). On 22 August 2023, far-right Member of Parliament Gloria Naveillan had dismissed the sexual crimes of the dictatorship as an “urban legend,” notwithstanding massive evidence to the contrary.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Joana Carvalho, “[‘Una heroína anónima que permitió resguardar la memoria’: INDH realiza homenaje a Amira Arratia](#),” *Diario UChile* (10 July 2023).

<sup>46</sup> Peter Kornbluh, “[Chile’s Coup at 50: Kissinger Briefed Nixon on Failed 1970 CIA Plot to Block Allende Presidency](#),” *National Security Archive* (8 August 2023); Peter Kornbluh, “[After 50 years of Secrecy, Archive Applauds Release; Calls on Biden Administration to Declassify Remaining Secrets on Chile](#),” *National Security Archive* (25 August 2023); “[Chile Launches Push to Find People Disappeared in Pinochet Era](#),” *Al Jazeera* (30 August 2023); John Bartlett, “[Chile Announces Much-Anticipated Plan to Search for Pinochet’s Victims](#),” *Guardian* (30 August 2023); Lucia Newman, “[‘Like a Phantom’: Chile Grapples with Ghosts of the Disappeared](#),” *Al Jazeera* (8 September 2023); Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2024: Events of 2023* (New York: HRW, 2024), 146; Amnesty International, *The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024* (London: AI, 2024), 126.

<sup>47</sup> Marcial Cabezas González, “[Diputada Naveillán aseguró que denuncias por violencia sexual en dictadura son ‘parte de la leyenda urbana’](#),” *T13* (23 August 2023); Eva Vergara & Daniel Politi, “[A Half-Century after Gen. Augusto Pinochet’s Coup, Some in Chile Remember the Dictatorship Fondly](#),” *AP News* (5 September 2023); Charis McGowan, “[Chile Marks 50 Years since Pinochet’s Brutal Coup](#),” *Al Jazeera* (11 September 2023); Juan Carlos Ramírez Figueroa, “Pinochet’s Ghost Still Haunts,” *Index on Censorship*, vol. 52 no. 3 (2023), 18–20; Amnesty International, *The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024* (London: AI, 2024), 125.

On 11 September 2023, marking the fiftieth anniversary of the 1973 coup that overthrew and killed democratically elected President Salvador Allende (1908–1973) and established a junta (1973–1990) led by General Augusto Pinochet (1915–2006), a peaceful procession of people commemorating the victims of the dictatorship was attacked by a group of vigilantes, throwing stones at the protesters and attempting to break into the presidential palace La Moneda. At the cemetery housing a memorial to the victims of the dictatorship, some mausoleums were damaged. Fifty years after the coup, there still existed no law to protect memorial sites or a national memory archive (although the government had announced a National Memory and Heritage Policy for the protection of memorial sites related to the Pinochet era).

President Gabriel Boric, along with all living former presidents, signed a commitment to promote and defend human rights “regardless of political ideology.” All political parties in the Senate supported a declaration on the promotion of democracy and human rights while acknowledging the impossibility of a “common vision of history.”<sup>48</sup>

In September 2023, the 1973 documentary *The Battle of Chile, the Struggle of an Unarmed People*, in which director Patricio Guzmán and his film crew gave an account of the events that took place in Chile between February 1972 and September 1973 in three parts (The Insurrection of the Bourgeoisie; The Coup d’État; and “The People’s Power”), was released fifty years after the film was shot. After the coup of 11 September 1973, amid raids on the homes of the film crew, eighteen hours of footage had been moved to the Swedish embassy and, after the military had been dissuaded from confiscating it at Valparaíso port, shipped as diplomatic cargo by boat to Sweden via Cuba. While several crew members went into exile, Jorge Müller Silva ([1947]–1974), in charge of camera and photography, was arrested and disappeared on 29 November 1974: the documentary was dedicated to his memory.<sup>49</sup>

*See also* United Kingdom.

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<sup>48</sup> “[Chile March to Commemorate Pinochet Victims Marred by Violence](#),” *Al Jazeera* (10 September 2023); Amnesty International, “[Chile: 50 Years since the Coup d’État, Exercising Historical Memory Is Vital for the Country’s Future](#)” (Press release; 8 September 2023); Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2024: Events of 2023* (New York: HRW, 2024), 146; Amnesty International, *The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024* (London: AI, 2024), 39, 126.

<sup>49</sup> Global Voices Advox, “[An Emblematic Documentary Salvaged during Chile’s Dictatorship Has Been Restored](#),” *Ifex News* (12 September 2023).

## CHINA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–2023.

At the end of August 2023, search engine platform Baidu rolled out its chatbot Ernie. Presented as Baidu’s answer to ChatGPT, it was prone to censorship, responding to actions that entered the date of the Tiananmen Square massacre (4 June 1989), the name of imprisoned former senior Communist Party figure Bo Xilai, or the name of the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo who died in prison, with “Let’s talk about something else.”<sup>50</sup>

In early September 2023, two people were arrested in Shanxi province, after they had widened a gap in the Great Wall (dating back to the third century BCE), a UNESCO World Heritage Site, as a shortcut to their work, reportedly causing “irreversible damage.” The section in Shanxi province was built during the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). They were charged with destroying a cultural relic.<sup>51</sup>

On 16 October 2023, the book distributor Dook Media Group recalled the second edition of the biography *Chóngzhēn: Qínzhèng de Wángguó Jūn* (The Chongzhen Emperor: Diligent Ruler of a Failed Dynasty; Wenhui publishing house; first edition 2016) by Chen Wutong (1935–2023). The Chongzhen Emperor (personal name: Zhu Youjian) (1611–1644) was the last emperor of the Ming dynasty; when rebels reached the capital Beijing, he committed suicide. It was speculated that the book’s withdrawal was due to a new title and cover design, which could be construed as critical of Xi Jinping. The blurb read: “The diligent ruler of a failed dynasty, Chongzhen’s repeated mistakes were the result of his own ineptitude. His ‘diligent’ efforts hastened the nation’s destruction.” The cover art also featured a noose wrapped around the first character in Chongzhen’s name, a reference to his suicide. Since the Chinese constitution was amended in 2018 to allow Xi Jinping to maintain power indefinitely, allusions to “Xi as emperor” abounded. He was compared, among others, to Yuan Shikai (see NCH *Annual Report 2018*).<sup>52</sup>

On 22 November 2023, Human Rights Watch reported that under the header of “mosque consolidation,” the government closed, destroyed and repurposed many mosques in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region and Gansu Province in a systematic effort to curb the practice of Islam since President Xi Jinping had called for the “sinicization” of religions in 2016. For example, since 2020, an estimated 1,300

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<sup>50</sup> Stephen McDonnell, “[Elusive Ernie: China’s New Chatbot Has a Censorship Problem](#),” *BBC News* (9 September 2023).

<sup>51</sup> “[Two People Arrested in China for Smashing a Hole in the Great Wall](#),” *Al Jazeera* (6 September 2023).

<sup>52</sup> Cindy Carter, “[Xi Parallels Suspected Behind Withdrawal of Book on Ill-Fated Chongzhen Emperor](#),” *China Digital Times* (18 October 2023).

mosques in Ningxia had been closed or converted, a third of the total in the region. Additionally, local authorities had reportedly installed surveillance systems in the remaining mosques. Since 2017, about two-thirds of the mosques in Xinjiang had also been damaged or destroyed [See NCH *Annual Reports 2020–2023*].<sup>53</sup>

In January 2024, a court in Changchun, Jilin, sentenced historian Yuan Keqin ([1956]–), charged with espionage in 2020, to six years' imprisonment [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2022*].<sup>54</sup>

Authorities were reportedly erasing the memory of the so-called White Paper protests of November 2022, when thousands took to the streets across China to protest against strict Covid-19 controls in an unprecedented wave of civil disobedience. Some reportedly chanted: “Down with the Chinese Communist Party,” while others held up blank sheets of paper to mock the regime’s censorship. Weeks later, the government abruptly ended its “zero-Covid” policy. However, it began censoring online reporting of the event and silencing those who dared to document or commemorate it. Among them was Chen Pinlin, a film director who released a film about the demonstrations on YouTube and X, both inaccessible in China, to mark the first anniversary of the protests. Arrested in Shanghai in January 2024, Chen was charged on 18 February with “picking quarrels and provoking trouble,” which carried a sentence of up to five years in prison.<sup>55</sup>

On 14 May 2024, Amnesty International reported that the government threatened Chinese students overseas when they took part in commemorations for the 1989 Tiananmen Square student-led protests, the 2019 pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong, the 2022 Sitong Bridge protest, or the 2022 White Paper protests. It also used threats against relatives at home to control and silence them.<sup>56</sup>

### *Hong Kong*

In September 2023, Zeng Yuxuan ([2000]–), a mainland Chinese postgraduate law student at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, pleaded guilty to sedition and was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for planning to display a banner depicting the Pillar of Shame, a statue commemorating

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<sup>53</sup> Kelly Ng, “[China: Human Rights Watch Accuses Beijing of Closing and Destroying Mosques](#),” *BBC News* (22 November 2023); “[China: Mosques Shuttered, Razed, Altered in Muslim Areas](#),” *Human Rights Watch* (22 November 2023).

<sup>54</sup> Suvendrini Kakuchi, “[Scholar’s Jailing for Spying Set to Dampen Bilateral Ties](#),” *University World News* (16 May 2024).

<sup>55</sup> Jessie Lau, “[China Erases Memory of ‘White Paper’ Protests in Further Threat to Journalism](#),” *Guardian* (1 May 2024).

<sup>56</sup> Amnesty International, “[On My Campus, I Am Afraid](#)”: *China’s Targeting of Overseas Students Stifles Rights* (London: AI, 2024), 5, 13–14, 36.

the Tiananmen crackdown [See NCH *Annual Report 2022*]. Zeng was due to be released in October having served most of her sentence in pretrial detention, but was deported to mainland China where she was believed to be held incommunicado. Her transfer was thought to be the first time someone from mainland China was deported from Hong Kong after being convicted of sedition.<sup>57</sup>

In early September 2023, authorities accused Kurt Leung Kui-ming of “inciting violence” and “importing seditious publications” after he had received books from the United Kingdom that included *Sheep Village*, a series of children’s books (called *Yangcun*) in which a village of sheep fights back against a group of wolves trying to take over their settlement, in what was seen by some as a reference to the attempt of the pro-democracy movement to maintain Hong Kong’s autonomy against the Chinese government [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*]. He faced up to two years in prison.<sup>58</sup>

On 24 October 2023, the Immigration Department of Hong Kong rejected the work visa renewal application of Canadian national Xiaoqing Rowena He, an associate professor since 2019 at the history department of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), a research associate of the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies at Harvard University in the United States, and a fellow at the National Humanities Center, after more than a year’s delay. The immigration authorities had questioned her connections with NGOs and foreign governments – activities that were criminalized as “collusion with foreign powers” under Hong Kong’s national security law. On 27 October 2023, CUHK dismissed her. In 2014, He had published *Tiananmen Exiles: Voices of the Struggle for Democracy in China* (removed from Hong Kong libraries in May 2023) [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*].

In February 2023, the Beijing-backed *Ta Kung Pao* and *Wen Wei Po* newspapers had published a commentary calling on CUHK to “eliminate anti-China forces trying to disrupt Hong Kong,” naming He for “slandering” the Chinese government in a politics course she had taught at Harvard. They reported that the National Humanities Center “use[d] academic freedom as an umbrella term to smear China and Hong Kong,” and accused her of “using history as a political weapon to brainwash students” into anti-China and anti-Hong Kong thinking. Since the post-2019 crackdown on dissent, denunciations such as these often preceded official action against individuals. He was also a temporary senior research fellow at the University of Texas (2022–).<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 133.

<sup>58</sup> Sophie Richardson, [“Hong Kong Unleashes Courts against Children’s Sheep Fiction,”](#) *Human Rights Watch* (13 September 2023); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 153.

<sup>59</sup> Gigi Lee & Siyan Cheung, [“Hong Kong University Fires Tiananmen Historian after Visa Denial,”](#) *Radio Free Asia* (30 October 2023); Mimi Leung, [“Dismay over University’s Sacking of Scholar Denied a Visa,”](#) *University World News* (1 November 2023); Grace Tsoi, [“Hong Kong’s Universities Shivel in Beijing’s Grip,”](#) *BBC News* (13 December 2023).

On 23 November 2023, the Hong Kong Education Bureau announced a new humanities curriculum for primary schools to be implemented from 2025 onward. It would emphasize “patriotic education,” including modules on national identity and national history, including the Opium Wars (1839–1842 and 1856–1860) and the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945), two historical events that featured prominently in the Communist Party’s (CCP) nationalist narrative of a “century of humiliation.” Pupils would further learn about significant Chinese historical figures and CCP achievements. Any mentions of the 2019–2020 pro-democracy protests were scrapped from the curriculum [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2023*].<sup>60</sup>

On 28 and 29 May 2024, during the lead-up to the 35th anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, eight people were arrested. These included Chow Hang-tung, a prominent pro-democracy activist and former vice chairperson of the disbanded Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements who had been sentenced to fourteen months for organizing the 2020 annual vigil at Victoria Park, and had already been in custody since 2021 on charges of subversion for her role in organizing the 2021 annual vigil [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2022*], and on charges of sedition under the new domestic national security law “Article 23” (Safeguarding National Security Ordinance) over social media posts related to the massacre.

Already on 3 April, Xu Guang, a 1989 student leader, was sentenced to four years in prison for “picking quarrels and provoking troubles” after he had demanded, in May 2022, the government’s acknowledgment of the massacre and protested with a sign at a local police station calling for redress for the victims.

On 3 June 2024, performance artist Sanmu Chen was arrested after she drew the Chinese characters for 8964 (4 June 1989) in the air. She was reportedly released afterward. Various pro-democracy activists were under heightened police surveillance, including Zhan Xianling, one of the founders of the Tiananmen Mothers, a group of relatives of the victims of the massacre [See NCH *Annual Reports 2004–2006, 2008–2009, 2017, 2023*]; Pu Zhiqiang, a former student representative at Tiananmen and human rights lawyer; and Ji Feng, a student leader in Guizhou.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> “[Hong Kong to Restructure Primary Education to Make It More ‘Patriotic’](#),” *Guardian* (24 November 2023); Kelly Ng, “[School Children Sang Anthem too Softly – Hong Kong](#),” *BBC News* (27 June 2024).

<sup>61</sup> “[China: Closing Off Memory of Tiananmen Massacre](#),” *Human Rights Watch* (2 June 2024); “[Taiwan’s Lai Says Tiananmen ‘Will Not Disappear in Torrent of History’](#),” *Al Jazeera* (4 June 2024); Louisa Lim, “[China’s Crackdown on Tiananmen Memorials Shows Its Obsession With Security – and Growing Paranoia](#),” *Guardian* (4 June 2024).

*Inner Mongolia*

On 3 May 2023, ethnic Mongolian historian Lhamjab A. Borjigin (1944–) [See NCH *Annual Reports 2019–2020*] was arrested by Chinese police at his exile residence in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, and deported to China. He had been sentenced to a one year suspended sentence in September 2019 and put under “residential surveillance” in late 2020. In March 2023, he had fled to Mongolia, where he worked on three books about Mongolian culture and history.<sup>62</sup>

Following a 25 August 2023 directive from the Inner Mongolian branch of the official Books and Periodicals Distribution Association, the authorities banned “A General History of the Mongols,” a 2004 book written by scholars in the Mongolian Studies department of the Inner Mongolia Institute of Education, citing “historical nihilism” as a reason [See NCH *Annual Reports 2017–2018, 2021*]. The book was previously lauded for its work in “connecting the history of Mongolia from ancient times to the medieval period, making the history of Mongolia more complete.” Analysts said that although the book was already nationalistic in tone, describing the Mongols as part of the Chinese nation, it was now considered to contribute to a pan-Mongolian identity because it did not go far enough in making the Mongols appear to be historically part of the Chinese nation.<sup>63</sup>

*Xinjiang*

Among the historians and related professionals imprisoned since 2015 and mentioned on a 31 December 2022 *List of Uyghur Intellectuals Imprisoned in China from 2016 to the Present* were the following [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2022* for related lists]:

- Writer and historian Omerjan Osman Suzuk.<sup>64</sup>
- Historian and chairman of the Yengisheher Political Consultant Conference, Kashgar Prefecture, Abdughopur.<sup>65</sup>
- Writer and historian Ghalip Barat Erk.<sup>66</sup>
- Yusupjan Yasin, historian at Urumchi No.14 High School.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>62</sup> “[Chinese Police Makes Arrest on Mongolian Soil, Deporting Prominent Writer](#),” *Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center* (11 May 2023); “[Pen America Condemns China’s Arrest of Exiled Mongolian Writer and Historian Lhamjab A. Borjigin](#),” *PEN America* (12 May 2023).

<sup>63</sup> Gao Feng, “[China Bans Book about the Early History of the Mongolian People](#),” *Radio Free Asia* (3 September 2023).

<sup>64</sup> Abduweli Ayup, “[List of Uyghur Intellectuals Imprisoned in China from 2016 to the Present](#),” *Uyghurhjelp.org* (last updated 31 December 2022).

<sup>65</sup> Abduweli Ayup, “[List of Uyghur Intellectuals Imprisoned in China from 2016 to the Present](#),” *Uyghurhjelp.org* (last updated 31 December 2022).

<sup>66</sup> Abduweli Ayup, “[List of Uyghur Intellectuals Imprisoned in China from 2016 to the Present](#),” *Uyghurhjelp.org* (last updated 31 December 2022).

<sup>67</sup> Abduweli Ayup, “[List of Uyghur Intellectuals Imprisoned in China from 2016 to the Present](#),” *Uyghurhjelp.org* (last updated 31 December 2022).

On 21 September 2023, a reliable source in the Chinese government confirmed that an intermediate people's court in Xinjiang has sentenced folklorist and historical anthropologist Rahile Dawut [See NCH *Annual Reports* 2019, 2021–2022] (1966–) to life imprisonment for “splittism” (a crime of endangering state security) in a secret trial in December 2018 and that this was confirmed on appeal in September 2023.<sup>68</sup>

In November 2023, a modern historian (name unknown) who had been researching, among other things, the history of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) policing politics and counterterrorism in the Xinjiang region, was looking for a research position outside of China after s/he had been sacked and expelled from the CCP, due to the critical nature of her/his research and teaching.<sup>69</sup>

An 18 June 2024 report by Human Rights Watch found that between 2009 and 2023 the government had replaced the names of at least 630 towns and villages with religious, cultural or historical meaning to Uyghurs with names that reflected government propaganda in a move aimed at erasing Uyghur Muslim culture. Words such as “hoja” (a title for a Sufi religious teacher), “sultan,” “beg,” “haniqa” (a type of Sufi religious building), and “mazar” (shrine) were disappearing from place names and replaced with terms such as “harmony,” “unity,” and “happiness.” Most of the changes, which also included the replacement of names of local leaders, republics, and kingdoms that preceded the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, had taken place between 2017 and 2019. One example was the renaming in 2018 of Qutpidin Mazar in Kashgar – named after the Persian polymath and poet Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi (1236–1311) – to Rose Flower village. Renaming places was first practiced in Tibet. In 2023 the government began referring to Tibet as “Xizang” on official documents. Since 2017 it also issued official Chinese names for locations in Arunachal Pradesh, the disputed Himalayan region where China claims territory.<sup>70</sup>

See also Japan, Thailand.

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<sup>68</sup> “[‘Cruel Tragedy’: Uyghur Scholar Sentenced to Life in Prison in China](#),” *Al Jazeera* (23 September 2023); “[China Sentences Uyghur Scholar to Life in Jail](#),” *BBC News* (24 September 2023); Yojana Sharma, “[Life Sentence for Uyghur Scholar Shocks Academics, Activists](#),” *University World News* (28 September 2023); Scholars at Risk, “Rahile Dawut, China” (s.d. [September 2023]); Scholars at Risk, [Letter to Xi Jinping](#) (31 October 2018); Scholars at Risk, [Free to Think 2023: Report of the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project](#) (New York: SAR, 2023); Network of Concerned Historians, [Campaign for Rahile Dawut](#) (23 February 2024).

<sup>69</sup> “[Monthly Newsletter](#),” *Scholars at Risk* (November 2023).

<sup>70</sup> “[China: Hundreds of Uyghur Village Names Change](#),” *Al Jazeera* (18 June 2024); “[China Accused of Erasing Religion, Culture from Uyghur Village Names](#),” *Al Jazeera* (18 June 2024); Helen Davidson, “[China Has Renamed Hundreds of Uyghur Villages and Towns, Say Human Rights Groups](#),” *Guardian* (19 June 2024); Anna Lamche, “[China Changed Village Names ‘to Erase Uyghur Culture’](#),” *BBC News* (20 June 2024).

## COLOMBIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997–1998, 2000, 2004, 2006–2023.

In 2023, the Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz (JEP; Special Jurisdiction for Peace) [See NCH *Annual Reports 2016–2021*] made significant strides in investigating and prosecuting war crimes and crimes against humanity, charging top former commanders of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC; Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces) guerrilla movement and several army officers. In August 2023, the JEP indicted General Mario Montoya, who commanded the army between 2006 and 2008, for his role in 130 extrajudicial executions when he led a brigade. Defendants who fully cooperated with the JEP and confessed to their crimes were subject to up to eight years of “special sanctions,” including restrictions on liberty but no prison time. It remained unclear how the “special sanctions” would operate in practice. The JEP further charged FARC members for war crimes and crimes against humanity against indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants and peasant communities and crimes against nature and ancestral and collective territories, including in Tolima, Huila, Quindío, Cauca and Valle del Cauca provinces. In late 2022, Congress had passed a law sponsored by the government of President Gustavo Petro that allowed the government to negotiate a peace accord, including new transitional-justice mechanisms, with parties to the armed conflict such as the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN; National Liberation Army), as well as with organized crime groups.<sup>71</sup>

In [July] 2023, President Gustavo Petro appointed Salvatore Mancuso, a former senior commander of the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC; United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia) – the country’s largest rightwing death squad (1997–2006/8) during the armed conflict (1964–present) – as “peace manager” to lead negotiations with the Clan del Golfo drug cartel. Mancuso previously testified to the Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz (JEP; Special Jurisdiction for Peace), providing details about the ties between military, business and political elites with right-wing paramilitary groups during the conflict and helping authorities to discover mass graves near the Venezuelan border. He also encouraged other paramilitary leaders to join the peace process. He admitted to 300 killings and was accused of having committed about 75,000 crimes during the armed conflict. In 2008 he had been extradited to the United States on drug trafficking charges, was sentenced to prison, and as of 2023 remained in detention there for a war crimes investigation.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 164–165; Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 137–138.

<sup>72</sup> Luke Taylor, [“Insult to His Victims’: Outrage as Warlord Appointed ‘Peace Manager’ in Colombia.”](#) *Guardian* (25 July 2023).

In mid-September 2023, Helena Urán Bidegain, the daughter of court magistrate Carlos Horacio Urán, who was killed in the 1985 Palace of Justice attack [See NCH *Annual Reports 2007–2008, 2011–2012, 2016*], and a special adviser on matters of non-repetition at the Foreign Ministry, called on President Gustavo Petro to officially request the declassification of all United States (US) records related to the massacre, in line with a 2014 verdict of the Inter-American Human Rights Court [See NCH *Annual Report 2016*] and a March 2021 “Request for Expedited Declassification for Colombia’s Truth Commission” to US President Joe Biden by the 2016 Comisión para el esclarecimiento de la verdad, la convivencia y la no-repetición (Commission for Clarification of the Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition) [See NCH *Annual Report 2018*]. The call was backed by the US-based National Security Archive.<sup>73</sup>

*See also* Peru, United States.

### **CONGO (Democratic Republic)**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998–2000, 2003–2023.

On 2 August 2023, the Plateforme d’actions de jeunes Congolais (Congolese Youth Action Platform) organized the first-ever official ceremony for the victims of human rights violations in the Second Congo War (1998–2003) – also known as the Great African War or “Genocost” – in Kinshasa. Founding member Mimie Witenkate called on the government to ensure that the recommendations of the 2010 United Nations Mapping Report, which documented human rights violations between 1993 and 2003, were applied [See NCH *Annual Report 2012*].

Since the election of Félix Tshisekedi as President in August 2020, who had campaigned on an agenda of transitional justice, few steps toward accountability and reparations had been taken [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2022*]. In December 2022 the government issued a new law on the protection of and reparation for victims of conflict-related sexual violence. It was estimated that tens of thousands of mostly women had been victims of sexual violence at various times since 1998.

The government had also set up two institutions responsible for reparations. The Fonds spécial de répartition et d’indemnisation aux victimes des activités illicites de l’Ouganda en République Démocratique du Congo (FRIVAO) Special Fund for the Compensation of Victims of Illicit Activities of Uganda in the Democratic Republic of Congo) was created in May 2023 for the victims of the

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<sup>73</sup> Commission de la Verdad, [Request for Expedited Declassification for Colombia’s Truth Commission](#) (March 2021); Michael Evans, “‘After Black November’: The U.S. and the 1985 Palace of Justice Tragedy,” *National Security Archive* (19 September 2023).

Ugandan occupation of parts of eastern Congo during the 1998–2003 war. Although the Ugandan government had paid the first installment of reparations in September 2022, in accordance with a ruling by the International Court of Justice [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*], nothing had been paid out to the victims as of September 2023 and FRIVAO had reportedly not enough funds to set up reparation mechanisms. The Fonds national des réparations des victimes des violences sexuelles liées aux conflits et des victimes des crimes contre la paix et la sécurité (FONAREV; National Fund for Reparations for Victims of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and Victims of Crimes against Peace and Security) set up to compensate victims of all human rights violations that were not covered by FRIVAO, had not received any of the US \$100 million promised to it as of September 2023.<sup>74</sup>

*See also* Belgium.

## **CONGO (Republic)**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2004–2006, 2008, 2010–2012, 2019.

## **COSTA RICA**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2010.

## **CÔTE D’IVOIRE**

*See* Ivory Coast.

## **CROATIA**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–2001, 2003–2013, 2015–2023.

Women victims of wartime rape faced numerous barriers when applying for the status of civilian victims of sexual violence during the war (1991–1995), which guaranteed certain welfare benefits. According

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<sup>74</sup> Caleb Kazadi, “[When Will Congolese “Genocost” Victims Receive Reparations?](#)” *Justiceinfo.net* (31 August 2023); “[What is the Geno-Cost,](#)” *Genocost.org* ([no date]).

to civil rights organizations, victims had to provide excessive and difficult to obtain documentation and witness testimonies, while some applicants were wrongfully rejected because they were suspected of being related to members of the Serb military or because the perpetrator was a member of the Croatian forces. The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed concern that some provisions of the Law on Civilian Victims of War were being interpreted in a discriminatory way against members of the Serb ethnic minority group and prevented them from exercising their rights as war victims.<sup>75</sup>

On 8 December 2023, the Ministry of Science and Education announced the removal of the history textbook “Why Is History Important? 4,” edited by historian Miljenko Hajdarovic and published by Profil Klett, from its catalog of officially approved textbooks for use in primary and secondary schools. The textbook was unanimously approved in an unchanged version by the ministerial authorization committee in May 2021 and had been in use in the final grade of high school since the 2021–2022 year. In a press release, the ministry said that the textbooks did not sufficiently follow the official history curriculum: it gave interpretations of historians about historical events rather than teaching the history of humanity through six officially prescribed concepts; it contained historical maps with incorrect information; it did not adequately explain specific primary historical sources and the accompanying questions were not well formulated; it contained many suggestive questions and photographs that led students to wrong conclusions, especially in the chapter about the creation of the modern Republic of Croatia, its multi-party system and the Homeland War (1991–1995); it contained incorrect facts and data, as well as wrong interpretations of historical processes. However, the statement did not mention any specific examples.

The decision to remove the textbook came after an online vilification campaign of the three textbook authors and their publisher, and a series of critiques in the conservative media outlet *narod.hr* – characterized by the main fact-checking organization *Faktograf* in 2022 as a platform that spread “incorrect information.” The publisher, the authors, some historians, organizations and a member of parliament asked the Education Ministry to publish the full findings that led to the removal. This was reportedly the first case of a history textbook ban in Croatia since 1996.<sup>76</sup>

*See also* Montenegro.

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<sup>75</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 142.

<sup>76</sup> Branimir Janković, “[Branimir Janković: Iza pozivanja na “činjenice” i “greške” stoje brojne imputacije i neskriveni interpretativni zahtjevi](#),” *Historiografija.hr* (19 December 2023); Miljenko Hajdarovic, personal communication (28 December 2023); Darko Markusic, “[Croatian Fact-Checkers’ War on Fake News Draws Bias Charge](#),” *Balkan Insight* (24 March 2022).

## CUBA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997–2002, 2006, 2010–2012, 2015–2016, 2018, 2021–2023.

On 26 April 2023, the Ministry of Culture suspended the screening of the documentary *Fito's Havana*, written and directed by art historian and film director Juan Pin Vilar (1963–), in which the official version of the death of revolutionary Camilo Cienfuegos (1932–1959) was questioned and the shooting of three young men in 2003 who hijacked a boat to flee to Miami criticized. On 10 June 2023, the official television showed the documentary without the authorization of its director or producers, but not in its final version, which sparked complaints from the director.<sup>77</sup>

On 27 November 2023, historian and Afro-descendant activist Alexander Hall Lujardo (1998–) was subjected to police surveillance at his home, following his public support for academic and writer Alina López Hernández after she was convicted of disobedience and fined for not attending extrajudicial summonses from State Security. Hall wrote for magazines such as *Sin Permiso* and *Rialta Magazine*, and was the co author and coordinator of the book *Cuba 11J: Perspectivas contrahegemónicas de las protestas sociales* (Cuba 11J: Counterhegemonic perspectives on social protests). Also on 27 November 2023, police prevented anthropologist Dmitri Prieto Samsónov from leaving his home, threatening him with the crime of disobedience. Prieto also attributed the police harassment to his support for López. He was the author of *Transdominación de Haití (1791–1826)* (Domination of Haiti, 1791–1826), for which he received the 2010 Pinos Nuevos prize.<sup>78</sup>

*See also* Chile, Mexico.

## CYPRUS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002, 2005, 2008–2011, 2013, 2015–2018, 2021–2022.

On 5 December 2023, in a reply to a question of European Parliament member Costas Mavrides about the continuing desecration of churches in northern Cyprus, including the Agia Anna in Kythrea, European Union (EU) Commissioner Elisa Ferreira, while acknowledging the example, wrote that the European

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<sup>77</sup> PEN International, [War, Censorship and Persecution: PEN International Case List 2023/2024](#) (London: PEN, 2024), 33.

<sup>78</sup> PEN International, [War, Censorship and Persecution: PEN International Case List 2023/2024](#) (London: PEN, 2024), 32–33.

Commission's leverage was limited due to the suspension of the *acquis* (the body of common rights and obligations binding on all the EU member states) in the areas not under the effective control of the Cypriot government, but that it supported the bi-communal Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage in its protection and restoration of monuments.<sup>79</sup>

## CZECH REPUBLIC

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997–1998, 2000, 2010, 2013–2023.

On 21 December 2023, David Kozák ([1999]–2023), a masters history student at Charles University's Institute of World History, Prague, shot 17 people dead and injured 25 others, before killing himself. Among the fourteen victims at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, on Jan Palach Square, were Lenka Hlávková, the head of the Institute of Music Sciences and an expert in the musical culture of medieval central Europe, and Klára Holcová, an athlete and student of archival science and Bohemian studies.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Costas Mavrides, "[Desecration and Cultural Genocide of Church Monuments in Occupied Cyprus](#)" (Question to the European Commission) (13 October 2023); Elisa Ferreira, "[Joint Answer Given by Ms Ferreira on Behalf of the European Commission](#)" (5 December 2023).

<sup>80</sup> Paul Kirby, "[What We Know about Prague Shooter](#)," *BBC News* (21 December 2023); Ivana Kottasová, "[Czechs Mourn the 14 Killed in University Mass Shooting](#)," *CNN* (23 December 2023); "[Victims of Prague Shooting Remembered as Nation Mourns](#)," *Expats.cz* (23 December 2023).

## DENMARK

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2006–2007, 2013, 2016–2020, 2022–2023.

### *Greenland*

On 4 March 2024, a group of 143 women sued the state for having been fitted an intrauterine device (IUD) without their consent or knowledge as part of a government birth control campaign to reduce the birthrate of Greenlanders between 1966–1974. After the incorporation of Greenland, a former Danish colony, into Denmark in 1953, mortality rates dropped and birth rates increased. In response to the island’s population increase, central authorities, without informing the Landsrådet (Greenland’s highest representative political body), initiated a family planning campaign in which half of the female population, approximately 4,500 women and girls some reportedly as young as twelve, received IUDs. The number was likely higher since registration was stopped after 1970. The IUD campaign was one of many scandals in Greenlandic-Danish relations. In the spring of 2022, Danish prime minister Mette Frederiksen had apologized for the removal of 22 Greenlandic children from their parents as part of the so-called “Experiment” – a failed attempt to educate a new Greenlandic elite by removing the children from their parents and bringing them to Denmark to learn how to speak Danish and understand Danish culture [See NCH *Annual Report 2022*]. On 9 June 2022, Frederiksen and Greenland’s Prime Minister Múte Bourup Egede signed a joint declaration to investigate their mutual historical relations since World War II [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*]. The IUD campaign was said to be included in this investigation.<sup>81</sup>

## DJIBOUTI

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2008.

## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2013, 2023.

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<sup>81</sup> Martine Lind Krebs, “[Denmark and Greenland Confront a Traumatic Birth Control Campaign](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (21 July 2022); Miranda Bryant, “[Greenlandic Women Plan to Sue Danish State over Historical Contraceptive ‘Violation’](#),” *Guardian* (2 October 2023); Miranda Bryant, “[Greenlandic Women Sue Danish State for Contraceptive ‘Violation’](#),” *Guardian* (4 March 2024).

## ECUADOR

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2005–2007, 2009–2021.

## EGYPT

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–2001, 2003, 2006–2007, 2010–2023.

