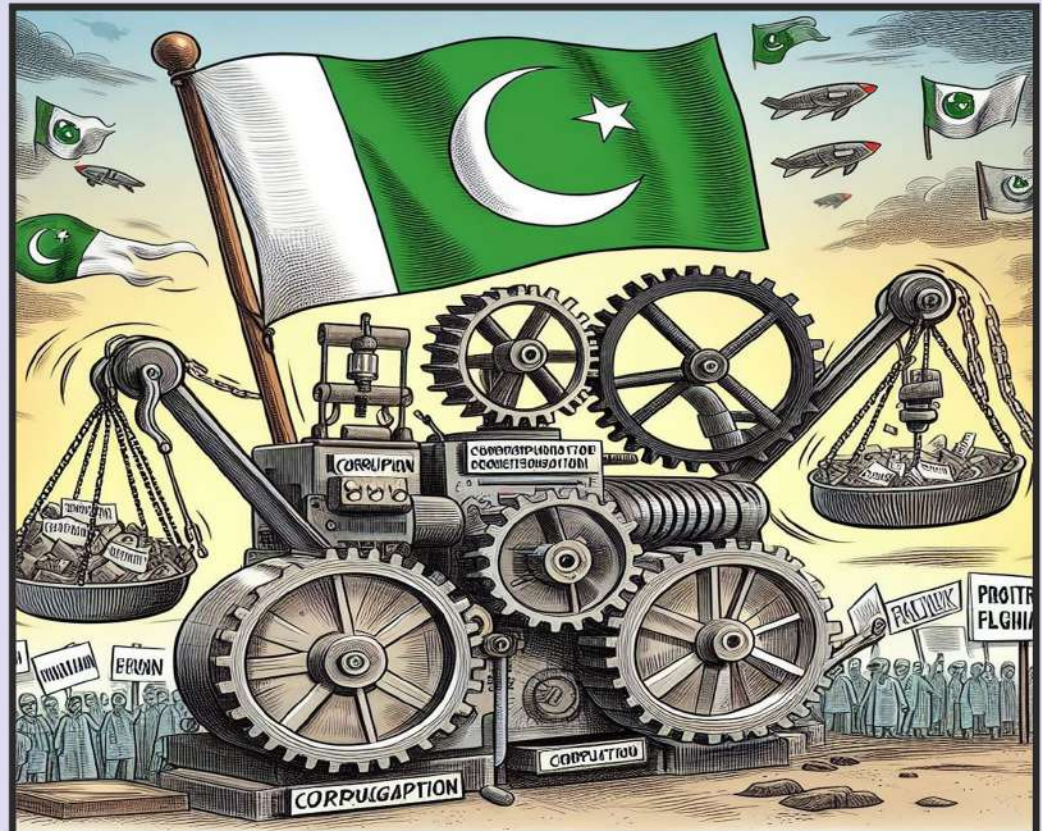


Why and how votes are stolen in Pakistan

Human Rights Media Network's alarming report on the elections in Pakistan

Nadeem Ahmed Advocate

This is a question that everyone knows the answer to and they don't express it openly. Before discussing this question further, let's look at the pages of history some time ago and it is known that Imran Khan When he assumed power in 2018, he did 3 big assignments, one of which was amendments in the NAB law so that the scope of accountability is more strict against real looters and the other big thing was the decision to give the right to vote to overseas Pakistanis because in fact, they are the people who play a key role in meeting the economic needs in Pakistan and when their confidence in their country is restored, they will put their savings in Pakistani banks as much as possible, in the result of foreign exchange in the country will come to Pakistan in dollars and other currencies, which will outcome in stability in the Pakistani economy. The decision by Imran Khan was given a warm welcome in abroad and tribute by the resident Pakistanis, after which another real change was passed by the bill to conduct transparent elections in Pakistan through Electronic Machines (EVM) which was passed by an overwhelming majority. Under this system, Pakistan would also join the ranks of developed countries where elections are conducted in a transparent manner without question marks and people get a chance to choose their representatives according to their opinion without any interference or manipulation. Not only the costs are reduced, but also the right of people to vote is secured by the coating and workmanship of human hands. These three bills were a wake-up call for the 75-year-old "status quo" in Pakistan, as the elections have always been characterized by lack of transparency and rigging, and it has also been seen that rigging has



been won. If a case has been filed against the failed candidate in other appellate courts after the Election Tribunal, then, due to the judicial system of Pakistan, which is number 139 in efficiency, the decision is not taken even when the term of the Assembly is completed. Yes, and if you die by your own death -By the way! In 2021, Imran Khan's government was ousted in a planned plan and for the first time in Pakistan's history, the Prime Minister was deposed in a no-confidence motion and the allies took over the government. They united against one person and Shahbaz Sharif was elected as such mixture pot. This government had not even taken a breath to assume power when it suddenly disposed of these three bills - NAB laws were amended to such an extent that the teeth of this watchdog of accountability were pulled out. Only politicians and corrupt people raised

and political elites and bureaucrats involved in corruption of trillions of rupees ended their cases -It was blessing on then Chief Justice Atta Bandial that he declared these amendments against the law and ordered to reopen the cases - but still these cases have not been fully opened and the Pakistani bureaucracy has not been able to open its doors to its political masters by disappearing these records, NAB is honorably acquitting them from the Courts, an example of which is the overnight acquittal of the Sharif family, in which most of them were given a clean chit due to the unavailability of records or lack of evidence. In the same way, by taking away their right to vote from overseas Pakistanis, not only the international laws were violated, but the political and constitutional rights of these Pakistanis were terminated and the reason for this was that the overwhelming majority of

Pakistanis abroad supported Imran Khan was in favor. The Pakistani "status quo" elites knew that their votes could play a decisive role in any election - the Allies at this stage sought the support of overseas Pakistanis rather than supporting a sinking economy, they pushed the nation deeper into debt by getting loans from IMF at huge interest rates and gegged mouth terms and left with a hand wringing after causing the worst inflation and destruction in 16 months. This coalition government did the last nail in the coffin i.e. the third act by disposing of the law to conduct elections through electronic voting machines because everyone knew that these machines identify the voter through fingerprints i.e. bio-metrics and thus the elections are transparent. The political elite of Pakistan and the civil and military bureaucracy, which is also known as the establish-

ment, are not acceptable in any way, so by abolishing this bill, the centuries-old electoral system was imposed on the nation, in which the rule of the buffalo is governed by whose stick-It is also worth mentioning here that the PTI had approached the Supreme Court against these three bills in which the Chief Justice and other judges of the bench had raised a legal question as to how the coalition government could pass such bills. While PTI members are not present in the assembly, it should be noted that after the coalition government came, Imran Khan boycotted the parliament with his party and later he also resigned. In the absence of a large number of the assembly, it can pass such important bills and impose them on the nation - but in Pakistan, But everything is possible in Pakistan by hook and crook. The coalition government, which came into power under the C o m p r o m i s e Agreement, did these three things and received its full price in the election 2024, and now the results of the elections held on February 8, 2024 have not been fully presented five days later. During these five days, the media channels witnessed how a winning candidate was defeated overnight and a losing candidate was declared winner. The United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union also expressed their displeasure and concern over this open rigging and alleged manipulation to prevent the results and demanded that the people's mandate be respected and not by internal conspiracies to favor their own people, should be imposed on the nation. As the topic of our program is "Why and how votes are stolen in Pakistan", then the partial answer to the first part of this question may have been understood in the form of the above introduction. In fact, the election, in the democracy is the right of the people to vote in

