



CENTRE FOR DEMOCRACY, PLURALISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Weekly Human Rights Report

(12/8/2024 - 18/8/2024)

New Delhi, 18th August. This week's report covers human rights violations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Mexico, Bangladesh, and the US. The situation in Bangladesh is most concerning as Hindu minorities are under extreme threat. The community as a whole is under constant fear due to the continuation of attacks against them in the country. Human Rights groups have criticized the US city of Los Angeles for criminalization of the homeless population in the country. Iraq tabled a marriage law in the parliament that makes marriage of underaged, even pre-teen, girls legal.

1. Bangladesh: Religious Violence Against Hindus Continues

This week too the violence against the minority Hindus continued unabated. The attacks this week spread to at least 52 districts in the country. Hindus, who make up 8% of the population and are the largest minority group, "are shivering," said Kajal Debnath, a vice president of the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council. "They are closing their doors, they are not opening it without confirming who is knocking. Everybody (in the Hindu minority)... from the Dhaka capital to the remote villages are very scared."

For more information:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/violence-in-bangladesh-after-hasinas-ouster-stirs-fear-within-hindu-minority-in-country/article68523564.ece>

2. Mexico: Inadequate Abortion Access in the State of Mexico Violates Human Rights

Despite nationwide strides towards recognizing access to abortion as a constitutional and human right, the state of Mexico continues to criminalize abortion, allowing exceptions only in cases of rape, "negligent abortions," risk to the pregnant woman's life, or when the fetus has "serious congenital or genetic. Human Rights Watch found that adolescents seeking abortion care face additional barriers. Though state law does not require parental authorization for

anyone over age 12, some providers unlawfully require parental involvement up to age 18. The state of Mexico “should join the other 16 states in the country that have fully decriminalized abortion and taken the lead in protecting women’s rights,” a woman right activist said. “Health institutions, both at the state and federal level, should increase their joint efforts to ensure that everyone has access to abortion services without discrimination.”

For more information:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/08/13/mexico-inadequate-abortion-access-state-mexico-violates-human-rights#:~:text=Despite%20nationwide%20strides%20towards%20recognizing,has%20%E2%80%9Cserious%20congenital%20or%20genetic>

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/08/13/navigating-obstacles/abortion-access-state-mexico>

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/hhrjournal/wp-content/uploads/sites/2469/2013/07/7-Kendall.pdf>

3. Need for an Urgent Rethink of International Response to the Human Rights Crisis in Afghanistan

An alliance of several Human Rights organizations released a statement decrying the worsening Human Rights situation in the Taliban country. The situation of women, ethnic minorities and school-aged girls is especially concerning. Below is the extract from the statement:

Joint Statement by the Alliance for Human Rights in Afghanistan

“Three years after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan on August 15, 2021, we, the undersigned organizations, remain alarmed that the international response to worsening Taliban human rights violations, especially against women and girls, is increasingly ineffective and sometimes even harmful. The dire and worsening human rights crisis in Afghanistan is not just a problem for its population. As international human rights organizations, we see clearly in our work how the lack of a meaningful international response to Taliban abuses is undermining human rights globally. The Taliban have imposed draconian policies and taken abusive actions that clearly violate Afghanistan’s obligations under international law, including international human rights law. These

policies have had a particularly devastating impact on women and girls, LGBTQI+ people, human rights defenders, and religious and ethnic minorities...”

Read the full statement below:

<https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/statement-report/joint-statement-alliance-human-rights-afghanistan-need-urgent-rethink-international>

4. Iraq: Parliament Poised to Legalize Child Marriage

Iraq’s parliament is moving forward with amendments to the country’s Personal Status Law that would allow Iraqi religious authorities, rather than state law, to govern marriage and inheritance matters at the expense of fundamental rights, Human Rights Watch said today. The Iraqi parliament, which completed its first reading of the bill on August 4, 2024, will have two more readings of the bill and a debate before deciding whether to vote it into law.

If passed, the amendment would have disastrous effects on women’s and girls’ rights guaranteed under international law by allowing marriage for girls as young as 9, undermining the principle of equality under Iraqi law, and removing protections for women regarding divorce and inheritance. Child marriage puts girls at increased risk of sexual and physical violence, adverse physical and mental health consequences, and being denied access to education and employment. The law has been proposed by an Islamist legislator named al-Maliki who [considers](#) the law in accordance with the “provisions of God’s law”.

Unregistered marriages also have extremely harmful effects on women and girls’ ability to obtain government services, register their children’s birth, and claim their rights. The proposed amendment would violate the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

For more information:

<https://msmagazine.com/2024/08/21/iraq-child-marriage/>

<https://time.com/7011752/proposed-bill-amendment-iraq-could-allow-girls-as-young-as-nine-to-marry/>

<https://www.businesstoday.in/world/story/iraqs-new-barbaric-bill-will-lower-marriage-age-for-girls-to-9-legalising-pedophilia-report-440787-2024-08-09>

<https://www.gicj.org/positions-opinions/gicj-positions-and-opinions/1285-a-silent-assault-proposals-to-legalize-child-marriage-in-iraq>

5. United States: Human Rights Activists Slam Los Angeles City for Criminalizing the Homeless Population

Los Angeles systematically criminalizes unhoused people through arrests and citations for violations arising out of their unhoused status and by destroying their property through sanitation sweeps. Criminalization drives unhoused people out of public spaces but does nothing to solve their lack of housing. The Los Angeles city government has pursued a cruel, expensive, and ineffective policy of criminalizing people's unhoused status through arrests, tickets, and property destruction.

For more information:

<https://calmatters.org/housing/homelessness/2024/08/human-rights-watch-la-report/#:~:text=Mayor%20Bass'%20public%20stance%20on%20homelessness%20in%20Los%20Angeles&text=When%20the%20U.S.%20Supreme%20Court,a%20stand%20against%20the%20decision.>

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-08-14/human-rights-watch-slams-l-a-and-state-for-criminalizing-homelessness>

6. Eswatini Supreme Court Upholds Controversial Anti-Terrorism and Anti-Sedition Laws

The Supreme Court of Eswatini's decision to uphold a controversial Suppression of Terrorism and Sedition and Subversive Activities Act has been criticized heavily by political activists. The country has a long history of authoritarian crackdown against human rights activists and free speech campaigners.

For more:

<https://allafrica.com/stories/202408150233.html>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/08/eswatini-major-setback-as-supreme-court-upholds-repressive-suppression-of-terrorism-act/>