In 2023, authorities continued to carry out forced evictions and house demolitions, including in Cairo’s informal settlements and the historic “City of the Dead” cemetery, home to tens of thousands of residents, and arrested residents for protesting.<sup>82</sup>

On 14 August 2023, marking the tenth anniversary of the 2013 Rabaa massacre in which police and security forces began attacking protesters holding a sit-in at Rabaa al-Adawiya Square and al-Nahda Square in Cairo to protest against the coup that had deposed democratically elected President Mohamed Morsi, Amnesty International criticized the lack of accountability and described the period since the massacre as a “decade of shame.” No official or state entity had been held accountable for the massacre, despite a government fact-finding mission concluding that security forces used excessive force. Moreover, some of the authorities who had ordered the massacre remained in power, including President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who was defense minister at the time. An estimated 904 people were killed: 817 at al-Adawiya Square and 87 at al-Nahda Square, but the remaining unidentified bodies and missing people likely placed the death toll above 1,000.<sup>83</sup>

## EL SALVADOR

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2023.

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<sup>82</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 159.

<sup>83</sup> [“I Saw Many Bodies That Day’: Protester Recounts Rabaa Massacre 10 Years On,”](#) *Al Jazeera* (14 August 2023); [“Turning Point’: What Happened During Egypt’s Rabaa Massacre 10 Years Ago?,”](#) *Al Jazeera* (14 August 2023); Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 157.

## EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2019.

## ERITREA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2008, 2016, 2018.

Annual “cultural festivals” held by Eritrean diaspora communities in cities around the world were criticized as forms of intimidation by the dictatorship of President Isaias Afewerki (ruling since 1991) against Eritrean refugees, and as a way of instilling loyalty and collecting taxes from the diaspora communities. The festivals, which often included the participation of government officials, reportedly consisted of hate speech against the refugees, and military displays that included children in uniforms being encouraged to act out violent scenes. From mid-2022 onward, violent protests in various cities against the festivals broke out, with significant escalations during the summer of 2023. On 2 September 2023, the thirtieth anniversary of Eritrean independence, violent clashes between diaspora groups broke out in Canada, Germany, Israel and Sweden.<sup>84</sup>

*See also* Ethiopia, United Kingdom.

## ESTONIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2007, 2010, 2015, 2017, 2023.

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<sup>84</sup> Kaamil Ahmed & Miranda Bryan, “[Eritrean Diaspora Vow to Continue Disrupting Festivals That ‘Promote Dictatorship’](#),” *Guardian* (12 August 2023); “[Israel’s Netanyahu Calls for Deportation of Eritrean Refugee ‘Rioters’](#),” *Al Jazeera* (3 September 2023); Roshni Majumdar, “[Germany: Dozens Injured in Unrest at Eritrean Event](#),” *Der Welt* (17 September 2023); Yohannes Woldemariam, “[Protests by the Eritrean Diaspora Have Highlighted Repression at Home and Dividing Lines Abroad](#),” *Africa at LSE* (18 September 2023); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 208.

## ESWATINI

Previous *Annual Report* entries under Swaziland: 2011, 2013, 2016–2018; under Eswatini: 2023.

In 2021, King Mswati III agreed to hold a national dialogue with the aim of deliberating on the democratic challenges confronted by Eswatini. He then decided that the multi-stakeholder national dialogue would be held through the Sibaya or “people’s parliament,” an annual traditional gathering of the nation. Human rights activists in Eswatini argued that the Sibaya format had traditionally been a monologue where the king talked down to his people while they sat in silence, rather than a meaningful and constructive dialogue. They also said that the royal kraal, where the Sibaya took place, was not a neutral venue for a national conversation about Eswatini’s democratic future. Two years later, the dialogue still had not taken place and there appeared to be a lack of political will to hold this much-awaited dialogue.<sup>85</sup>

## ETHIOPIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998–2011, 2015–2023.

Following the November 2022 peace treaty between the federal government and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), the government committed to implement a national transitional justice policy framework. In January 2023, it released a draft Green Paper, “Policy Options for Transitional Justice,” as a starting point for public consultations. The government began seeking public input in February, including in the Amhara region and parts of the Oromia region still affected by fighting. In September 2023, the second report of the United Nations-mandated International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) found that the government “failed to effectively investigate violations” and “initiated a flawed transitional justice process.” Political opposition groups, civil society groups, human rights experts, and consultation participants criticized the Green Paper, pointing to its focus on the principle of sovereignty, and the lack of inclusiveness of the consultations. They also questioned the timeliness of the discussion while the fighting was ongoing. In Tigray, participants reportedly raised concerns about the document’s failure to address Eritrean forces’ accountability.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 213–214.

<sup>86</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 219–220.

On 21 September 2023, the British government returned a lock of hair of Prince Alemayehu, but continued to decline repatriating his remains [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*].<sup>87</sup>

On 28 December 2023, a report by the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Office and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) called on the government to ensure that efforts to address the country's legacy of human rights violations were grounded in international human rights law. The report set out findings of fifteen community consultations held from July 2022 to March 2023 with more than 800 participants in all regions of the country. The aim was to develop a national transitional justice policy in line with the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed in Pretoria in November 2022.

In the last five decades, Ethiopians had gone through different political transitions: from the imperial regime to the Derg in 1974, from the Derg to the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in 1991, and from the EPRDF to the Prosperity Party in 2018. During these transitions, Ethiopians grappled with the legacies of past gross human rights violations. Historically, the prevailing approach for addressing them largely involved drawing a line under the past. After the 1990s, this view gradually shifted to the need to confront legacies of the repressive past through a transitional justice approach.<sup>88</sup>

*See also* United Kingdom.

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<sup>87</sup> [“Ethiopian Prince’s Hair, Artefacts Returned 155 Years after British Plunder,”](#) *Al Jazeera* (23 September 2023).

<sup>88</sup> *Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the Findings of Community Consultations on Transitional Justice (TJ) with Victims and Affected Populations in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia* (Geneva: OHCHR, 28 December 2023), §§ 42–43; United Nations Human Rights Office & Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, [“Ethiopia: Justice for Past Abuses Must Be Victim-Centred and Include Criminal Prosecutions, Reparations, Truth-Seeking and Institutional Reforms – UN report”](#) (press release; Geneva: OHCHR, 28 December 2023).

## FIJI

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2004, 2006, 2010.

## FINLAND

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2011–2012, 2017, 2020, 2022.

On 15 March 2024, Fabián Salvioli, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence, urged Finland to undertake more transitional justice measures to address the legacy of human rights violations endured by the Sámi people. He said that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Sámi Psychosocial Support Unit (Uvja) were hallmarks of this process and must receive full support. Salvioli also underscored the reparation carried out by Uvja and the repatriation and reburial initiatives carried out by the National Museum of Finland and the Sámi Museum Siida. He noted a scarcity of measures aimed at memorializing the legacy of assimilation and related policies.

The Sámi people had been the subject of assimilation policies adopted by the state and church in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including the forced accommodation of Sámi children in boarding schools, where they were forbidden to speak the Sámi language and forced to integrate into the majority culture. The Sámi were also subjected to religious conversion, removed from their land, and stripped of their culture [See NCH *Annual Reports 2017, 2020, 2022*].<sup>89</sup>

## FRANCE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–1999, 2001–2009, 2011–2014, 2016–2018, 2020–2023.

Throughout 2023, mosques, synagogues and cemeteries were subjected to racist attacks, often being vandalized with racist symbols and messaging promoting extremist political groups. After the escalation of violence in Israel and occupied Gaza, reports of attacks increased as schools and walls were defaced with Nazi and antisemitic symbols.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, Fabián Salvioli, [Preliminary Observations: Visit to Finland](#) (11 to 15 March 2024); United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, “[Finland Must Address Legacy of Human Rights Violations against Sámi people, Says UN Expert](#)” (Press release; 15 March 2024).

<sup>90</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 171.

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On 27 November 2023, six minors went on trial in a children’s court behind closed doors, accused of involvement in the beheading of history and geography teacher Samuel Paty by suspected Islamist Abdullakh Anzorov in 2020 [See NCH *Annual Report 2021*]. The children were aged between 13 and 15 at the time. One of them, a girl who allegedly told her parents that Paty had shown caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad in her class, was charged with false accusation after it was established that she was not in the class when it happened; the others were charged with premeditated criminal conspiracy or ambush because they allegedly pointed out Paty to the murderer or helped monitor his exit from the school. On 8 December, all six were sentenced to up to 18 months suspended prison sentence. Eight adults were also charged, including two for “complicity in a terrorist murder,” and would appear before a special criminal court in 2024. Anzorov was shot dead by police soon after the attack.<sup>91</sup>

In early December 2023, teachers at the Jacques-Cartier school near Paris refused to work after first-year high school pupils, aged 11 and 12, had said that they were offended by “Diana and Actaeon,” a Renaissance-era painting by Italian painter Giuseppe Cesari (1568–1640) portraying a mythical scene from Roman poet Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, because it contained nude women. They also accused the teacher of making racist and Islamophobic remarks, which the school denied. Staff felt they had been left unsupported and were working in a “degraded climate.” On visiting the school, Education Minister Gabriel Attal said that the pupils behind the complaints would face disciplinary measures and a team would visit the school to make sure it adhered to “values of the republic.” On 12 December 2023, classes at the school restarted after several days’ interruption.<sup>92</sup>

On 14 May 2024, the anniversary of the first major round-up of French Jews under the Nazis in 1941, the Wall of the Righteous at the Shoah (Holocaust) Memorial in Paris, which honors people who saved Jews during the Nazi occupation of France, was vandalized with red hand graffiti. President Emmanuel Macron wrote on X that the vandalism “damage[d] the memory” both of those who saved Jews in the Holocaust and the victims. Around ten other spots in Paris were similarly targeted.<sup>93</sup>

On 1 July 2024, more than a thousand French historians sent a letter to newspaper *Le Monde* calling on voters not to elect the far-right Rassemblement National (RN; National Rally). Among many reasons, the historians outlined threats to the freedom of historical research and teaching if the RN were elected, citing

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<sup>91</sup> [“Six Teenagers in Court over Beheading of French Teacher,”](#) *Reuters* (27 November 2023); [“Samuel Paty: Six French Teenagers on Trial over Teacher’s Murder,”](#) *BBC News* (27 November 2023); Angelique Chrisafis, [“Six Teenagers Convicted in France over Teacher’s Beheading in 2020,”](#) *Guardian* (8 December 2023); Stéphane Simon, *Les Derniers jours de Samuel Paty: Enquête sur une tragédie qui aurait dû être évitée* (Paris: Plon, 2023); Valérie Igounet & Guy Le Besnerais, *Crayon noir: Samuel Paty, Histoire d’un prof* ([No Place]: StudioFact Éditions, 2023).

<sup>92</sup> Ido Vock, [“Nude Painting Row at French School Sparks Teacher Walkout,”](#) *BBC News* (12 December 2023).

<sup>93</sup> [“Paris Holocaust Memorial Hit with Red Hand Graffiti,”](#) *France24* (14 May 2024).

its education manifesto’s “instrumentalization of the past ... entirely focused on the return to a teaching of history that is national, even nationalistic, and nostalgic.”<sup>94</sup>

### *French Guiana*

On 1 February 2024, the Institut Francophone pour la Justice et la Démocratie (IFJD) published a report recommending the establishment of a Truth Commission on “Indian Homes” – a series of Catholic boarding schools that, under the guise of religious education, interned 2,000 Amerindian and Bushinengue children between 1935 and 2023 – in French Guiana. The report linked structural colonial violence, cultural practices of forced assimilation, and physical violence against the children in the Homes. The project had been initiated in 2019 and on 13 January 2023 the Grand Customary Council of the Amerindian and Bushinengue populations of French Guiana – a council set up in 2017 to enable indigenous populations to participate in local decision-making bodies – had mandated the IFJD to investigate the Homes. However, two months later the partnership was suspended without reason, reportedly because the French prefect of Guiana canceled it, allegedly in an attempt to block accountability [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*].<sup>95</sup>

*See also* Mexico, Russia, Syria, United States.

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<sup>94</sup> Patrich Boucheron, Antoine Lilti, et al., “[The French Republic Is Under Threat: We Are 1,000 Historians and We Cannot Remain Silent](#),” *Guardian* (6 July 2024).

<sup>95</sup> Clémentine Méténier, “[Indian Homes in French Guiana: Truth Commission Project Not Yet Ripe](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (22 February 2024).

## GABON

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2016, 2018.

## GAMBIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2016–2018, 2021–2023.

In April 2019, the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) – set up in 2017 to investigate human rights violations committed during the rule of Yahya Jammeh (1996–2017) [See NCH *Annual Reports 2018, 2021–2023*] – embarked on an excavation at the Yundum Barracks, finding the bodies of seven soldiers who were among those extrajudicially executed on 11 November 1994, after an attempted coup against Jammeh. As of August 2023, however, the human remains continued to be in storage in unknown conditions and without any DNA testing for their identities having been conducted. In June 2022, experts from the NGO Justice Rapid Response had criticized the TRRC for performing the exhumations without proper technical knowledge, plans for post-exhumation analysis, and with limited participation of victim’s families.<sup>96</sup>

In April 2023, a study commissioned by Journalists for Justice, a not-for-profit organization, highlighted shortcomings in the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC)’s reparation program, including lack of communication, a limited definition of “victim,” the exclusion of some survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, and inadequate monetary compensation.

In May 2022, and again in May 2023, the government issued White Papers to implement the TRRC’s recommendations, including the creation of a Special Prosecutor’s Office and a hybrid court in collaboration with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) “to try those with the greatest responsibility” during Yahya Jammeh’s presidency (1996–2017) [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*]. In July 2023, the government stated that it would establish a taskforce, which would include members of civil society, to expand the work already done by the TRRC on enforced disappearance. In the same month, the ECOWAS Court of Justice ruled that Gambia had violated the right to life of Saul Ndow, a critic of Jammeh’s government – who was subjected to enforced disappearance – and that despite the establishment of the TRRC, the almost ten-year delay in prosecuting those suspected to be responsible was unreasonable. The court also ordered the government to implement the TRRC’s recommendations

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<sup>96</sup> Joyce Mutoka, “[Opinion: The Search for the Gambia’s Disappeared Must Use a Victim-Centred Approach](#),” *Justice Rapid Response* (28 June 2022); Mariam Sankanu, “[Gambia: Why After Four Years Identity of the Exhumed Remains Unknown](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (24 August 2023).

[See NCH *Annual Reports 2018, 2021–2023*].

On 22 April 2024, Parliament passed bills to set up a Special Prosecutor’s Office (SPO) and a Special Accountability Mechanism, the latter consisting of a set of principles for the SPO, the Special Criminal Division of the High Court (a court for trying domestic crimes) and the Special Tribunal (a hybrid court to try international crimes, in cooperation with the Economic Community of West-African States [ECOWAS]) on how to implement the TRCC recommendations. The two bills were hailed as a step in the right direction, but also criticized because they did not include a timeline or a budget.<sup>97</sup>

## GEORGIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2003, 2010–2012, 2014, 2016, 2019, 2023.

On 9 January 2024, a glass-covered icon in the Holy Trinity (Sameba) Cathedral in Tbilisi depicting Russian-Orthodox Saint Matrona of Moscow (1881–1952) blessing Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin (1878–1953), was splattered with paint by activist Nata Peradze. Afterward, she published a video of her act, saying it was a protest against the glorification of a tyrant. The next day, protesters including priests from the far-right Alt Info movement surrounded her home. She also received death threats and went into hiding. Police launched a petty hooliganism investigation into the paint splattering but guarded her home. Leaders of the pro-Russian political party, Alliance of Patriots, had donated the icon to the cathedral several months previously. Later in January 2024, the Georgian Church ordered the removal of the icon from the cathedral as there was insufficient evidence that Stalin and Saint Matrona had ever met.<sup>98</sup>

## GERMANY

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 1997–2000, 2003, 2006–2013, 2015–2017, 2019–2023.

On [24] January 2023, Gabriele Krone-Schmalz, former Moscow correspondent (1987–1991) for the German television network ARD, demanded a cease-and-desist declaration from historian Franziska Davies, a lecturer of Eastern European history at the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich,

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<sup>97</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 175; Mariam Sankanu, “[Gambia: The End of the Wait-and-See Strategy?](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (17 May 2024).

<sup>98</sup> Ido Vock, “[Georgian Orthodox Church Calls for Stalin Religious Icon To Be Changed](#),” *BBC News* (11 January 2024); Sophia Kishkovsky, “[Stalin Religious Icon Splattered with Paint in Georgia](#),” *The Art Newspaper* (15 January 2024); Rayhan Demytrie & Robert Greenall, “[Georgia: Stalin Icon Removed from Tbilisi Church](#),” *BBC News* (19 January 2024).

regarding fourteen (later: three) statements the latter had made. Krone-Schmalz was known for her view that the “West” was also to blame for the Russian invasion of Ukraine because it had ignored Russia’s interests and expanded NATO. Davies had called Krone-Schmalz “a defender of the criminal Putin regime” and criticized her books, lectures and media appearances in writings and on Twitter, saying they contained disinformation (that is, distortions, half-truths, manipulation of sources, and false statements). She had also argued that Krone-Schmalz did not meet minimum journalistic standards and ignored the existing expertise and literature available on the “Putin System.” Davies refused to issue a cease-and-desist declaration and sued Krone-Schmalz before the Cologne Regional Court. In her turn, Krone-Schmalz sued Davies before the Düsseldorf Regional Court. The Cologne Regional Court ruled that the statements were statements of opinion and therefore a legitimate use of Davies’s freedom of expression. On 8 March 2023, Krone-Schmalz withdrew her complaint.<sup>99</sup>

In February 2023, seven UN Special Rapporteurs expressed grave concerns at the alleged “lack of effective reparative measures afforded” to Ovaherero and Nama peoples in Germany’s former colony of “Southwest Africa” (1884–1915; now Namibia), including lack of “an unqualified recognition of the genocide committed” against them between 1904 and 1908 [See NCH *Annual Report 2021* under “Germany” and *Annual Report 2023* under “Namibia”].<sup>100</sup>

In May 2022 and April–May 2023, demonstrations on and around Nakba Day (a day to commemorate the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from Israel in 1948) were banned pre-emptively and in a blanket manner in Berlin. The ban was based on stigmatizing and discriminatory stereotypes of expected participants, whom the police characterized as having a “tendency toward violent acts.”<sup>101</sup>

On 11 October 2023, the Hamburg District Court imposed a temporary ban on sales of *The Compatriots: The Brutal and Chaotic History of Russia’s Exiles, Émigrés, and Agents Abroad* (2019) [alternative subtitle: *The Russian Exiles Who Fought Against the Kremlin*], a history of espionage against Russian émigrés since the late nineteenth century written by London-based Russian journalists Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan. The ban was limited to the English-language e-book version. Berlin-based Russian

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<sup>99</sup> “[Ex-Moskau-Korrespondentin Krone-Schmalz geht mit Anwälten gegen Kritikerin vor](#),” *Der Spiegel* (10 November 2022); Julian Seifert, “[‘Muss sich das gefallen lassen’: Gabriele Krone-Schmalz verliert vor Gericht gegen Kritikerin](#),” *t-online (Nachrichten für Deutschland)* (13 February 2023); Julian Seifert, “[Krone-Schmalz klagt nicht weiter gegen Kritikerin Franziska Davies](#),” *t-online (Nachrichten für Deutschland)* (9 March 2023); Franziska Davies, “[Desinformationsexpertin: Russland, die Ukraine und Frau Krone-Schmalz](#),” *Osteuropa*, 72 nos. 9–10 (2022), 245–265; [Stellungnahme des VOH zum Versuch von Gabriele Krone-Schmalz gegen ihre Kritikerin, die Osteuropahistorikerin Franziska Davies, mit juristischen Mitteln vorzugehen](#) (11 November 2022).

<sup>100</sup> United Nations Special Rapporteurs, [AL NAM 1/2023](#) (Allegations Letter) (23 February 2023); Amnesty International, *The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024* (London: AI, 2024), 180.

<sup>101</sup> Amnesty International, [Under Protected and Over Restricted: The State of the Right to Protest in 21 European Countries](#) (London: AI, 2024), 95.

businessman Alexey Kozlov had claimed that allegations in the book that his wealth had been partially based on his family's historical links to the Russian secret service KGB (his grandmother, great-grandfather and step-great-grandfather had all been KGB officers, the latter of whom was the spy Nahum Eitingon, who had organized the murder of Leon Trotsky [1879–1940]) were false and defamatory. Soldatov and Borodan claimed that the disputed passages had come from Kozlov himself, made during a 2018 interview in Moscow.

Following the court verdict, a statement by Index on Censorship backed by fifteen other freedom of expression groups including PEN International and Article 19 expressed extreme concern over what it saw as “intimidatory tactics.” Around the time of Kozlov’s defamation claim, Soldatov was declared a “foreign agent” by the Kremlin, had his Russian bank accounts frozen, and was charged with discrediting the armed forces for his criticism of the 24 February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. The appeal to the verdict was to be heard on 8 December 2023. In the meantime, Kozlov’s lawyers were seeking the withdrawal of all versions of the book worldwide.<sup>102</sup>

On 13 October 2023, the LitProm association – a literary organization active in the promotion of literature from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Arab world – postponed the awarding of the so-called LiBeraturpreis at the Frankfurt Book Fair to the Palestine-born novelist and essayist Adania Shibli (1974–) “due to the war started by Hamas, under which millions of people in Israel and Palestine are suffering.” Shibli was awarded the prize for her historical novel *Minor Detail*, telling the true story of the 1949 abduction and gang rape of a Palestinian Bedouin girl by Israeli soldiers in the Negev (Naqab) desert. Already in the summer of 2023, one of the jury members had resigned in protest against the award. Following LitProm’s decision, an open letter signed by more than 350 authors admonished the book fair’s organization, citing its responsibility to create spaces for Palestinian authors to share their stories, “not shut them down.” Human rights organizations, including PEN America, joined the criticism, stating that “any literary organizations worldwide should affirm their commitment to free expression and pluralism even amid conflict.”<sup>103</sup>

In December 2023, the police of Nordrhein-Westfalen issued an information brochure for students, teachers and parents on how to deal with the Israel–Gaza War (2023–). It contained, among other things,

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<sup>102</sup> [“Anti-SLAPP Campaigners from across Europe Stand in Solidarity with the Russian Dissident Authors after an Injunction Was Secured against Their Publisher in Germany,”](#) *UK Anti-SLAPP Coalition* (press release; 24 November 2023); Luke Hardin & Kate Connolly, [“Free Speech Groups Criticize German Ban on Russian Journalists’ Book,”](#) *Guardian* (28 November 2023).

<sup>103</sup> Fatima Bhutto, [“Minor Detail by Adania Shibli Review – Horror in the Desert,”](#) *Guardian* (30 May 2020); Philip Oltermann, [“Palestinian Voices ‘Shut Down’ at Frankfurt Book Fair, Say Authors,”](#) *Guardian* (15 October 2023); [“PEN America Calls on LitProm to Reconsider Postponement of Shibli Award,”](#) *Guardian* (16 October 2023); Daisy Ruddock, [“Art Institutions Accused of Censoring Pro-Palestinian Views,”](#) *Index on Censorship* (12 December 2023).

a prohibition to refer to the Israeli military campaign in Gaza as a “genocide” or compare it to the Holocaust, and called on children, parents and teachers to report on them as breaches of the German Criminal Code offense of incitement to hatred (“Volksverhetzung.”)<sup>104</sup>

*See also* Bosnia and Herzegovina, Eritrea, France, Palestine, Russia, Tanzania, United States.

## GHANA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002, 2004–2008, 2017, 2019, 2022.

*See also* United Kingdom.

## GREECE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 1999, 2004–2011, 2013–2019, 2022–2023.

In August 2023, the Culture Ministry announced the eviction of the Σύλλογος Ελλήνων Αρχαιολόγων (SEA; Association of Greek Archaeologists) from their government-rented offices in Athens. On 14 June, the SEA had organized an event titled “Justice in the Crime of Pylos,” after a fishing vessel carrying approximately 750 people seeking asylum sank that day, killing up to 646 people. After the shipwreck, some survivors claimed that the coast guard had towed the boat, causing it to capsize in what is known as “pushbacks.” The Culture Ministry claimed that the event had been in violation of the terms of contract, but the SEA accused the ministry of censorship. The SEA and the Culture Ministry repeatedly came into conflict in the past, including over the illegal licensing of construction activities on archaeological sites on the island of Mykonos [See *NCH Annual Report 2023*].<sup>105</sup>

In early June 2024, Zeynep Boz, the Turkish culture ministry’s top anti-smuggling official, said that there was no “firman” (official evidence of a legal sale) in the Ottoman archives to prove that Lord Elgin had been given a permit in 1801–1816 to strip the fifth-century BC Greek Parthenon on the Acropolis in

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<sup>104</sup> Polizei Nordrhein-Westfalen, [Nahost-Konflikt: Informationsbroschüre für Schulen, Lehrkräfte und Eltern](#) (Düsseldorf: Landeskriminalamt Nordrhein-Westfalen, December 2023), 3, 6, 9.

<sup>105</sup> [“Greece: Disparities in Accounts of Pylos Shipwreck Underscore the Need for Human Rights Compliant Inquiry,”](#) *Human Rights Watch* (3 August 2023); Eleni Stamatoukou, [“Greek Culture Ministry Evicts Archeologists’ Association From its HQ,”](#) *Balkan Insight* (17 August 2023); Eleni Stamatoukou, [“Greece to Probe Mykonos Building Violations After Archaeologist Attacked,”](#) *Balkan Insight* (4 April 2023).

Athens of its marbles (the so-called Elgin marbles) to take them to Britain – thereby rebutting the argument that they were bought legally. The marbles, held in the British Museum since 1816, were reclaimed by Greece [See NCH *Annual Report 1998*].<sup>106</sup>

## **GRENADA**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2007, 2022.

## **GUATEMALA**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–2023.

*See also* Nicaragua.

## **GUINEA**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2007, 2009–2023.

On 4 November 2023, an armed commando extracted four people from Conakry’s central prison, including former President Moussa Dadis Camara (in office between 2008–2010) and former Minister of Presidential Security Claude Pivi. Camara and two others were recaptured the same day, but Pivi remained a fugitive. The four men were on trial for the 2009 Conakry Stadium massacre [See NCH *Annual Reports 2015–2016, 2018–2023*]. On 12 February 2024, in a new phase of the trial which had begun in September 2022, civil party witnesses were to be heard. According to lawyers, the escape of Pivi, who had been charged with murder, rape and destruction of property, added to fears among witnesses that their lives could be at risk if they were to testify at the trial. Before the trial, a law had been passed providing for the protection of “persons at risk,” but it had not been implemented yet.

On 31 July 2024, the court sentenced Camara and seven military commanders to twenty years in prison for crimes against humanity.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Helena Smith, “[Turkey Rejects Claim Lord Elgin Had Permission to Take Parthenon Marbles](#),” *Guardian* (7 June 2024).

<sup>107</sup> “[Guinea Stadium Massacre: Minister Claude Pivi Charged](#),” *BBC News* (28 June 2013); “[Commando Operation in Guinea: Reward Offered for the Capture of the Last Fugitive](#),” *Africa News* (9 November 2023); Matthias Raynal, “[Guinea Stadium Massacre: Jailbreak Undermines the Trial](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (13 November

## **GUINEA-BISSAU**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999, 2012, 2015.

*See also* Central African Republic.

## **GUYANA**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 2022.

*See also* Venezuela.

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2023); Matthias Raynal, "[Guinea: Frightened Witnesses Desert the Trial](#)," *Justiceinfo.net* (12 February 2024); Paul Njie, "[Guinea's Ex-military Ruler Jailed over Stadium Massacre](#)," *BBC News* (1 August 2024).

**HAITI**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 2000–2003, 2006, 2008–2009, 2013–2023.

**HONDURAS**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 1998, 2001–2002, 2009–2015, 2022–2023.

**HONG KONG**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996. From 1997: *See* China.

**HUNGARY**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 1997, 2004, 2007–2023.

In [September] 2023, the refurbished Trianon Museum reopened in Varpalota. The state-funded museum, the gift shop of which sold anti-Trianon merchandise and irredentist board games, commemorated the 1920 Treaty of Trianon, in which two-thirds of Hungary's pre-World War I territory was incorporated into other countries in the region, a fact which was felt (and actively propagated by the successive Fidesz governments of Viktor Orbán [2010–present]) as a trauma by many Hungarians. Adjacent to the museum lay the Greater Hungary Park featuring a flowerbed in the shape of pre-World War I Hungary and the Carpathia Hotel whose rooms were named after cities that were part of Hungary before the war.<sup>108</sup>

On 3 September 2023, during a ceremony for the thirtieth anniversary of the reburial of former regent Miklós Horthy (in power between 1920–1944), Minister of Construction and Transportation Janos Lazar praised Horthy as “an exceptional statesman who was a true heroic soldier and a true Hungarian patriot.” His comments caused outrage among foreign ministers and ambassadors and was criticized by chief rabbi of the Dohány Street Synagogue, Hungarian's largest synagogue, Robert Frölich, who

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<sup>108</sup> Lili Rutai, “[Why Is Viktor Orbán Keeping the 100-Year-Old Treaty of Trianon Alive?](#),” *RFE/RL* (24 April 2024); Edit Inotai, “[How Hungary's 'Trianon Trauma' Inflames Identity Politics](#),” *Balkan Insight* (25 November 2019).

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referenced Horthy's antisemitism and his promises to Adolf Hitler to "gradually phase out the Jews" in Hungary during World War II. Repeated Fidesz governments of Viktor Orbán (2010–present) had pushed a campaign of reappraisal for the Horthy regime, including an overhaul of the history curriculum and support for revisionist historical research [See NCH *Annual Reports 2019–2023*].<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Bela Szandelsky, "[Hungary's Transportation Minister Gets Sharp Criticism for Comments Praising Nazi-Allied WWII Leader](#)," *Associated Press* (6 September 2023).

## INDIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–1997, 2000–2023.

Between May and July 2023, amid ethnic violence between the Hindu Meitei and Christian Kuki-Zo people in Manipur, more than 220 churches and 17 Hindu temples were destroyed. Human Rights Watch accused the Bharatiya Janata Party state authorities of facilitating the violence through “divisive policies that promote[d] Hindu majoritarianism” [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*].<sup>110</sup>

In July 2023, the University of Kashmir and the Cluster University Srinagar (CUS) decided to drop poems of critically-acclaimed Kashmiri-American poet Agha Shahid Ali and the memoirs of author and journalist Basharat Peer from their curricula. One of Shahid’s poems, “I See Kashmir from New Delhi at Midnight,” taken out of CUS’s Integrated Masters in English program, explored the experience of the Kashmiri people during the Insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir (1989–). The advisers on education in New Delhi and Srinagar claimed that “resistance literature” sustained a “secessionist mindset, aspiration and narrative” among university students.<sup>111</sup>

In [early August] 2023, amid ethnic tensions between the Hindu majority and Muslim minority in Haryana, a mosque in the 57th district was set on fire and the imam (the prayer leader) killed. He was one of at least seven who were killed in violent attacks throughout the state. In Haryana’s only Muslim-majority district of Nuh, the local Bharatiya Janata Party government demolished hundreds of buildings between [4 and 7 August]. On 8 August, the Punjab and Haryana High Court ordered a halt to the destruction of property and questioned whether the demolitions were “an exercise of ethnic cleansing ... conducted by the State.”<sup>112</sup>

On 3 August 2023, the Allahabad High Court in Uttar Pradesh ruled in favor of Hindu petitioners that the Archaeological Survey of India could survey the structure of the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi – which had supposedly been built on the ruins of destroyed Hindu temples [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2023*]. Muslim petitioners expressed fear that the survey would damage the structure of the mosque and pointed out provisions of a 1991 Indian law protecting places of worship.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> [“Why Ethnic Violence in India’s Manipur Has Been Going on for Three Months,”](#) *Al Jazeera* (9 August 2023).

<sup>111</sup> [“‘Curfewed Night’, Agha Shahid Ali’s Poetry To Be Removed from Curriculum at KU,”](#) *Kashmiriyat* (19 July 2023); Jehangir Ali, [“Two Leading Kashmir Universities Drop Agha Shahid Ali, Basharat Peer from English MA Courses,”](#) *The Wire* (23 July 2023).

<sup>112</sup> [“India Court Asks if Nuh Demolitions Were ‘an Exercise of Ethnic Cleansing’,”](#) *Al Jazeera* (8 August 2023).

<sup>113</sup> [“India Court Allows Survey of Historic Mosque To See If It Stands on Temple,”](#) *Al Jazeera* (3 August 2023).

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On 10 September 2023, a Hindu mob attacked Muslim worshippers in Pusesavali, Maharashtra, killing one person, damaging the mosque and burning the Quran and other religious books. The violence reportedly erupted after a Hindu man had hacked into a Muslim minor's Instagram account, posting derogatory remarks in the latter's name about Chhatrapati Shivaji (1630–1680), the first Hindu king of the Maratha Empire (1674–1818) [See NCH *Annual Reports 2004, 2010–2011, 2014, 2020–2022*]. According to the Association for the Protection of Civil Rights, the attack fitted a surge of anti-Muslim violence in the Kolhapur region, Maharashtra.<sup>114</sup>

On 1 November 2023, political scientist and former head of the University of Delhi political science department, Achin Vanaik, delivered a lecture, “The history and politics of the Palestinian present,” at OP Jindal University in Sonapat, Haryana. Some leaders of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) claimed that the lecture was organized in support of Hamas (the Palestinian organization governing the Gaza Strip of the Occupied Palestinian Territory) and contained critical remarks about Hindutva's anti-Muslim stance. Viral clips of the lecture showed Vanaik making a comparison between Zionism and Hindutva, arguing that the former was not Islamophobic while the latter was. The university asked Vanaik to express regret but the latter refused saying that his words had been taken out of context and that he viewed Hamas's action on 7 October 2023, in which approximately 1,200 Israelis were killed by Hamas's military arm, as a terrorist activity and did not support it. On 14 November, a radical right-wing faction of students at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT Bombay) opposed a lecture by Vanaik on the Israel–Palestine conflict. IIT Bombay subsequently canceled it.<sup>115</sup>

On 30 January 2024, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) – a federally-run urban planning organization – demolished the Akhoondji Mosque in Mehrauli, Delhi, estimated to be at least 600 years old, in order to save the forest in which it was located, alleging “illegal encroachment.” Along with it, the madrasa (religious school), an adjacent graveyard and a shrine of one of the first Sufi saints (an Islamic mystic) in Delhi located inside the mosque complex were also razed. Preservationists and historians called the demolition a “mindless” destruction of collective heritage, arguing that the mosque was older than the forest and therefore no “encroachment,” and that its demolition unfairly targeted Muslim heritage. On 8 February 2024, at least four people died in violence in Haldwani, Uttarakhand, after authorities demolished a mosque and adjoining madrasa, similarly alleging “illegal encroachment.”<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Kaisar Andrabi, “[‘Shattered’: Muslim Engineer Killed by Mob at Mosque in India’s Maharashtra](#),” *Al Jazeera* (15 September 2023).

