

Amnesty International Report 2021/22; The State of the World's Human Rights; Lithuania 2021

Migrants were forcibly returned to Belarus. Parliament voted against legalizing same-sex unions. Domestic violence remained widespread. Lithuania had still not ratified the Istanbul Convention, nor implemented the European Court of Human Rights' ruling regarding Abu Zubaydah.

Refugees' and migrants' rights

Following a significant increase in the number of migrants arriving at the border from Belarus in August, Lithuania declared a state of emergency in November, which was extended until January 2022.

By the end of the year, Lithuanian border guards had reportedly forcibly returned over 8,000 migrants to Belarus since August. Migrants were held in poor conditions in camps. The prime minister announced plans to build a barrier separating Lithuania and Belarus. Construction began in November.

On 1 December, the European Commission published proposals allowing Lithuania to derogate from EU rules for six months. The measures allow Lithuania to extend the registration period for asylum application and simplify returns, thereby weakening asylum protections.

On 23 December, parliament voted to increase the six-month detention limit, introduced in July, to one year for migrants entering Lithuania from Belarus.

Women's rights

The issue of Lithuania's ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) was excluded from the parliamentary session in March.

Gender-based violence

Domestic violence remained widespread and was exacerbated during the Covid-19 pandemic. In March, the parliamentary Ombudsman's Office published its 2020 annual report, which concluded that provision of assistance to victims of domestic violence was insufficient.

LGBTI people's rights

In May, parliament narrowly voted against debating a bill – the “partnership law” – to legalize same-sex unions.

In September, the city of Kaunas held its first LGBTQ+ march. The local authorities, which had refused to issue a permit, lost an appeal and were ordered to authorize the event by Lithuania's Supreme Administrative Court.

Arbitrary detention

Abu Zubaydah, a Palestinian national detained in Guantánamo Bay, submitted a petition in April to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, and in November to a US federal court, calling for his release. In 2018, the European Court of Human Rights had ruled against Lithuania for its deliberate facilitation of Abu Zubaydah's enforced disappearance and torture in a secret CIA prison that it hosted between 2005 and 2006. By the end of the year, Lithuania had still not yet fully implemented the court's decision.

ecoi.net summary:

Report on the human
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