which they choose their leaders so that they can go to the assembly and represent their rights, have development work in their areas, provide them with basic facilities, development of their areas and other utility bills should be taken according to their budget and income, the people who give the tax to the government, then their elected representatives can build their constituencies through this tax and be able to take the path of development - that is why it has been named democracy, that is, the decision of the people, for the people, by the people - But it is a pity that public opinion has never been respected in the history of Pakistan, be it the

phase is completed in all the polling stations, a Form 45 is prepared in the presence of the polling agents belonging to all the political parties and candidates. In which there is the number of votes cast in each polling station i.e. how many votes were cast for which candidate - the representative of the election signs these forms and hands over the copies to the polling agents of all the candidates. - After that, these votes are sealed and sent to the RO office, where after the Election Commission staff processes Form 46 and officially announces the name of the winning candidate under Form 47. - This is the stage where all the tampering takes

well-known lawyer, Salman Raja. The position of Pakistan's judicial system is that these appeals continue for years until the assembly completes its term. In the past, these appeals against several members of the National Assembly, including Shazia Murri, are still going on and these people have once again imposed themselves on the nation after indulging the perks and privileges of Assembly. The major powers of the world, including the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union, including the international media, have expressed their concern and displeasure over this botched election in Pakistan, on which a separate

report will be presented. The most unique thing witnessed in the recent elections is actually more and more voters coming out to cast their votes and interestingly, there is a large number of women whose votes have created a stir in the ruling circles. It has been done and it has been accepted by the United States, Great Britain and the



election of the time of Mother Nation Fatima Jinnah or the recent election. Benazir Bhutto gave a historical name to such an election i.e. "engineered" election, what did the people want and what did they get? An excellent post on social media gives a true picture of this, stating that The test match of General Election 2024 has entered the fifth day. Day 1: PTI 179/N-League 35 Day 2: PTI 136 / PML-N 57 Day 3: PTI 96/N-League 78 Day 4: PTI 93/N-League 79 And even after five days, the Election Commission failed to release the official and final results, which is a proof of the failure of this institution. Now we come to how the election results are changed, the procedure is that when the voting

place to actually show the desired results, but putting error in the correct votes, reject how many votes and turn the winning candidate's win into a loss. It's all in their hands. The losing candidate now has the option to challenge the decision in the Election Tribunal in the light of the results of Form 45 and the aggrieved party can appeal to the High Court against the decision of the Election Tribunal. And later the way of appeal is open to the Supreme Court and obviously the decision of the Supreme Court is final. The Lahore Court dismissed 18 constitutional petitions filed directly on the same grounds and directed the victims to approach the Election Tribunal - including the petition of a

European Union. What will be the future of these elections will be revealed with time, but now the growing consciousness of the Pakistani nation has indicated that if the powerful circles continue to manipulate the elections and win their favorite candidates and parties in the same engineered way, contrary to the wishes of the people, it is not unlikely that the same people will reach their necks by the next election. These incidents are a perfect example to prove that these elections were engineered when in the 2013 election, Nawaz Sharif announced his victory in his speech only 3 hours after the election, on which Imran Khan always shouted that how did it come to know within three hours that

they had won and now in the recent election when PTI and Jamaat-e-Islami had won the majority of seats in Sindh in the light of huge number of votes and form 45, then at 9 o'clock in the night the Muttahida Qaumi Movement announced its victory in 18 seats and put everyone in a trance and people ignored it as a dream of a madman. But the declaration of 17 seats by MQM-Pakistan after 2 days proved that the prevailing procedure of election results in Pakistan was adopted and by giving the news to their favorite candidates in advance, they were gifted with their slavery and subjugation. It is worth noting here that FAFEN, an organization that monitors elections in Pakistan, i.e. Fair and Free Election Network, has opened the eyes of the whole world, including Pakistan, by presenting its shocking report - according to FAFEN's report, 16 lakhs across the country votes were rejected, more than 200,000 votes were rejected in Multan alone. These votes were mostly rejected in the constituencies where the candidates of PP and Noon won. According to FAFEN, the number of rejected votes in the recent election is more than 1.6 million and the total number of registered votes in Pakistan is around 12.8 million, of which the votes

polled in this election are around 6 million. Of these, 16 lakh votes have been rejected and a large number of them have been rejected from 25 constituencies and 23 of the 25 constituencies are in Punjab and 14 of them are for PML-N candidates. It has been successful and 5 seats belong to People's Party And out of these 5 seats, 2 seats belong to father and son i.e. a former Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani and his son who won from PTI supported Mehrabano Qureshi and the number of rejected votes of Mehrabano Qureshi is more than 16 thousand. And Yusuf Raza Gilani who won his seat won by a very small margin and the number of

rejected votes in his constituency is more than 12 thousand-This report by FAFEN presents the testimony of our analysis of the journey of votes above i.e. from the polling station to the RO office and how the election results are changed. Why and how votes are stolen in Pakistan Nadeem Ahmed Advocate This is a question that everyone knows the answer to and they don't express it openly. Before discussing this question further, let's look at the pages of history some time ago and it is known that Imran Khan When he assumed power in 2018, he did 3 big assignments, one of which was amendments in the NAB law so that the scope of accountability is more strict against real looters and the

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ICESCO Keen To Boost Cooperation With Pakistan In Diverse Sectors

Director General of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) Dr Salim M. Al-Malik has reaffirmed the Organization's keenness to promote cooperation and partnerships in diverse fields including education, science and culture.

While speaking exclusively to Head of international news operations Dunya media Group at organisation head office based at Rabat capital city of Morocco DG ICESCO Dr Salim said, "The ICESCO relationship with Pakistan is very strong. We have several projects in Pakistan. We have four associates from Pakistan who are working in different sectors like we have the head of science and technology and we have two experts on science and technology, one in stabilization dialogue centres from Pakistan and we are looking for further collaboration."

"I also mentioned here that we have a strong collaboration with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Pakistan has given us 100 scholarships for students to study in Pakistan," he added.

While speaking about the organization, he said that the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) is a specialized organization that operates under the aegis of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and is concerned with fields of education, science, culture and communication not only for Islamic countries but all around the world.

"We are currently 54 members state and we are a specialized organization. We are independent from the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and

we have our general conference and executive council. ICESCO also allowed other countries to join the organization as Observer States," Mr Salim said.

"These are two bodies that approved what we do. Executive council meets every year and the general conference meets every four years. The general conference consists of the Ministers of education and minister of cultures,

name. At that time, it was called Islamic Organization for science for Education, science and culture. We change it to the Islamic World Organization for Education, science and culture. The reason was that this world consists of different ethnicities and different people. The Islamic world is not just only locked in our member State."