<sup>115</sup> Shuriah Niazi, “[Academic Who Lectured on Palestine Rejects Anti-Hindu Claim](#),” *University World News* (24 November 2023); Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, *Casesheet* (no date).

<sup>116</sup> Zoya Mateen, “[Mehrauli: A Mosque Demolished, and Orphans Displaced in India](#),” *BBC News* (9 February 2024); “[Haldwani: Uttarakhand on Alert after Four Dead in Clashes over Mosque Demolition](#),” *BBC News* (9 February 2024).

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On 2 February 2024, members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) unit in Pune, Maharashtra, disrupted the play *Jab We Met* (Ramleela) on the campus of Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU). A day later, ABVP leader Harshwardhan Harpude filed a complaint to object against the depiction of Lord Ram, Sita, Laxman, and Ravan in it. Consequently, Pravin Dattatraya Bhole, professor of theater arts and head of the SPPU Lalit Kala Kendra (Center for Performing Arts); Bhavesh Rajendra Patil, student and the play’s author; Jay Pedhnekar, student and the play’s director; and the actors (three other students) were arrested under Sections 295A (insulting religious beliefs), 294 (obscene acts and songs), 143/149 (unlawful assembly), 147 (rioting), and 323 (voluntarily causing hurt) of the Indian Penal Code. They were later released on bail. SPPU apologized for the play, stating that “Parody of any person, legend or historical figure is completely wrong and prohibited,” and forming a fact-finding committee to investigate the incident. A group of protesters linked to the Bharatiya Janata Party defaced the sign-board of Lalit Kala Kendra by smearing ink on it. A huge police force was then deployed in the SPPU premises. Videos of the play reportedly went viral on social media.<sup>117</sup>

[On or around 16] February 2024, the right-wing Hindu organization Vishwa Hindu Parishad launched a court petition in West Bengal to stop a lion named Akbar, after the sixteenth-century Mughal Emperor Abu’l-Fath Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar (1542–1605), being put in a zoo enclosure with a lion named Sita, after the avatar of the Hindu deity Lakshmi, claiming that it constituted blasphemy.<sup>118</sup>

## INDONESIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 1998, 2001–2002, 2004–2013, 2015–2019, 2021–2023.

On 8 August 2023, the District Court of Jayapura, Papua province, found Yoseph Ernesto Matuan, Devio Tekege and Ambrosius Fransiskus Elopere guilty of treason under Articles 55 and 106 of the Criminal Code and sentenced them to ten months’ imprisonment each. The three students had been arrested in November 2022 while participating in a vigil at Jayapura University of Technology and Science to commemorate the 21st anniversary of the abduction and killing of pro-independence leader Theys Eluay (1937–2001), at which the Morning Star flag, a symbol of Papuan independence, was

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<sup>117</sup> [“Play with ‘Objectionable Scenes’ on Lord Ram, Sita Disrupted at Pune University Campus; Head of Performing Arts Dept, Students Arrested,”](#) *Indian Express* (3 February 2024); [“‘Parody of Historical Figures, Legends Wrong, Condemnable’: Pune University Apologises for Ram Leela Play; Arrested Students, HoD Get Bail,”](#) *Indian Express* (5 February 2024); Shraddha Kumbhojkar, [“Chitta Jetha Bhayashunyo....”](#) *Loksatta*, (6 February 2024).

<sup>118</sup> [“Hindu Nationalists Go to Court Over Lion Named After Muslim Emperor in India,”](#) *Guardian* (8 February 2024).

raised. All three were released in September having served their sentences.<sup>119</sup>

On 14 February 2024, Prabowo Subianto was elected President. A former commander of the Kopassus special forces during the authoritarian rule of President Suharto (1967–1988), he had been accused of involvement in human rights violations in Papua and Timor-Leste, including the 1983 Kraras massacre, and had been discharged from the military after his alleged involvement in the 1998 kidnapping and torture of 22 pro-democracy activists, 13 of whom were still missing. Human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, expressed concern that Subianto’s election would further limit accountability for past atrocities.<sup>120</sup>

## IRAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–2023.

In 2023, authorities continued to prevent Baha’i burials in a cemetery they had used for decades in Tehran and forcibly bury several deceased Baha’is at the nearby Khavaran mass gravesite, believed to contain the remains of victims of prison massacres in 1988, without their families’ prior knowledge and in violation of Baha’i burial practices [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*].<sup>121</sup>

An August 2023 report by Amnesty International found that authorities had “imposed cruel restrictions on peaceful gatherings at gravesites” and destroyed the graves of some of those who were killed during the protests that had erupted after the death of law student Mahsa (Zhina) Amini (1999–2022), including that of Amini herself. On 16 September 2022, Amini had been detained by the morality police for allegedly wearing her hijab “improperly” and died in detention that day [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*]. On 15 and 16 September 2023, security forces were deployed in several cities, especially in the Kurdish regions, to prevent commemorations for the first anniversary of Amini’s death. On 16 September, security forces arrested Amjad Amini, Mahsa’s father in Saqqez, and warned him not to hold a vigil at his daughter’s graveside. He was later released. Police seriously injured at least one man near Amini’s grave. In Evin prison, human rights activist Narges Mohammadi (who would be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize less than a month later) and three other women detainees burned their headscarves in the courtyard to mark the anniversary. In Mahabad, security forces reportedly opened fire on people holding

<sup>119</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 199.

<sup>120</sup> Rebecca Ratcliffe & Richaldo Hariandja, “‘Winter Is Coming’: Activists’ Fears as Prabowo Subianto Likely Wins Indonesia Election,” *Guardian* (15 February 2024).

<sup>121</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 204.

a vigil, injuring at least one. Security forces also arrested several people in the lead-up to the anniversary, claiming that they were part of “networks of rioters and saboteurs.” Vandals had attacked Mahsa Amini’s grave twice in the spring of 2023.

An independent United Nations fact-finding mission came to similar conclusions in February 2024: the authorities threatened grieving families with burying the bodies of their loved ones in unidentified locations, unless the families remained silent and complied with severe restrictions on funerals and commemorations. Families were pressured to bury their loved ones swiftly, without funeral ceremonies and in the presence of only immediate family, with bans on chanting slogans. In many cases, security and intelligence forces were present during burial ceremonies. State security forces raided family homes or cemeteries and violently assaulted, injured, arrested and detained family members of the victims and other mourners.<sup>122</sup>

On 4 August 2023, agents of the ministry of intelligence ransacked the house of historian Hashem Aghajari (1957–), confiscated his laptop and other electronic devices, and summoned him to appear in the Revolutionary Court, likely on charges of threatening state security. Two weeks earlier, Aghajari, who was an affiliate of the Green Movement, had participated in a “Dialogue to Save Iran” conference, where he had signed a statement calling for the end of clerical rule. In 2002, he had been sentenced to death after urging Iranians to “not blindly follow” Islamic clerics. In 2004, his sentence had been reduced to five years in prison [See NCH *Annual Reports 2003–2005, 2007–2008*].<sup>123</sup>

On 13 August 2023, one person was killed and eight wounded in a terrorist attack at the Shah Cheragh mausoleum in Shiraz. The mausoleum included the tombs of two sons of the seventh Shia Imam Musa al-Kazim (745–799 CE), who were also the brothers of the eighth Imam Ali al-Rida (766–818 CE). No group claimed the attack. On 26 October 2022, thirteen people had been killed in an attack on the mausoleum that was claimed by the Islamic State (IS) group. IS has claimed previous attacks in Iran, including the deadly twin bombings in 2017 that targeted the parliament and the tomb of Islamic Republic founder, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini [See NCH *Annual Reports 2017, 2023*].<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Amnesty International, [Iran: Harassment of Families of Victims Unlawfully Killed During Protests Must End](#) (21 August 2023); Maziar Motamedi, [Iran: One year after the Death of Mahsa Amini](#), *Al Jazeera* (16 September 2023); [Iran Cracks Down on Protests on Mahsa Amini’s Death Anniversary](#), *Al Jazeera* (17 September 2023); Fiona Niomi, [Mahsa Amini: Protesters Mark One Year since Death of Iranian Student](#), *BBC News* (17 September 2023); David Gritten, [Iran Protests: Mahsa Amini’s Grave Attacked by Vandals](#), *BBC News* (23 May 2023); Parham Ghodabi, [Iran Stops Families Marking Anniversaries of Protesters’ Deaths](#), *BBC News* (21 September 2023); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 311; *Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran* (UN Doc. A/HRC/55/670) (2 February 2024), §§ 35, 65–66, 124; Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 62, 202, 205.

<sup>123</sup> [“Dissident Iranian Historian Summoned After Agents Search His House,”](#) *Iran International* (5 August 2024).

<sup>124</sup> Graeme Baker, [Iran Attack: Shiraz Shrine Shooting Leaves at Least One Dead](#), *BBC News* (14 August 2023).

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On or around 26 August 2023, Dariush Rahmanian, an associate professor of history at the University of Tehran College of Literature, was suspended, along with six other professors, and had his lessons removed from the course schedule for the 2023/2024 academic year. His suspension was reportedly due to his support of the “Woman, Life, Freedom” student movement after the killing of law student Mahsa Amini (1999–2022) on 16 September 2022. Rahmanian’s removal was part of a wave of suspensions of university professors in the lead-up to the first anniversary of Amini’s death.<sup>125</sup>

On 29 September 2023, at least 23 people were reportedly injured in Zahedan, Sistan–Baluchistan, when police clashed with people commemorating the first anniversary of the 30 September 2022 Zahedan massacre (also known as “Bloody Friday”) in which security forces reportedly killed at least 104 people.<sup>126</sup>

On 18 October 2023, Franco-Iranian Fariba Adelkhah (1959–), social and political anthropologist, specialist in Shia Islam, and director of research at Sciences Po’s Center for International Studies (CERI) in Paris returned to France, after she had been in and out of prison since June 2019 [See NCH *Annual Reports 2020–2023*].<sup>127</sup>

*See also* Argentina, China, Netherlands.

## IRAQ

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2000–2023.

On 25 June 2024, five large-scale explosive devices were found hidden in a wall in the Prayer Hall of the twelfth-century al-Nuri Mosque in Mosul by members of a UNESCO restoration mission. The mosque and its distinctive minaret that gave Mosul its nickname al-Ḥadbā (“the hunchback”) had been a focal point of UNESCO’s restoration efforts since 2020, after it had been destroyed by the Islamic State in the Levant (ISIL; also known as Daesh) during the 2017 Battle of Mosul. The mosque had also been the site where ISIL leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi proclaimed the establishment of a Caliphate in

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<sup>125</sup> Tzvi Joffe, “[Iranian Anti-Government Professors Fired Ahead of Mahsa Amini Anniversary](#),” *Jerusalem Post* (27 August 2023); “[Iranian Government Replaces University Professors Accused of Backing “Woman, Life, Freedom” Protests with Regime Loyalists](#),” *Center for Human Rights in Iran* (13 September 2023).

<sup>126</sup> “[Iran: ‘Bloody Friday’ Crackdown This Year’s Deadliest](#),” *Human Rights Watch* (22 December 2022); “[Protesters Confront Security Forces as Iran Marks Anniversary of Crackdown](#),” *Al Jazeera* (29 September 2023).

<sup>127</sup> “[French-Iranian Academic Imprisoned for Years in Iran Returns to France](#),” *AP News* (18 October 2023).

June 2014. The explosives had reportedly been concealed by ISIL members within a specially rebuilt section of the wall [See NCH *Annual Report 2017*].<sup>128</sup>

*See also* Kuwait, Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States.

## **IRELAND**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2013, 2015–2016, 2021, 2023.

*See also* United Kingdom.

## **ISRAEL**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 1998, 2000–2003, 2008–2014, 2016–2023.

In early October 2023, an American tourist was arrested for smashing two ancient Roman statues from the second century, in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. Upon his arrest, he declared that “they were against the Torah” (the compilation of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible) and represented “idol worship.” In February 2023, a Jewish American tourist had vandalized a statue of Christ with a hammer at the Church of the Flagellation on the Way of the Cross in Jerusalem.<sup>129</sup>

On 18 October 2023, history and civics teacher Meir Baruchin was dismissed from his high school teaching job in Petach Tikvah. Shortly after his arrest by police officials on treason charges, his home was searched and two laptops and six hard drives confiscated, and he was put in solitary confinement in the notorious “Russian Compound” prison in Jerusalem. After two series of interrogations he was released pending trial. The treason charges were related to a series of his Facebook posts after the 7 October 2023 attacks by Hamas in Israel and the ensuing Israeli military campaign into Gaza. The posts included pictures mourning the civilians killed in Gaza, criticizing the military, and warning against revenge actions. Already in 2021, similar criticism of the military had cost him his teaching job in Rishon LeZion.

Baruchin’s arrest was criticized by a *Haaretz* newspaper editorial stating that the arrest “was used as a political tool . . . silencing any criticism or any hint of protest against Israeli policy.” In early January 2024, Baruchin had a hearing at an educational tribunal claiming that his right to free speech had been violated

<sup>128</sup> “[Iraq: 5 Big ISIL Bombs Found Hidden in Mosul’s al-Nuri Mosque](#),” *Al Jazeera* (29 June 2024).

<sup>129</sup> Alex Smith, “[American Tourist Arrested for Smashing Israel Museum Statues](#),” *BBC News* (6 October 2023).

and that municipal authorities had no right to dismiss him.<sup>130</sup>

In November 2023, the website of the Israel State Archives, which are a part of the Prime Minister’s Office, was infiltrated by pro-Palestinian hackers, who disabled its search functions, erased some databases (but not the backups), and prevented users from viewing files. The hackers also obtained the personal details of the site’s users, including researchers, historians and ordinary citizens, and leaked them online. On 11 March 2024, the National Cyber Directorate warned at a session of the Knesset Science and Technology Committee that all online records were in danger of permanent deletion.<sup>131</sup>

In December 2023, historian Omer Bartov, professor of Holocaust and genocide studies at Brown University, United States, criticized the government for invoking false memories of the Holocaust after the 7 October Hamas attacks on Israel. Bartov stated that calling the attacks a “second Holocaust” and comparing Hamas to Nazis was a “propagandistic turn of phrase” and risked stoking antisemitism and Islamophobia. Hamas forces killed 1,200 people and took 240 hostages. Since then, Israeli bombardments and its military campaign reportedly killed 20,000 people as of 20 December 2023.<sup>132</sup>

*See also* Argentina, Bahrain, Eritrea, France, Germany, India, Netherlands, Palestine, United Kingdom, United States.

## ITALY

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2001, 2003, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2016–2019, 2021–2022.

On 2 March 2022, the University of Milan–Bicocca announced that a course on the Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821–1881) which had been canceled due to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine would go ahead as scheduled. Lecturer Paolo Nori had called it a case of unwarranted censorship.<sup>133</sup>

On 12 January 2023, Justice Minister Carlo Nordio vetoed the extradition of Reverend Franco Reverberi to Argentina, where he was accused of crimes against humanity during the military dictatorship (1976–1983). Reverberi faced charges of murder and torture during his time as military chaplain. He had fled

<sup>130</sup> Emma Graham-Harrison & Quique Kierszenbaum, “[‘It Is a Time of Witch Hunts in Israel’: Teacher Held in Solitary Confinement for Posting Concern about Gaza Deaths](#),” *Guardian* (13 January 2024).

<sup>131</sup> Ofer Aderet, “[National Cyber Directorate Warns State Archive: Israel’s Digital History Could Be Erased](#),” *Haaretz* (12 March 2024).

<sup>132</sup> Gulcin Kazan Doger, “[Israel Legitimizes Killing Gazans by Comparing Hamas to Nazis, Says Israeli Professor](#),” *Andalou Agency* (5 December 2023).

<sup>133</sup> “[Dostoevsky Course Reinstated after Cancellation](#),” *Ansa* (2 March 2022).

Argentina in 2011 after trials against pro-junta individuals had started. In October 2022, the criminal court had ruled in favor of Reverberi's extradition.<sup>134</sup>

In April 2023, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on environmental defenders under the Aarhus Convention criticized a government-backed bill, under discussion in parliament, to criminalize the defacing or damaging of heritage buildings and artifacts during demonstrations, urging the authorities to refrain from disproportionately restricting peaceful acts of civil disobedience by climate justice protesters.<sup>135</sup>

On 20 April 2024, in the lead-up to the 25 April celebrations of the movement of Italian resistance to Nazism and Fascism (also known as Liberation Day), Antonio Scurati (1969–), a professor of comparative literature at IULM University of Milan and best-selling author of *M: Il figlio del secolo* (2018; *M: Son of the Century*; the first of a planned tetralogy about Benito Mussolini [1883–1945] and Italian fascism), had his talk that he was due to read out in the RAI3 television program *Chesarà...* canceled “for editorial reasons.” The show's presenter Serena Bortone protested online and read out the monologue in full during the show. Rai sent her a letter of disciplinary complaint.

In the monologue, which was widely republished in the press and online, Scurati claimed that Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni had “stubbornly stuck to the ideological line of her neo-Fascist culture of origin: she distanced herself from the indefensible brutalities perpetrated by the regime (the persecution of the Jews) without ever repudiating the fascist experience as a whole.” He also warned that “the specter of Fascism haunt[ed] the house of Italian democracy” and asked the government, led by the Fratelli d'Italia party (that had strong roots in the postwar neo-Fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano), to recognize that the Fascist regime had used systematic violence. Meloni responded by publishing Scurati's speech in its entirety on her Facebook page, while attacking Scurati for charging a high fee for his appearance on the show, which she called “propaganda.”<sup>136</sup>

*See also* France, Poland.

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<sup>134</sup> Lorenzo Tondo, “[Italy Refuses to Extradite Priest Accused of Murder and Torture to Argentina](#),” *Guardian* (12 January 2024).

<sup>135</sup> Amnesty International, *The State of the World's Human Rights – April 2024* (London: AI, 2024), 216.

<sup>136</sup> Nick Vivarelli, “[Italy's RAI Slammed for Pulling Anti-Fascist Monologue From Writer of Bestseller 'M,' which Reconstructs Mussolini's Rise to Power](#),” *Variety* (22 April 2024); “[Scurati Case, Rai Sends a Letter of Disciplinary Complaint to Serena Bortone](#),” *Agenzia nova* (8 May 2024).

## **IVORY COAST (Côte d'Ivoire)**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2004, 2006–2021.

## JAMAICA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2017–2018.

*See also* Barbados.

## JAPAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–2023.

In early 2023, plans emerged to institutionalize the revised appointment procedure for the Science Council of Japan (SCJ) in an amendment to the law on the SCJ [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021, 2023*], but in April 2023 the plans were canceled. Instead, in August 2023 a commission to reorganize the SCJ was installed.<sup>137</sup>

On the centenary anniversary of the September 1923 Kantō Massacre, in which 6,000 predominantly ethnic Koreans were killed by Japanese police forces and vigilantes, the government refuses to recognize the massacre and issue an apology.<sup>138</sup>

In May 2024, a Chinese man living in Japan [name unknown] desecrated a pillar of the controversial Yasukuni shrine (a memorial for 2,5 million victims of war, including since 1978 fourteen convicted war criminals) in Tokyo. Footage of the incident went viral. On 9 July 2024, the man was arrested on suspicion of damaging property and desecrating a place of worship [See NCH *Annual Report 2021* under Japan, *Annual Report 2022* under China, *Annual Report 2023* under Japan].<sup>139</sup>

*See also* Korea, South.

## JORDAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2003–2004, 2015, 2018, 2022–2023.

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<sup>137</sup> Hashimoto Nobuya, personal communication (2 October 2023).

<sup>138</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World's Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 219.

<sup>139</sup> Yvette Tan, "[Japan Arrests Chinese Man for Alleged Shrine Vandalism](#)," *BBC News* (9 July 2024).

## KAZAKHSTAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 1999–2001, 2007, 2012, 2022.

On 31 May 2023, four activists, including professor of history Yesengaz Kuandyk, of the so-called “31 May Committee” were detained in Almaty ahead of a planned commemoration for the victims of Soviet repression. They were released the same day. Two other activists were reportedly put under house arrest. The committee had planned to hold a “March of Memory and Sorrow” and called on “all Kazakhstanis to honor the memory of innocent victims not only from repression, but also from the Asharshylyk [Kazakh famine of 1930–1933].” One month later, in June, Kuandyk was fined 200,000 tenge (around €400) for attending a meeting of the “People’s Parliament,” an association of people who were not elected for the 2023 parliamentary elections, which they protested against as unfree and unfair.

On 14 December 2020, unknown people had set fire to Kuandyk’s car near his house in Almaty. He linked the arson attack to his civil activism and criticism of the authorities.<sup>140</sup>

*See also* Moldova.

## KENYA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999–2000, 2002–2005, 2007, 2009–2018, 2020–2023.

On 7 August 2023, marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 1998 al-Qaeda claimed attack on the United States (US) embassy in Nairobi, survivors and relatives of the victims renewed their demands for reparations from the US government. The attack killed 213 people and wounded over 5,000, most of which were passers-by or workers in buildings around the embassy. Forty-four members of the embassy were killed, including twelve US citizens.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Andrei Grishin, “[Репрессии в наследие](#),” *Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law* (31 May 2023); “[Полиция Алматы оштрафовала профессора Есенгазы Куандыка за участие в собрании ‘Народного парламента’](#),” *Radio Azattyk* (19 June 2023); “[No Real Space for Opposition Activities in ‘New Kazakhstan’](#),” *Civicus Monitor* (25 July 2023); “[Активист Есенгазы Куандык сообщил о поджоге его автомобиля неизвестными](#),” *Radio Azattyk* (14 December 2020).

<sup>141</sup> “[Families of Victims of 1998 Attack on US Embassy Nairobi Renew Demand for Reparations](#),” *Africa News* (7 August 2023).

## KOREA, NORTH

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001, 2006–2007, 2009–2011, 2013–2015, 2017, 2019.

On 16 January 2024, Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un announced a change to the Constitution that would identify South Korea as the “number one hostile state,” breaking with a decades-old commitment to unifying the Korean peninsula. Days later, the Monument to the Three Charters for National Reunification (also known as the Arch of Reunification) – a monument built after the 2000 inter-Korean summit as a symbol of the intentions for reunification, showing two women holding an emblem of the Korean peninsula – on the Reunification Highway linking Pyongyang with the South-Korean border, was reportedly demolished.<sup>142</sup>

*See also* Japan; Korea, South; Zimbabwe.

## KOREA, SOUTH

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 1998–2001, 2003, 2006, 2008–2010, 2012–2013, 2016–2023.

On 31 May 2023, police demolished a memorial altar to Yang Hoe-dong, a labor leader who self-immolated on 1 May 2023 after he refused anti-union charges against him. They injured four people, and threatened to use pepper spray to break up a peaceful rally organized by the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions.<sup>143</sup>

On 26 October 2023, the Supreme Court found historian Park Yu-ha, author of *Comfort Women of the Empire* (2013) and emeritus professor of Sejong University in Seoul, not guilty of criminal defamation after deliberations that lasted six years [See NCH *Annual Reports 2016–2018*]. Park had portrayed some comfort women as prostitutes or collaborators with the Japanese military. The Court noted that Park’s opinion did not amount to a denial of the crime against the comfort women or to defamation of the comfort women, and that the examination of academic work should take place in a public debate rather than in criminal courts. The Supreme Court’s decision meant that the case would be sent back for retrial

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<sup>142</sup> Justin McCurry, “[Unification with South Korea No Longer Possible, Says Kim Jong-un](#),” *Guardian* (16 January 2024); Justin McCurry, “[North Korea Demolishes Symbol of Hope for Reunification with South – Report](#),” *Guardian* (24 January 2024).

<sup>143</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 343.

to Seoul High Court [See NCH *Annual Report 2018*]. Park further faced a civil lawsuit filed by the former sex slaves due for 2024.<sup>144</sup>

On 24 November 2023, the Seoul High Court overturned a ruling of the Seoul District Court in the case of the comfort women (the system whereby the Japanese army forced an estimated 200,000 women into sexual slavery during the Pacific War of 1931–1945). In 2021, the Seoul District Court had dismissed a 2016 case filed by a group of sixteen surviving comfort women, citing sovereign immunity [See NCH *Annual Report 2021*]. The High Court now ruled that it recognized South Korea’s jurisdiction over the Japanese government because the women lived there and sought compensation for acts deemed “unlawful.” It declared that “[i]t is reasonable to consider that there is a common international law which does not recognize state immunity for an illegal act ... regardless of whether the act was a sovereign act.” Japan’s Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa called the ruling “extremely regrettable and absolutely unacceptable.”<sup>145</sup>

*See also* Japan.

## KOSOVO

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2021–2023. For previous entries: *see* Serbia.

In April 2023, the trial of former Kosovo President and Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi and three other former senior Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) officials began in The Hague before the Kosovo Specialist Chambers. The accused, who spent almost 2.5 years in pretrial detention, were charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed during the Kosovo War (1998–1999). All four men pleaded not guilty [See NCH *Annual Report 2021*].<sup>146</sup>

In a July 2023 report, the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence recommended that the UN provide full and effective reparations, including a fully funded reparation program, to Roma, Ashkali, and Balkan Egyptian victims of lead poisoning who had resided in contaminated camps for displaced people run by the UN

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<sup>144</sup> Yumi Jeung, “[Academic Charged with Defaming Sex Slaves Acquitted](#),” *University World News* (2 November 2023); Pola Lem, “[Historian’s Comfort Women Trial Was ‘Cancel Culture on Steroids’](#),” *Times Higher Education* (21 November 2023).

<sup>145</sup> Lou Newton, “[Japan Ordered to Compensate Wartime ‘Comfort Women’](#),” *BBC News* (24 November 2023).

<sup>146</sup> Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2024: Events of 2023* (New York: HRW, 2024), 366; Amnesty International, *The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024* (London: AI, 2024), 228.

Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). A 2016 report by the Human Rights Advisory Panel, an independent body established to investigate complaints of abuses by UNMIK, had recommended that the UN pay individual compensation and apologize to victims [See NCH *Annual Report 2018*].<sup>147</sup>

On 26 October 2023, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) condemned the desecration of graveyards at an early 20th-century Serbian Orthodox cemetery in North Mitrovica, due to the construction of a road next to the cemetery.<sup>148</sup>

## **KUWAIT**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999–2000, 2004–2005, 2018, 2021.

In 2023, authorities forbade public commemorations of Ashura – the tenth day of Muharram, on which Shiites commemorate the death of Husayn, the Prophet Muhammad’s grandson, who died at the Battle of Karbala in 680. At the same time, the Interior Ministry deployed 4,000 security personnel to protect 110 people commemorating Ashura in mosques.<sup>149</sup>

## **KYRGYZSTAN**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2010–2013, 2016–2017, 2021–2022.

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<sup>147</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 366, 369.

<sup>148</sup> Milica Stojanovic & Xhorxhina Bami, “OSCE, Serbian Church Criticize Damage to Serb Cemetery in [Kosovo](#),” *Balkan Insight* (26 October 2023).

<sup>149</sup> United States Department of State, [2023 Report on International Religious Freedom: Kuwait](#) ([no date]).

## LAOS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2023.

## LATVIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2006, 2008, 2015–2016, 2019, 2022–2023.

## LEBANON

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2003, 2006–2023.

In January 2023, the United Nations (UN) extended the mandate of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon until the end of December 2023 to allow it to finalize its work [See NCH *Annual Reports 2010–2011, 2013–2015, 2021–2022*].<sup>150</sup>

On 2 February 2023, United Nations human rights experts expressed deep concern at the lack of progress to ensure accountability for the assassination of archivist Lokman Slim (1962–2021), who was found shot dead on 4 February 2021 in his car in southern Lebanon [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2023*].<sup>151</sup>

On 3 August 2023, the day prior to the third anniversary of the 2020 Beirut port blast [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021, 2023*], 300 organizations, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, renewed a call for the United Nations to establish a fact-finding mission. Although in February 2021 the lead investigator of the domestic inquiry, Tarek Bitar, had been suspended [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*], he suddenly resumed his investigation in January 2023, charging eight suspects including high-level security officials and top prosecutor Ghassan Oueidat.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 388.

<sup>151</sup> [“Lebanon: UN Experts Concerned at Slow Progress in Investigation and Continued Impunity for Killing of Prominent Intellectual Lokman Slim”](#) (Press release; 2 February 2023); Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 238.

<sup>152</sup> [“Lebanon Marks Three Years since Catastrophic Beirut Port Blast,”](#) *Al Jazeera* (4 August 2023).

## LIBERIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2001, 2004–2015, 2018, 2021.

On the twentieth anniversary of the end of the Second Civil War (1999–2003), no war crimes court had been established despite recommendations of the 2009 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and promises in 2018 by then presidential candidate (and later President) George Weah. On 20 November 2023, former Vice President and head of the Unity Party Joseph Boakai was inaugurated as President. In the lead-up to the national elections, Boakai had chosen Jeremiah Kpan Koung, a reported protégé of warlord-turned-senator Prince Yormie Johnson, as his running mate, despite the TRC’s recommendation to bar Johnson from holding public office due to crimes committed during the First Civil War (1989–1997). In the presidential campaign, Johnson had vocally opposed the establishment of a criminal court on multiple occasions. In early March 2024, the proposal to create a War and Economic Crimes Court was backed by a majority of legislators (42 to 30), and in April it passed through the Senate.<sup>153</sup>

## LIBYA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2003, 2005–2021, 2023.

In February 2023, the Internal Security Agency in Benghazi arrested singer Ahlam al-Yamani and content creator Haneen al-Abdali for “offending the traditions of Libya.” They were released in April without charge or trial.<sup>154</sup>

In March 2023, the Tarek Ben Ziyad Brigade and Brigade 20/20 of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF), the armed group controlling eastern and much of southern Libya, forcibly evicted on short notice more than 20,000 residents of Benghazi and forced them to rescind their property or ownership documents without an appropriate compensation scheme for residents, according to six United Nations (UN) experts and the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. The Brigades’ members demolished scores of residential units, including historic neighborhoods and protected heritage sites in the Benghazi center to make way for new residential and commercial building developments, and briefly arrested several

<sup>153</sup> Azeekat Olaoluwa & Yūsuf Akínpèlú, “[Liberia Election: George Weah Faces Demands for War Crimes Court](#),” *BBC News* (7 October 2023); Dounard Bondo, “[The Key Issues at Stake in Liberia’s Presidential Election](#),” *Al Jazeera* (9 October 2023); Aaron Weah, “[George Weah’s Politics of Silence](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (12 October 2023); Aaron Weah, “[Liberia Has a New President: Is There Renewed Hope for Justice?](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (27 November 2023); “[Liberian Senators Back Creation of War and Economic Crimes Court](#),” *Africa News* (10 April 2024); “[Liberia ex-Warlord Prince Johnson in Leader Race](#),” *BBC* (24 September 2010).

<sup>154</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 242.

residents and at least two activists protesting the evictions, the experts said.<sup>155</sup>

## LITHUANIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2005, 2009, 2015, 2018, 2021–2022.

*See also* Belarus.

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<sup>155</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 391.

**MACEDONIA**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999, 2006–2008, 2010–2015, 2017–2018.

From 2021: *See* North Macedonia.

**MADAGASCAR**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2018.

**MALAWI**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2011–2012, 2019, 2021.

In 2024, the Malawi Prisons Service successfully sent five candidates to the university. They included Paul Tembo from Lilongwe Prison who would pursue a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities at the University of Malawi and George Chipwanthe from Blantyre Prison who was selected for a Bachelor of Education in History and Social Studies.<sup>156</sup>

**MALAYSIA**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 2002, 2007–2008, 2010–2011, 2016–2017, 2019–2023.

In February 2023, police arrested two teenagers under Communications and Multimedia Act section 233, on the “improper use of network facilities or network service,” and the Minor Offenses Act 1995 over a TikTok video in which they criticized a history exam using “abusive words.”<sup>157</sup>

On 4 January 2024, the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies Malaysia (IAIS) canceled the planned book launch of *Islam, Authoritarianism, and Underdevelopment: A Global and Historical Comparison* (English 2019; Malay 2024), by Turkish scholar Ahmet T. Kuru, director of Islamic and Arabic Studies at San Diego State University, United States. IAIS gave no official reason for canceling

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<sup>156</sup> Ben Bongololo, “[Five Prisoners Selected for Public Universities](#),” *Malawi24* (13 June 2024).

<sup>157</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 404.

the launch, which was supposed to take place on 8 January 2024. However, there had been online accusations of “liberalism,” a term sometimes used to discredit fellow Muslims. The Turkish ambassador to Malaysia allegedly also pressured IAIS to cancel the event. Kuru had previously participated in protests against the Turkish government’s growing influence on universities. The launch was relocated to the University of Nottingham Malaysia campus, Semenyih, Selangor.<sup>158</sup>

## MALDIVES

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002–2004, 2006, 2009–2010, 2013, 2020–2021.

In the lead-up to the presidential elections on 9 September 2023, human rights activists and lawyers expressed concern over the country’s transitional justice process. In November 2018, sitting President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih had set up the Presidential Commission on Deaths and Disappearances (DDCom) to probe unresolved cases of murder and enforced disappearances between 1 January 2012 and 17 November 2018. In December 2020, the government further passed the Transitional Justice Act, installing an Ombudsperson’s Office for Transitional Justice (OTJ) to investigate human rights violations between 1 January 1953 and 17 November 2018.

Both DDCom and the OTJ experienced difficulties. Victims felt frustrated about the slow pace of the DDCom and feared for their safety if they participated in investigations. The DDCom also had a number of investigations ongoing, but as its mandate was set by Solih, it was unclear whether it would continue after his term ended. The OTJ suffered from too broad a mandate, being required to investigate all human rights violations between 1953 and 2018, ranging from socio-economic rights (like the appropriation of houses then allocated to the tourism industry), to the August 1953 coup that deposed the first President Mohamed Amin Didi (1910–1954), the 162 military interventions into Thinadoo island, which was accompanied by human rights abuses. The OTJ further lacked sufficient resources and legal expertise, and its mandate lacked clear legal definition. As of September 2023, the OTJ had completed 230 cases, mostly related to housing issues. Human rights lawyers feared that its mandate would end before the bigger historic cases were decided.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, “[Ahmet Kuru](#)” (4 January 2024).

