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Amnesty International Report 2022/23; The State of the World's Human Rights; Latvia 2022

Refugees and migrants continued to face violent pushbacks to Belarus. Various groups faced discrimination. Over 43,000 people fleeing Ukraine were granted protection.

Refugees' and migrants' rights

The state of emergency introduced in August 2021 at the border with Belarus was renewed repeatedly, allowing unlawful pushbacks of refugees and migrants and preventing NGOs' oversight of the area. Although asylum was effectively suspended at border areas, from April onwards people could file applications at the Daugavpils detention centre and at border crossing points. During the year, Latvia admitted 200 people on humanitarian grounds and reported over 5,000 "prevented" border crossings – effectively summary returns. Most people transferred from the border, including children, were detained arbitrarily.

In October, research was published documenting violent pushbacks to Belarus, arbitrary detention in undisclosed areas of the border, possibly constituting enforced disappearances, ill-treatment sometimes amounting to torture, and the use of force and deception to return people to their country of origin.¹ Latvian border guards, working with unidentified officers, were described as the main perpetrators.

In December, NGOs documented new incidents of people who had gone "missing" at the border and pushbacks. An Afghan citizen died of hypothermia as a result of the cold temperatures at the border.

In May, the European Court of Human Rights communicated a case against Latvia brought by a group of Iraqi nationals (*H.M.M. and Others v.*

Latvia) concerning pushbacks to Belarus and detention.

Ukraine conflict

Over 43,000 people fleeing Ukraine were granted temporary protection status. In March, a law was passed to ensure their access to residency, employment and broader support.

Economic, social and cultural rights

The European Committee of Social Rights reported failings in the areas of health and safety at work, and rights to health, social security and social assistance.

Discrimination

There was no progress on the UN's recommendations to introduce comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation. The Council of Europe recommended measures to address the gender pay gap.

A restitution law was passed in February, granting compensation to the Jewish community for properties seized during the Nazi and Soviet occupations.

The number of people with "non-citizen" status decreased but remained significant. "Non-citizens" continued to face restrictions, including on their right to vote and gaining employment in the public sector.

Women's rights

The country made no progress towards ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention).

LGBTI people's rights

Following a Supreme Court decision, administrative courts started recognizing the status of same-sex couples in order to implement the Constitutional Court's rulings, given the parliament's failure to approve a law on civil unions. In December, the parliament discontinued its work on this legislation.

1. *Latvia: Return Home or Never Leave the Woods*, 12 October

Associated documents

28 March 2023 | [AI – Amnesty International](#) (Author)

Latvia

Report on the human rights situation covering 2022

[Amnesty International Report 2022/23; Zur weltweiten Lage der Menschenrechte; Lettland 2022](#) (Periodical Report, German)

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