"There are communities in China, more than 150 million

focused on woman's empowerment. Previously there was not much representation of women in the organization but now we have almost half of the representation of the woman," he said.

Mr Salim further added that in 2019 there were only two people who were below the age of 30. "Today, 25 per cent of young in the organization is below the 30s. Now, having youth and women be part of the organization has really brought a lot of life to the organization, and made us think of the future, but at the same time look into the quality and make sure that what we are doing is right."

"We communicate with the country and ask them what they need. What is the project? What are the programs? So, we redirect our business to the needs of countries and I think that has made us totally different in the way that we communicate with our member state," he said.

While praising Saudi Vision 2030, Mr Salim said that Saudi Arabia put vision 2030 under the leadership of Mohammed bin Salman and they speed up their vision, especially in the field of the sport like in the recent development, famous footballer Cristiano Ronaldo signed with the Saudi Arabian club and in culture.

He said that to protect Islamic world heritage, we have decided to establish a heritage sites Center to register and to make sure that is protected and it is been preserved. "Our goal is to reach 20,000 by 2055. Yet we have reached 482," he concluded.



while the executive council consists of either Deputy ministers or vice ministers," he added.

He further said that we are almost like a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). "We do things that are related to education, culture and science, but we at the same time, try to do other things that are changing with the changing World, in a way that we want to be part of the future, a part of things that are happening, but at the same time, keep the past and keep our Legacy."

About his journey in ICESCO, he said, "I joined ICESCO in 2019 and the first thing we have done was change the

in India, in Brazil, Argentina in Europe. Several Islamic heritage sites need to be protected, it need to be promoted. So, changing the name is to open up the ICESCO for all," he said.

Dr Salim said that ICESCO is working very hard to communicate with the world that Islam is a peaceful religion. "Islam is a religion of universalism, tolerance, peace, and reconciliation. Islam emphasises peace in communication with all Muslims and non-Muslims in society. We decided to serve humanity, not to serve a particular region."

"We restructured the whole organization to meet our needs, our goals, objectives and our vision. We also

Afghanistan: Aid Cutbacks, Taliban Abuses Imperil Health

Addressing Economic Crisis, Ongoing Rights Violations Critical to Meeting Needs

The sharp reduction in foreign assistance for Afghanistan's public health system, alongside the Taliban's serious abuses against women and girls have jeopardized the right to health for millions of Afghans, Human Rights Watch said in a report released today. The healthcare crisis has made the Afghan population increasingly vulnerable to severe malnutrition and illness.

The 38-page report, "A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future": Afghanistan's Healthcare Crisis," describes how the collapse of Afghanistan's economy after the Taliban takeover in August 2021 inflicted severe harm on the country's healthcare infrastructure. Donors' decisions to reduce humanitarian aid have further weakened health care access, destabilized the economy, and worsened food insecurity. The Taliban's abusive policies and practices have greatly exacerbated the crisis. Bans on education for women and girls have blocked most training for future female healthcare workers, ensuring shortages for the foreseeable future.

"The loss of foreign development aid and Taliban rights violations have caused a catastrophic health crisis in Afghanistan that is disproportionately harming women and girls," said Fereshta Abbasi, Afghanistan researcher at Human Rights Watch. "The Taliban have severely obstructed women from providing or accessing health care, while the cost of treatment and medicine has put care out of reach for many Afghans."

February 12, 2024

"A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future"
Afghanistan's Healthcare

Crisis

Download the full report in English

Human Rights Watch interviewed Afghan and foreign aid officials, healthcare workers, and people seeking health care in 16 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces between February 2023 and January 2024.

At the planned February 18 meeting of special envoys from key countries organized

system vulnerable to collapse once aid was withdrawn. Taliban authorities have also allocated little funding for health care, and humanitarian organizations have struggled to fill the void amid funding cuts that threaten this lifeline. While Afghans living in poverty have always faced difficulties obtaining health care because of costs, a rising number of Afghans now struggle to

keep pace with the country's worsening conditions."

The Taliban's ban on women's employment with humanitarian agencies has compounded the crisis by creating additional obstacles to delivering assistance equitably and by depriving women and their families of income. Strict hijab and mahram (male guardian) regulations have impeded women from traveling for work or to receive treatment.

A doctor in Samangan said: "The Taliban have instructed us not to treat any female patient who is not accompanied by a mahram or is not in full hijab."

Among those most affected by Afghanistan's healthcare crisis are people with disabilities. Due to decades of conflict and poor maternal health care, Afghanistan has one of the largest populations in the world of people with disabilities. Because of aid shortfalls, the few services for people with disabilities, including physical rehabilitation and mental health support, have largely disappeared.

A counselor based in Kabul said that "even before the Taliban takeover, there were few donors to provide mental health services in major cities. Now most of them are gone, while people are in in greater need." The Taliban's restrictive policies further impede access to services for women and girls with disabilities.

"The unprecedented economic crisis in Afghanistan has meant that millions are facing life-threatening conditions," Abbasi said. "The situation demands more than humanitarian aid, it requires sustainable efforts to avert further economic decline and alleviate the immense suffering of the Afghan population."



by the United Nations, governments should press Taliban leaders to remove restrictions impeding people's access to health care, including bans on women's education and employment. The special envoys should also address structural problems that have undermined Afghanistan's economic stability, including those affecting water management, electrical supply, and the banking system.

Over the previous two decades, the Afghan government had depended on international development support from donors to fund essential services like primary health care, even as Afghans paid most healthcare costs from their own pockets. The previous government's contribution to the public primary care system was negligible, leaving the

pay for food and are often unable to cover the price of medicines and transportation to reach health services.

A 54-year-old man living with a kidney infection said, "Since the Taliban took over, the price of my medications has nearly doubled. This is too much for anyone who doesn't have a job."

The United Nations estimates that 23.7 million people – more than half of Afghanistan's population – will need humanitarian assistance in 2024. While humanitarian agencies provide life-saving assistance, they cannot replace all the essential services that had previously depended on donor support.

As a Mercy Corps official said in September 2023, "The humanitarian response in Afghanistan simply cannot

Indonesia: End Hijab-Linked Bullying in Schools

Fully Enforce National Regulation Permitting Clothing Choice

The Indonesian government should better enforce a revised state school uniform regulation to protect girls and women from being required to wear the hijab, Human Rights Watch said today.

The Education Ministry in September 2022 adopted a regulation providing for personal choice in school uniforms that covers about 150,000 state schools nationwide. However, more than 70 local regulations require girls to wear a hijab in school and up to 15 provincial education offices refuse to abide by the 2022 regulation. A national curriculum that requires female students to wear the hijab in Islamic class also thwarts choice in dress.

"The Indonesian government took an important step by adopting a national regulation to tackle hijab-related bullying, intimidation, and other abuses against girls and women," said Elaine Pearson, Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "But the religious affairs and other government ministries need to work together to overcome local school uniform rules that deny schoolgirls their rights by requiring them to wear the hijab."