<sup>159</sup> Julia Crawford, “[Justice in Paradise](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (8 September 2023).

## MALI

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2011, 2013–2021, 2023.

On 26 June 2024, the International Criminal Court convicted Al Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz, a key member of the Al-Qaeda linked Ansar al-Din, for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including torture, rape and the destruction of religious and historical buildings in Timbuktu between 2012 and 2013. He faced up to life imprisonment.<sup>160</sup>

## MALTA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2012, 2021.

On 9 November 2023, parliament approved the construction of an apartment block within the so-called “buffer zone” (the area surrounding a World Heritage Site that gives it added protection) of the megalithic Ġgantija Temples (built ca. 3600–2500 BCE during the Late Neolithic era), that was established by UNESCO in 2015. The approval ignored UNESCO’s request for a Heritage Impact Assessment of the temple. The construction project was criticized by World Heritage Watch for disrupting the ancient skyline and obstructing archaeological research, including through the building of a large underground parking garage.<sup>161</sup>

## MARSHALL ISLANDS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2013, 2015.

## MAURITANIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2002, 2009, 2011, 2017, 2019–2020.

On 12 September 2023, the United Nations Committee on Enforced Disappearances raised questions over the establishment of reparations for alleged disappearances and other abuses committed during the

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<sup>160</sup> “[ICC Convicts al-Qaeda-Linked Leader of War Crimes in Mali’s Timbuktu](#),” *Al Jazeera* (26 June 2024).

<sup>161</sup> World Heritage Watch, *World Heritage Watch Report 2024* (Berlin: WHW, 2024), 15–16.

era of the *Passif Humanitaire* (1989–1992; era of humanitarian liability), and over the State’s cooperation with civil society organizations, and called for the investigation of all disappearances in this period and the prosecution of those responsible, including military and civilian leaders. A 14 June 1993 Amnesty Law had granted full amnesty to members of the armed forces and security forces for crimes committed between 1989 and 1992.<sup>162</sup>

## MAURITIUS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2012.

See United Kingdom.

## MEXICO

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 1999, 2001–2023.

In June 2023, authorities placed metal fences around the Roundabout of Women who Fight in Mexico City to remove the memorial, but after pressure from civil society organizations and activists, Martí Batres Guadarrama, Mexico City’s head of government, agreed to keep the memorial.<sup>163</sup>

On 4 July 2023, writer, journalist and historian Adolfo Gilly (1928–2023) died. From April 1966 to March 1972, the Argentinian-born Gilly, then a left-wing journalist expelled from Cuba in October 1963 for his Trotskyist ideas, was imprisoned in Lecumberri prison on a charge of conspiracy against the State. During the first five years of his prison term, he wrote *La revolución interrumpida: México, 1910–1920; Una guerra campesina por la tierra y el poder* ([The Interrupted Revolution: Mexico 1910–1920, A Peasant War for Land and Power] México 1971; translated as *The Mexican Revolution*, London 1983). After scores of political prisoners were assaulted in prison on 1 January 1970 and the manuscript was in danger of loss, he began smuggling it out of prison. The book, appearing while Gilly was still in prison, became a bestseller (most recent revised edition: 1998; translations in English and

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<sup>162</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commission on Human Rights, “[Experts of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances Commend Mauritania on Prospective Bill Criminalising Enforced Disappearance. Ask Questions on the State’s Cooperation with Civil Society and Reparations for Alleged “Passif Humanitaire” Era Abuses.](#)” (press release; 12 September 2023); Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 257.

<sup>163</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 260.

French). In March 1972, Gilly was released in accordance with the new policy of democratic liberalization and expelled to France. Later, the Supreme Court annulled the charge. Returning to Mexico in November 1976, he became a professor at the Faculty of Economics and the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (National School for Anthropology and History) (1977–1978) and at the Department of Political and Social Sciences of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) (1979–). He received the Mexican nationality in 1982. From 1976, Lecumberri prison housed the National Archives. In 2022, Gilly published *Paths of Revolution: Selected Essays*. Adolfo Gilly was a patron of the Network of Concerned Historians.<sup>164</sup>

On 11 July 2023, six people of the State Attorney General’s Office and the municipal police were killed by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) near Tlajomulco, Jalisco. They were accompanying a volunteer search group helping to locate bodies of disappeared people. The group had received an anonymous call locating a hidden burial site. When they arrived near the site, eight IEDs set up around it reportedly detonated. The attack was blamed on an unnamed drug trafficking group. On 20 July 2023, the United Nations Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED) condemned the attack and called on the government to implement a National Policy for the Prevention and Eradication of Disappearances. More than 110,000 people remained missing as of August 2023. In April 2022, the CED had issued a report calling on the government to guarantee the permanent protection of public servants dedicated to the search and investigation of disappeared people and to establish a protection program for them, as well as for victims and family members of the disappeared [See NCH *Annual Report 2022*]. On 15 September 2023, the CED expressed concern over the increase in enforced disappearances, the high levels of impunity (reportedly up to 98%), the lack of protection for those involved in searches and indications that this was usually left to victim’s families without the help of state institutions.<sup>165</sup>

On 25 July 2023, the Grupo Interdisciplinario de Expertos Independientes (Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts), created by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in 2014 to

<sup>164</sup> Adolfo Gilly, personal communication (August–September–December 2000); Adolfo Gilly, *Arriba Los de Abajo: Perfiles Mexicanos* (Mexico 1986), cover; Adolfo Gilly, *La Revolución Interrumpida: Edición Corregida y Aumentada* (originally 1971; México 1998), 9–13; Octavio Paz, “Letter to Adolfo Gilly,” in Octavio Paz, *The Other Mexico: Critique of the Pyramid* (New York 1972), 113–148; David C. Bailey, “Revisionism and the Recent Historiography of the Mexican Revolution,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* (1978), 77; Sheldon B. Liss, *Marxist Thought in Latin America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1984), 235–237.

<sup>165</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, “[Roadside Bombings in Mexico Kill Six People in ‘Act of Terror’](#),” *Al Jazeera* (12 July 2023); “[Mexico: UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances Condemns Violence against Authorities Searching for Disappeared People](#)” (press release; 20 July 2023); UN Office of the High Commission on Human Rights, “[Experts of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances Welcome Mexico’s Cooperation with the Committee’s Country Visit, Raise Issues Concerning Apparent Rise in Enforced Disappearances, High Levels of Impunity and the Slow Progress of Investigations](#),” (press release; 15 September 2023).

investigate the 2014 Ayotzinapa case of 43 disappeared and murdered students [See NCH *Annual Reports 2015, 2021–2023*], published its final report stating that it was no longer possible to continue its research, because authorities were hiding information and “prevented getting to the truth” [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*]. The group then left the country. Leaked emails suggested that senior military officials had pressured the government to drop charges against soldiers implicated in the case.<sup>166</sup>

In August 2023, the 2021 truth commission investigating military abuses against leftist activists during the Guerra sucia (“Dirty War”; 1964–1982) said the military and intelligence services had refused to give it access to key documents. Additionally, Pegasus spyware was detected in the phone of the commission’s coordinator Camilo Vicente Ovalle. In September, the commission investigators withdrew after discovering that military officials had hidden, altered and destroyed documents.<sup>167</sup>

On [24] August 2023, Karla Quintana, head of the Comisión Nacional de Búsquedas (CNB; National Search Commission) stepped down. Her resignation came after the government of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador had announced a census of the number of disappeared people, in what critics considered an attempt to “present a fictitious decrease” ahead of the 2024 presidential elections. Human rights groups expressed concern that the resignation of Quintana fitted in a policy of López Obrador to backtrack on accountability for disappearances [See NCH *Annual Report 2022–2023*].<sup>168</sup>

*See also* United States.

## MOLDOVA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999, 2003, 2010, 2022–2023.

On 6 July 2023, the seventy-fourth anniversary of a mass deportation campaign of local elites and political opponents from Bessarabia to Siberia and the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic ordered by Joseph Stalin between 5 and 9 July 1949, the government inaugurated an exhibition at the Chisinau railway station. In response, the Russian ambassador to Moldova Oleg Vasnetsov called the exhibition a “purposeful incitement of hatred toward Russia and everything Russian” and criticized exhibitions

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<sup>166</sup> “[2014 Ayotzinapa Case of 43 Disappeared and Murdered Students](#),” *Reading Chronicle* (25 July 2023); Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2024: Events of 2023* (New York: HRW, 2024), 424.

<sup>167</sup> Oscar Lopez & Mary Beth Sheridan, “[He’s Leading Mexico’s Probe of the Dirty War: Who’s Spying on Him?](#),” *Washington Post* (3 June 2023); Daniel Shailer, “[Mexican Official Says Military Obstructs Probe Into Human Rights Abuses during Country’s ‘Dirty War’](#),” *Associated Press* (12 October 2023); Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2024: Events of 2023* (New York: HRW, 2024), 424.

<sup>168</sup> “[Official Leading Search for Thousands of Missing People in Mexico Resigns](#),” *Al Jazeera* (24 August 2023).

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that “honor the Romanian accomplices of Nazi Germany,” without specifying the allegations. The Foreign Ministry responded to Vasnetsov’s comments, urging him to refrain from interfering in matters of Moldovan history and invited him “to find out the historical truth about the Soviet-induced famine and the massive deportations to the Gulags.” Between 1941 and 1951, in three waves of deportations, between 80,000 and 150,000 persons were estimated to have been deported from Besarabia.<sup>169</sup>

*See also* Romania.

## **MONGOLIA**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2007, 2013.

*See also* China.

## **MONTENEGRO**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2008–2009, 2011–2013, 2015–2017, 2021–2023.

A legislative amendment adopted in May 2023, which denied compensation to civilian victims of the war (1991–1995) killed or forcibly disappeared outside Montenegro, was withdrawn in December 2023, and a new amendment was proposed to include all civilian war victims.<sup>170</sup>

On 11 August 2023, historian Boban Batrićević (1988–), professor at the Faculty of Montenegrin Language and Literature in Cetinje, published an article on the independent Montenegrin portal Antena M, in which he detailed examples of hateful narratives spread by priests of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro, including the glorification of war criminals. A lawyer affiliated with the church filed a criminal complaint against Batrićević, accusing him of inciting religious hatred. The Supreme State Prosecutor’s Office of Montenegro subsequently initiated misdemeanor proceedings against Batrićević, accusing him of violating Article 19 of the National Law on Public Order and Peace, which prohibited national, racial, or religious insults and carried a fine or imprisonment for up to sixty days. Batrićević’s

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<sup>169</sup> Madalin Necsutu, “[Moldova Commemorates Victims of Soviet Deportations](#),” *Balkan Insight* (6 July 2023); Madalin Necsutu, “[Moldova Denies Soviet Deportation Exhibition is ‘Russophobic’](#),” *Balkan Insight* (14 July 2023).

<sup>170</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 265.

statement and his ensuing prosecution came against the backdrop of a controversial population census, eventually begun on 3 December 2023 after several delays, which opposition parties had threatened to boycott over fears that pro-Russian forces, including the Serbian Orthodox Church, would spread propaganda and inflate the numbers of people identifying as Serbian. Batrićević's trial opened on 22 January 2024. Batrićević was a specialist in the history of propaganda and totalitarian movements, as well as cultural identity theory.<sup>171</sup>

On 15 May 2024, the Croatian government delivered a note of protest after the President of the Montenegrin parliament and leader of the Nova srpska demokratija (New Serb Democracy) party, Andrija Mandić, announced that representatives of the Serbian people in Montenegro would propose a resolution in parliament about the Jasenovac concentration camp in Croatia, along the lines of the then pending (and later adopted) United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Srebrenica (see under Bosnia and Herzegovina). The note reportedly condemned the “manipulation of the Jasenovac victims for political purposes and the instrumentalization of Croatia for internal politics.” Between August 1941 and April 1945, the Jasenovac camp was run by the Croatian fascist Ustaše organization. Almost 85,000 victims, predominantly ethnic-Serbs, Romani and Jewish people, were identified, with the final number estimated to be much higher [See NCH *Annual Reports 1996, 2017 2020* under Croatia, *Annual Report 2023* under Serbia].<sup>172</sup>

See also Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## MOROCCO / WESTERN SAHARA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2013, 2015–2018, 2020–2023.

In September 2023, journalist and historian Maâti Monjib (1962–) [See NCH *Annual Reports 2016, 2020–2023*] was dismissed as a historian at Mohammed V University, following an interview with al-Araby21 news website in which he had criticized King Mohammed VI. In July 2023, he was subjected to a smear campaign by pro-government media who accused him of supporting a Quran burning in Sweden. The smear campaign pushed Monjib into hiding over fears of attack by people who believed the false news.<sup>173</sup>

<sup>171</sup> PEN International, [War, Censorship and Persecution: PEN International Case List 2023/2024](#) (London: PEN, 2024), 76.

<sup>172</sup> Borislav Visnjic, “[Croatia Protests Montenegrin Push for Jasenovac Resolution](#),” *Balkan Insight* (15 May 2024).

<sup>173</sup> Website: <https://maatimonjib.net>; PEN International, [War, Censorship and Persecution: PEN International Case List 2023/2024](#) (London: PEN, 2024), 101–102. Background in Human Rights Watch, “[They’ll Get You No Matter What](#)”: Morocco’s Playbook to Crush Dissent (Washington: HRW, 2022), 54–68.

## MOZAMBIQUE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2018, 2020, 2023.

Members of the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM), a regional peacekeeping mission deployed in July 2021 to assist the national armed forces fighting the Al Shabaab insurgency (2017–), were implicated in the mutilation and other mistreatment of the dead in Cabo Delgado. In January 2023, a video appeared on social media showing SAMIM soldiers throwing corpses onto a pile of burning rubble. The Southern African Development Community, the organization overseeing SAMIM, condemned the acts in the video and announced an investigation, but as of January 2024 had to provide any updates on the investigation.<sup>174</sup>

## MYANMAR (BURMA)

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997–2001, 2003, 2005–2006, 2008–2023.

In May 2023, history student Thaik Tun Oo ([2001]–) was released from prison. On 12 March 2021, he was arrested for participating in the protests against the February coup, detained in Obo prison, Mandalay, and sentenced to three years’ imprisonment. When he tried to organize the prisoners against the appalling prison circumstances, he was tortured and isolated. His family believed he was dead. In [May] 2022, he was transported to Myingyan prison. After his release, Thaik Tun Oo went into hiding and later fled to the liberated border area in eastern Myanmar and to Thailand. He then worked for the Political Prisoners Network Myanmar.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 436–437.

<sup>175</sup> Minka Nijhuis, [“In overvolle cellen koelt de Myanmarese junta haar woede op politieke gevangenen,”](#) *NRC Handelsblad* (1 February 2024).

## NAMIBIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 2006–2009, 2011, 2016–2018, 2023.

*See also* Germany.

## NEPAL

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2007–2021.

In March 2023, the government presented an amended transitional justice bill regarding human rights violations committed during the Civil War (1996–2006). The bill was in response to a 2015 Supreme Court ruling that found existing legislation unlawful, particularly because it allowed amnesties for serious crimes under international law. In late 2023, a parliamentary committee proposed further amendments. Supporters hailed the bill’s guaranteeing of the right to reparation and interim relief for some victims who were left out of earlier relief packages. It also mandated the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to study the root causes of the conflict and recommend institutional reforms to guarantee the non-recurrence of abuses. However, victims and United Nations Human Rights Experts voiced concerns that unless it was appropriately amended, the bill would continue to enable amnesties for murder, sexual violence not amounting to rape, “beating and mutilation,” and “any inhuman act[s] that are against international human rights and humanitarian law.” The bill failed to establish a special investigation unit to collect evidence of these crimes, and it included a statute of limitations that severely limited access to justice for survivors of sexual violence. Throughout 2023, the TRC and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons, which had respectively collected more than 60,000 and 3,000 complaints from victims, had failed to resolve a single case.<sup>176</sup>

## NETHERLANDS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 2004–2005, 2007–2023.

Two lectures on freedom at the Westerbork Memorial (a former Nazi prisoner camp), one by Emmy Drop-Menko, a Holocaust survivor, and one by Wahhab Hassoo ([1995]–), a refugee who in 2014

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<sup>176</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 449–450; Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 276.

escaped the genocide of the Yazidis by Islamic State in Iraq, scheduled for 29 October 2023, were canceled because Hassoo, also a politician for the new political party Nieuw Sociaal Contract (NSC; New Social Contract), received threats against him and his family. In 2018, Hassoo had also received death threats.<sup>177</sup>

In early January 2024, the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU; Free University Amsterdam) removed a trigger warning in the online course presentation of Iranian-born cultural anthropologist Younes Saramifar, lecturer of the second-year history course “History and Social Sciences,” on the grounds that it was biased and political. The warning – calling Israel an Apartheid state and saying that the prosperity in most European countries was based on colonialism, genocide and repression – had led to a complaint in late December 2023 from one or some students (and public praise for Saramifar’s record from many others and from colleagues who spoke of a breach of academic freedom). The public debate accompanying the removal was fed, among others, by erroneous media reports. On 26 January 2024, the VU Faculty of Arts and Saramifar issued a joint declaration saying that the latter was not censored, surveilled, or otherwise sanctioned. During the row, Saramifar received hate letters and threatening emails, including at his home address.<sup>178</sup>

On 26 January 2024, a lecture series about the Holocaust and antisemitism at the Hogeschool Utrecht (University of Applied Sciences Utrecht), scheduled to start on 12 February 2024, was postponed indefinitely due to concerns about the safety of speakers and audience. On 29 January, the decision was reversed. The decision and its revocation were influenced by publicity about pro-Palestinian and pro-Jewish groups trying to influence the Hogeschool’s decision. During the commotion, some members of the Utrecht NGO New Neighbours, involving both Palestinian and Jewish Utrechters, were intimidated.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> [“Lezing in Westerbork afgelast wegens bedreiging spreker: ‘Echt nooit gedacht in Nederland dit mee te maken’,”](#) *Het Parool* (24 oktober 2023).

<sup>178</sup> David Bremmer, [“VU-docent bestraft na omstreken Israël-uitspraak,”](#) *Algemeen Dagblad* (19 January 2024; updated 26 January 2024); [“Formal Complaint Letter to Rector Magnificus Jeroen Geurts”](#) (Letter from students and staff in support of Saramifar; no date); Welmoed Visser, [“VU-docent in de problemen wegens Israël-uitspraak,”](#) *Ad Valvas* (23 January 2024); Niels Debonne, [“VU-docent over berispte collega na Israël-uitspraak,”](#) *Het Parool* (23 January 2024); Peter Breedveld, [“VU-docent is niet berispt en staat niet onder curatele,”](#) *Ad Valvas* (26 January 2024); [“Gezamenlijke verklaring Geesteswetenschappen, VU en Younes Saramifar”](#) (Press release; 26 January 2024); Claudia Kammer, [“De docent waarschuwde voor zijn ‘dekoloniale benadering’, de universiteit greep in,”](#) *NRC Handelsblad* (30 January 2024).

<sup>179</sup> Laura Wismans, [“Uitstel lezingen over antisemitisme leidt tot verontwaardiging en vreugde,”](#) *NRC Handelsblad* (28 January 2024); [“Outrage over Holocaust Lecture Delay at Utrecht Higher-Ed; No Problems at Leiden Univ.,”](#) *NL Times* (29 January 2024); Claudia Kammer & Rosa Uijtewaal, [“In Utrecht gaat Holocaustlezing toch door: wat ging aan dat besluit vooraf,”](#) *NRC Handelsblad* (30 January 2024); Laurien Vastenhout, [“Een lezing over de Holocaust is een politiek statement,”](#) *NRC Handelsblad* (1 February 2024); [“Lezingencyclus Holocaust en Antisemitisme”](#) [program of lecture series] (no date).

On 30 January 2024, the Koninklijk Nederlands Historisch Genootschap (Royal Netherlands Historical Society) issued a press release saying that historian and independent researcher Anne-Lot Hoek (1978–), an expert on colonialism and the Indonesian war of independence (1945–1949), was insulted and intimidated with threatening content from activists related to the foundations Histori Bersama (an online platform) and Komite Utang Kehormatan Belanda – Stichting Comité Nederlandse Ereschulden (KUKB; Foundation Dutch Debt of Honor Committee), invading Lot’s privacy, defaming her, and threatening her safety. Lot had published *De strijd om Bali* (The fight for Bali) (2021), about imperialism and resistance in Bali, Indonesia, in 1846–1950, and participated in the officially commissioned history project *Independence, Decolonization, Violence and War in Indonesia, 1945–1950*. The foundations called her work government propaganda that neglected critical voices.<sup>180</sup>

In a 26 June 2024 newspaper interview, Leo Lucassen, historian of migration, professor of social history at the University of Leiden and director of the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, said that since at least 2015 he had been the target of a barrage of almost daily online intimidation attempts, especially on Twitter/X, because he tried to refute radical-right prejudices about migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers with historical and statistical arguments in frequent newspaper columns. On one occasion, the intimidation included the publication of pictures of his daughters.<sup>181</sup>

*See also* Syria, United States.

## NEW ZEALAND

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2017, 2019–2021.

On 24 July 2024, the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse and Care – a 2018 commission set up to investigate abuse in state and religious care institutions between 1950–2019 – found that one in three people (200,000 children, young people and vulnerable adults) had suffered from abuse, including sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect. It further found that Maori and Pacific Islanders were targeted

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<sup>180</sup> Koninklijk Nederlands Historisch Genootschap, [Statement against Harassment Anne-Lot Hoek](#) (Press release; 30 January 2024 in Dutch; 1 February 2024 in English); Bart Funnekotter, “[Historica Anne-Lot Hoek geïntimideerd om Indonesië-onderzoek](#),” *NRC Handelsblad* (30 January 2024); “[Independence, Decolonization, Violence and War in Indonesia, 1945–1950](#),” *NIOD webpage* (no date); Histori Bersama, “[Statement Concerning Anne-Lot Hoek and Her Husband](#)” [2022]; Anne-Lot Hoek, personal website (<https://www.annelothoek.com>); Arjen Fortuin, “[Eerbiedwaardige historici hekelen intimidatie, maar waar doelen ze precies op?](#)” *NRC Handelsblad* (9 February 2024).

<sup>181</sup> Jannetje Koelewijn, “[Twee wetenschappers vertellen hoe ze geïntimideerd werden: ‘Bérgen beledigingen en bedreigingen, echt bérgen’](#),” *NRC Handelsblad* (26 June 2024), 3.

because of their ethnicity and that they were prevented from engaging with their cultural heritage and practices. Prime Minister Christopher Luxon promised to implement the final report's 130 recommendations and to issue an apology in November 2024.<sup>182</sup>

*See also* Australia.

## NICARAGUA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2020–2023.

On 9 February 2023, politician and historian Dora María Téllez was released after having spent twenty months in El Chipote Prison, Managua, and forced into exile in the United States. As *comandante* in the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN; Sandinista National Liberation Front), Téllez had fought during the 1979 revolution that ousted dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle (in power between 1967–1972 and 1974–1979). Between 1979 and 1990, she served as Minister of Health, but in 1995 she co-founded the Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS) in protest against corruption and lack of democracy in the FSLN. Her historical work included publications on Nicaraguan history for which she was admitted to the Academy of Geography and History of Nicaragua and made a corresponding Member of the Academy of Geography and History of Guatemala. In 2004, she was appointed Robert F. Kennedy Visiting Professor in Latin American studies at the Harvard Divinity School, but in [March] 2005 she was barred from obtaining an entry visa to the United States because of her involvement in “terrorist attacks” [See NCH *Annual Report 2005* under United States]. In June 2008, she went on hunger strike against the dictatorship of President Daniel Ortega (in power since 2006). In June 2021, she was arrested in a wave of arrests, including opposition party leaders, journalists and social activists, in the lead-up to the 2021 presidential elections. In February 2022, she was sentenced to prison on bogus charges of political conspiracy in a closed-door trial. Her nationality, together with that of 222 other prisoners who were released and forced into exile with her, was revoked.<sup>183</sup>

On 16 August 2023, the government of President Daniel Ortega confiscated the Instituto de Historia de Nicaragua y Centroamérica (IHNCA) in Managua, considered the last independence space for historical

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<sup>182</sup> “[New Zealand Inquiry Finds 200,000 Abused in State and Religious Care](#),” *Al Jazeera* (24 July 2024).

<sup>183</sup> Linda Mannheim & Mike Lanchin, “[Dora María Téllez Is Free at Last – and Able to Speak Freely!](#),” *The Nation* (2 March 2023); “[Dora María Téllez](#),” *Wikipedia* (last updated 13 February 2024); Duncan Campbell, “[US Bars Nicaragua Heroine As ‘Terrorist’](#),” *Guardian* (4 March 2005); “[Nicaragua Arrests More Opposition Figures in Crackdown](#),” *Der Welt* (14 June 2021); Tom Phillips, “[Legendary Sandinista Commander Sentenced as Ortega Crushes Dissent](#),” *Guardian* (4 February 2022).

research in the country. The IHNCA had been founded in 1987 by two Jesuit priests to promote the study of regional history and contained in its online catalog 70,000 documents from as far back as the seventeenth century [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*]. Following the confiscation, 36 historians signed a letter condemning the government's actions and hailing the IHNCA as "the champion of safeguarding history sources." Already in August 2021, the government had closed the newspaper archive of *La Prensa*, containing ninety years of documents published in the country, leaving only two libraries – the library of the Central Bank of Nicaragua and the National Library – both of which were controlled by the government and allowed limited access for historical research.

A week later, on 23 August, the Ortega government inaugurated the Heroes of Nicaragua History Institute in the IHNCA facilities, announcing it as a "space to show ... our history through the archives and documentary memory." A researcher at the institute criticized the new institute as being "dedicated to highlight the narrative of the Sandinista Front and to the cult of this party's memory."<sup>184</sup>

## **NIGER**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2009, 2013, 2021.

## **NIGERIA**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2006, 2008, 2010–2013, 2016–2023.

In May 2023, the case against two suspects accused of student Deborah Samuel's murder [See NCH *Annual Report 2022–2023*] and charged with "criminal conspiracy and inciting public disturbance," was struck from the roll for lack of diligent prosecution.<sup>185</sup>

On 27 July 2023, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), the International Press Centre (IPC) and Media Rights Agenda (MRA) launched a thirty-day social media campaign to demand justice for Pelumi Onifade ([1999 or 2000]–2020), a history student and journalist killed by police on 24 October 2020 [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2023*]. The campaign marked the countdown to the thousandth day of his death.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> "[Ortega and Murillo 'Confiscate History' by Seizing Nicaragua's Last Independent Libraries](#)," *Divergentes* (30 August 2023).

<sup>185</sup> Afeez Bolaji, "[Case Dropped against Suspects Accused of Student's Murder](#)," *University World News* (24 May 2023).

<sup>186</sup> "[Demands for a Thorough Investigation into Death of Pelumi Onifade Intensify](#)," *Ifex News* (31 July 2023).

In [late] January 2024, in the context of armed clashes between the predominantly Muslim Fulani people and the predominantly Christian Mwangavul people in Plateau State, six mosques and two churches were burnt down in Mangu.<sup>187</sup>

## **NORTH MACEDONIA**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2021–2023. For previous entries: *see* Macedonia.

On 2 October 2023, the Defense Ministry announced the erection of three memorials for Macedonian soldiers and police officers who were killed by ethnic Albanian guerrilla forces during the armed conflict between April and August 2001, after similar efforts had been repeatedly obstructed by local mayors. The brief armed conflict between ethnic Albanian insurgents of the Ushtria Çlirimtare Kombëtare (UÇK; National Liberation Army) and Macedonian security forces took the lives of 68 Macedonian security forces. The number of UÇK members killed ranged between 64 and 105.<sup>188</sup>

## **NORWAY**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2009, 2012, 2016–2017, 2022–2023.

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<sup>187</sup> “[Churches and Mosques Burnt in Nigeria as Curfew Imposed in Mangu](#),” *Africa News* (24 January 2024).

<sup>188</sup> Sinisa Jakov Marusic, “[North Macedonia Vows to Finally Build Memorials to Troops Killed in 2001](#),” *Balkan Insight* (3 October 2023).

## OMAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2010, 2017, 2019, 2021.

On 15 July 2024, the night before Ashura – a day of mourning for Husayn, the Prophet Muhammad’s grandson – at least six people were killed and thirty wounded at a mosque in Wadi Kabir. The responsibility for the attack was claimed by Daesh (also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant [ISIL]).<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> “[ISIL Claims Oman Mosque Attack, Six Killed](#),” *Al Jazeera* (16 July 2024).

**PAKISTAN**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2009–2012, 2014, 2016, 2018–2019, 2021, 2023.

On 29 March 2022, Safoora Bibi, a teacher at the all-girl Jamia Islamia Falahul Binaat madrassa in Dera Ismail Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, was killed by a female colleague and two students who accused her of “blasphemy.” The students reportedly told police officials that one of their relatives had dreamed that Bibi had committed blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad.

On 5 August 2023, Abdul Rauf ([2000/1]–2023), an English teacher in at a language center in Turbat, Balochistan, and student at Turbat University, was shot dead by unknown men while he was on his way to a jirga (a council meeting common among the Pashtun to settle disputes) of ulema (religious scholars) to confront charges of “blasphemy” issued against him by some of his students.<sup>190</sup>

On 14 August 2023, the Pakistan Cricket Board released a video on social media commemorating the 76th anniversary of Pakistan’s independence on 14 August 1947. The video, showing the national cricket team’s successes since 1947, was widely criticized for omitting any footage of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, who had been the team’s captain during its 1992 World Cup win, despite showing imagery of the 1992 tournament. On 9 May 2023, Khan was deposed as prime minister on corruption charges, arrested and barred from politics for five years. Since then, a *de facto* ban had reportedly been place on broadcasters mentioning his name or showing his image.<sup>191</sup>

On 16 August 2023, armed mobs attacked and set ablaze five churches, including the Salvation Army Church and the Saint Paul Catholic Church, in Jaranwala, Punjab, after a Christian community had been accused of “blasphemy” after pages torn out of the Quran and inscribed with “blasphemous” content were found near the Isa Nagri (Christian colony) area. A Christian graveyard was also desecrated. One hundred and forty-six people were arrested. On 18 August, police arrested two Christian residents on “blasphemy” charges. Punjab’s Minister of Information Amir Mir unsubstantially claimed that the torn Quranic pages were a “well thought-out conspiracy to inflame public sentiments.” Pakistan’s blasphemy laws had been repeatedly criticized for allowing majority groups to attack minorities with impunity [See *NCH Annual Report 2023*].<sup>192</sup>

<sup>190</sup> “[Pakistani Teacher Killed for Alleged Blasphemy: Police](#),” *Al Jazeera* (30 March 2022); Behram Baloch, “[Teacher Killed on Blasphemy Allegation in Turbat](#),” *Dawn* (7 August 2023).

<sup>191</sup> “[Pakistanis Slam ‘Shameful’ Cricket Board Video Omitting Imran Khan](#),” *Al Jazeera* (15 August 2023).

<sup>192</sup> “[Mobs Burn Christian Churches, Homes in Pakistan after Blasphemy Allegations](#),” *Al Jazeera* (16 August 2023); “[Pakistan Arrests 146 as It Launches Probe into Church Attacks](#),” *Al Jazeera* (17 August 2023); “[Two Christians Arrested in Pakistan over Blasphemy Accusation](#),” *Al Jazeera* (18 August 2023).

On 25 September 2023, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan stated that at least 34 attacks on religious places of the Ahmadi (Ahmadiyya) people – a Sunni Islam messianic movement – had taken place since January 2023. In 1974 the approximately 500,000 member Ahmadi community had been officially declared “non-Muslim,” and enshrined in the Constitution as such. Later, during the dictatorship of Zia ul-Haq (in power between 1978–1988), Ahmadi were barred from “posing as Muslims,” for example by publicly referring to themselves as Muslims. Ahmadi representatives claimed that at least fourteen mosques and 197 graves had been damaged in 2021, and that at least 74 graves and two minarets had been vandalized in Daka, Punjab, in one week alone, in what they considered a systematic and coordinated hate campaign [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*].<sup>193</sup>

On 29 September 2023, a suicide bombing killed at least 52 participants of the Eid-e-Milad an-Nabi (or Mawlid an-Nabi; a procession celebrating the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad [570–632]) in the Mastung District, Balochistan province, and wounded another 58. A second blast killed at least five people and injured twelve at a mosque in Hangu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. No one claimed immediate responsibility for the attacks.<sup>194</sup>

## PALESTINE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 1998–2002, 2008–2010, 2013–2015, 2018, 2021–2023.

Since 2017, the Eyes on Heritage team – a group of nine volunteering women in the Gaza Strip – had begun digitizing hundreds of documents, some dating back hundreds of years, related to the history, culture and heritage of the Gaza Strip. However, due to the frequent and prolonged closure of border crossings by Israeli officials, the delivery of essential resources, tools and machines for restoration and archiving often fell short.<sup>195</sup>

On 6 September 2023, officials from the European Union, Germany and Israel condemned Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas for comments he made about the Holocaust. In a speech to the Fatah Revolutionary Council and aired on Palestine television in August, he said that Adolf Hitler had ordered the mass murder of Jews because of their “social role” as moneylenders, rather than out of genocidal

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<sup>193</sup> Abid Hussain, “[Pakistan’s Ahmadi Living in Fear as Graves, Religious Sites Attacked](#),” *Al Jazeera* (27 September 2023).

<sup>194</sup> “[Blast at Pakistan Procession to Mark Prophet’s Birthday Kills At Least 52](#),” *Al Jazeera* (29 September 2023); Abid Hussain, “[At Least Five Killed as Another Blast Hits Pakistan on Prophet’s Birthday](#),” *Al Jazeera* (29 September 2023).