Restrictive regulations on girls and women's dress in schools and other public buildings have spread rapidly throughout Indonesia over the past two decades. They have compelled millions of schoolgirls and female government employees to wear the hijab, covering the hair, neck, and chest, usually in combination with a long skirt and a long-sleeve shirt.

Article 3 of the 2022 regulation states that state schools can adopt a local government regulated *pakaian khas* (uniform), which may be based on *pakaian adat* (traditional



clothes) such as wearing the hijab. However, because the regulation allows for parents rather than the schools to provide uniforms for their children, the parents can decide whether their daughters should wear the hijab – as well as either with long-sleeve or short-sleeve shirts, and long skirts or knee-length skirts.

Article 15 states that the Education Ministry should coordinate with the Home Affairs Ministry to ensure that local governments and school principals enforce the regulation. But the authorities also need assistance from the Religious Affairs Ministry, which mandates Islamic class teachers to require their female students wear the hijab.

Across Indonesia, the 2022 regulation has been difficult to enforce because of the many local hijab regulations. In August 2023, a teacher in a state middle school in Lamongan, East Java, shaved the heads of 14 schoolgirls for not wearing the *ciput* (cloth), a knitted head covering, under the hijab. In July 2023, in

Karawang, West Java, a family of Sunda Wiwitan believers took their daughter out of a state primary school because her teachers bullied her over her refusal to wear the hijab. Ultimately, the family moved from Karawang.

Previous government regulations facilitated widespread bullying of girls and women to force them to wear the hijab, which led to deep psychological distress. In at least 24 predominantly Muslim provinces of Indonesia's 38 provinces, girls who did not comply with hijab requirements were forced to leave school or withdrew under pressure. Some female civil servants, including teachers, doctors, school principals, and university lecturers, lost their jobs or felt compelled to resign because of hijab requirements. Bullying and intimidation to wear the *jilbab* has also frequently occurred on social media.

Schoolgirls and female teachers have a right to make their own decisions on what clothing to wear, and especially whether to wear the hijab. The

Indonesian government's enforcement of hijab regulations against women and girls violated provisions in several human rights treaties that Indonesia has ratified, including the rights to freedom of religion, expression, privacy, and personal autonomy.

Indonesia has had 120 local mandatory hijab regulations, mostly local executive decrees, which were first introduced in West Sumatra in 2001 and Aceh in 2002. Of those, 73 are still in force. Sanctions for violations include verbal warnings, expulsion from school or work, and jail terms of up to three months, according to the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan).

"The 2022 regulation should result in girls and women wearing clothes that reflect their own choices," Pearson said. "The Indonesian government's compliance with its international human rights obligations means ending the use of uniform regulations that violate women and girls' rights."

UN Scrutinizes Indonesia's Record on Socio-Economic Rights

New Government Should Address Discrimination against Women, People with Disabilities



On Wednesday in Geneva, United Nations experts concluded their dialogue with Indonesian government officials to review the country's record on delivering economic, social, and cultural rights.

When the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights last met with Indonesian representatives in 2014, it urged the government to "review and repeal provisions ... found to be discriminatory against women." The committee also called on Indonesia to "adopt a human rights-based policy for the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities which includes ... awareness-raising campaigns to eliminate stigma, negative stereotypes and other cultural barriers to their full participation in society."

Sadly, the committee needs to be repeating these same calls a decade later.

There are 73 local mandatory hijab regulations in force today in Indonesia that leave women

and girls under intense psychological distress to conform. Those who refuse to comply face punishments and are often

whom are women and girls, are not recognized as workers under national labor laws. They are left without basic

Convention on Violence and Harassment at Work, a landmark treaty the International Labour Organization (ILO) promulgated in 2019. The UN committee should also call on Indonesia to pass the Domestic Workers' Protection Bill, which has remained stalled in parliament for the past 19 years.

For people with disabilities in Indonesia, community-based mental health, support, and independent living services are still lacking. Instead, thousands of people with mental health conditions, including children, are shackled against their will by families in their own homes or in overcrowded and unsanitary institutions. The government has made serious efforts to end the practice, but much more remains to be done.

Last week, millions of Indonesians cast their votes to elect a new president, who will take office in October. The



forced to leave school or work. Some simply quit rather than endure the pressure.

Domestic workers in Indonesia, the vast majority of

legal labor protections and face harassment, exploitation, and violence. This could change if Indonesia ratifies and implements the

incoming government should ensure that the committee's recommendations are carefully considered and acted upon this time around.

Israel Not Complying with World Court Order in Genocide Case

Failing to Ensure Basic Services, Aid

The Israeli government has failed to comply with at least one measure in the legally binding order from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in South Africa's genocide case, Human Rights Watch said today. Citing warnings about "catastrophic conditions" in Gaza, the court ordered Israel on January 26, 2024, to "take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently need-

ed basic services and humanitarian aid," and to report back on its compliance to the specific measures "within one month."

One month later, however, Israel continues to obstruct the provision of basic services and the entry and distribution within Gaza of fuel and lifesaving aid, acts of collective punishment that amount to war crimes and include the use of starvation of civilians as a

weapon of war. Fewer trucks have entered Gaza and fewer aid missions have been permitted to reach northern Gaza in the several weeks since the ruling than in the weeks preceding it, according to United Nations Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

"The Israeli government is starving Gaza's 2.3 million Palestinians, putting them in even more peril than before the World Court's binding order," said Omar Shakir, Israel and Palestine director at Human

Rights Watch. "The Israeli government has simply ignored the court's ruling, and in some ways even intensified its repression, including further blocking lifesaving aid." Other countries should use all forms of leverage, including sanctions and embargoes, to press the Israeli government to comply with the court's binding orders in the genocide case, Human Rights Watch said.



Human Rights Watch found in December 2023 that Israeli authorities are using starvation as a weapon of war. Pursuant a policy set out by Israeli officials and carried out by Israeli forces, the Israeli authorities are deliberately blocking the delivery of water, food, and fuel, willfully impeding humanitarian assistance, apparently razing agricultural areas, and depriving the civilian population of objects indispensable to its survival.

Israeli authorities have kept its supply of electricity for Gaza

shut off since the October 7 Hamas-led attacks. After initially cutting the entire supply of water that Israel provides to Gaza via three pipelines, Israel resumed piping on two of its three lines. However, due to the cuts and widespread destruction to water infrastructure amid unrelenting Israeli air and ground operations, only one of those lines remained operational at only 47 percent capacity as of February 20.

Officials at the Gaza Coastal Municipalities Water Utility told Human Rights Watch on February 20 that Israeli authorities have obstructed efforts to repair the water infrastructure. According to data published by OCHA and the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the daily average number of trucks entering Gaza with food, aid, and medicine dropped by more than a third in the weeks following the ICJ ruling: 93 trucks between January 27 and

February 21, 2024, compared to 147 trucks between January 1 and 26, and only 57 between February 9 and 21. A survey of impediments to the entry of aid faced by 24 humanitarian organizations operating in Gaza between January 26 and February 15 pointed to a lack of transparency around how aid trucks can enter Gaza, delays and denials at Israeli crossings and inspection points, and concerns about safety of trucks.

By comparison, an average of 500 trucks of food and goods entered Gaza each day before the escalation in hostilities in October, during which time 1.2 million people in Gaza were estimated to be facing acute food insecurity, and 80 percent of Gaza's population were reliant on humanitarian aid amid

Israel's more than 16-year-long unlawful closure.

High-ranking Israeli officials have articulated a policy to deprive civilians of food, water, and fuel, as Human Rights Watch has documented. The Israeli government spokesperson said more recently that there are "no limits" to aid entering Gaza, outside of security. Some Israeli officials blame the UN for distribution delays and accuse Hamas of diverting aid or Gaza police for failing to secure convoys.

The Israeli government cannot shift blame to evade responsibility, Human Rights Watch said. As the occupying power, Israel is obliged to provide for the welfare of the occupied population and ensure that the humanitarian needs of Gaza's population are met. The Israeli human rights group Gisha challenged the Israeli government's claims that it is not obstructing entry or distribution of aid and also found that it is not complying with the ICJ order.

Israeli authorities have also obstructed the aid that enters Gaza from reaching areas in the north. The survey of humanitarian organizations found that "almost no aid is distributed beyond Rafah," Gaza's southernmost governorate. On February 20, the

Gaza have been facilitated between January 1 and February 15, as compared with 86 percent of missions planned between October and December, according to OCHA.

"Israel's ground forces are able to reach all parts of Gaza, so Israeli authorities clearly have the capacity to ensure that aid reaches all of Gaza," Shakir said.

Since the ICJ order, Israeli authorities have also apparently destroyed the offices of at least two humanitarian organizations in Gaza and taken steps to undermine the work of UNRWA, the largest provider of humanitarian aid in Gaza, which more than half of other humanitarian organizations rely on to facilitate their operations. The head of UNRWA,

Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), a multi-partner initiative that regularly publishes information on the scale and severity of food insecurity and malnutrition globally, concluded that over 90 percent of Gaza's population is at crisis level of acute food insecurity or worse. The IPC said that virtually all Palestinians in Gaza are skipping meals every day while many adults go hungry so children can eat, and that the population faced famine if current conditions persisted. "This is the highest share of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity that the IPC initiative has ever classified for any given area or country," the group said.

On February 19, The United Nations Children's Fund

evacuate Rafah ahead of a ground incursion, the ICJ said that the "perilous situation demands immediate and effective implementation of the provisional measures" throughout Gaza – but not new measures – and highlighted Israel's duty to ensure "the safety and security of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip."

Beyond enabling the provision of basic services and aid, the measures in the ICJ's binding order require Israel to prevent genocide against Palestinians in Gaza and prevent and punish incitement to commit genocide. The ICJ issued these measures "to protect the rights claimed by South Africa that the Court has found to be plausible," including "the right of the Palestinians in Gaza to be protected from acts of genocide."

Although South Africa asked the court in its oral arguments during January hearings on the provisional measures to make any report it ordered public, the court did not indicate that it has done so. Between January 26 and February 23, more than 3,400 Palestinians were killed in Gaza, according to figures from Gaza's Health Ministry compiled by OCHA. South Africa's case against Israel for genocide is distinct from the



World Food Programme paused deliveries of lifesaving food to the north, citing lack of safety and security. Israeli forces struck a food convoy on February 5, the UN said and CNN documented.

Between February 1 and 15, Israeli authorities only facilitated 2 of 21 planned missions to deliver fuel to the north of the Wadi Gaza area in central Gaza and none of the 16 planned fuel delivery or assessment missions to water and wastewater pumping stations in the north. Fewer than 20 percent of planned missions to deliver fuel and undertake assessments north of Wadi

Philippe Lazarini, said in a February 22 letter to the UN General Assembly president that the agency has reached a "breaking point" due to multiple government suspensions of funding and Israel's campaign to shut the agency down.

Israel's finance minister, Bezalel Smotrich, said on February 13 that he had blocked a US-funded flour shipment to Gaza, because it was going to UNRWA. Israel has alleged that at least 12 of the agency's 30,000 employees participated in the October 7 attacks, which the UN is investigating.

In late December, the

(UNICEF) found that 90 percent of children under age 2 and 95 percent of pregnant and breastfeeding women face "severe food poverty." On February 22, Save the Children said families in Gaza "are forced to forage for scraps of food left by rats and eating leaves out of desperation to survive," noting that "all 1.1 million children in Gaza [are] facing starvation."

In response to a request by South Africa for additional provisional measures following Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's order for Israeli authorities to explore a possible plan to

proceedings on the legal consequences of Israel's 57-year-occupation, which began at the ICJ on February 19.

"Israel's blatant disregard for the World Court's order poses a direct challenge to the rules-based international order," Shakir said. "Failure to ensure Israel's compliance puts the lives of millions of Palestinians at risk and threatens to undermine the institutions charged with ensuring respect for international law and the system that ensures civilian protection worldwide."

Pakistan: Ensure Fair, Peaceful Transition of Power

New Parliament Should Enact Electoral Reforms, Promote Rights-Respecting Agenda

Pakistani authorities should ensure the peaceful transfer of power following national parliamentary elections on February 8, 2024, Human Rights Watch said today. The Election Commission of

signals on election day and delaying the announcement of election results. Several candidates have alleged vote rigging in some locations. "The Pakistani government should respect the election

assembly while responding to acts of violence with the minimum force necessary. International observers including the European Union, United States, and United Kingdom have expressed con-

tion, and dozens have been tried in military courts in violation of international law. Pakistan has had a history of elections that raised serious concerns as to whether they were free and fair. Similar election irregularities marred the 2018 and 2013 elections. The policy of successive Pakistan governments of clamping down on critical voices in the media, non-governmental organizations, and the political opposition has eroded the infrastructure for upholding human rights and democratic governance. Structural denial of rights, such as requirements for computerized identification cards, has practically disenfranchised marginalized groups, including in this election, Human Rights Watch said.

Pakistan has been undergoing one of the worst economic crises in its history, jeopardizing millions of people's rights to health, food, and an adequate standard of living. These human rights challenges will need to be addressed by a government that has legitimacy both at home and abroad, Human Rights Watch said. Among the human rights challenges facing the country, the incoming parliament should adopt electoral reforms to remove structural barriers to political participation and guard against improper interference in the electoral process.

"The Pakistani government's repeated crackdowns on free expression and association in the political process have hurt the credibility of the country's elections," Gossman said. "Real reform of the democratic political process is needed to put an end to the political manipulation of elections."