<sup>195</sup> Abdelhakim Abu Riash, “[Meet the Research Team Working to Save Gaza’s History, Heritage](#),” *Al Jazeera* (18 August 2023).

racism. Abbas had a history of ambiguity vis-à-vis the Holocaust, calling it “the most heinous crime in modern human history” but also repeatedly seeming to deny it or to defend long abandoned historical theories about the Jews [See NCH *Annual Reports 2009, 2023*].<sup>196</sup>

On 7 October 2023, during the attack on Israel by the al-Qassam Brigades of Hamas (the Islamic Resistance Movement), Holocaust historian Alex Danzig (Alex Dancyg) (1948–) was abducted and taken as a hostage to an unknown destination in the Gaza Strip. In late November 2023, he sent a message to his family through one of the hostages that were released. He gave history lectures to the other hostages who were imprisoned together with him. Born in Warsaw, Poland, to Jewish Holocaust survivors, he migrated with his parents to Israel in 1957. In 1986, he was a member of one of the first groups of young Israelis to visit Poland. Working for Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust remembrance center, since about 1993, he spent most of his life educating about the Holocaust and training educators. He lived with his family in kibbutz Nir Oz in Israel, close to Gaza. His health was precarious.<sup>197</sup>

Among those killed during the Israel-Gaza war since 7 October 2023 were the following:

- [Between 7 October and 6 December 2023], Iman Abu Saeed, oral historian at the Tamer Institute for Community Education, was killed with her two children and her husband.<sup>198</sup>
- [Between 7 October and 22 December 2023], an archaeology student (name unknown) working for the Gaza Maritime Archaeology Project (Gazamap) was killed in an Israeli airstrike, together with two media collaborators who were training students and obtaining aerial footage from Gaza’s coastal archaeology.<sup>199</sup>
- On 17 October 2023, historian Jihad Suleiman Al-Masri [El Masry] (?–2023) died of his injuries inflicted by the shelling of Khan Younis by Israeli forces. He worked as a university professor

<sup>196</sup> Yolande Knell, “[Outrage over Abbas’s Antisemitic Speech on Jews and Holocaust](#),” *BBC News* (7 September 2023); “[Holocaust Row: Abbas Accused of Anti-Semitism](#),” *BBC News* (1 May 2018); Jonathan Freedland, “[It’s Right to Condemn Mahmoud Abbas for His Antisemitic Remarks](#),” *Guardian* (2 May 2018); Oliver Holmes, “[Netanyahu Accuses Palestinian President of Antisemitism](#),” *Guardian* (2 May 2018); “[Palestinian Leader Abbas Apologises for Holocaust Remarks](#),” *BBC News* (4 May 2018); David Gritten, “[Israel and Germany Condemn Palestinian Leader’s ‘50 Holocausts’ Claim](#),” *BBC News* (17 August 2022).

<sup>197</sup> Robert Greenall, “[Alex Danzig: Fears Grow for Much-Loved Historian Kidnapped by Hamas](#),” *BBC News* (18 October 2023); “[We Miss Them a Lot, We Want Them to Come Back Home](#)” – Interview with [Matty Dancyg](#),” *Arolsen Archives* (13 November 2023); “[A Great Relief: How One Hostage Sent Regards to His Family](#),” *Israel National News* (28 November 2023); “[Hamas Hostages: Stories of the People Taken from Israel](#),” *BBC News* (27 February 2024).

<sup>198</sup> Librarians and Archivists with Palestine, [Israeli Damage to Archives, Libraries, and Museums in Gaza, October 2023–January 2024: A Preliminary Report](#) (No place: Librarians and Archivists with Palestine, 2024), 12.

<sup>199</sup> Sarvy Geranpayeh, “[Gaza City Archives among Heritage Sites Destroyed in Israel-Hamas War](#),” *The Art Newspaper* (22 December 2023).

specialized in Islamic history and Palestinian oral traditions and as director of the Al-Quds Open University's Khan Yunis branch.<sup>200</sup>

- On 19 October 2023, Marwan Tarazi (?–2023), archivist of Photo Kegham – the first photography studio in Gaza, set up in 1944 by Kegham Djeghalian Kegham – was killed with his wife and infant granddaughter while sheltering at the Saint Porphyrius Orthodox Church.<sup>201</sup>
- On 23 October 2023, Abdul Karim Hashash (?–2023), a writer and advocate for Palestinian heritage and collector of Palestinian rare books, was killed with many members of his family.<sup>202</sup>

During the war that broke out between Hamas and Israel (7 October 2023–), airstrikes damaged or destroyed multiple cultural heritage sites in Gaza and the West Bank:

- Israeli forces targeted several memorials, including the monument for the Al-Jundi Al-Majhool (Unknown Soldier) in Memorial Park, Gaza City, the Memorial of the Martyrs of the Marmara Ship in Gaza Port, the memorial of late journalist Shireen Abu Akleh in the Jenin Refugee Camp, and the memorial of late President Yasser Arafat (1929–2004) in Tulkarm, in the West Bank.<sup>203</sup>
- On 11 October 2023, an Israeli airstrike destroyed the Rafah Museum, containing a collection of ancient coins, copper plates and jewelry, which was considered Gaza's main museum of Palestinian heritage.<sup>204</sup>
- On 19 October 2023, the twelfth-century Greek Orthodox Church of St. Porphyrius (ca. 347–420) in Gaza-City was severely damaged by an Israeli airstrike. At least seventeen people who had taken shelter in the church were killed.<sup>205</sup>
- On 22 October 2023, the Gaza-based Endowments and Religious Affairs Ministry claimed that 31 mosques had been destroyed by Israeli airstrikes since 7 October. On the same day, the Al-Ansar Mosque in Jenin was severely damaged by an Israeli airstrike.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Dan Sheehan, "[These Are the Poets and Writers Who Have Been Killed in Gaza](#)," *Literary Hub* (21 December 2023); Nadda Osman, "[War on Gaza: Some of the Prominent Palestinian Academics and Scientists Killed by Israel](#)," *Middle East Eye* (17 February 2024); Librarians and Archivists with Palestine, [Israeli Damage to Archives, Libraries, and Museums in Gaza, October 2023–January 2024: A Preliminary Report](#) (No place: Librarians and Archivists with Palestine, 2024), 12; PEN International, [War, Censorship and Persecution: PEN International Case List 2023/2024](#) (London: PEN, 2024), 104.

<sup>201</sup> Librarians and Archivists with Palestine, [Israeli Damage to Archives, Libraries, and Museums in Gaza, October 2023–January 2024: A Preliminary Report](#) (No place: Librarians and Archivists with Palestine, 2024), 13.

<sup>202</sup> Librarians and Archivists with Palestine, [Israeli Damage to Archives, Libraries, and Museums in Gaza, October 2023–January 2024: A Preliminary Report](#) (No place: Librarians and Archivists with Palestine, 2024), 11.

<sup>203</sup> "[Israel Destroyed Central Archives of Gaza City': Head of Gaza Municipality](#)," *Middle East Monitor* (29 November 2023).

<sup>204</sup> Indlieb Farazi Saber, "[A 'Cultural Genocide': Which of Gaza's Heritage Sites Have Been Destroyed?](#)," *Al Jazeera* (14 January 2024).

<sup>205</sup> Eleni Stamatoukou, "[Greece Voices 'Deep Sorrow' over Bombing of Church in Gaza](#)," *Balkan Insight* (20 October 2023).

<sup>206</sup> "[Israel Has Destroyed 31 Mosques in Gaza Strip since 7 October: Ministry](#)," *Middle East Monitor* (22 October 2023); "[Israel Strikes Mosque in Occupied West Bank Refugee Camp](#)," *Al Jazeera* (22 October 2023).

- On 7 November 2023, the Heritage for Peace NGO published preliminary findings indicating that 104 historic sites had been damaged or destroyed. These included 8 mosques, 4 churches, 9 archaeological sites, 73 historical houses, 5 shrines, 3 cemeteries and 2 museums.<sup>207</sup>
- On 29 November 2023, Israel bombed and destroyed the Central Archives of Gaza City, which contained thousands of historical documents dating back one century, and the main public library. Also targeted was the Rashad Al-Shawwa Historical Cultural Center.<sup>208</sup>
- On 6 December 2023, the Palestinian branch of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) confirmed the complete or partial destruction of nine heritage sites, adding that the number was likely to be far greater. The sites included: the Gaza City Central Archives [See above]; the El Saqqa House, a cultural center established in a traditional Islamic Mamluk period house dating back to 1661; the Al Ahli Baptist Hospital founded in 1882; and the Souq Al Zawiya market. It further awaited imagery confirming damages done to the thirteenth-century Pasha's Palace Museum, the thirteenth-century Othman bin Qashqar Mosque, the Souq Al Qaysariyya market and the Tell Umm Amer (Tell Umm el-'Amr) in Al Nusairat – an archaeological site containing the Saint Hilarion Monastery (founded ca. 340 CE) and part of the UNESCO Tentative Heritage List. On 14 December the UNESCO Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict granted Tell Umm Amer the highest level of protection under the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Event of Armed Conflict.<sup>209</sup>
- On 8 December 2023, the seventh-century Great Omari Mosque in Gaza City was destroyed in an Israeli strike. The strike also damaged the mosque's library, established by Sultan Zahir Baybars (1223/8–1277). The library consisted of old copies of the Quran, biographies of Prophet Muhammad and ancient books on philosophy, medicine, and Sufi mysticism, many of which had been destroyed by Christian Crusaders and during World War I (1914–1918). The 62 books that remained in the library were at risk after the strike, according to the United States-based Hill Museum and Manuscript Library.<sup>210</sup>

<sup>207</sup> Ahmed al-Barsh, [Report on the Impact of the Recent War in 2023 on the Cultural Heritage in Gaza Strip – Palestine](#) (Heritage for Peace; 7 November 2023).

<sup>208</sup> [“Israel Destroyed Central Archives of Gaza City”: Head of Gaza Municipality](#),” *Middle East Monitor* (29 November 2023); [“Statement of the International Council on Archives on the Destruction of the Central Archives of the Municipality of Gaza](#),” (press release; no date [ca. 3 January 2024]); Librarians and Archivists with Palestine, [Israeli Damage to Archives, Libraries, and Museums in Gaza, October 2023–January 2024: A Preliminary Report](#) (No place: Librarians and Archivists with Palestine, 2024), 3.

<sup>209</sup> Sarvy Geranpayeh, [“Gaza City Archives among Heritage Sites Destroyed in Israel-Hamas War](#),” *The Art Newspaper* (22 December 2023).

<sup>210</sup> [“Images Show Major Damage to Gaza’s Oldest Mosque](#),” *BBC News* (8 December 2023); Sarvy Geranpayeh, [“Gaza City Archives among Heritage Sites Destroyed in Israel-Hamas War](#),” *The Art Newspaper* (22 December 2023); Indlieb Farazi Saber, [“A ‘Cultural Genocide’: Which of Gaza’s Heritage Sites Have Been Destroyed?](#),” *Al Jazeera* (14 January 2024).

- On 11 December 2023, the 13th-century Qasr Al-Basha, or Pasha's Palace, was hit by Israeli air strikes damaging its walls, courtyard and gardens.<sup>211</sup>
- On 19 December 2023, the University of London-based Forensic Architecture Research Group found that Israeli aerial strikes had severely damaged the Al-Balakhya port and the Anthedon Harbor, the first known seaport of Gaza dating back to the ninth to sixth century BCE. In April 2012, the ancient archaeological site of Anthedon had been listed as a UNESCO Tentative World Heritage Site.<sup>212</sup>
- On 10 April 2024, UNESCO issued a preliminary damage assessment verifying 43 damaged cultural heritage sites in the Gaza Strip, including 24 buildings of historical and/or artistic interest, one museum and three archeological sites. A [21 December 2023] report by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) had found that over 200 of the 350 listed cultural heritage sites in Gaza had been partially or completely destroyed. On 6 February 2024, the United Kingdom-based Institute of Conservation issued a statement calling for the cessation of violence and the adherence to international law, including the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Event of Armed Conflict and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. In March 2024, the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) issued a statement calling for the safeguarding of human lives and cultural heritage, reportedly after pressure from heritage scholars to do so.<sup>213</sup>

*See also* Bahrain, France, Germany, India, Israel, Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States.

## PANAMA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2003, 2008, 2013, 2015–2017.

<sup>211</sup> Indlieb Farazi Saber, "[A 'Cultural Genocide': Which of Gaza's Heritage Sites Have Been Destroyed?](#)," *Al Jazeera* (14 January 2024).

<sup>212</sup> Dania Akkad, "[100 Days of War in Gaza: More than 23,000 Dead and a Society in Ruins](#)," *Middle East Eye* (13 January 2024).

<sup>213</sup> ICOMOS, "[Press Release on the Situation in Gaza and Israel](#)" (21 December 2023); Indlieb Farazi Saber, "[A 'Cultural Genocide': Which of Gaza's Heritage Sites Have Been Destroyed?](#)," *Al Jazeera* (14 January 2024); The Institute of Conservation, "[Icon's Statement on the Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Gaza](#)" (press release; 6 February 2024); Clothilde Mraffko & Samuel Forey, "[Israeli Bombs Are Wiping Out Gaza's Heritage and History](#)," *Le Monde* (14 February 2024); European Association of Archaeologists, "[EAA Statement on Threats to Archaeology and Archaeologists Arising from the Israel/Gaza Crisis](#)" (press release; March 2024); Hilary Morgan Leatham, "[Why Archaeologists Must Speak Up for Gaza](#)," *Al Jazeera* (25 March 2024); UNESCO, "[Gaza Strip: Damage Assessment](#)" (press release; 10 April 2024).

## PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2014, 2023.

## PARAGUAY

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002–2005, 2007, 2009–2010, 2012, 2015, 2020, 2022.

## PERU

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2023.

In January 2023, Congress modified the immigration law, making it easier for authorities to deny migrants entry and transit; adding vague obligations for foreigners, such as to “respect Peru’s historic and cultural legacy”; and erecting obstacles to migrants’ access to housing. The Ombudsperson’s Office filed a lawsuit opposing the changes, as they “criminalized migration, validated discrimination, and affected foreigners’ fundamental rights.”<sup>214</sup>

On 5 December 2023, the Constitutional Court ruled in favor of granting a humanitarian pardon to former President Alberto Fujimori (in office between 1990–2000), in the latest episode of a long-lasting legal battle involving national courts and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR) [See NCH *Annual Reports 2002–2021*]. In 2009, Fujimori had been sentenced to 25 years in prison for corruption and crimes against humanity committed during the armed conflict (1980–2000). In 2003, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission had estimated that almost 70,000 people were killed or subject to enforced disappearance by the Shining Path, other armed groups, or state agents during the armed conflict. Additionally, Fujimori’s administration oversaw a forced sterilization campaign in which over 350,000 women and 25,000 men were sterilized against their will as part of a plan to reduce the birth rate in rural and indigenous communities. In 2017, then-President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski (in office between 2016–2018) had granted a humanitarian pardon to Fujimori on health grounds, which was later overturned due to pressure from the IACtHR. In 2022, the Constitutional Court upheld the pardon.

The United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights called the court ruling “a concerning setback for accountability.” The IACtHR requested the government to “refrain from executing the

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<sup>214</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 499.

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order.” The government of President Dina Boluarte was itself facing accusations of human rights violations for its deadly response to anti-government protests between December 2022 and January 2023, in which at least sixty people were killed.<sup>215</sup>

On 5 July 2024, Miguel Ángel Beltrán Villegas (1965–), a historian, sociologist and professor at the Universidad Nacional in Bogotá, Colombia, and his wife, Natalia Caruso López, an anthropologist and historian at the Universidad Pedagógica de Colombia, and their children were detained for various hours at Lima airport when they wanted to enter the country for a vacation. The reason given was that Beltrán constituted a risk for the “national security and public order” of Perú. Previously, Beltrán had been detained at the airports of Panamá (2016) and Mexico (2021) on similar charges. In 2009–2011, Beltrán had been imprisoned in Colombia on false charges of membership of the guerrilla movement Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC; Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces) [See NCH *Annual Reports 2010, 2012, 2017* under Colombia].<sup>216</sup>

## PHILIPPINES

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2011–2015, 2019–2023.

In early January 2024, it was reported that persons involved in seeking justice for those who were killed during previous President Rodrigo Duterte’s “war on drugs” (2016–2022) and their families, such as Father Flavie Villanueva and forensic pathologist Raquel Fortun, were harassed. Villanueva was charged with conspiracy to commit sedition over an alleged plot to oust Duterte. Fortun, a professor in the College of Medicine and chair of the Department of Pathology at the University of the Philippines, who had autopsied the remains of more than ninety victims since July 2021 and discovered multiple inconsistencies, got some threatening visits from the police and the state prosecutor. According to the International Criminal Court, crimes against humanity were likely to have been committed during the Duterte campaign. The government estimated that more than 6,252 people had been gunned down during the drugs war but rights groups said that the numbers could actually run into the tens of thousands.<sup>217</sup>

*See also* Singapore.

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<sup>215</sup> Dan Collens, [“International Court Urges Peru Not to Release Ex-President Fujimori From Jail,”](#) *Guardian* (6 December 2023); Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 305.

<sup>216</sup> Editora Bogotá, [“Liberados el profesor Miguel Ángel Beltrán y su familia,”](#) *Colombia Informa* (6 July 2024); Miguel Ángel Beltrán Villegas, [“Estudiantes de la Nacho víctimas de represión,”](#) *Voz* (13 June 2024).

<sup>217</sup> Linda Pressly, [“Philippines: Bone Diggers Seek Justice for Dead in Duterte’s Drug War,”](#) *BBC News* (3 January 2024).

## POLAND

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–1998, 2000–2001, 2004–2005, 2007–2011, 2014–2023.

On 30 May 2023, Polish-Canadian historian Jan Grabowski was about to give a lecture at the German Historical Institute in Warsaw about “The (Growing) Polish Problem with the Holocaust.” Far right-wing member of parliament Grzegorz Braun disrupted Grabowski’s lecture by grabbing his microphone, slamming it several times on the lectern, and cutting off the power. Braun declared that he did not want to be told about Polish history at an event at the German Historical Institute. Since Grabowski felt unable to continue his paper, the event was ended. Braun’s supporters then celebrated with him on the street in front of the institute. The University of Warsaw invited Grabowski to give his lecture the next day. Although there were disruptions there also, the lecture and the ensuing academic discussion went ahead [See NCH *Annual Reports 2017–2022*].<sup>218</sup>

In September 2023, Agnieszka Holland’s movie *Zielona granica* (“The Green Border”) – depicting the abuse of migrants and asylum seekers on the border with Belarus – premiered. It was subsequently attacked by then Minister of Justice Zbigniew Ziobro, who described the movie as “anti-Polish Nazi propaganda.” The Interior Ministry announced it would broadcast a clip prior to screenings of the movie to inform viewers of “untruths and distortions.”<sup>219</sup>

On 29 December 2023, Minister of Culture and National Heritage, Bartłomiej Sienkiewicz, of the new Donald Tusk government canceled the planned exhibition of artist Ignaz Czwartos (1966–) at the 2024 Venice Biennale Polish Pavilion. The exhibition – a set of more than 35 paintings and objects about twentieth-century Polish history titled *Polish Practice in Tragedy: Between Germany and Russia* and presenting a Polish state victimized throughout the twentieth century at the hands of its neighbors Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia – had been selected in an open competition on 31 October 2023 under the previous government of the nationalist-populist Law and Justice party (PiS). It was controversial for several reasons: it did not fit the Biennale’s inclusive theme *Stranieri Ovunque* (Foreigners Everywhere); it followed a narrative of anti-European and anti-Russian “right-wing, martyrdom-oriented cultural policy,” close to PiS history politics; some of the paintings contained controversial symbols or historical figures (including alleged war criminals) or suggested anachronistic historical

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<sup>218</sup> Wilhelm Krull & Thomas Brunotte, [The Future of Democracy and Academic Freedom in Central Europe: A Neo-Nationalism and University Brief](#) (UC Berkeley Research and Occasional Papers Series) (6 November 2023), 2–3; Wilhelm Krull & Thomas Brunotte, “[University Legitimacy: A Strong Defence of Academic Freedom](#),” *University World News* (18 November 2023); European Parliament, *EP Academic Freedom Monitor 2023: Study* (Brussels: Scientific Foresight Unit of the European Parliamentary Research Service, 2024), 176.

<sup>219</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 511.

comparisons; and the PiS-appointed jury chairman was accused of lack of impartiality because he had curated a similar exhibition by Czwartos earlier in 2023. On 18 September 2023, three out of fourteen jury members had publicly disapproved the nomination. Czwartos called the cancellation “censorship.”<sup>220</sup>

*See also* Palestine, Russia.

## **PORTUGAL**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2017, 2021.

*See also* United Kingdom.

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<sup>220</sup> Gareth Harris, “[Polish Pavilion Selection at Venice Biennale Gets Political as Rejected Artist Cries Censorship](#),” *The Art Newspaper* (1 January 2024); Richard Unwin, “[Three Members of Jury that Voted on Poland’s 2024 Venice Biennale Pavilion Show Hit out at Plans](#),” *The Art Newspaper* (7 November 2023); Philip Oltermann, “[‘An Anti-European Manifesto’: Poland’s Venice Biennale Entry Defies Inclusive Theme](#),” *Guardian* (12 November 2023).

## **QATAR**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2010.

## ROMANIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2007–2008, 2010, 2019, 2021–2023.

On 15 November 2023, Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu expressed irritation over Ukrainian textbooks for fifth-grade students that employed references to the “Moldovan language” – a term that Romanians alleged denoted a political tool invented by the Soviet Union after it seized Bessarabia (present-day Moldova) from Romania in June 1940, and that was a contentious marker of identity in Moldova and among ethnic Moldovans in Ukraine. On 16 March 2023, Moldova’s parliament had voted in favor of a draft law that would replace the phrase “Moldovan language” with “Romanian language.”<sup>221</sup>

On 7 March 2024, journalist and assistant professor of journalism at the University of Bucharest, Emilia Șercan, won a retrial lawsuit at the Bucharest Court of Appeal against the Police Academy to get full and free access to all doctoral theses from the institution. It was one of several court cases in which Șercan had successfully claimed that her access to information of public interest had been unlawfully restricted under Law 544/2001, including access to information of the Serviciul Român de Informații (SRI; Romanian Intelligence Service). In recent years, she had exposed plagiarism in the doctoral theses of many high dignitaries who had pursued their education at police and intelligence service academies. In April 2019, Șercan had received death threats from an officer of the Alexandru Ioan Cuza Police Academy in Bucharest.<sup>222</sup>

On 3 April 2024, the Prosecutor General requested presidential approval to start a renewed investigation into the role of former President Ion Iliescu (in office between 1989–1996 and 2000–2004) and four others in crimes against humanity committed during the so-called *mineriade* protests (thrice in 1990, once in 1991 and twice in 1999), in which anti-government protesters were violently attacked by miners. In 2020 the High Court of Cassation and Justice had found that the indictment was invalid and returned the case to the Military Prosecutor’s Office for reinvestigation. On 26 April 2024, Iliescu was questioned by prosecutors [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2023*].<sup>223</sup>

*See also* Moldova.

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<sup>221</sup> Madalin Necsutu, “[Ukraine’s New ‘Moldovan’ Schoolbooks Raise Hackles in Romania](#),” *Balkan Insight* (16 November 2023).

<sup>222</sup> Madalin Necsutu, “[Romania Journalist Wins Right to Search Police Academy Archives](#),” *Balkan Insight* (8 March 2024).

<sup>223</sup> Madalin Necsutu, “[Romanian Prosecutor Seeks to Investigate Ex-President for 1990 Crackdown](#),” *Balkan Insight* (4 April 2024); Madalin Necsutu, “[Romania’s Ex-President Iliescu Grilled Over ‘Mineriada Case’](#),” *Balkan Insight* (26 April 2024).

## RUSSIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–1998, 2001, 2004–2006, 2008–2023.

In August 2021, Marc Fogel (1961–), an American history teacher at the Anglo-American School of Moscow since 2012, was arrested at Sheremetyevo airport in Russia for illegal possession of cannabis (he carried a small amount of medical marijuana, which had been prescribed in the United States to treat chronic pain). In June 2022, he was convicted of drug trafficking and sentenced to fourteen years in prison. While serving his sentence, he reportedly taught English to fellow inmates. Fogel was not included in the 1 August 2024 prisoner swap [See below under Kara-Murza, Orlov].<sup>224</sup>

After Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, the Deutsches Historisches Institut (DHI; German Historical Institute) in Moscow suspended its scholarship programs and event activities, and halted its cooperation with state institutions. Later, the Justice Ministry branded the DHI as “undesirable” and “a foreign agent” (meaning that cooperation with it was punishable by law). The central library continued to operate and a decentralized network was reportedly established so that researchers could continue to study Russian and Soviet history.<sup>225</sup>

In [2023], several people were sentenced, indicted, or detained for their supposed affiliation with Nurdzhular, a group of followers of the Turkish theologian Said Nursi (1877–1960) that Russia banned as extremist in 2008 even though it had no history of incitement or violence.<sup>226</sup>

In January 2023, a publishing house referred to the legislation against the “rehabilitation of Nazism” to censor sections of a book by an American author that compared the Soviet army’s conduct in Poland during World War II to that of Nazi Germany.<sup>227</sup>

On 24 April 2023, the Education Ministry announced a new compulsory high school history textbook across Russia and the Russia-occupied territories of Ukraine, which heavily focused on the “Great Patriotic War” (World War II; 1939–1945) and the so-called “Special Military Operation” (referring to the 24 February 2022 invasion of Ukraine) and repeated the baseless claims that it had been a measure against the threats posed by Western countries and the “growing Nazi sentiments” in Ukraine [See NCH *Annual Report 2022*]. On 10 August 2023, Russian Education Minister Sergei Kravtsov presented the

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<sup>224</sup> Carl Nasman & Emily McGarvey, “[“Betrayal”: Detained US Teacher’s Sister Upset Russia Prisoner Swap Left Him Out](#),” *BBC News* (4 August 2024); “[Marc Fogel](#),” *Wikipedia* (retrieved 5 August 2024).

<sup>225</sup> Table Media, “[Repression Grows in Russian Universities](#),” *Science/Business* (1 August 2024).

<sup>226</sup> Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2024: Events of 2023* (New York: HRW, 2024), 524.

<sup>227</sup> Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2024: Events of 2023* (New York: HRW, 2024), 519.

textbook for the eleventh grade (17- and 18-year-olds), entitled “Russian History, 1945–Early 21st Century,” to be used from 1 September 2023 and co-authored by presidential adviser and historian Vladimir Medinsky [See NCH *Annual Reports 2016–2022*]. Amnesty International criticized the textbook for its attempt to whitewash the historical human rights record of Russian and Soviet authorities, while also falsely justifying Russia’s war of aggression in Ukraine as an act of self-defense. It condemned the textbook as indoctrination of propaganda, which was a violation of the right to education. History teachers who refused to follow the Russian curriculum were at risk of violence, arbitrary detention and ill-treatment.<sup>228</sup>

On 1 April 2023, Fedor [Fyodor] Solomonov, a student at the Faculty of History of Saint Petersburg State University (SPBU), died on the front in the war against Ukraine. He had praised the “special military operation” on social media, decided not to use the deferral granted to him by law, and on 22 October 2022, joined the ranks of the Russian Armed Forces. A memorial for him appeared at SPBU [See below under Belousov].<sup>229</sup>

In May 2023, a court sentenced human rights activist and member of Memorial Bakhrom Khamroyev (Hamroev; Khamroev) to fourteen years in prison on terrorism-related charges reportedly for social media posts and for preparing materials related to Hizb ut-Tahrir, a pan-Islamist movement that sought to establish a caliphate but publicly repudiated violence to achieve that goal [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*].<sup>230</sup>

On 5 May 2023, long-time member of Perm Memorial and chair of the Center of Historical Memory, Aleksandr Chernyshov, was arrested at the airport just before his departure to Germany, on charges of “attempted smuggling of cultural artifacts.” Chernyshov allegedly attempted to smuggle to Germany Memorial’s local archives, which were ordered by authorities to be sent to Moscow after his arrest. In March 2023, authorities had searched his house and confiscated personal equipment and documents.

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<sup>228</sup> Anastasiia Vorobiova, [Education as Indoctrination: Mnemonic Constitutionalism and History Teaching in Russia](#), *Verfassungsblog.de* (25 April 2023); Pjotr Sauer and agencies, [“Russia Releases History Schoolbook Praising Ukraine Invasion,”](#) *BBC News* (8 August 2023); Vitaly Shevchenko, [“Russia’s New Schoolbook Aims to Justify War on Ukraine,”](#) *BBC News* (10 August 2023); Amnesty International, [“Ukraine/Russia: New History Textbook Is a Blatant Attempt to Unlawfully Indoctrinate School Children in Russia and Russian-Occupied Ukrainian Territories”](#) (London: AI, 1 September 2023); Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 53, 319–320; Amnesty International, [“Russia: ‘Your Children Will Go To an Orphanage’: Children and the Crackdown on Protest”](#) (EUR 46/8085/2024; London: AI, 31 May 2024), 6.

<sup>229</sup> Mary Ilyushina, [“To Please Putin, Universities Purge Liberals and Embrace Patriots,”](#) *Washington Post* (7 May 2024).

<sup>230</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 523.

Chernyshow was sentenced to three years of suspended prison time. On 18 April 2024, prosecutors in Perm filed an appeal to overhaul the suspended quality of the sentence.<sup>231</sup>

On 17 May 2023, various United Nations Rapporteurs wrote a so-called letter of allegations concerning the search of the homes of members of the NGO Memorial as well as their offices, and the criminalization of historian Oleg Orlov [See below] in connection with his legitimate human rights work, the exercise of his freedom of expression and freedom of association.<sup>232</sup>

On 2 June 2023, Mikhail Belousov, an associate professor at the History Institute of Saint Petersburg State University (SPBU), was dismissed for criticizing Russia's invasion of Ukraine and "insulting" the Russian armed forces. Screenshots of Telegram messages between him and a group of history students reportedly showed his opinion that "There is some evidence that some topics related to World War II are distorted; however, it is forbidden to discuss the matter as it is punishable by law." The rector of SPBU stated that his behavior was "immoral and incompatible with the implementation of educational functions and the continuation of this work." At a meeting with the university's Ethics Committee prior to his dismissal, Belousov reportedly denied having sent the messages, stating that someone had created a Telegram account in his name without his knowledge. On 16 June 2023, seven history students were expelled from the Faculty of History in the same case. Pro-Kremlin and pro-war channels published the screenshots, commenting that SPBU was harboring "a cell of nascent Russophobes" and accusing the students that they had desecrated the memory of their fellow SPBU history student Fedor Solomonov [See above]. On 26 June 2023, the Regional Branch of the Investigative Committee of Russia initiated a criminal investigation against Belousov for "rehabilitating Nazism" [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*].

Among the expelled history students was Michael Martin, a student at the SPBU history department and leader of the student council, who was supposed to defend his thesis a few days later. On 24 February 2022, the day of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Martin had issued an antiwar manifesto quickly drafted in a cafe. Martin went into exile after warnings that he and the other students could be charged with discrediting the army, a crime punishable by up to fifteen years in prison. In 2024 he was accepted into a master's program abroad and continued his research into 19th-century Australian federalism.

In August 2023, officials of the SPBU opened proceedings against Aleksandra Zaitseva, editor of the student magazine *Studen*. The university's Ethics Committee summoned her because of her written

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<sup>231</sup> Perm Center for Historical Memory, "[Free Aleksandr Chernyshow! Statement by Perm Memorial](#)," (press release; 7 May 2023); "[Head of Successor to Russian Rights Group Memorial Placed in Pretrial Detention](#)," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* (22 May 2023); "[Russian Prosecutors Appeal Suspended Sentence For Ex-Memorial Chief](#)," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* (18 April 2024); Amnesty International, *The State of the World's Human Rights – April 2024* (London: AI, 2024), 318.

<sup>232</sup> United Nations Special Rapporteurs, [Allegations Letter AL RUS 7/2023](#) (17 May 2023).

defense of the history students and Belousov Committee members argued that her conduct “showed disregard for the reputation” of the SPGU and that she was “undeserving of being a student.” Her case was ongoing as of October 2023.

In October 2023, Dmitry Kuzmin, one of the seven expelled history students, was expelled from the history department of Herzen Pedagogical University where he had been studying after his expulsion from SPNU. Kuzmin had appeared in the center of Saint Petersburg carrying a banner reading “For Your Freedom and Ours. Peace To Ukraine. Freedom To Russia.” The second expulsion was reportedly based on a letter sent by the director of the Interior Ministry’s anti-extremism center (“Center E”).<sup>233</sup>

Among the historians who went into exile after the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2023*] was Alexandra Kolesnik, a senior research fellow at the Poletaev Institute for Theoretical and Historical Studies in the Humanities (IGITI) and associate professor at the Faculty of Humanities School of History, both at the HSE (National Research University Higher School of Economics), Moscow (2011–2022). She worked in the fields of public history and heritage studies, including on the memory of victims of political repressions and the heritage associated with underground culture in the USSR. She became an independent scholar in Germany and France.<sup>234</sup>

On 31 July 2023, the appeal of Russian-British opposition activist, journalist and historian Vladimir Kara-Murza (1981–) [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*] was quashed. In September 2023, he was moved to an isolation cell in a maximum-security prison in Omsk, Siberia. On 29 January 2024, he disappeared, only to reappear later in solitary confinement in an even harsher prison. In May 2024, he won the Pulitzer prize for his *Washington Post* columns written and smuggled from prison. On 4 or 5 July 2024, Kara-Murza was taken to a prison hospital. On 1 August 2024, Kara-Murza was released in a prisoner swap between Russia and several Western countries. He went into exile in Germany.

A former adviser to opposition leader Boris Nemtsov (shot dead in 2015), Kara-Murza survived two poisonings (2015, 2017), allegedly by Russian authorities. The attempts on his life left him with a nerve condition called polyneuropathy. In February 2024, Kara-Murza tried to get the Investigative Committee to open a criminal case into the poisonings.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Andrii Nekoliak & Elizaveta Klochkova, “[Weaponizing Russia’s Memory Law: On Russia’s Mnemonic Dissidents](#),” *Verfassungsblog* (11 July 2023); Scholars at Risk, [Mikhail Belousov](#) (2 June 2023) and [Mikhail Belousov](#) (16 June 2023); Robert Coalson, “[‘Cultural Pogrom’: Putin’s St. Petersburg Alma Mater Purges Dissident Students, Faculty](#),” *RFE/RL News* (22 October 2023); Mary Ilyushina, “[To Please Putin, Universities Purge Liberals and Embrace Patriots](#),” *Washington Post* (7 May 2024).

<sup>234</sup> “[Alexandra Kolesnik](#)” (2023 biography at the Fondation Maison des sciences de l’homme).