Pakistan should promptly announce the official results, and all political parties and stakeholders should commit to upholding democratic norms and cooperating with an independent investigation into alleged election irregularities. The elections were marred by the authorities' widespread clampdown on freedom of expression and association. The mass detention and harassment of supporters of the Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaf (PTI) party, including a ban on the use of its election symbol, undermined a fair vote and prevented a level playing field for all candidates. The authorities further harmed the credibility of the electoral process by shutting down cell phone

results and ensure a peaceful transfer of power," said Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "Pakistan's deepening human rights and economic crises highlight the need for a representative government that will promote respect for fundamental rights and freedoms." No party achieved a simple majority of the February 8 vote. Instead, the results have been split among the three major political parties: PTI, Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). Until there is an accepted resolution, the current impasse could lead to protests. The Pakistani authorities should uphold the right to peaceful

cern about the fundamental fairness of the elections for all political parties and called for an investigation into claims of election irregularities. Before the elections, a government crackdown on opposition parties, primarily the PTI, the party of imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan, as well as other opposition parties, has resulted in hundreds of detentions — some on charges of violence. Journalists described intimidation, harassment, and surveillance by the authorities for perceived criticism of the government. Some politicians and journalists have been charged under Pakistan's vague and overly broad sedition law, based on colonial-era legisla-

Senegal: Delayed Elections Spark Violence, Repression

3 Dead, 60 Injured, at Least 271 Arrested, Journalists Assaulted

Senegal's authorities should immediately open independent investigations into violence during protests on February 9 and 10, 2024, over delayed elections, Human Rights Watch said today. At least two young men and a 16-year-old boy died, while scores have been injured and at least 271 arrested.

Demonstrations broke out in Dakar, the country's capital, and several other cities after President Macky Sall announced that presidential elections, slated for February 25, would be delayed. On February 6, Senegal's parliament voted to delay the elections to December 15 after a chaotic National Assembly session during which security forces removed opposition lawmakers. The authorities are yet to release the death toll and the number of people injured and arrested during protests.

The authorities should release all those held for expressing their political views, ensure the right to freedom of assembly, and end assaults on journalists. "The recent deaths and injuries of protesters should not lead to further abuse," said Ilaria



Allegrozzi, senior researcher at Human Rights Watch. "The authorities should rein in security forces, investigate those implicated in abuses, and hold them to account."

Human Rights Watch interviewed by telephone 29 people, including 5 protesters, 7 civil society activists, 8 opposition members, 5 journalists, 2 lawyers, and the relatives of two people who were injured.

Human Rights Watch also reviewed medical records of those injured or killed, photographs and videos showing the dead and injured, multiple images of the protests, and reports by national and international media outlets.

In Dakar, witnesses said that security forces dispersed hundreds of protesters and other citizens around Place de la Nation (Nation's Square), firing

live and rubber bullets as well as tear gas at close range. Modou Guèye, 23, was shot at close range by a gendarme and died of his injuries

at the Principal Hospital on February 10. A relative of Guèye said he was selling clothing, not protesting. Human Rights Watch reviewed Guèye's hospital records stating that he died of wounds "in the thoraco-abdominal area" caused by a "firearm."

According to the opposition, about 60 people were injured in protests across the country. "Police fired a tear gas grenade that hit me," said a protester who went out to demonstrate in Dakar's Colobane neighborhood on February 9. "I have a fracture in my right foot and a wound in my right thigh."

Witnesses said demonstrators in Dakar responded by building barricades, blocking roads, burning tires, and throwing rocks at the police.

Elsewhere in the country, including Mbour, Mbacké, Tivaoune, Touba, Saint-Louis, and Ziguinchor, security forces also apparently used excessive force to disperse protesters.

Alpha Yero Tounkara, a 22-year-old geography student,



died amid protests at a university in the northern city of Saint-Louis on February 9. On February 10, the interior minister said in a Facebook post that was subsequently deleted that “the public prosecutor was requested to conduct an investigation to determine the causes and circumstances of the death” but that security forces “did not intervene in the university campus where the death occurred.” However, media has cited witnesses as well as medical, legal, and university sources who said that a gendarme shot Tounkara in his ribs on university grounds. Any investigation into Tounkara’s death should not be influenced by government officials’ statements, Human Rights Watch said.

On February 10, violent protests broke out in the southern city of Ziguinchor. Witnesses said the police dispersed protesters by firing live ammunition and tear gas. “They shot at us indiscriminately,” said a 32-year-old protester. “Five of my friends were

injured by live bullets; one of them, Landing Diédhiou, was hit in the head and died of his injuries about one hour after we took him to the regional hospital.” The media and the opposition also reported the death of Diédhiou, 16. Human Rights Watch reviewed a video filmed by witnesses minutes after Diédhiou was shot showing him lying still on the ground with his head covered in blood, as well as photographs showing the four other men injured, all of whom are being treated at Ziguinchor Regional Hospital.

Human Rights Watch has previously documented Senegalese security forces’ use of excessive force, including live ammunition and improper use of tear gas, to disperse protesters in March 2021 and June

2023. At least 37 people have been killed during violent clashes since March 2021, with no accountability.

According to lawyers and the opposition, since February 9, across the country, security forces arrested 271 people, including women and children, mostly members and supporters of the dissolved opposition party African Patriots of Senegal for Work, Ethics, and Fraternity (Patriotes africains du Sénégal pour le travail, l’éthique et la fraternité, PASTEF), but also civil society activists and others. At least 66 have been released. Some of those arrested were also severely beaten.

“When I saw him at the hospi-

opposition, media, and dissent ahead of general elections initially scheduled for February 25. The authorities’ crackdown on protests following court cases involving prominent opposition leader Ousmane Sonko and over concerns about whether President Sall would run for a third term began in 2021. However, there has been a spate of arrests of political opposition figures and dissidents in recent months.

According to civil society groups and opposition parties, security forces arbitrarily arrested up to 1,000 opposition members, including party leaders and presidential candidates, journalists, and activists across the country from March 2021

my colleagues asked the policeman why he did that. The officer insulted and pulled her. So, I went to help her, and the policeman beat me on my face.” During the same incident Absa Hane, a journalist with the online media outlet Seneweb, was dragged into a police vehicle and beaten unconscious. “She told me that she was kicked in the head and in the neck,” her brother told Human Rights Watch.

Human Rights Watch verified a video shared on social media of the assault to the group of journalists showing police pushing and hitting members of the group before dragging Absa Anne away. Several other videos circulated on social media show police brutality against media professionals who covered the protests.

“Journalists experienced inexplicable violence,” said Ibrahima Lissa Faye, president of the association of online press publishers and professionals. “We are concerned that security forces have received the order to crack down on journalists.”

International human rights law and the Senegalese Constitution protect the right to freedom of assembly and

expression and prohibit the excessive use of force by law enforcement officials. The African Union’s Guidelines for the Policing of Assemblies by Law Enforcement Officials in Africa provide that law enforcement officials may use force only in proportion to the seriousness of the offense, and that the intentional use of lethal force is permitted only when strictly unavoidable to protect life.

“Senegal has for long been seen as an example in the region of how a democracy can encourage free speech, free association, and political participation,” Allegrozzi said. “That legacy is now at risk. As the political crisis unfolds, authorities need to respect basic rights.”



tal, he couldn’t even speak,” said the brother of a 25-year-old man arrested in Tivaouane, west Senegal, on February 9. “He told me that police beat him with truncheons in the head, nose, face, and neck.” Human Rights Watch reviewed a photograph showing the man’s injuries as well as medical records issued by the hospital where the police took him before taking him to a police station, where he is still detained.

“I represent dozens among those arrested in the Dakar region,” said Amadou Sow, a human rights lawyer. “Many tell me they were beaten up and brutalized by the security forces.”

The latest demonstrations occurred amid increasing government repression on the

to January 2023. About 700 are in pretrial detention at Rebeuss detention center in Dakar. Detainees’ families and lawyers said that visits there have been halted since the elections were postponed. The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Mandela Rules) protect prisoners’ right to receive visits “at regular intervals” from family and friends.

During the latest protests in Dakar, security forces assaulted and intimidated journalists, preventing them from covering unfolding events. “I was with other journalists, we were all wearing our press vests, when a policeman fired a tear gas grenade at us,” said Mor Amar, a journalist working for the EnQuête+ newspaper. “One of

Japan Court Finds Rohingya Ethnicity Grounds for Refugee Status

Asylum Seekers Still Risk Being Returned Home to Harm

Teppei Kasai
The Nagoya High Court last month ordered the Japanese government to grant refugee status to an ethnic Rohingya asylum seeker from Myanmar. A lower court had previously ruled that 44-year-old Khin Maung Soe was a Rohingya, but that his ethnicity was an insufficient basis for considering him a refugee. The high court found that because the Myanmar military had “committed ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya” since the February 2021 military coup, there “exists objective fact to feel fear of persecution.”

The ruling is unprecedented as Japan’s refugee determination system puts more weight on asylum seekers’ individual circumstances than their status as a member of a particular group. The Japanese government had rejected Khin Maung Soe’s refugee application four times before he filed the lawsuit in 2020. In 2017, the Myanmar military’s campaign



of mass atrocities drove more than 730,000 Rohingya abroad, most to Bangladesh. Those remaining in Myanmar face systematic abuses, including the crimes against humanity of apartheid, persecution, and deprivation of liberty.

Since the coup, restrictions have increased and conditions have deteriorated.

Japan has highly restrictive policies on asylum requests. In 2022, only 202 people out of 3,772 applicants were given refugee status, and 1,202 people had to

Recognition Act. The amendments allow the government to deport asylum seekers who apply for refugee status more than twice. The law will go into effect by June, meaning Khin Maung Soe may have been sent back to Myanmar had he not won the case.

apply for refugee status more than once, including 83 from Myanmar. Khin Maung Soe’s case also exemplifies the heightened risk asylum seekers face after Japan’s Diet passed a bill last year to amend the Immigration Control and Refugee

The Japanese government should ensure refugees like Khin Maung Soe aren’t forced returned to harm’s way. Japan should respect the international treaties it has ratified, notably the Refugee Convention, by upholding the principle of nonrefoulement, which prohibits the return of anyone to a place where they would face a real risk of persecution, torture or other ill-treatment, or a threat to life. The government should also establish independent bodies to oversee refugee applications and appeals as recommended by the Japan Federation of Bar Associations.



Joint Recommendations for the Universal Periodic Review of Yemen

This document, compiled by the undersigned organizations, is a summary of submissions made by civil society organizations in relation to Yemen's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) during the upcoming 46th session of the UPR Working Group. It highlights critical human rights concerns and priorities in Yemen, as well as key recommendations to be urgently put forward to the internationally recognized government.

Discrimination Against Women; to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; to investigate and prosecute attacks and other forms of abuse against journalists and human rights defenders; and to put an end to the recruitment of child soldiers.

Recommendations to be put forward:

Fulfill commitments based on the recommendations accepted

have committed grave violations against children. Some of these attacks might amount to war crimes. There has been virtually no accountability for violations committed by parties to the conflict, while victims and survivors have not been sufficiently included in the peace process. As such, key aspects of transitional justice have not been effectively pursued.

Recommendations to be put forward:

abuses and violations of international human rights and humanitarian law and that investigative bodies, including the national commission, can independently and effectively operate within the country, protect prosecutors and witnesses, as well as prosecute and hold to account those responsible, in accordance with international investigation and fair trial standards. Ensure access to remedies is provided to victims of unlaw-



Recommendations from previous UPR sessions:

During its third UPR on January 23, 2019, Yemen supported 201 recommendations and noted 51 recommendations. However, the government failed to implement many of them, including: to establish a moratorium on the use of capital punishment; to align domestic legislation with the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of

during the 32nd session of the UPR Working Group.

Provide a clear timeline for implementing previous and new UPR recommendations. Accountability and redress:

Throughout the conflict, all warring parties have committed unlawful attacks against civilians and civilian objects such as residential homes, hospitals, and schools; have disappeared, arbitrarily detained, and tortured civilians; and

Ratify the Rome Statute and implement the statute in national legislation, including by incorporating provisions to cooperate promptly and fully with the International Criminal Court and to investigate and prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide before its national courts in accordance with international law.

Ensure effective, independent investigations of human rights

ful attacks and their families, including compensation, restitution, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition across Yemen. Ensure that any negotiated settlement or peace process includes participation of victims and survivors, effectively addresses their rights to justice with fairness and equity, and elaborates steps to fulfill transitional justice imperatives including reparative measures.

Cooperate with relevant Treaty Bodies and with UN Special Procedures mandate-holders including by granting visit requests, by providing updates on responses to such requests, and by implementing their recommendations.

Arbitrary detentions, torture, and enforced disappearances: All parties to the conflict have arbitrarily arrested, forcibly disappeared, and tortured people across Yemen. Abductees Mothers' Association documented 2,725 cases of arbitrary detention of civilians, 761 cases of enforced disappearance, and 974 cases of torture and other ill-treatment of civilian detainees between 2019 and 2022 – the largest percentage of instances of kidnapping, disappearance and torture fall under the responsibility of the Houthis. In May 2023, the Houthis forcibly disappeared 17 individuals of the Baha'i faith who were having a gathering in a private residence. The Southern Transitional Council has also arbitrarily detained journalist Ahmad Maher in August 2022 and subjected him to torture and other ill-treatment. Parties to the conflict also continue to detain and torture detainees in detention facilities and secret prisons.

Recommendations to be put forward:

Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and ensure national legislation aligns with obligations under these conventions.

End the practices of arbitrary arrest and detention, enforced disappearance, torture and other ill-treatment as well as release all those arbitrarily detained and reveal the fate of those disappeared.

Women's rights and gender equality:

Yemeni women face movement restrictions in areas under Houthi control, as well as in areas under government and STC control, due to requirements that they travel with a mahram (male guardian), in contravention of

the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). This restriction increasingly hindered Yemeni women from working, especially those required to travel for their job. This also had a direct impact on the access of Yemeni women and girls to healthcare and reproductive health rights. Many women who have completed their jail sentences remain in detention due to the requirement that they must have a mahram in order to be released. Recommendations to be put forward:

rights law obligations as well as provide protection and rehabilitation for them after their release in order for them to reintegrate with society and live a decent life.

Children and armed conflict:

All warring parties have committed serious violations against children throughout the war. Parties to the conflict have been regularly listed in the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict for perpetrating grave violations against children. During 2023, the Yemeni Coalition for Monitoring Human Rights Violations (YCMHRV) and Watch 4 Human Rights (Watch4HR) identified and investigated 309

End the recruitment of children in the armed forces including those serving non-military functions.