<sup>235</sup> Francis Clarke, “[Vladimir Kara-Murza: ‘Putin Has Elevated His Status’](#),” *Index on Censorship* (7 September 2023); “[Vladimir Kara-Murza: Putin Opponent in Isolation Cell in Siberian Jail](#),” *BBC News* (24 September 2023); “[Location of Jailed Russian Activist Vladimir Kara-Murza Unknown, Say Backers](#),” *Guardian* (29 January 2024); Sarah Rainsford, “[Alexei Navalny: Dissent Is Dangerous in Russia, but Activists Refuse to Give Up](#),” *BBC News* (25 February 2024); Ido Vock, “[Jailed Russian Dissident Moved to Prison Hospital](#),” *BBC News* (5 July 2024); Nate Ostiller & Kyiv Independent News Desk, “[Who Was Released from Russian Prisons](#)”

On 29 September 2023, Moscow city authorities banned a vigil to commemorate victims of Soviet-era repressions (1917–1991) while allowing a large pro-government rally to proceed on the same day. The authorities' decision was seen as part of a national trend of obstructing peaceful rallies on discriminatory grounds.<sup>236</sup>

On 17 October 2023, Alexander Demidenko ([1963]–2024), a pacifist history and geography teacher, was arrested, disappeared for ten days, then kept in pre-detention custody in Belgorod, and tortured by forces of the Chechen Akhmat battalion. He awaited trial on politically motivated charges of illegal weapon possession (allegedly confiscated during a search of his home) and treason. Demidenko was a vocal opponent of the 24 February 2022 invasion of Ukraine and was reputed to have helped some 900 Ukrainian refugees return home since the invasion. On 27 October, his wife photographed signs of torture on his body during a police house search in which he was present. On 5 April 2024, he died in prison. Prison officials said that he committed suicide but on his official death certificate it was stated that the cause of death “was not yet established.”<sup>237</sup>

On 19 October 2023, Andrei Shalayev [Shalaev], the founder of Immortal Barracks – a Russian project set up in 2015 to collect documents, photographs and memories of victims of political repressions in the USSR – disappeared for two days of interrogation after being detained at a railway station in Tver. Back in Moscow, he was followed and received threats. He was called a “traitor and enemy of the people.” In November, it became apparent that Shalayev had gone into exile to save the website.<sup>238</sup>

In November 2023, the authorities opened a criminal case against the local head of an opposition party in the Kamchatka region for social media posts comparing images of “patriotic” singer Shaman (Yaroslav Dronov) with images of a Nazi youth from *Cabaret* (a 1972 movie taking place in Weimar Germany). He faced up to four years' imprisonment for display of Nazi symbols. In June, a court in Blagoveschensk, Amur Oblast, fined a former deputy of the local legislative assembly on similar administrative charges for reposting on social media a parody video showing clips from a video by

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[in Historic Swap?](#)” *Kyiv Independent* (1 August 2024); Martin Bright, “[Vladimir Kara-Murza: The Dissident Spirit of Russia](#),” *Index on Censorship* (2 August 2024); Sarah Rainsford, “[Russian Dissident Kara-Murza Tells BBC He Thought He Would Die in Prison](#),” *BBC News* (5 August 2024).

<sup>236</sup> Amnesty International, *The State of the World's Human Rights – April 2024* (London: AI, 2024), 317.

<sup>237</sup> Benoît Vitkine, “[Russian Who Helped Ukrainians Cross Border Dies in Prison](#),” *Le Monde* (10 April 2024); “[Russischer Aktivist in Untersuchungshaft verstorben](#),” *Memorial Deutschland* (11 April 2024); Pjotr Sauer, “[A Russian Pacifist Helped Ukrainians Flee the Country: Then the Kremlin Caught Him](#),” *Guardian* (13 April 2024).

<sup>238</sup> [Immortal Barracks](#) (website); Kateryna Tyshchenko, “[Activist Who Ran Project Commemorating Political Repression Victims Disappears in Russia after Being Detained](#),” *Ukrainska Pravda* (21 October 2023); “[The Founder of the ‘Immortal Barracks’ Andrei Shalaev Left Russia](#),” *NeMoskva* (9 November 2023).

Shaman side by side with a clip from *Cabaret*. Shaman shot to fame after the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 with a number of “patriotic” music video releases.<sup>239</sup>

On 26 November 2023, historian Oleg Orlov [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2023*] appealed his 11 October 2023 sentence to pay a large penalty. The prosecutor’s office counter-appealed, charging him with an aggravated “discrediting” offense, after which the case was sent to retrial. On 2 February 2024, the Justice Ministry designated Orlov a “foreign agent.” Orlov’s legal team was given three days to examine the seven-volume case file. On 27 February 2024, the appeals court sentenced him to thirty months’ imprisonment. In his closing speech to the court, Orlov maintained that he had committed no crime and regretted nothing, instead castigating the “totalitarian” and “fascist” Russian state. He compared his trial to Franz Kafka’s *Der Prozess* (1925; *The Trial*). On 1 August 2024, Orlov was released in a prisoner swap between Russia and several Western countries.<sup>240</sup>

Specific content for the “Important Conversations” lessons introduced in September 2022 [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*] was provided at the national level. For example, for the “Important Conversations” lesson for six- and seven-year-olds on 18 March 2024, the teachers were mandated to “support the feelings of joy and celebration associated with” the tenth anniversary of the (illegal) annexation of Crimea, which the official lesson guidance document called “reunification of Crimea and Sevastopol with Russia.” The document instructed teachers to discuss Crimea’s history, geography and culture as the proof that the “reunification” (also called “return home”) signified “restoring historical justice, because the history of Russia, the history of the Russian world, [we]re inseparable from Crimea and Sevastopol.” The document did not once mention Ukraine, and avoided mention of Crimea’s internationally recognized status as part of Ukraine. In another example, for the “Important Conversations” lesson on 18 December 2023 aimed at older children, there was a publication titled “Our Heroes” which gave a long list of short biographies of individuals, starting with a tenth-century ruler of Kyiv (Kiev), who were meant to epitomize Russia’s history and its military, cultural, scientific

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<sup>239</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 519.

<sup>240</sup> Memorial, [“Open Letter of Historians and Slavists in Defense of Oleg Orlov”](#) (13 September 2023); Memorial, [Преследование Олега Орлова за антивоенную позицию](#) (petition for Oleg Orlov; s.d. [May] 2023); Network of Concerned Historians, [Campaign for Oleg Orlov](#) (27 September 2023); Veerle Schyns, [“Hoger beroep tegen Russische mensenrechtenactivist Oleg Orlov uitgesteld,”](#) *NRC Handelsblad* (14 December 2023); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 520; Tanya Lokshina, [“The Price of Defiance in Russia”](#) (Press Release; Human Rights Watch, 5 February 2024); [“Closing Statement by Oleg Orlov, Co-chair of Memorial, at His Second Criminal Trial on Politically Motivated Charges of ‘Discrediting Russia’s Armed Forces’”](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 26 February 2024); Human Rights Watch, [“Russia: Sham Trial of Human Rights Leader Draws to a Close”](#) (press release; 26 February 2024); Human Rights Watch, [“Russia: Court Convicts Human Rights Leader in Sham Trial”](#) (press release; 27 February 2024); Pjotr Sauer, [“Russian Human Rights Campaigner Sentenced to Jail for Denouncing War,”](#) *Guardian* (27 February 2024); Nate Ostiller & Kyiv Independent News Desk, [“Who Was Released from Russian Prisons in Historic Swap?”](#) *Kyiv Independent* (1 August 2024).

and other achievements. In the last section of the list, “Modern Russia,” there were biographies of eleven persons, most of whom were prominent supporters of Russia’s military intervention in Ukraine starting in 2014, and three were included in the list because of their active military role in it.<sup>241</sup>

On 12 January 2024, Boris Akunin (pseudonym of Grigory Chhartishvili / Grigori Tsjchartisjvili) (1956–), author of historical novels and historical works, was designated a “foreign agent” and added to a register of “terrorists and extremists” by the Justice Ministry over his objections to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. In 2012, he became involved in the large-scale protests against the fraudulent re-election of Vladimir Putin as president. In 2014, after the annexation of Crimea, he left Russia and went to live in Western Europe. His books were banned in Russia.<sup>242</sup>

On 12 February 2024, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced sanctions, including entry bans, on British and American scholars and researchers who were accused of “contributing sabotage operations in Russia.” Among them were Orlando Figes, professor emeritus of history at Birkbeck College, University of London; Norman Davies, professor emeritus of history at the University of London; Timothy Garton Ash; a historian and professor of European Studies at the University of Oxford; David Abulafia, a professor emeritus of Mediterranean History at the University of Cambridge; and Calder Walton, assistant director of the Belfer Center’s Applied History Project and Intelligence Project at Harvard University.<sup>243</sup>

Following the death in prison of opposition leader Alexei Navalny (1976–2024) on 16 February 2024, hundreds of mourners who gathered at improvised memorials or in the proximity of monuments to victims of Soviet-era repression in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, and elsewhere, were harassed or intimidated. Dozens were detained for up to two weeks and some were beaten while imprisoned.<sup>244</sup>

On 28 February 2024, the Vyborgsky district court of Saint Petersburg sentenced history teacher Boris Romanov ([1986]–) in absentia to six years’ imprisonment for “discrediting the army” and banned his website management for four years. The criminal case had been instituted in May 2022 because of a video he had posted on the social media platform Vkontakte of his speech at a meeting of the municipal council in Svetlanovsky, Saint Petersburg, in which he allegedly spread “knowingly false information

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<sup>241</sup> Amnesty International, [Russia: “Your Children Will Go To an Orphanage”: Children and the Crackdown on Protest](#) (EUR 46/8085/2024) (London: AI, 31 May 2024), 5.

<sup>242</sup> Lipika Pelham, “[Boris Akunin: Russia Designates Author ‘Foreign Agent’](#),” *BBC News* (13 January 2024); Eva Cukier, “Poetin regeert desnoods tot zijn dood” (interview with Akunin), *NRC Handelsblad* (24 October 2017), 12.

<sup>243</sup> Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, “[Travel Restrictions](#)” (12 February 2024).

<sup>244</sup> Alexandra Domenech, “[Navalny Told Them Not To Give Up – And They Didn’t](#),” *Index on Censorship* (8 March 2024); “[Information on Protests in Memory of Alexei Navalny](#),” *OVD-Info* (22 February 2024).

about the armed forces of the Russian Federation.” When in July 2022 the district court released Romanov from the pre-trial detention center, he went into exile with his family in Germany.<sup>245</sup>

On [4 March] 2024, historian Ivan Kurilla [See NCH *Annual Report 2015*] was dismissed from the European University in Saint Petersburg for alleged “absenteeism.” Kurilla, who specialized in Russian-American relations, had arranged to go on academic leave, but the rector refused permission at the last moment. The university’s official explanation was that Kurilla had intended to work for a United States university during his sabbatical, but Kurilla suspected that the university could have been pressured after he had signed a 2022 open letter in protest against the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. His name had previously been found on a leaked government list of “potential foreign agents.”<sup>246</sup>

On 13 March 2024, a new textbook – entitled “The Russian Army in Defense of the Fatherland” – was presented. Aimed at 15-to-18-year-olds, it was designed for a new compulsory subject “Fundamentals of Security and Defense of the Motherland,” which would replace “Fundamentals of Safe Living” from 1 September 2024 in Russia and five Russian-occupied territories in Ukraine and would be taught by former soldiers. The 368–page textbook was filled with stories describing the “heroic achievements of Russian soldiers” from the thirteenth century to the present day, grossly falsifying history. It also promoted military service for anyone over eighteen and included a link to an application form for signing up to the Russian army.<sup>247</sup>

In [April] 2024 the Kremlin-funded film *The Master and Margarita* by the Russian-American director Michael Lockshin, after the satirical and metaphorical novel by Mikhail Bulgakov (1891–1940), came under attack for being anti-regime but became a box-office hit. In 2020, the state cinema fund had contributed 40% of the production money to Lockshin’s film. After the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, however, he posted his support for Ukraine on social media while editing the film. When the film finally opened in Russia in 2024 – after a two-year struggle to get it finished and released, and with Lockshin’s name taken off any promotional material – the attacks by influential supporters of the Kremlin began. A large Telegram channel called him a Russophobe, and the right-wing group Call of the People said he should be criminally charged with promoting falsehoods. Many noted the irony that Bulgakov’s novel about a writer fighting state oppression and Stalinist censorship in the 1930s – written in 1928–1940 but only published posthumously in 1966 – seemed like a forecast of Lockshin’s own struggle to get his work released. Lockshin, who had lived in the United States since 2021, was

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<sup>245</sup> Grigory Dudnik, “[Учитель истории получил 6 лет за ‘фейки’](#),” *Antimafia* (29 February 2024).

<sup>246</sup> “[Anti-War Historian Fired From St. Petersburg’s European University](#),” *Moscow Times* (5 March 2024).

<sup>247</sup> Maria Korenyuk, “[Ukraine War: Russian Schoolbook Urges Teenagers to Join the Army](#),” *BBC News* (13 March 2024).

liable to be charged with spreading so-called “false information,” carrying up to fifteen years’ in prison.<sup>248</sup>

In [May 2024], an archaeologist (name unknown) specialized in Bronze Age Eurasia became a Scholar at Risk after threats of being imprisoned over his/her participation in protests against the 24 February 2022 invasion of Ukraine.<sup>249</sup>

On 18 June 2024, the European Court of Human Rights decided in a set of five cases, initiated in 2012–2022 and all related to the right to the truth and the right to access information, including archival information about past atrocities: *Suprun v. Russia*, *Dupuy v. Russia*, *Kulakova v. Russia*, *Prudovskiy v. Russia*, and *International Memorial v. Russia* [for the Suprun case, see *NCH Annual Reports 2010–2013*]. The court ruled that Russia’s refusal to allow the applicants (individuals and researchers) access to archival information about Soviet political repression amounted to an interference with their right to receive information, saying that “seeking historical truth is an integral part of freedom of expression.” About Russia’s argument that such access violated the privacy of victims and perpetrators mentioned in the records, the court said that the passage of time since the activities in question—namely the 1930s and 1940s—made the infringement of those persons’ right to respect for private and family life minimal as the concerned individuals had already passed away when the applications were submitted and as the right to privacy was personal and non-transferrable and could not be relied upon to protect the feelings of descendants.<sup>250</sup>

See also Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Moldova, Ukraine.

## RWANDA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2000–2017, 2019–2023.

In March 2023, an additional two years were added to the fifteen-year sentence of Yvonne Idamange, a Tutsi online commentator and genocide survivor who made videos about the 1994 genocide as well

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<sup>248</sup> Caryn James, “[The Master and Margarita: The Russian Box-Office Hit that Criticised the State](#),” *BBC News* (1 May 2024).

<sup>249</sup> “[Monthly Newsletter](#),” *Scholars at Risk* (14 May 2024).

<sup>250</sup> European Court of Human Rights, [Case of Suprun and Others v. Russia](#) (2024); Article 19, [Third Party Intervention](#) (London: A19, 2024); Article 19, “[Russia: Protect the Right to Truth about Human Rights Atrocities](#)” (London: A19, 2024); Article 19, “[European Court of Human Rights: Win for the Right to Truth about Human Rights Atrocities](#)” (London: A19, 2024); Emma Burns, “[ECHR: Russia Denial of Access to Archives on Soviet Political Repression Violates Freedom of Expression](#),” *Jurist.org* (19 June 2024).

as crimes committed by the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in its aftermath [See NCH *Annual Report 2022*]. Her trial was held behind closed doors at the High Court’s Special Chamber for International Crimes and Cross-border Crimes, after the prosecution argued she posed a risk to public order.<sup>251</sup>

In August 2023, appeal judges at the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT) ordered that the trial of 90-year-old alleged chief genocide financier Félicien Kabuga be suspended indefinitely. In June, the court had ruled that he was unfit to stand trial because of ill health, but had proposed an “alternative finding procedure” that was rejected on appeal.<sup>252</sup>

An October 2023 report by Human Rights Watch found that the government of President Paul Kagame continued to use a 2018 law targeting genocide ideology [See NCH *Annual Report 2021*] to stifle political dissent, in particular related to commemorations of the 1994 genocide and crimes committed by the Rwandan Patriotic Front in the genocide’s aftermath, in- and outside of Rwanda with methods ranging from online threats and physical surveillance to enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2022*]. Among those targeted by online attacks was Philippe Basabose, a genocide survivor living in exile in Canada. In August 2021, Basabose had established an organization called Igicumbi (“dwelling”), which campaigned against the government’s politicization of the genocide and the imprisonment of people, including genocide survivors, falsely accused of “genocide denial.” Basabose had also been among the 36 people calling for a joint international investigation into the death of gospel musician Kizito Mihigo (1981–2020) [See NCH *Annual Report 2021*].<sup>253</sup>

*See also* Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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<sup>251</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 533.

<sup>252</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 322.

<sup>253</sup> Human Rights Watch, [Join Us or Die](#) (London: HRW, 2023), 1, 50.

**SAINT VINCENT**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2014.

**SAUDI ARABIA**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 2001, 2006, 2010–2011, 2013, 2017–2021.

On [8] November 2023, Dalal Alharbi, a professor of modern history and a member of the Saudi Shura (advisory) Council, declared on television that she opposed the current Saudization policy in universities (restricting teaching in the kingdom's universities to Saudis only). She pleaded for diversity.<sup>254</sup>

**SENEGAL**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002–2004, 2006, 2009, 2013, 2017–2018, 2020, 2023.

**SERBIA**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2021–2023. For previous entries, see Serbia / Kosovo; Serbia / Montenegro.

In May 2023, Serbia agreed to provide Kosovo with access to archives, including classified files, to assist in locating the whereabouts and identifying the remains of over 1,620 missing persons [See NCH *Annual Report 2023* under Kosovo].<sup>255</sup>

On 7 May 2023, a smear campaign against Jovo Bakić, an associate professor of sociology at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, was launched by government officials and pro-government media outlets. The campaign was joined by Prime Minister Ana Brnabić, who urged the University of Belgrade to take a stand against Bakić. A petition calling for his dismissal was launched by the ruling Srpska napredna stranka (SNS; Serbian Progressive Party). Bakić received several anonymous messages

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<sup>254</sup> Ramadan Al Sherbini, "[Saudi Arabia: Noted Academic Opposes Saudisation in Universities,](#)" *Gulf Independent News* (8 November 2023).

<sup>255</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World's Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 328.

threatening him and his family with rape. On 3 June, he was reportedly twice approached by an unknown individual who threatened and insulted him, after the radio and television broadcaster Pink TV had disclosed his home address.

The campaign was rooted in a 13 June 2019 interview with the independent weekly *Nedeljne informativne novine* (NIN; “Weekly Informational Newspaper”), in which Bakić had denounced the nationalistic stance of the SNS and the alleged connections between criminal organizations and government representatives. That same day, President Aleksandar Vučić called for a criminal investigation against him to be launched. The broadcaster Radio–Television of Serbia subsequently published an edited version of the interview, in which Bakić was falsely made to appear to be calling for violence. A pre-investigation procedure was promptly shelved after Bakić shared the actual interview transcripts.

Bakić specialized in nationalism, ethnicity and national minorities, particularly in Yugoslavia (1918–1992). He wrote three monographs: *The European Far Right 1945–2018* (in Serbian; 2019), *Yugoslavia: Destruction and Its Interpreters* (in Serbian; 2011) and *Ideologies of Yugoslavia; between Serbian and Croatian nationalism 1918–1941* (in Serbian; 2004).<sup>256</sup>

*See also* Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro.

## **SERBIA / KOSOVO**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2008–2020. For previous entries, *see* Serbia.

## **SERBIA / MONTENEGRO**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999, 2001–2007. For previous entries, *see* Montenegro and Serbia; *see* Montenegro.

## **SEYCHELLES**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2019, 2022.

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<sup>256</sup> PEN International, [War, Censorship and Persecution: PEN International Case List 2023/2024](#) (London: PEN, 2024), 77–78.

## SIERRA LEONE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2012, 2016, 2021.

Since April 2021, Chernoh Alpha Bah – then a PhD candidate in history and from 2023 a postdoctoral fellow specializing in medical, legal, and economic history at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, United States – was subjected to attacks and threats, including death threats, from members of the ruling Sierra Leone People’s Party and from supporters of President Julius Maada Bio. The attacks stemmed from articles written or co-authored by Bah for online newspaper *Africanist Press*, which exposed financial crimes and corruption in Sierra Leone. Bah’s PhD focused on the history of prison labor and public health from the time of British occupation through the end of the twentieth century. The attacks prevented Bah, living in exile in the United States, from returning to Sierra Leone to carry out additional archival and oral history research.<sup>257</sup>

## SINGAPORE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2009–2011, 2015–2016, 2018–2022.

On 2 November 2023, Sol Iglesias, an assistant professor of political science at the University of the Philippines–Diliman and a member of the Network in Defense of Historical Truth and Academic Freedom in the Philippines, was disinvited as a speaker at a panel on “Public Intellectuals, Populism and Power: Perspectives from Southeast Asia” in the “Global Research Forum: Toward a Public Asian Studies,” to be held at the National University of Singapore in mid-January 2024. No official explanation was given but some thought it was because she was married to Singaporean historian and democracy activist Thum Ping Tjin, who had previously been attacked by the Singaporean government for his research critical of the first and present Prime Ministers Lee Kuan Yew (1959–1990) and his son Lee Hsien Loong (2004–present) and of successive People’s Action Party governments [See NCH *Annual Report 2018*]. On 7 December 2023, the Network in Defense of Historical Truth and Academic Freedom in the Philippines expressed solidarity with Iglesias and criticized the “general rise of academic freedom risks in Southeast Asia” in general, and Singapore in particular.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> [“Letter of Support for Chernoh Alpha M. Bah, PhD”](#) (no date [July 2024]); Matthew Anderson & Mark Feldman, [“Academics Condemn Attacks on Sierra Leone’s Endangered Historian and Journalist”](#) (15 July 2024); Network of Concerned Historians, [Campaign for Chernoh Alpha Bah](#) (27 July 2024).

<sup>258</sup> Sol Iglesias, [“On Academic Freedom and Singapore,”](#) *Medium* (11 November 2023); Yojana Sharma, [“Professor Dropped from Panel Raises Academic Freedom Fears,”](#) *University World News* (18 November 2023); Network in Defense of Historical Truth and Academic Freedom, [“Statement on the National University of Singapore Disinvitation of Dr. Sol Iglesias,”](#) (press release; 7 December 2023).

**SLOVAKIA**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 2002, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013–2015, 2017, 2022–2023.

**SLOVENIA**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2007–2009, 2011–2013, 2015–2018, 2021, 2023.

**SOMALIA**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2003, 2006, 2012–2014, 2019, 2022.

**SOUTH AFRICA**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–2004, 2006–2010, 2012–2021, 2023.

**SOUTH SUDAN**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2013, 2015–2021.

Between 15 and 17 May 2023, the government convened the Conference on Transitional Justice Mechanisms in Juba. Its objectives included reviewing progress in the establishment of the transitional justice mechanisms under the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan; learning from regional experiences; and building consensus on the content and enactment of draft bills to establish the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH) and the Compensation and Reparation Authority (CRA). In November 2023, the CTRH and CRA bills were approved by the Council of Ministers and due to be tabled for debate in parliament before going to the president for his assent to their becoming law. The council continued to block the establishment of the

Hybrid Court for South Sudan provided for under the 2018 peace agreement [See NCH *Annual Reports 2016–2021*].<sup>259</sup>

*See also* Sweden.

## SPAIN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 1999, 2002–2023.

In September 2023, for the first time, a judge ruled that a lawsuit alleging torture and crimes against humanity during the Franco dictatorship (1939–1975) was admissible. Previously, such lawsuits had been blocked by a 1977 amnesty law, the reach of which was limited by the passage of the 2022 Democratic Memory Law [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*].<sup>260</sup>

In November 2023, the Asociación de Amigos de las Brigadas Internacionales (Association of Friends of the International Brigades) called on the government to “prevent a further affront to the memory and dignity of the fallen international volunteers” who had fought on the side of the Republicans during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), in relation to a plan by the Madrid municipality to build a waste plant near the Fuencarral cemetery in the Montecarmelo suburb. Research by amateur historians and historical associations had found it likely that the envisioned location was the site of a mass grave containing the mortal remains of 451 people, mostly international volunteers. Initially, the Republican soldiers had been buried at the Fuencarral cemetery, covered with gravestones and a large memorial plaque, but in 1941 their remains were excavated and thrown into an unmarked mass grave. In January 2024, Madrid city council’s culture department indicated its willingness to set up an archaeological excavation.<sup>261</sup>

On 30 April 2024, the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition, the UN Rapporteur for the Working Group on Forced Disappearances, and the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions warned in an allegations letter that the so-called “leyes de concordia” (harmony laws), concerning the Civil War (1936–1939) and the Franco dictatorship (1939–1975), proposed or approved by regional

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<sup>259</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 576, 578; Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 31, 344, 346.

<sup>260</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 583.

<sup>261</sup> Sam Jones, “[‘Respect – and Honour’: The Fight to Save a Spanish Civil War Mass grave.](#)” *Guardian* (27 January 2024).

coalition governments of the conservative Partido Popular (PP; Popular Party) and far-right Vox party in Aragón (approved), Castilla y León (proposed), and Valencia (proposed), could violate the obligation of the Spanish State to guarantee the preservation of the historical memory of certain violations of human rights, because “they order the suppression of multiple entities, projects, websites and historical memory activities,” and thus “may pose limits to access to truth about the fate or location of victims” and “hinder or suppress financial assistance to projects.” The UN experts further criticized the laws for not mentioning or explicitly condemning the dictatorial nature of the Franco dictatorship and for inflating the understanding of victimhood by referring to “all the victims of social, political and terrorist violence and of ideological and religious persecution,” thus contributing to reviving “revisionist or denialist” theories about the 1936–1975 period. They also warned that the law promoted in the Valencian Community equated the victims of the Civil War (1936–1939) and dictatorship (1939–1975) with those of the Second Spanish Republic (1931–1936) and those of the Basque terrorist movement ETA and Islamic terrorism, emphasizing that the “extrajudicial executions and forced disappearances during the Franco dictatorship” should not be included in a “heterogeneous set” of crimes committed in Spain in the twentieth century.

National historical memory organizations and the government described the laws as attempts to circumvent the 2022 Democratic Memory Law and “to whitewash Francoism.” The Spanish government intended to take the “harmony laws” to the Constitutional Court and had asked the European Parliament and the Council of Europe for support. Aragón’s President Jorge Azcón Navarro and Valencia’s President Carlos Mazón Guixot criticized the “distorted” information in the UN Special Rapporteurs’ allegations letter. In Spain, there were more than 110,000 unidentified victims of the Civil War and the dictatorship, one of the highest numbers in the world. More than 500,000 people died in the Civil War.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Mandatos del Relator Especial sobre la promoción de la verdad, la justicia, la reparación y las garantías de no repetición; del Grupo de Trabajo sobre las Desapariciones Forzadas o Involuntarias y del Relator Especial sobre ejecuciones extrajudiciales, sumarias o arbitrarias, [OL ESP 4/2024](#) [Allegations letter] (30 April 2024); Alberto Caparrós, “[Mazón defiende su ley de Concordia](#),” *ABC* (3 May 2024); Ana Andrés, “[El PP valenciano responde a la ONU: la ley de Concordia ‘no elimina nada, sino que amplía derechos’](#),” *La Razón* (3 May 2024); Sam Jones, “[UN Alarm over Rightwing Laws That Could ‘Whitewash’ Franco Era in Spain](#),” *Guardian* (3 May 2024); LUSA, “[Spain. PP/Vox Government Laws Threaten the ‘Memory’ of the Crimes of the Dictatorship](#),” *Mundo Ao Minuto* (3 May 2024); Jordi Martín, “[UN Report Condemns Human Rights Dangers of PP–Vox ‘Concordance’ Laws in 3 Spanish Autonomous Regions](#),” *El Nacional* (3 May 2024; updated 6 May 2024); Alejandro Tobalina, “[Tres relatores de la ONU instan al Gobierno a ‘tomar las medidas necesarias’ frente a las leyes de concordia del PP y Vox](#),” *20minutos* (3 May 2024); Javier Lezaola, “[La ONU insta al Gobierno español a preservar la memoria histórica frente a las leyes de ‘concordia’ de PP y Vox](#),” *DiarioRed* (4 May 2024); “[Azcón recrimina en una carta al secretario general de la ONU la información ‘sesgada’ del informe sobre las leyes de memoria](#),” *El Debate* (6 May 2024); Ramiro Fdez-Chillón, “[Entrevista Presidente de Aragón](#),” *El Debate* (11 May 2024); Juan Carlos Arroyo González, personal communication (27 June 2024).

## SRI LANKA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998–2004, 2008–2023.

In June 2023, fourteen years after the defeat of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the Civil War (1983–2009) and over three decades after the suppression of a leftist uprising in the south in 1989, President Ranil Wickremesinghe announced plans to establish a new truth and reconciliation commission, called the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), to examine human rights violations. Victims' groups and civil society organizations said they had not been properly consulted and that the new commission – which did not include human rights activists or families and victims of past human rights violations and ignored evidence gathered by previous commissions – would put them at risk of re-traumatization and further threats from security forces.

The government's ongoing abuses against victims of past violations, their families, and communities undermined the purported goals of the proposed commission. Those campaigning for truth and accountability for crimes committed during the Civil War were subjected to surveillance and intimidation by the police and intelligence agencies. An April 2023 United Nations (UN) Human Rights Committee report had criticized the Office on Missing Persons's appointment of "individuals implicated in past human rights violations" and its "interference in the prosecution of such cases."

An 18 September 2023 Human Rights Watch report found that the government's security forces continued to intimidate, through surveillance and counterterrorism laws, activists and victim's relatives campaigning for accountability and the right to the truth regarding the disappearances of mostly LTTE victims during the Civil War. The report argued that the government only used the NURC as a propaganda tool directed at foreign governments and UN agencies with the aim of decreasing support for further investigations by the UN Human Rights Council [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2023*].

Some government officials implicated in alleged crimes remained politically powerful or held senior official positions [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2022*]. Government agencies also unlawfully occupied property and religious sites of minority Tamil and Muslim communities. In September 2023, a judge from Mullaitivu district resigned and fled the country after receiving death threats following a ruling he handed down against the Department of Archaeology, which had constructed a Buddhist monument on the site of a Hindu temple [See NCH *Annual Report 2021*].

Successive governments had appointed similar commissions that collected extensive testimony from victims and witnesses, but none led to accountability or revealed the fate of the disappeared [See NCH *Annual Report 2021–2023*]. A resolution adopted by the UN Human Rights Council in 2021 to form the Sri Lanka Accountability Project to gather evidence of international crimes for use in future prosecutions was due for renewal in 2024. President Wickremesinghe's office said it hoped the proposed truth commission would convince governments that there was no need for further scrutiny by the council.

On 7 February 2024, various UN Special Rapporteurs expressed concern about alleged restrictions and obstructions imposed on memorialization efforts carried out by Tamil civil society to commemorate Maaveerar Naal (Heroes' Day), and the alleged arrest and/or detention of participants or organizers of these events, pursuant to the Prevention of Terrorism Act [See NCH *Annual Reports 2020, 2022–2023*]. On 18 May 2024, known as Mullivaikkal Remembrance Day, several thousand Tamil people commemorated the fifteenth anniversary of the end of the Civil War in Mullivaikkal. In the lead-up to the ceremony, security forces' activity had reportedly increased, including the surveillance and intimidation of Tamil residents.<sup>263</sup>

## SUDAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002–2003, 2006–2023.

The destruction of cultural heritage by Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) during the Civil War (April 2023–) [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*] continued:

- In Darfur, the Sultan Bahruddin Museum in el Geneina and the Sultan Ali Dinar Museum in el Fasher were severely damaged by nearby bombing, while the Nyala Museum in el Obeid suffered minor damage. All three museums reportedly faced threats of lootings.
- Sometime between 15 April and late June 2023, RSF forces reportedly broke into the Republican Palace Museum in Khartoum. The NGO Heritage for Peace voiced concern over the status of the attached public library, housing valuable books and an important archive. The historical building of the old palace had already been damaged.
- On 14 June 2023, the Abdul Karim Mirghani Center in Omdurman was looted, including its library and audio-visual archive. In Khartoum, the main gate of the National Records Office, which housed the National Archives of Sudan and contained over thirty million documents dating as far back as 1504, was damaged by nearby bombings. The archives remained reportedly undamaged as of June 2023.
- A 27 June 2023 Heritage for Peace report found that at least 28 cultural and archaeological sites had been damaged or destroyed. It also found that at least fourteen universities and colleges had

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<sup>263</sup> Human Rights Watch, [“If We Raise Our Voice, They Arrest Us”: Sri Lanka’s Proposed Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) (18 September 2023); [“Sri Lanka: Abuses Undercut Proposed ‘Truth Commission’”](#), *Human Rights Watch* (18 September 2023); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 585–587; Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 352; United Nations Special Rapporteurs, [Allegations Letter AL LKA 1/2024](#) (7 February 2024); [“‘Grim Reminder’: Sri Lanka’s Tamils Mark 15 Years since End of Civil War,”](#) *Al Jazeera* (19 May 2024).

been damaged, looted or occupied, and warned about the loss or significant risk of loss of its libraries, archives, and research facilities. At Ahliya University in Omdurman, at least fifty rare books had been destroyed by fire.<sup>264</sup>

- On 28 November 2023, the Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) joined the World of Monuments Fund and other international organizations condemning attacks to cultural heritage sites and calling for the protection of these sites under the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Event of Armed Conflict and the 1972 World Heritage Convention, both of which ratified by Sudan.<sup>265</sup>
- On 16 January 2024, the UNESCO Regional Network for Cultural Rights strongly condemned an RSF incursion at the site of the ancient city of Naqa and the ancient temple complex of Musawwarat es-Sufra on the Island of Meroe, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Both sites dated back to the Kingdom of Kush (ca. 780 BCE–350 CE).<sup>266</sup>

*See also* Sweden.

## **SURINAME**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2004, 2009–2010, 2012–2013, 2015–2016, 2018.

On 20 December 2023, the Hof van Justitie (HvJ; the High Court of Justice) confirmed on appeal the conviction and twenty-year prison sentence of former military leader (between 1980–1987) and former President (between 2010–2020) Desiré Delano Bouterse [See NCH *Annual Reports 2001–2002, 2009–2010, 2012–2013, 2015, 2019* under Suriname, *2016, 2021* under Netherlands]. On 29 November 2019, the HvJ had found Bouterse guilty on fifteen counts of murder related to the execution of fifteen opponents of the military dictatorship (1980–1987) in December 1982 (also known as the December Murders). Like in the original verdict, the HvJ did not issue an arrest warrant. Bouterse’s whereabouts remained unknown.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> Ismail Hamid, Mahssin Yusef, Isber Sabrin & Tomomi Fushiya, [Cultural Heritage Situations in Sudan](#) (27 June 2023); Adam Makery, [“Sudan’s Cultural Heritage in Peril as Fighting Rages,”](#) *Reuters* (5 July 2023).