Appropriately investigate and punish officers who allow children in their units or are responsible for the war crime of recruiting or using children under 15 in military or security operations.

Fulfill obligations according to international law and in line with Action Plans signed with the UN, taking all the necessary measures to protect children, including rehabilitation measures, and stop violations against them.

Blocking and impeding humanitarian access:

The Houthis and the Yemeni government impose unnecessary restrictions and regulations on humanitarian organizations and aid projects, creating lengthy delays and impairing civilians' rights, including their access to food, water and healthcare. Several NGOs and Yemeni CSOs, as well as the UN Panel of Experts, have reported on how the Houthis have utilized humanitarian aid to recruit people to their forces, including children.

Recommendations to be put forward:

Take the necessary measures to ensure free and unimpeded access for humanitarian organizations delivering aid and emergency assistance to all civilians who need it without further delay.

Refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, and internally displaced people:

Yemen has been a key transit country for refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants from Somalia, Ethiopia, and Djibouti to Saudi Arabia in search of work or fleeing human rights abuses. Houthi forces have forcibly expelled thousands of Ethiopian migrants from northern Yemen, including by pushing them to the Saudi border, where Saudi border guards have systemically killed them. These killings if committed as part of a Saudi government policy to murder migrants would be a crime against humanity. Vulnerable groups, including persons from racial



Fulfil Yemen's obligation under CEDAW and end any discriminatory restrictions on women's rights, such as male guardianship, in law and practice such as the male guardianship.

Amend the Personal Status Law to ensure it is aligned with international human rights law and standards and does not contain any discriminatory provisions against women. Immediately release all women detained beyond the completion of their prison sentence in accordance with Yemen's constitution, Penal Code, and international human

grave children's rights violations (99 cases of killing and maiming, 70 cases of child recruitment, 55 victims of cases attacks on schools and hospitals, 56 cases of abduction, 13 cases of denial of humanitarian access, and 16 cases of sexual and gender-based violence). The majority of perpetrators are affiliated with Houthi forces with 75 percent, and 25 percent affiliated with the Yemeni government and Southern Transitional Council or unknown.

Recommendations to be put forward:

and religious minorities, are uniquely affected by internal displacement, as their access to human rights including health-care is severely impeded.

Fully implement the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and take all other necessary measures to fulfil the rights of internally displaced people in Yemen.

Investigate alleged killings of migrants, including asylum seekers, and other violations and abuses at the Saudi/Yemen border, identify all those suspected to be responsible including state officials and non-state actors, and hold them accountable in fair trials without recourse to the death penalty.

Persons with disabilities:

Ongoing internal displacement has led to increased risks of Yemenis becoming disabled as a result of explosive weapons such as landmines and improvised explosive devices. Despite the high numbers of persons with disabilities in Yemen – which include persons with disabilities unrelated to the conflict – efforts by the government and other relevant actors including international organizations have revealed serious weaknesses in addressing the needs and perspectives of persons with disabilities. Access to schools

and to primary health care centers and the situation of women and girls with disabilities are some of the key areas where government action to promote the equality and inclusion of persons with disabilities is urgently needed.

Recommendations to be put forward:

Take all necessary steps to ensure compliance with requirements under international human rights law and international humanitarian law to protect persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, including necessary measures to clear areas under their control of landmines and other explosive remnants of war and to provide the neces-

sary support and services to persons with disabilities caused by such unexploded ordnance.

Ensure that humanitarian aid is accessible to persons with disabilities and that they are able to receive adequate health services, and that education and employment opportunities are inclusive.

Ensure special attention is given in addressing the adverse impact on the rights of persons with disabilities in the context of the conflict in Yemen including in any rehabilitation efforts.

Freedom of expression, journalists and human rights defenders:

Parties to the conflict have

freedom of expression, end the practice of summoning activists and journalists to security and military agencies for questioning as a means of harassment and end the abuse of laws on criminal defamation and national security to suppress dissent.

Bring national legislation that restricts the right to freedom of expression into line with international standards.

Signing organizations:

Al-Amal Women's and Sociocultural Foundation

Amnesty International

Arab Human Rights Foundation

Association of Mothers of Abductees

Center for Strategic Studies to

Center

Watch for Human Rights

Yemeni Coalition to Monitor

Human Rights Violations

Yemeni Network for Victims Associations

List of submissions referenced:

Amnesty International

Arab Human Rights Foundation

Human Rights Watch

Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies

Joint submission: Human Rights Agenda, Association of

Mothers of Abductees, Musaala for Human Rights,

Dameer for Rights and Freedoms

Joint submission: DT Institute and Justice 4 Yemen Pact

Coalition[1]

Joint submission: Yemeni Network for Victims Associations[2]

[1] Abductees' Mothers Association, Al-Amal Women's and Sociocultural Foundation,

Center for Strategic Studies to Support Women and Children, Free Media

Center for Investigative Journalism, Marib Dam

Foundation for Social Development, Musaala Organization,

SAM Organization for Rights and Liberties, Studies and

Economic Media Center, Watch for Human Rights,

and Yemeni Coalition to Monitor Human Rights Violations.

[2] Abductees' Mothers Association, Yemeni Journalists Syndicate,

Yemeni Teachers Syndicate-Taiz, HOCO-Hemaya (Protection)

Organization for Civil Orientation, The Civil Commission for House

Bombings Victims, Resaly Foundation for Women

Development, Rasd Center for Rights and Development, The

National Union for the Development of the Poorest Groups (NUDP)-Yemen,

Musawah Organization for Rights and Freedoms, Eradah

Organization against Torture, The Yemen Association for

Landmine Survivors, and The Association of Residential

Complexes Families of Martyrs, Wounded, Aggrieved

and Victims in Mokha.



continued to harass, threaten, arbitrarily detain, forcibly disappear and prosecute targeted journalists and human rights defenders for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression. In 2022, government judicial authorities prosecuted at least three journalists for publishing content that was critical of officials and public institutions.

Recommendations to be put forward:

Immediately and unconditionally release all those imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression.

End the harassment and prosecution of activists and journalists and respect their right to

Support Women and Children Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies

Dameer for Rights and Freedoms

DT Institute

Free Media Center for Investigative Journalism

Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect

Human Rights Agenda

Human Rights Watch

Justice 4 Yemen Pact

Marib Dam Foundation for Social Development

Musaala Organization for Human Rights

SAM Organization for Rights and Liberties

Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies

Studies and Economic Media

Syndicate-Taiz, HOCO-Hemaya (Protection)

Organization for Civil Orientation, The Civil

Commission for House Bombings Victims, Resaly

Foundation for Women Development, Rasd Center for

Rights and Development, The National Union for the

Development of the Poorest Groups (NUDP)-Yemen,

Musawah Organization for Rights and Freedoms, Eradah

Organization against Torture, The Yemen Association for

Landmine Survivors, and The Association of Residential

Complexes Families of Martyrs, Wounded, Aggrieved

and Victims in Mokha.