<sup>265</sup> Bryan Clark Green, [“Statement on Cultural Heritage Loss in Sudan,”](#) *Society of Architectural Historians* (press release; 28 November 2023).

<sup>266</sup> [“Sudan Fighting Spreads to World Heritage Site,”](#) *Al-Monitor* (16 January 2024); [“Sudan: UNESCO Calls for the Protection of the World Heritage Site of the Island of Meroe,”](#) *UNESCO* (19 January 2024).

<sup>267</sup> Jeff Handmaker, [“Verdict Upheld against Former President in Suriname \(Part II\),”](#) *Bliss* (30 January 2024).

## SWAZILAND

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2011, 2013, 2016–2018.

## SWEDEN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2017–2018, 2020, 2022.

On 5 September 2023, the Lundin trial began at the District Court of Stockholm. The chief prosecutor charged the Lundin Oil company, its former chief executive Ian Lundin and its former vice-president Alex Schneider with complicity in war crimes committed in Block 5A oil concession, in what are now the states of Unity and Warrap in South Sudan. Between 1999 and 2003 – an episode in the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983–2005) between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army (SPLM/A) known as the “oil wars” – Lundin had allegedly paid the Sudanese army and allied militias to secure oil operations in the area then controlled by the SPLM/A. Army and militia forces allegedly carried out numerous systematic and indiscriminate attacks, including unlawful killings, rape, the recruitment of child soldiers, and the forcible displacement of local populations, leading to the deaths of thousands and the displacement of almost 200,000. The trial included a claim to confiscate 1,4 billion Swedish Krona (€ 140 million).<sup>268</sup>

In [October] 2023, a Karlstad University disciplinary panel decided not to take action against Christian Peterson, an undergraduate who had enrolled in, and filmed the Zoom seminar “Interculture: Race and Whiteness in Sweden” by Tobias Hübinette. Hübinette, a historian and lecturer in intercultural education and studies, said that Peterson had “harassed” him inside and outside the course and that he had “mocked” fellow students in the seminar, later posting about them on his blog. This led to complaints of students, to cancelation of the course, and to Hübinette going on sick leave. Peterson was a former member of the neo-Nazi Nordic Resistance Movement whereas Hübinette had previously been convicted for incitement, harassment and defamation as part of the campaign group Antifascist Action. Vice-chancellor Jerker Moodysson disagreed with the panel’s decision because Peterson had intentionally disrupted the course.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> [“Lundin Energy - Alex Schneider and Ian Lundin,”](#) *Trial International* (last updated 17 April 2023); [“The Lundin Moment,”](#) *Justiceinfo.net* (1 September 2023).

<sup>269</sup> Ben Upton, [“Sweden Split on How to Handle Right-Wing Student’s ‘Harassment’,”](#) *Times Higher Education* (16 October 2023).

*See also* Chile, Eritrea, Morocco.

## SWITZERLAND

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 1999–2000, 2004, 2007–2009, 2014, 2016–2018, 2022.

On 12 September 2023, researchers from the University of Zürich published a “pilot project report on sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic Church in Switzerland since the mid-20th century” identifying 1,002 cases of sexual abuse involving 921 victims between 1950 and 2022, committed by 510 perpetrators, the vast majority of whom were priests. The study, commissioned in April 2022 by several religious organizations and carried out under the auspices of six members of the Swiss Historical Society, was scheduled to continue in January 2024. Historians cited the number of victims as an underestimation given that certain archival documents had been destroyed and that access to archives, including diplomatic files, had been refused by the Vatican and the Vatican embassy.<sup>270</sup>

*See also* Algeria, United States.

## SYRIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2002, 2004–2023.

On 29 June 2023, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly established an independent, international institution to clarify the fate and whereabouts of the tens of thousands of missing and forcibly disappeared people in Syria since 2011 and provide reparation to their families.

On 10 October 2023, the International Court of Justice (ICJ; also known as the World Court) held the first public session in the case submitted by Canada and the Netherlands alleging that the Syrian government was violating the UN Convention against Torture. On 16 November 2023, the ICJ issued an order directing Syrian authorities to take all measures to prevent acts of torture and other detention-related abuses.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> Clémentine Méténier, “[What Next after Swiss Report on Sexual Abuse in the Church](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (14 November 2023).

<sup>271</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 360.

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On 21 August 2023, marking the tenth anniversary of the chemical attacks on the Damascus suburbs of Eastern and Western Ghouta by the government of President Bashar al-Assad, survivors and victim's families reiterated their calls for justice and accountability. On 21 August 2013, 1144 people, many of them children, were suffocated by Sarin nerve gas. It was one of 222 chemical attacks in Syria since 2012, the vast majority of which were committed by the Assad government. Attempts at accountability had been complicated by the arrest and intimidation of witnesses and social media disinformation campaigns [See NCH *Annual Report 2022*]. On 15 November 2023, French judges issued international arrest warrants for President al-Assad, his brother Maher al-Assad and two other senior officials on charges of complicity in crimes against humanity and war crimes over the chemical attacks.<sup>272</sup>

In early September 2023, President Bashar al-Assad abolished the notorious military field courts, where thousands of people are thought to have been sentenced to death without due process. Human rights advocates, who had long called for the dissolution of these courts, expressed concern that the decision could lead to the erasure of court records and other evidence related to enforced disappearances, obstructing families' right to the truth.<sup>273</sup>

*See also* Türkiye.

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<sup>272</sup> [“Survivors of Worst Chemical Attack of 21st Century Demand Justice on 10th Anniversary of Ghouta Attacks,”](#) *The Syria Campaign* (18 August 2023); Amnesty International, [The State of the World's Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 360.

<sup>273</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 599.

## TAIWAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2001, 2008–2010, 2012, 2016–2020, 2022.

On 28 February 2024, the 77th anniversary of the massacre on 28 February 1947 in which the Kuomintang (KMT)-led government of then President Chiang Kai-shek (1887–1975) cracked down on anti-government protests killing between 18,000 and 28,000 people, victims and relatives demanded accountability and a better reckoning with past crimes. Although the 2–28 massacre was commemorated nationally every year; museums, parks and statues had been erected dedicated to the massacre; and the KMT had issued an apology for crimes committed during the four decades of martial law also known as White Terror (1949–1992), victim groups criticized the lack of accountability and withholding of truth about other crimes committed during martial law. They also criticized the politicization of transitional justice, especially by KMT politicians, and what was considered a deliberate strategy of prioritizing reparations over truth-seeking [See NCH *Annual Reports 2016–2017, 2020, 2022*].<sup>274</sup>

On 22 April 2024, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)-led government pledged to remove the remaining 760 statues of former dictator Chiang Kai-shek (in power as Chairman of the National Government of China between 1943–1948; as President of Taiwan between 1950–1975), after it had been criticized for stalling recommendations of the 2018 Transitional Justice Committee [See NCH *Annual Reports 2019–2020, 2022*]. The decision was criticized by the opposition Kuomintang party, of which Chiang Kai-shek had been the founder, as “imposing ideology” and whitewashing history.<sup>275</sup>

## TAJIKISTAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2017–2018, 2020, 2023.

In May 2023, on the first anniversary of the brutal crackdown on demonstrators in the Rushan district of Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) in May 2022, the authorities allegedly suppressed physical gatherings and monitored online activities in commemoration of the victims.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> Helen Davidson & Chi Hui Lin, “[‘Facing Up to History’: Relatives of Taiwan’s 2–28 Massacre Victims Demand Official Reckoning](#),” *Guardian* (28 February 2024).

<sup>275</sup> Helen Davidson, “[Taiwan Pledges to Remove 760 Statues of Chinese Dictator Chiang Kai-shek](#),” *Guardian* (23 April 2024).

<sup>276</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 363.

## TANZANIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2010, 2016–2017.

In February 2023, the government banned the use of supplementary books with content that “goes against the national morals and traditions” – widely interpreted as content that referenced LGBTQ+ people and history – in all schools across the country.<sup>277</sup>

On 9 September 2023, in a meeting between civil society organizations and descendants of leaders of the current-day Tanzania-based Chagga and Meru communities, DNA research was presented that showed that a number of skulls held at the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation depot in Berlin belonged to former members of the two communities. The research – conducted in the context of the Marejesho research exhibition aimed at exchanging knowledge about human remains and looted cultural property during the German colonial occupation of parts of Tanzania (1884/5–1918) – indicated that the remains belonged to some of the nineteen Magis (chiefs) and Akidas (ministers), who had been publicly hanged on 2 March 1900 in what was now called Old Moshi and whose remains had been sent to the Berlin Ethnological Museum in the context of scientific racism. Descendants, who had already been requesting the return for more than fifty years, demanded repatriation, and an apology from the government and the museums and universities involved.<sup>278</sup>

*See also* United States.

## THAILAND

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 1999, 2001–2002, 2005, 2007–2022.

Throughout the course of 2022, student publisher Sam Yan Press (established in 2017) repeatedly rejected a lucrative offer to be bought out and shut down by a Chinese businessman. Sam Yan Press was known for publishing books about Chinese dissidents such as Joshua Wong (1996–), Liu Xiaobo (1955–2017), Ilham Tohti (1969–), and Fang Lizhi (1936–2012), among others, and books by historian

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<sup>277</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 613.

<sup>278</sup> European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights, [“After DNA-Matching: Relatives at Kilimanjaro Demand Early Return of Their Identified Ancestors and Apology from Germany,”](#) (press release; 11 September 2023); Andrea Böhm, [“Sie wollen ihre Toten zurück,”](#) *Die Zeit* (25 October 2023); [“The Tanzanians Searching for Their Grandfathers’ Skulls in Germany,”](#) *BBC News* (29 October 2023).

Jeffrey Wasserstrom about the Hong Kong protests and journalist Leta Hong Fincher about Chinese feminist history.<sup>279</sup>

*See also* Myanmar.

## **TIMOR-LESTE**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2003–2013, 2015–2018, 2023.

## **TOGO**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002, 2008–2013, 2017–2018, 2021.

## **TRINIDAD and TOBAGO**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2018.

## **TUNISIA**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001, 2011–2023.

In 2023, the authorities imposed at least a dozen travel bans in connection with criminal investigations of opponents and perceived critics, such as President of the Truth and Dignity Commission Sihem Bensedrine and former member of parliament Zied Ghanney, restricting their freedom of movement [See NCH *Annual Reports 2015, 2023*].<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> Jirapreeya Saeboo, “Our Principles Are Not for Sale,” [Index on Censorship](#), 53 no. 1 (2024), 64–65.

<sup>280</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 624.

## TÜRKIYE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–1998, 2000–2023.

On 20 July 2015, Hatice Ezgi Sadet ([1994/5]–2015) and Polen Ünlü ([1991/2]–2015), art history students at the Mimar Sinan Fine Art University in Istanbul, were among thirty-three people killed by an Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) suicide attack at the Amara Cultural Center in Suruç, Şanlıurfa province. They had been among the 300 people that enlisted to travel to Kobani in northern Syria to help rebuild the city after fighting between Kurdish and ISIS forces in 2014 had largely destroyed it.

Eight years later, on 20 July 2023, law enforcement officials prevented several commemorations of the 2015 killings. At least 187 protesters were arbitrarily detained in the cities of Istanbul, Izmir, and Ankara. In Istanbul authorities kettled protesters, using pepper spray, plastic bullets and unlawful force.<sup>281</sup>

In January 2023, state surveyors cleared the Alcasu and Bostanlık beaches, located where the ancient city of Phaselis used to be, for the construction of tourist facilities. The decision was criticized by archaeological and cultural heritage organizations, who argued that the site, containing ruins dating back to the second century BCE and a potential nominee for UNESCO World Heritage status, had never been excavated and held “the potential to offer significant archaeological information.” In June, a group of organizations, including the Phaselis’e Dokunma Hareketi (Don’t Touch Phaselis) and the Turkish Association of Archaeologists, took legal action resulting in the temporary halting of construction activities. However, local activists claimed that some artifacts, including coins and ceramic fragments, had already been damaged.<sup>282</sup>

On 2 August 2023, a spokesperson for President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan criticized streaming platform Disney+ for its decision to cancel a six-part series about founder of the Turkish Republic Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938), claiming that it had caved in to “the Armenian lobby” in the United States. In June, the Armenian National Committee of America had called on Disney+ not to launch the show because it “glorifies a Turkish dictator and genocide killer” – although Atatürk did not play an active role in the Armenian genocide (1915–1917). Disney+ confirmed the cancellation of the series, but said a special television version of it would be broadcasted in Türkiye.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Zeynep Bilginsoy & Jared Goyette, “[The 20-Year-Old Activist Who Died Trying to Help Rebuild a City.](#)” *The World* (21 July 2015); “[Young Victims of Suruç Laid to Rest across Turkey.](#)” *Egypt Today* (22 July 2015); “[Polen Ünlü.](#)” *100-reasons.org*; “[Hatice Ezgi Sadet.](#)” *100-reasons.org*; Amnesty International, *The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024* (London: AI, 2024), 376.

<sup>282</sup> Sara Tor, “[Outrage at Plans to Develop Turkey’s Cultural Heritage Sites.](#)” *Guardian* (21 August 2023).

<sup>283</sup> Hamdi First Buyuk, “[Disney’s Decision to Cancel Atatürk Series Leaves Turks Angry.](#)” *Balkan Insight* (3 August 2023); Rouben Paul Adalian, “[Ataturk, Mustafa Kemal.](#)” *Armenian National Institute* ([no date]).

In [September] 2023, historian Suleyman Demirci went to the United States, where he became a Scholar at Risk at the State University of New York at Buffalo. A professor of early modern Ottoman history specialized in Ottoman Turkish taxation from the 1620s, he had been harassed and named a “terrorist” and “traitor” by social media and columnists and had reportedly also been taken into custody and put on trial in Türkiye.<sup>284</sup>

On 24 October 2023, former history teacher Mustafa Seçkin was detained, because of a social media post in which he shared a prayer that had previously been recited by a friend – another former teacher who was serving a prison sentence on terrorism-related charges after the 15 July 2016 coup attempt – whose son had committed suicide. Seçkin, who was almost totally blind, had been sentenced in 2018 to fifteen months in prison for sending his children to a private school linked to the movement of Fethullah Gülen, whom the government of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan alleged was behind the coup attempt.<sup>285</sup>

On 11 November 2023, the Saturday Mothers, a group of human rights defenders including relatives of victims of enforced disappearances [See NCH *Annual Report 2019*], were allowed to read a short statement near Galatasaray Square in Istanbul, a place of symbolic importance to the group, after being banned from doing so for over five years. This positive development fell short of constitutional court decisions that the group’s freedom of assembly should be upheld, and between April and November 2023 law enforcement officials had continued to use unlawful force to disperse their protests and detain and prosecute participants [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*].<sup>286</sup>

The “Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide,” which organizers attempted to hold each year on 24 April, was banned for three years in a row between [2022] and [2024].<sup>287</sup>

On 26 June 2024, the exhibition “Dön-Dün Bak: A Look Back at the History of the Trans Movement in Turkey,” organized by the Trans Pride Week Exhibition Collective, opened in Istanbul. Scheduled to run until 27 July, it was banned following an official notice from the Beyoğlu District Governor’s

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<sup>284</sup> Charles Anzalone, “[UB Welcomes Its First Scholars at Risk](#),” *UB Now* (10 October 2023).

<sup>285</sup> “[Disabled Teacher Arrested in Nationwide Operation against Gülen Movement](#),” *Stockholm Center for Freedom* (6 November 2023).

<sup>286</sup> Amnesty International, *The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024* (London: AI, 2024), 376; Amnesty International, *Under Protected and Over Restricted: The State of the Right to Protest in 21 European Countries* (London: AI, 2024), 92, 140.

<sup>287</sup> Amnesty International, *Under Protected and Over Restricted: The State of the Right to Protest in 21 European Countries* (London: AI, 2024), 96.

Office. The exhibition traced the evolution of the trans movement in Türkiye from the 1980s to 2024 through archival records.<sup>288</sup>

*See also* Greece, Malaysia, Russia, Ukraine.

## **TURKMENISTAN**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2004, 2009, 2011–2012, 2015–2019, 2023.

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<sup>288</sup> [“Exhibition on Trans Movement’s History in Turkey Banned in İstanbul,”](#) *Bianet* (12 July 2024).

## UGANDA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2005–2009, 2011–2013, 2015–2017, 2019–2021, 2023.

*See also* Congo, Democratic Republic.

## UKRAINE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 2009–2011, 2014–2023.

In the days after 27 February 2022, when Berdyansk, a city located near the Azov Sea in the Zaporizhzhia Oblast, was captured by the Russian army, Igor Lyman, a historian at Berdyansk University, head of its history and philosophy department, and presenter of local history on local television, and his wife Victoria, also a historian, were almost arrested after their apartment was burglarized. They fled to Ukrainian-controlled territory and together with others re-established Berdyansk University as an online university with about 3,500 students.<sup>289</sup>

During the Russian occupation of the Donbas (2014–), theologian and historian Ihor Kozlovskiy (1954–2023) was targeted for his participation in the EuroMaidan protests in Donetsk and his outspoken Ukrainian identity. On 27 January 2016, Kozlovskiy was captured by militants of the Donetsk People’s Republic because of his pro-Ukrainian views, placed in solitary confinement in the Izolyatsia prison in Donetsk, and tortured. In May 2017, a “military tribunal” sentenced him to two years and eight months in prison; he was transferred to a regular prison. Kozlovskiy was released in a prisoner exchange with Ukraine on 27 December 2017. On 6 September 2023, he died unexpectedly. He was a full member of the Donetsk branch of the Shevchenko Scientific Society in Ukraine (2019–), a senior researcher of the Department of Religious Studies of the Hryhorii Skovoroda Institute of Philosophy of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, and head of the ecumenical Christian-Muslim Dialogue Center.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> Nathan Greenfield, “[War Has Not Dampened Ukrainian Scholars’ Courage to Think](#),” *World University News* (18 July 2024).

<sup>290</sup> Mansur Mirovalev, “[‘Some Stay, Some Die’: The Horror of Ukraine’s War Camps](#),” *Al Jazeera* (22 March 2021); Elsa Court & Kyiv Independent news desk, “[Ukrainian Scholar Ihor Kozlovskiy Who Survived Imprisonment in Donetsk Dies at 69](#),” *Kyiv Independent* (6 September 2023); “[Igor Kozlovskiy](#),” *Wikipedia* (retrieved 25 October 2023).

Among those killed at the frontline in the war against Russia were [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*]:

- On [18 April] 2022, history teacher Roman Businsky (1995–2022) went missing. He was found killed and buried in [November 2023]. A graduate of the history department of the Kamianets-Podilskyi National University, he worked as a history teacher at the Strikhytzi gymnasium, Chmelnytskyi Oblast.<sup>291</sup>
- On 19 July 2022, Oleg Dyakov ([1994/5]–2022), a graduate from the faculty of history at the Dorhobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University, was killed near Bakhmut.<sup>292</sup>
- On [24 or 27] September 2022, political scientist, public intellectual and Crimean Tatar historian Rustem Mamut-oglu Ablyatfov (1964–2022) was killed by Russian troops in Kherson Oblast. Between 2002 and 2010 he worked for a number of state institutions and campaigned for the rights of previously deported Crimean Tatars to Ukrainian citizenship. He also worked as a political analyst and deputy director of the Crimean News Agency. After the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russian forces in 2014, he was forced to leave and entered Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, where he taught courses on the history of the Crimean Tatars. On 29 August 2022, he defended his dissertation in history on the repatriation of the Crimean Diaspora in Türkiye. He had been scheduled to receive his Ph.D.<sup>293</sup>
- On 16 November 2022, Serhii Mironov, a writer, historian and officer of the Territorial Defense of Ukraine was killed in Bakhmut.<sup>294</sup>
- On 12 February 2024, Maksym Shtatskyi ([1988/9]–2024), a historian who worked for the Khortytsia National Reserve and was specialized in the history of the Mennonites – a group of Anabaptist Christians that emerged during the sixteenth-century Radical Reformation and that derived its name from the Frisian excommunicated Roman-Catholic priest Menno Simons (1496–1561) – was killed in action. In 2010, he had graduated from the history department of Zaporizhzhia National University. In the army he was known by his nickname “the Historian.”<sup>295</sup>
- On 28 February 2024, Anton Yakovenko (?–2024), a video editor for the television channel XSPORT before the start of the war, was killed at the front in Vuhledar (Donetsk oblast) as a

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<sup>291</sup> “[Пам’яті вчителя, добровольця Романа Бузінського](#),” *Ukrinform* (27 January 2024).

<sup>292</sup> “[List of Deaths during the Russian Invasion of Ukraine](#),” *Wikipedia* (last updated on 26 July 2024).

<sup>293</sup> “[На фронті загинув випускник аспірантури Львівського університету Рустем Мамут оглу Аблятіфов](#),” *Ivan Franko National University of Lviv* (27 September 2022); “[Tomorrow Lviv Will Say Goodbye to Two Heroes: Rustem Mamut oglu Ablyatfov and Yevhen Dovgan Died in Battles with the Russian Invaders](#),” *Golos Sokal* (29 September 2022); “[List of Deaths during the Russian Invasion of Ukraine](#),” *Wikipedia* (last updated on 19 September 2023).

<sup>294</sup> “[List of Deaths during the Russian Invasion of Ukraine](#),” *Wikipedia* (last updated on 19 September 2023).

<sup>295</sup> “[Maksym Shtatskyi, Historian Who Worked for Khortytsia National Reserve, Killed in Action](#),” *Ukrainska Pravda* (20 February 2024).

member of the “Black Zaporozhians” brigade. He was a history graduate from Volodymyr Vynnychenko Central Ukrainian State University, Kropyvnytskyi.<sup>296</sup>

- On 28 March 2024, Yuri Lushchai (1982–2024), a historian (graduated with a master’s degree from the Kharkiv National University history department) specialized in the history of Kievan Rus and an administrator of the Russian-language Wikipedia section, was killed in action near Ivanivske, Bakhmut district, Donetsk Oblast, during a massive Russian shelling.<sup>297</sup>

Among those (temporarily) emigrated or exiled since the Russian invasion of February 2022 was [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*]:

- Historian and scholar of library and information sciences Tetiana Hbranchak, a researcher at the Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine, who after the invasion went into exile in the United States with her husband because she feared for her safety given her activism and scholarly research. She first worked at the Indiana University–Ukraine Nonresidential Scholars Program and later at Syracuse University’s Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. She specialized in media literacy and the role of libraries in the formation and politics of memory.<sup>298</sup>

On 5 October 2023, at least 59 people were killed in a single missile strike on a café in the village of Hroza, Kharkiv region, during a memorial service for a Ukrainian soldier. A Russian representative at the United Nations spoke of the attendees as the soldier’s “Nazi collaborators,” a reference to the official Russian justification of its war of aggression [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2023*].<sup>299</sup>

As of 13 December 2023, UNESCO had verified damage to 333 sites since the invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces on 24 February 2022: 125 religious sites, 146 buildings of historical and/or artistic interest, 29 museums, 19 monuments, 13 libraries, and 1 archive [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2023*]. A May 2024 report by the Virginia Museum of Natural History’s Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab and the Smithsonian Institution’s Cultural Rescue Initiative identified the potential damage to cultural heritage sites between 24 February 2022 and 30 April 2024 to 2,122 out of 28,710. These included memorials and monuments (950), places of worship and burial (633), museums (188), libraries/archives (143), heritage buildings (102), and archaeological sites (39).<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> Evgeniya Kanchura, Personal communication (28 February 2024); “[Soldier, XSPORT video editor Anton Yakovenko Killed in Action](#),” *IMI* (29 February 2024).

<sup>297</sup> “[Yuri Lushchai](#),” *Wikipedia* (16 April 2024).

<sup>298</sup> Jessica Youngman, “[Visiting Scholar from Ukraine Has Found Community, Continued Her Work at Maxwell School](#),” *Syracuse News University* (17 November 2023).

<sup>299</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 384.

<sup>300</sup> Alexandre Larcen, “[Damaged Cultural Sites in Ukraine Verified by UNESCO](#),” *UNESCO* (Press release; 15 December 2023); Hayden Bassett and others, [Potential Damage to Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Sites – Report Coverage: 24 February 2022 to 30 April 2024](#) (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 2024); Tatiana Vorozhko

### *Russian-occupied Territories*

Since at least the 2022 invasion, children in Russian-occupied territories were forced to learn the Ukrainian curriculum “in hiding,” to avoid reprisals. A new history textbook introduced in September 2023 was criticized as an attempt to indoctrinate schoolchildren and a blatant violation of their rights to appropriate and quality education. Pupils as well as their parents were forced to attend propaganda events at schools, and write letters of support to members of the Russian forces. In March 2024, there were reports that some teachers offered secret online classes to hundreds of their (former) students in order to rectify the distorted Russian views, including on history, and teach the Ukrainian curriculum. A June 2024 report by Human Rights Watch found that Russian authorities suppressed the Ukrainian language, imposed a Russian curriculum and Russian as the language of instruction in schools, and spread anti-Ukrainian propaganda. The report further found that history textbooks portrayed the Ukrainian government as a “neo-Nazi state” and justified the Russian invasion.<sup>301</sup>

*See also* Bulgaria, Italy, Romania, Russia.

## **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2013, 2016.

## **UNITED KINGDOM**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 1998–2001, 2003–2004, 2006–2023.

In 2023, historian Andrew Lownie (1961–) said that official documents relating to the Duke of York, Prince Andrew (1960–), including papers about his time as United Kingdom special representative for trade and investment, would not be accessible until 105 years after his birth, in defiance of the public interest test provided since 2010 in the Freedom of Information Act and complicating his writing of the

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& Iryna Matviichuk, “[Russians Target Ukrainian Publishing Industry, Libraries, Books, Archives](#),” *VOA News* (4 June 2024).

<sup>301</sup> Anastasiia Levchenko, “[Secret Classes to Counter Russian Brainwashing in Occupied Ukraine](#),” *BBC News* (16 March 2024); Amnesty International, *The State of the World's Human Rights – April 2024* (London: AI, 2024), 53, 387; “[Ukraine: Forced Russified Education Under Occupation](#),” *Human Rights Watch* (20 June 2024); Human Rights Watch, *Education under Occupation: Forced Russification of the School System in Occupied Ukrainian Territories* (Washington: HRW, 20 June 2024).

Prince's biography [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*].<sup>302</sup>

In August 2023, former Conservative Member of Parliament, Antoinette Sandbach, asked to be removed from the research of historian Malik Al Nasir, working as a Ph.D. student at St. Catherine's College, Cambridge University. In 2021, Al Nasir had named her as a descendant of Liverpool merchant Samuel Sandbach, her slave-owning ancestor, in a Ted Talk video, embedded on the Cambridge University website. She argued that there was no public interest in identifying her as his descendant and that she had a right to privacy and a right to be forgotten, accusing Al Nasir of singling her out while there were many other living relatives. Al Nasir invoked his right to free expression and his academic freedom. It was not clear whether Sandbach had initiated a legal action.<sup>303</sup>

In October 2023, Israeli-British historian Avi Shlaim from the University of Oxford was scheduled to give a lecture, titled "Zionism and the Jews of Iraq: a personal perspective," at Liverpool Hope University, only to be told a week prior to the event that it was canceled because of concerns about the "well-being and safety" of the students. A member of the "New Historians," a group of Israeli historians critical of traditional Israeli historiography, Shlaim argued that the cancelation was contrary to academic freedom and the result of political pressure from those who disagreed with his views on Zionism and Israel. Liverpool Hope University stated that the lecture was not canceled but postponed until later in the year. Shlaim refused the offer to postpone. The British Committee for the Universities of Palestine offered their support to Shlaim.<sup>304</sup>

In late January 2024, the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum agreed a three-year loan deal with Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, the King of the Asante (Ashanti) people in Ghana. The deal included 32 objects, the majority of which had been looted by the British army during the Anglo-Asante wars (1824–1900). National legislation forbade major museums to repatriate looted artefacts.<sup>305</sup>

Between January and [mid-February] 2024, social-media channels of the British Museum were flooded with messages calling on it to return two moai statues dating back to between 1400 and 1650 CE to Rapa Nui (also known as Easter Island), which were looted by British surveyors in 1868. The online campaign followed a message by Chilean influencer Mike Milfort, who had called on his one million followers to

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<sup>302</sup> Andrew Lownie, "All the Books that Might Not Be Written," *Index on Censorship*, 52 no. 4 (2023), 90–92.

<sup>303</sup> Ed Thomas & Joshua Nevett, "[Antoinette Sandbach: Ex-MP Asks To Be Removed from Slavery Research](#)," *BBC News* (31 August 2023); Malik Al Nasir, "[Searching for My Slave Roots](#)," *BBC News* (July 2020).

<sup>304</sup> Tom Williams, "[Historian Criticizes 'Spineless' Cancellation of Israel Lecture](#)," *Times Higher Education* (20 October 2023); Daisy Ruddock, "[Art Institutions Accused of Censoring Pro-Palestinian Views](#)," *Index on Censorship* (12 December 2023).

<sup>305</sup> Matthew Weaver, "[British Museum and V&A to Lend Ghana Looted Gold and Silver](#)," *Guardian* (25 January 2024).

demand the statues' repatriation to Chile. The hashtag was later supported by Chilean President Gabriel Boric. The campaign was criticized by Rapa Nui's mayor Pedro Edmund Pao, who called on Boric not to "politicize something that is so holistically, spiritually and culturally important to us." The Polynesian island was annexed by Chile in 1888 and had expressed a desire for greater autonomy. In 2018, Rapa Nui had issued a written request for the return of the moai. In response, a reciprocal visit between island and museum representatives took place. In 2023, the island's elders' council wrote to King Charles III to request the return of the moai once again. They had not received an answer by February 2024.<sup>306</sup>

On [31] March 2024, a complaint against the British Museum submitted with the Information Commissioner's Office argued that vital specifics of internal conversations over the restitution of eleven wooden and stone tabots (sacred altar tablets in Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox churches stolen from Ethiopia after the 1848 Battle of Maqdala) had not been disclosed. The complaint followed an August 2023 Freedom of Information request filed by the not-for-profit organization Returning Heritage, which had resulted in a response from the museum that allegedly omitted the said information and shared documents that were overly redacted. Restitution advocates argued that the tabots could be returned to Ethiopia, despite the very restrictive 1963 British Museum Act, because the tablets had reportedly never been exhibited or studied as they could only be attended by Ethiopian clergy due to their religious significance. Two tabots had previously been considered for restitution: once in 2001, when one had been discovered in the St John the Evangelist church in Edinburgh; and in February 2024, when Westminster Abbey agreed "in principle" to return one in their possession.<sup>307</sup>

According to an 8 June 2024 report, at least three historians of British imperialism had been harassed. David Olusoga had to employ a bodyguard at some speaking events. Sathnam Sanghera largely stopped doing events for a period because the abuse had become routine. Corinne Fowler, co-author of a 2020 report for the National Trust on its estates' ties to the East India Company and transatlantic slavery, and author of the book *Colonial Countryside*, received many hate mails and threats and inaccurate reporting in the press [See NCH *Annual Report 2021*].<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> Charis McGowan, "[British Museum's Instagram Flooded with Calls to Return Easter Island Statue](#)," *Guardian* (18 February 2024); James Gregory, "[British Museum Facing Social Media Campaign to Return Easter Island Statue](#)," *BBC News* (18 February 2024).

<sup>307</sup> Laure Bakare, "[Westminster Abbey Agrees 'In Principle' to Return Sacred Tablet to Ethiopia](#)," *Guardian* (19 February 2024); Esther Addley, "[British Museum Investigated over Ethiopian Artefacts Hidden from View for 150 Years](#)," *Guardian* (31 March 2024).

<sup>308</sup> Sathnam Sanghera, "['Imperial Nostalgia Has Become so Extreme': Sathnam Sanghera on the Conflict Surrounding Colonial History](#)," *Guardian* (8 June 2024).

According to an 8 June 2024 report, the corroborated genocide of Tasmanian aboriginal people by British colonizers in the early 1800s was increasingly denied and minimized.<sup>309</sup>

### *Northern Ireland*

On 12 September 2023, Parliament adopted an amended Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill. Amendments included the continuation of existing civil cases and an extension of the deadline to start new cases, including into torture allegations, to May 2024. Nevertheless, human rights organizations, victims and relatives continued to criticize the bill, which they feared would be tantamount to a de facto amnesty scheme [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2023*]. In December 2023, the Irish government announced its intention to launch an inter-state case against the United Kingdom at the European Court of Human Rights, arguing that the act’s provisions breached the European Convention on Human Rights.<sup>310</sup>

### *Saint Helena*

In 2008, during construction work on the Saint Helena Airport, archaeologists excavated the remains of 325 formerly enslaved people, who had been quarantined on the island in the mid-nineteenth century. Following the excavation, the government endorsed a “masterplan” to organize a “dignified reburial,” memorialization projects, and safeguards to protect the up to 10,000 remains in the Rupert’s Valley African burial ground, considered “the most significant physical remaining trace of the transatlantic slave trade on Earth.” Those buried, including 3,000 children, were victims of the “middle passage” – the forced voyage of enslaved African people across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas and the West Indies – who had been removed from Portuguese slave ships. Although called “liberated Africans,” many were shipped further to the West Indies to work as indentured labor, while those who remained on the island were confined in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions, employed in the lowest economic occupations and deprived of food [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*].

In [late March] 2024, Annina van Neel and Peggy King Jorde, the two co-authors of the masterplan, enlisted the help of the State of the African Diaspora (SOAD), recognized by the African Union, to repatriate the remained of the 325 people and prevent further desecration of the burial ground, arguing that the government had failed to honor their recommendations, including commemorative sites and a

<sup>309</sup> Sathnam Sanghera, “[‘Imperial Nostalgia Has Become so Extreme’: Sathnam Sanghera on the Conflict Surrounding Colonial History](#),” *Guardian* (8 June 2024).

<sup>310</sup> Tommy Greene, “[‘Justice Denied’: Victims’ Families Slam UK’s Northern Ireland Legacy Bill](#),” *Al Jazeera* (6 September 2023); “[UK Parliament Adopts Controversial Northern Ireland Troubles ‘Legacy’ Bill](#),” *Al Jazeera* (13 September 2023); Amnesty International, *The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024* (London: AI, 2024), 392.

national conservation area. SOAD and the International Commission on Heritage and Culture threatened international legal action over the government's alleged failure to honor the reburial plan.<sup>311</sup>

*See also* Australia, Barbados, China, Ethiopia, Greece, Palestine, Russia, Sierra Leone, United States.

## UNITED NATIONS / INTERNATIONAL

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2022–2023.

On 30 May 2024, the seventieth anniversary of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, the International Council on Archives (ICA), the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) issued a *Declaration on the Protection of Archives, Libraries, Museums and Heritage Places during Armed Conflicts and Political Instability*, expressing their concern at the current escalating destruction of life and cultural heritage during armed conflict and political instability and pleading to protect the life and work of professionals working in the field of cultural and documentary heritage.<sup>312</sup>

## UNITED STATES

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–2023.

Throughout 2023, Congress introduced four resolutions or bills that addressed reparations and truth and healing commissions regarding chattel slavery and Indian boarding schools and their legacies. The descendants of enslaved Africans, African Americans and indigenous peoples continued to live with intergenerational trauma, as well as the detrimental economic and material impacts of the legacy of slavery and colonialism, without reparations [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*].<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> Haroon Siddique, "[St Helena Urged to Return Remains of 325 Formerly Enslaved People to Africa](#)," *Guardian* (27 March 2024).

<sup>312</sup> International Council on Archives, International Council of Museums, International Council on Monuments and Sites & International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, [Declaration on the Protection of Archives, Libraries, Museums and Heritage Places during Armed Conflicts and Political Instability](#) (30 May 2024).

<sup>313</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World's Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 393–394.

In March 2023, art historian Erika López Prater filed a lawsuit against Hamline University’s Board of Trustees claiming defamation, reprisal, internal infliction of emotional distress, retaliation, and religious discrimination before the United States District Court of Minnesota. In November 2022, Hamline University had rescinded an offer to her to teach during the spring 2023 semester, after a student complained about a painting of the Prophet Muhammad that she had displayed in class [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*]. The university admitted that its use of the term “Islamophobic” to define her behavior was flawed. While a judge dismissed most of the claims on 15 September 2023, the claim of religious discrimination was still under consideration.<sup>314</sup>

A 1 June 2023 report by the Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH) found that Twitter (later known as X) failed to act on 99% of hate speech, including Holocaust denial and racist and antisemitic content, committed by verified accounts. On 20 July 2023, Twitter’s attorney Alex Spiro threatened to sue CCDH for “incendiary claims.”<sup>315</sup>

A September 2023 report by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) found that almost 65% of professors in Florida, Texas, Georgia and North Carolina did not consider their state a desirable place to work, citing political interference into curricula, restrictions of tenure and repressive policies toward LGBTQ+ people.

In Florida, the report referred to the effects of the 2022 Individual Freedom Act (IFA; also known as “Stop W.O.K.E. Act”), the early 2023 rejection of the Advanced Placement History course and Florida Senate Bill 266, which banned courses that “distort significant historical events” or “teach theories that systemic racism, sexism, oppression and privilege are inherent in the institutions of the United States” [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2023*].

In Texas, under the auspices of lieutenant governor Dan Patrick, state bills had banned the teaching of critical race theory and made it a legal cause for dismissal of tenured and tenure-track professors [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2023*].

In North Carolina, as of September 2023, the state legislature planned to require students at community colleges and universities to take a course on the study of the founding documents, including the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution (a practice that was already mandatory in Florida).<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Scholars at Risk, [Free to Think 2023: Report of the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project](#) (New York: SAR, 2023).

<sup>315</sup> Center for Countering Digital Hate, “[Twitter Fails to Act on 99% of Twitter Blue Accounts Tweeting Hate](#)” (1 June 2023); “[Musk Threatens to Sue Researchers Who Documented the Rise in Hate Tweets](#),” *Al Jazeera* (31 July 2023).

<sup>316</sup> Nathan Greenfield, “[‘Demonised’ Professors Seek Exit from Right-Wing States](#),” *University World News* (5 October 2023); Madison Ingram, “[How Librarians Became American Free Speech Heroes](#),” *Zócalo* (5 October 2023).

On 7 September 2023, a report by the Government Accountability Office (GOA) found that during the construction of a wall to block off the border between the United States (US) and Mexico in the Tohono O’odham Nation Reservation, Arizona, between 2017 and 2021, government contractors irreparably damaged multiple historical heritage sites of the Tohono O’odham Nation people. These included Monument Hill – a site that the Hia-C’ed O’odham (“Sand Dune People”; ancestors of the Tohono O’odham) and other indigenous communities used for religious ceremonies and that contained the burials of Apache and O’odham ancestors – which was blasted by explosives to expand a patrol road. Contractors also destroyed a burial site in the Quitobaquito Springs, an oasis in the Sonoran Desert, and another sacred site for the O’odham people. The GOA report further documented how the government of President Donald Trump had used emergency laws, claiming that the border crossing of undocumented migrants into the US constituted a “national emergency,” to bypass cultural heritage protection laws.<sup>317</sup>

On 13 September 2023, the Hamshire–Fannett Independent School District in Beaumont, Texas, dismissed a teacher (name unknown) who had assigned to an eighth-grade class a passage from Ari Folman’s and David Polonsky’s 2018 *Anne Frank’s Diary: The Graphic Adaptation*, which included passages Frank wrote about female and male genitalia, and about a possible attraction to women. The unabridged version of Frank’s diary had been removed from schools in Texas and Florida in 2023 after complaints from parents over its sexual content. Anne Frank (1929–1945) was a German-born Jewish child who had kept a diary while hiding from the Nazis in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. She died in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. The graphic adaptation was fully authorized by the Anne Frank Fonds, the Switzerland-based foundation that oversaw the copyright to Frank’s diary.<sup>318</sup>

A 25 September 2023 report by Human Rights Watch (HRW) stated that the government had failed to provide compensation or other redress to Iraqi citizens who suffered torture and other abuse in Abu Ghraib and other United States (US)–led prisons in Iraq. Between 2003–2009 around 100,000 Iraqis had reportedly been held in US–led prisons. A 2004 report by the International Committee of the Red Cross had found that 70–90% of the people held in custody in 2003 had been arrested by mistake. In 2004, then-President George W. Bush had issued an apology for the “humiliation suffered” at Abu

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<sup>317</sup> United States Government Accountability Office, [Southwest Border: Additional Actions Needed to Address Cultural and Natural Resource Impacts from Barrier Construction](#) (September 2023), 22–23; Brian Osgood, [“US Border Wall Construction Damaged Native Burial Site: Government Report,”](#) *Al Jazeera* (8 September 2023).

<sup>318</sup> Timothy Bella, [“Texas Teacher Fired after Assigning Graphic Novel Based on Anne Frank’s Diary,”](#) *Washington Post* (20 September 2023).

Ghraib, and then-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld had promised the US Congress to provide compensation. However, the HRW report found no evidence for this.<sup>319</sup>

On 26 September 2023, the ninth anniversary of the 2014 Ayotzinapa case of 43 disappeared and murdered students in Mexico [See under Mexico], the National Security Archive (NSA) reported that, together with the Center for Investigative Reporting, it had filed over 150 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and two FOIA lawsuits since 2017, but that it had received very little new information while most relevant records remained classified. The NSA blamed refusals of six federal agencies on an overburdened classification system due to the explosion of electronic records, a backlogged FOIA (the government was reportedly 150,000 requests behind), and a deterioration, ever since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, of the right to information and the public's right to know. In 2022, a Senate Judiciary Committee had pointed to the same problems in a right to information hearing and had criticized the absence of consequences for agencies that failed to comply with the law. In January 2023, Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines had expressed concern about the overclassification of records, that undermined key democratic values like “transparency,” “accountability,” and “the basic trust that the public has in its government.”<sup>320</sup>

On 10 October 2023, Governor of California Gavin Newsom signed two laws intended to make California's public universities return Native American remains and artifacts. The laws required the California State University (CSU) system to review their progress annually, and urged the University of California (UC) system to do the same. A report published in 2020 had found that the UC system did not have adequate policies for repatriation, and that its Berkeley campus had only returned around 20% of the remains and artifacts in its possession. A state auditor's office report of June 2023 found that more than half of the 21 CSU campuses had not returned any of them.<sup>321</sup>

On 21 October 2023, historian of early modern Europe Natalie Zemon Davis (1928–2023) died. In 1952 the State Department had confiscated the passports of her and her husband, mathematician Chandler Davis, probably in connection with a pamphlet that she and Elizabeth Douvan had written, entitled *Operation Mind*. The pamphlet reviewed the history of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and tried to show with excerpts from testimonies that the HUAC attacked specific ideas about peace, trade unions, and equality, rather than efforts to overthrow the government. It was published

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<sup>319</sup> Human Rights Watch, “[Iraq: Torture Survivors Await US Redress Accountability](#)” (Washington: HRW, 25 September 2023).

<sup>320</sup> Kate Doyle & Claire Dorfman, “[Keeping the Secrets: U.S. Silence about Ayotzinapa](#),” *National Security Archive* (26 September 2023).

<sup>321</sup> Sophie Austin, “[California Governor Signs Laws Compelling Universities to Report Return of Native American Remains](#),” *AP* (11 October 2023).

anonymously before the HUAC visit to Michigan and attributed to Chandler Davis. The latter was charged with distributing Communist literature. In 1954, after refusing to answer questions before the HUAC on First Amendment grounds, he was charged with contempt, dismissed by the University of Michigan, and blacklisted. Natalie Davis did not have a passport for many years and could no longer travel to France to work in the archives. As a result, her doctoral research (eventually completed in 1959) was hampered. She had to raise three children while her husband was imprisoned (for six months in 1960 on charges brought against him by the HUAC) and blacklisted at United States universities. After her term as a history professor at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island (1959–1963), both went to work at Toronto University (1963–1971). Later she became a professor at the University of California, Berkeley (1971–1977) and Princeton University (1977–1996). Natalie Zemon Davis was a patron of the Network of Concerned Historians.<sup>322</sup>

A November 2023 report by PEN America found that throughout 2023 110 educational gag orders – state legislative and policy efforts to restrict teaching of, among other things, race, gender and sexuality in United States (US) history [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2023*] – had been issued, of which ten had become law and four more had been passed through executive order, bringing the total to 40 as of 1 November 2023. It found that the content of gag orders had shifted to LGBTQ+ history, modeled after HB1557 (also known as the “Don’t Say Gay Bill”) in Florida [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2022*; See below under Florida].

In another report, PEN America’s Index of School Book Bans found 5894 (attempted) book bans between July 2021 and June 2023, including books about the history of race, LGBTQ+ history and the history of World War II, and noted an increase between July 2022 and June 2023 in comparison to the previous year [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*].<sup>323</sup>

On 6 January 2024, the American Historical Association passed a resolution entitled “In Defense of the Right to Learn,” which stated, among others: “Whereas numerous state legislatures and officials are censoring the teaching of history in public schools and universities; Whereas, under pressure, a number of school boards across the country are forcing teachers to censor their treatment of particular historical

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<sup>322</sup> Elsa Dixler, “[Natalie Zemon Davis, Historian of the Marginalized, Dies at 94](#),” *New York Times* (23 October 2023); Henry Abelove, et al., eds., *Visions of History* (Manchester 1984), 104–105; Kelly Boyd, ed., *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writing* (London and Chicago 1999), 290–291; Chandler Davis, “The Purge,” in Peter Duren et al. eds., *A Century of Mathematics in America* (Providence 1988–1989), 422–423; Jennifer Scanlon & Shaaron Cosner, *American Women Historians, 1700s–1990s* (Westport / London 1996), 53–56; Ellen W. Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* (New York/Oxford 1986), 287, 301, 304; Daniel R. Woolf, ed., *A Global Encyclopedia of Historical Writing* (New York/London 1998), 224.

<sup>323</sup> Jeremy Young, Jonathan Friedman & Kasey Meehan, “[America’s Censored Classrooms 2023](#),” *PEN America* (9 November 2023); Sabrina Baëta & Kasey Meehan, “[Spineless Shelves: Two Years of Book Banning](#),” *PEN America* (no date [2023]); PEN America, [PEN America’s Index of School Book Bans \(July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023\)](#) (ongoing database).

topics in their classes, and libraries are removing books in literature and history from their shelves; Whereas teachers and librarians who resist these measures have faced personal attacks and threats; Therefore the Association will continue to vigorously: (1) uphold accuracy in history teaching; (2) intervene where appropriate and encourage members to organize against attacks on history and the work of historians; (3) defend academic freedom and job security for history teachers at every level; (4) write editorials and letters to the editor defending teachers, librarians, and school board members; and (5) testify before legislative bodies and school boards about the right to learn.”<sup>324</sup>

On 8 February 2024, Michael Mann, climate scientist at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, prevailed in a lawsuit that he had initiated in 2012 to accuse two conservative commentators – policy analyst Rand Simberg and author Mark Steyn – of defamation for challenging his research, accusing him of fraud, and comparing him to a convicted child molester in blog posts. A jury at the Washington DC Superior Court awarded Mann more than US\$1 million. Mann was the co-author of a pair of papers published in 1998 and 1999 that contained the famous “hockey-stick graph,” showing global temperature trends since the year 1000. It revealed a sharp spike in the twentieth century, after the Industrial Revolution had boosted greenhouse-gas emissions in the atmosphere. The graph became a symbol of human interference in the climate system and was reproduced by many others, including the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in its 2001 report on climate change. Some of Mann’s e-mails, as well as others discussing his work, were among a trove of thousands of documents that were released after being illegally obtained from the University of East Anglia, United Kingdom, in 2009 in a row known as the Climategate controversy. Critics claimed that some of the e-mails showed an attempt to manipulate climate data to indicate global warming rather than cooling. This sparked the blogposts and later the defamation case. In a reaction to the judgment, Kim Cobb, a paleoclimatologist at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, said that he had been subjected to similar attacks.<sup>325</sup>

On 13 February 2024, the Alabama Senate County and Municipal Government Committee approved State Bill 77 that would remove the board of trustees of the Alabama Department of Archives and History. The bill, sponsored by Republican Senator Chris Elliott, would end the board’s independence by giving appointments to political representatives. The legislation came after in June 2023 some Republican lawmakers, including Elliott, took issue with the Archives hosting a talk by Maigen

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<sup>324</sup> American Historical Association, “[In Defense of the Right to Learn: Resolution Passed at the 137th Business Meeting \(January 2024\)](#).”

<sup>325</sup> “[Punitive Damages Awarded to Climate-Change Scientist Dr. Mann in Decade-Long Defamation Case](#),” *X* (8 February 2024); Jeff Tollefson, “[Climatologist Michael Mann Wins Defamation Case: What It Means for Scientists](#),” *Nature* (9 February 2024).

Sullivan, co-founder of the Invisible Histories Project based in Birmingham, on LGBTQ+ history in Alabama.<sup>326</sup>

On 29 February 2024, university researchers charged with a United Nations (UN) inquiry into the death of UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld in 1961, accused the governments of the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK) of delaying the handing over of archival records. In 2017, the UN had reopened an inquiry into the death of Hammarskjöld, under the auspices of Tanzanian judge Mohamed Chande Othman. A recent UN General Assembly resolution to renew the investigation was co-sponsored by 142 UN member states, but did not include the US and the UK.<sup>327</sup>

On 24 April 2024, the administration of the University of Southern California (USC) invited riot police to campus to stop peaceful student demonstrations against the atrocities committed by Israel in Gaza. Ninety-three individuals were arrested for trespassing, including two members of the history department. In an open letter, seventeen history department faculty demanded the resignation of the USC president, among others, for use of violence against the campus community.<sup>328</sup>

On 27 April 2024, Steve Tamari ([1959]–), a history professor at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, was among the protesters arrested at a campus demonstration at the private Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, with video showing several officers slamming him to the ground. He was hospitalized with broken ribs and a broken hand. During the same demonstration, Michael Allen, an architectural historian at Washington University, was also arrested and suspended from teaching, when he filmed Tamari's arrest. The protesters called for the university to divest from Boeing amid Israel's attacks on Gaza.<sup>329</sup>

In May 2024, the Working Group on the National Archives of the National Coalition for History published *A Program to Support and Strengthen the National Archives*. Among other things, it contained a critical assessment of the state of declassification of historical records and the backlog

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<sup>326</sup> Jemma Stephenson, "[Senate Committee Approves Bill that Would Remove Alabama Archives' Governing Board](#)," *Alabama Reflector* (14 February 2024).

<sup>327</sup> Julian Borger, "[UK and US Accused of Obstructing Inquiry into 1961 Death of UN Chief](#)," *Guardian* (2 March 2024).

<sup>328</sup> "[USC: 17 History Department Faculty Demand Resignation of President, Others, for Use of Violence against Campus Community](#)," *Informed Comment* (29 April 2024).

<sup>329</sup> Kallie Cox, "[SIUE Professor Hospitalized After Arrest at Wash U](#)," *River Front Times* (30 April 2024); Rachel Treisman, "[How Some Faculty Members Are Defending Student Protesters, in Actions and in Words](#)," *NPR* (1 May 2024); Jacob Barker, "[Protesters Dispute Washington University's Account of Saturday's Demonstration](#)," *St. Louis-Post Dispatch* (1 May 2024).

consisting of thousands of pending Freedom of Information Act and Mandatory Declassification Review requests [See above under Ayotzinapa].<sup>330</sup>

On 1 May 2024, labor historian Annelise Orleck (1959–) attended and filmed a protest in support of Palestinians in Gaza at Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, where she had taught for three decades and had been head of the Jewish studies department. She was knocked to the ground by police called in to clear out an encampment. She was one of ninety people arrested. Orleck said that she had been charged with criminal trespass and allegedly temporarily banned from campus, as a condition of her bail. On 2 May 2024, Dartmouth College administrators said that her suspension was an error in the bail process.<sup>331</sup>

On 18 May 2024, police forces arrested and beat several demonstrators in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, New York, who were commemorating the seventy-sixth anniversary of the Nakba (15 May 1948, when about 750,000 Palestinians were expelled from Israel).<sup>332</sup>

In early June 2024, the *Columbia Law Review* website was shut down for about a week after it published “Toward Nakba as a Legal Concept,” an essay by Palestinian human rights lawyer and Harvard Law School doctoral candidate Rabea Eghbariah in which he argued that “Nakba” (catastrophe) – the Arabic name for the 1948 expulsion of about 750,000 Palestinians from Israel – should become a new modality of crimes against humanity (next to genocide and apartheid), characterized by displacement, fragmentation, and denial of self-determination. Despite its approval after extensive peer review and editorial approval, the law school journal’s faculty and alumni board shuttered the website in order to make it inaccessible. In November 2023, the *Harvard Law Review* had blocked publication of an early version of the article that it had commissioned from Eghbariah, after the law review president had expressed safety concerns tied to the piece. That version of the piece later appeared in *The Nation* magazine.<sup>333</sup>

On 12 June 2024, the Oklahoma Supreme Court dismissed a lawsuit for reparations, brought in 2020 under the public nuisance law by three survivors of the so-called Tulsa massacre, during which in 1921

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<sup>330</sup> National Coalition for History (Working Group on the National Archives), [A Program to Support and Strengthen the National Archives](#) (Washington: NCH, May 2024); National Security Archive, [“History Coalition Warns of Critical Needs at National Archives”](#) (22 July 2024).

<sup>331</sup> Vimal Patel, [“Police Treatment of a Dartmouth Professor Stirs Anger and Debate,”](#) *New York Times* (3 May 2024); Casey Bertocchi, [“Conditions of Annelise Orleck’s Bail ‘Corrected’,”](#) *The Dartmouth* (3 May 2024; updated 5 May 2024).

<sup>332</sup> [“New York Police Violently Arrest Pro-Palestine Protesters Marking Nakba,”](#) *Al Jazeera* (19 May 2024).

<sup>333</sup> Rabea Eghbariah, [“Toward Nakba as a Legal Concept,”](#) *Columbia Law Review*, 124 no. 4 (May 2024), 887–991; Rabea Eghbariah, [“The Harvard Law Review Refused to Run This Piece About Genocide in Gaza,”](#) *The Nation* (21 November 2023); Jonathan Guyer, [“Why Are America’s Elite Universities So Afraid of This Scholar’s Paper?,”](#) *Guardian* (9 June 2024).

an estimated 300 black Americans were killed when a white mob razed the Greenwood neighborhood of Tulsa, Oklahoma. “Though Plaintiffs’ grievances are legitimate, they do not fall within the scope of our State’s public nuisance statute,” the court wrote. In doing so, it affirmed a lower court judge’s identical ruling in July 2023 who had concluded that “simply being connected to a historical event does not provide a person with unlimited rights to seek compensation” [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2023*].<sup>334</sup>

On 27 June 2024, Oklahoma State Superintendent of Public Instruction Ryan Walters, a former public school history teacher, ordered “all Oklahoma schools ... to incorporate the Bible, which includes the Ten Commandments, as an instructional support into the curriculum” for all public school students aged 11–18 (grades 5–12). The American Historical Association (AHA) condemned the order, saying that the claim that the Christian Bible had a “substantial influence” on the founders of the United States and the Constitution was not a settled question among professional historians. “Oklahoma students,” it stated, “deserve to learn about the complex and nuanced conversations among early national America’s already diverse religious traditions, the Constitution, and the First Amendment. This order violates that right, threatening the integrity of history instruction in public education and the basic constitutional rights of Oklahomans.”

The directive came a week after Louisiana’s governor signed a law directing all public schools in that state to display the Ten Commandments, notwithstanding the fact that, in 1980, the Supreme Court had struck down a Kentucky law requiring that the document be displayed in elementary and high schools.<sup>335</sup>

### *Florida*

On 12 May 2023, New College in Sarasota, Florida, declined to renew historian Eric Wallenberg’s contract, apparently in retaliation for the latter’s critical comments in a *Teen Vogue* op-ed about administrators appointed by Governor Ron DeSantis who were “vocal opponents of diversity, equity and inclusion programs, and curricula that include[d] critical race theory and gender studies” [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2023*]. The nonrenewal came shortly after the New College board of trustees had denied five professors tenure in a vote that appeared politically motivated. The New College board of trustees had previously voted to dismiss President Patricia Okker, who had supported teaching about critical race theory and topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> Sam Cabral, “[Oklahoma Court Rejects Tulsa Massacre Survivors Suit](#),” *BBC News* (13 June 2024).

<sup>335</sup> Bernd Debusmann Jr, “[Oklahoma Orders Schools to Teach Bible ‘immediately’](#),” *BBC News* (28 June 2024); American Historical Association, “[Statement on Oklahoma Mandate for Religious Content in Public Schools](#)” (press release; 9 July 2024).

<sup>336</sup> Nathan Greenfield, “[Where Universities Face Emerging Threats and Crises](#),” *World University News* (15 September 2023); Scholars at Risk, [Free to Think 2023: Report of the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project](#) (New York: SAR, 2023).

On 21 October 2023, David Allen Emanuel was sentenced to one year in prison on six counts of hate crimes for attempting to run over, in September 2022, public historian Marvin Dunn, his son and five others, who were in the process of building a memorial for the centennial anniversary of the 1923 Rosewood massacre. In the lead-up to the trial, Emanuel had displayed Confederate symbols. Dunn, an emeritus professor of psychology, had worked as a public historian since his retirement for projects such as the “Teach the Truth” tours, in which he took students around significant sites of Florida’s Black history. The Rosewood massacre was a racially motivated series of attacks against Black people and a race riot that destroyed the majority-Black town of Rosewood between 1 and 7 January 1923. The official death toll was eight, but survivor testimony estimates ranged between 27 and 150.<sup>337</sup>

In December 2023, a special committee of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) released a report arguing that Governor Ron de Sanctis’ higher education policies constituted an attack on academic freedom and democracy and could serve as an example to spread nationwide. Based on interviews with 65 current and former professors, students and university presidents, AAUP concluded that the state had become a threat to a free and open society and constituted a “canary in the coal mine” for developments around the country. The report cited, among other things, legislative measures limiting or forbidding the teaching of race, gender and sexuality in United States history, changes to tenure allegedly to censor those critical of the state’s policies, and the decision not to renew the contract of visiting history professor Eric Wallenberg [See above] [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2023*; See above under the September 2023 report of the American Association of University Professors].<sup>338</sup>

On 24 January 2024, the Florida Board of Education, whose members were handpicked by Governor Ron de Sanctis, voted to remove sociology as a core class at twelve public universities and replace it with its self-drafted United States history curriculum to ensure that students would get a “historically accurate account of America’s founding [and] the horrors of slavery.” In the summer of 2023, the same board had faced a backlash after it had required public schools to teach that forced labor was beneficial to enslaved Black people, because it taught the latter useful skills. The decision to remove the sociology course was criticized by academics and the American Sociological Association as another example of the state’s “culture war” [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2023*].<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> [“Florida Man Sentenced to 1 Year in Federal Prison for Trying to Run Over 6 Black Men,”](#) *Tampa Bay Times* (21 October 2023); Michan Connor, [“For Historian, the Best and Worst of Times,”](#) *History News Network* (6 December 2023).

<sup>338</sup> Douglas Soule, [“Professors Union Report Says Florida Higher Ed Policies Must Be Fought ‘Tooth and Nail,’”](#) *USA Today* (6 December 2023).

<sup>339</sup> Richard Luscombe, [“Ron DeSanctis Condemned as Florida Removes Sociology as Core College Class,”](#) *Guardian* (26 January 2024).

On 11 March 2024, education officials and civil rights attorneys reached a settlement over HB 1557 (also known as the “Don’t Say Gay Bill”) [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2022*; See above under the November 2023 report by PEN America]. The settlement laid out that the law would not prohibit discussing LGBTQ+ people and LGBTQ+ history in classrooms, nor apply to library books as long as they were “not instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity.” The settlement was hailed by Governor Ron de Sanctis as a “major win.” The law, deemed an “educational gag order” by PEN America that served as a template law for other state’s legislation, had been criticized for its vague provisions creating a chilling effect in classrooms and leading to self-censorship. In 2022, the Miami-Dade County School Board had decided not to adopt a resolution recognizing LGBTQ History Month, even though it had done so a year earlier, reportedly for fears of violating the law.<sup>340</sup>

On 10 June 2024, a jury in West Palm Beach, Florida, found Chiquita Brands International liable for funding the far-right paramilitary Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC; United Self-defense Forces of Colombia). The AUC had been actively involved in the Colombian armed conflict (1964–present) between 1997–2006 and was responsible for major human rights violations, including the 1997 Mapiripán massacre. The decision was hailed as the first time that a United States (US) jury held a US company liable for complicity in human rights abuses in another country.<sup>341</sup>

On 15 July 2024, Florida Judge Aileen Cannon dismissed the Justice Department’s classified documents case against former President Donald Trump because the Justice Department’s 2022 appointment of special prosecutor Jack Smith violated the Appointments Clause of the Constitution by neglecting the role of Congress in the appointment of constitutional officers. The Justice Department authorized an appeal [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021– 2023*].<sup>342</sup>

*See also* Chile, China, Colombia, Israel, Kenya, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Palestine, Russia, Sierra Leone, Türkiye, Ukraine.

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<sup>340</sup> AP, “[Florida Settles Lawsuit after Challenge to ‘Don’t Say Gay’ Law](#),” *Guardian* (11 March 2024).

<sup>341</sup> Michael Evans, “[Chiquita Found Liable for Colombia Paramilitary Killings](#),” *National Security Archive* (10 June 2024).

<sup>342</sup> District Court Southern District of Florida, [United States Versus Donald Trump and Others](#) (2024); Madeline Halpert, Ana Faguy & Anthony Zurcher, “[Trump Classified Documents Case Dismissed by Florida Judge](#),” *BBC News* (14 July 2024).

## URUGUAY

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2013, 2015–2018, 2021.

In [early January 2024] Senators passed legislation which – if approved by the lower house of Congress – would allow criminals over the age of 65 to be released from prison into house arrest. In this way, military officers who had committed human rights violations during the dictatorship (1973–1985) could be allowed to serve their sentences at home. Patricia López of the Association of Mothers and Relatives of Uruguayan Disappeared Persons called the law a big step backward. Thousands of people had been tortured and 197 people forcibly disappeared under the military regime. A further 202 had been victims of extrajudicial killings between 1968 and 1985. An immunity law granting amnesties to members of the armed forces accused of human rights violations had been in force until 2011.<sup>343</sup>

## UZBEKISTAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2005–2014, 2016, 2020.

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<sup>343</sup> Grace Livingstone, "[Uruguay Bill Stirs Debate about Dictatorship–Era Crimes](#)," *BBC News* (4 January 2023).

## VATICAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2009, 2011, 2015, 2019–2020, 2022–2023.

In June 2023, two climate activists from the group Ultima Generazione (Last Generation) were sentenced by the Vatican court for damaging “a public monument of inestimable historical and artistic value” after they had glued their hands to the base of the Laocoön statue in the Vatican Museums in May. They were sentenced to nine months’ imprisonment, suspended for five years, fined 1,500 euros, and ordered to pay a compensation of around 28,000 euros to the Vatican.<sup>344</sup>

*See also* Switzerland.

## VENEZUELA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001, 2003–2004, 2006, 2009–2010, 2012, 2014, 2017–2021, 2023.

The government acknowledged 455 cases of enforced disappearance reported since 2015, the majority of which had not been resolved. In June 2023, the Pre-trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court (ICC) authorized the prosecutor to resume his investigation into alleged crimes against humanity, a decision that was subsequently appealed by the government.<sup>345</sup>

In December 2023, the government of President Nicolás Maduro held a referendum on the creation of a Venezuelan province in the Essequibo, a territory controlled by neighboring Guyana that had been in dispute for over a century, including in ongoing proceedings before the International Court of Justice. The government said that ten million people participated in the referendum and over 90% voted in favor. Governments in Latin America, Europe, and the United States urged Maduro to de-escalate the situation, fearing an international armed conflict. In late 2023, Guyana and Venezuela had agreed to initiate talks.<sup>346</sup>

*See also* Colombia.

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<sup>344</sup> Amnesty International, [Under Protected and Over Restricted: The State of the Right to Protest in 21 European Countries](#) (London: AI, 2024), 160–161.

<sup>345</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 402, 406.

<sup>346</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 713.

**VIETNAM**

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–2006, 2009–2013, 2016–2017, 2019–2020, 2022–2023.

In July 2023, the Political Bureau (Politburo) of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) issued Directive 24 “on ensuring national security in the context of comprehensive and deep international integration.” Signed by CPV General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong, it was leaked months later. The directive contained nine orders for Party and State organizations to implement, including an order on culture: “Urgently research and build a national value system, cultural value system, and moral standards that preserve and promote the Vietnamese family value system in the new era, focused on educating people about historical, cultural, and revolutionary traditions.” The directive was seen as undermining human rights and democracy: while Article 5 of the Constitution guaranteed the right of every ethnic group to “preserve its national identity [and] to promote its fine customs, habits, traditions, and culture,” the order indicated a scheme to homogenize culture at the expense of Vietnam’s 53 ethnic minority groups.<sup>347</sup>

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<sup>347</sup> Ben Swanton & Michael Altman-Lupu, [Vietnam’s Leaders Declare War on Human Rights as a Matter of Official Policy: An Analysis of Secret Directive 24](#) (No place [Illinois]: Project 88, 1 March 2024), 3, 8, 10, 18; Jonathan Head, [“Vietnam: Leaked Communist Party Document Warns of ‘Hostile Forces’,”](#) *BBC News* (1 March 2024).

## **WESTERN SAHARA**

*See Morocco / Western Sahara.*

## YEMEN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001, 2003, 2010, 2013–2016, 2018–2023.

On 26 July 2023, over forty civil society organizations and victims' and survivor associations launched the Yemen Declaration for Justice and Reconciliation. The declaration emphasized the need for a post-conflict (2014–) justice process to actively and adequately address the grievances of the Yemeni people. It also laid out principles to guide the post-conflict justice process, which included a victim-centered approach, inclusivity, gender equality, truth and memorialization, redress and reparations, accountability, reconciliation, and an emphasis on human rights.<sup>348</sup>

On 26 September 2023, Houthi de facto authorities carried out a wave of arrests rounding up scores of largely peaceful demonstrators who had gathered to commemorate the anniversary of the popular revolution against President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi (in office between 2012–2022) – that had lasted from 21 September 2014 to 6 February 2015 and was variously known as the September 21 Revolution (by supporters) or the 2014–2015 coup d'état (by opponents) – during which the Houthi took over power in parts of Yemen.<sup>349</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World's Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 411–412.

<sup>349</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World's Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 410.

## ZAMBIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2009, 2015, 2021.

In October 2023, the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), a government body with a mandate to grant, renew, and suspend or cancel broadcasters' licenses, made an official written complaint to the Hot FM radio station, telling it to "strengthen its international controls." This was after the station had held an interview with historian Sishuwa Sishuwa, a leading academic and government critic [See NCH *Annual Report 2021*]. Sishuwa had spoken of a "growing public perception" that the president [Hakainde Hichilema] appeared to consider himself "primarily as the leader of ... one half of the country, mainly [those in ruling United Party for National Development strongholds]." IBA stated that Sishuwa's assertions had "the potential to cause disunity in the country."<sup>350</sup>

## ZIMBABWE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998–2001, 2004, 2006, 2008–2015, 2018, 2021.

On 16 July 2024, the government of President Emmerson Mnangagwa launched a "community engagement" program to promote "healing, peace and unity" among survivors of the Gukurahundi – a series of massacres, including rape, torture and forced disappearances, between 1982 and 1987, in which a North Korean-trained unit of the army killed between 2,000–20,000 predominantly Ndebele and Kalanga people in North and South Matabeleland and Midlands, as part of a political struggle between then President Robert Mugabe (in power between 1987–2017) and leader of the opposition Joshua Nkomo [See NCH *Annual Report 2012*]. The program would include conducting exhumations and giving official burials to the victims, carving out spaces for discussing the Gukurahundi, collecting evidence and witness testimonies, and providing forms of restoration. It was, however, criticized because it did not mention monetary compensation, because it remained unclear whether previous reports on the massacre would be made accessible, and, above all, because of the alleged involvement of members of the current government in the massacres (including Mnangagwa himself who was minister of state for national security at the time).<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>350</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2024: Events of 2023](#) (New York: HRW, 2024), 730; Amnesty International, [The State of the World's Human Rights – April 2024](#) (London: AI, 2024), 413.

<sup>351</sup> Shola Lawal, ["Will Survivors of Zimbabwe's Gukurahundi Massacre Finally Get Justice?"](#) *Al Jazeera* (22 July 2024).