

AMNESTY

INTERNATIONAL

REPORT 2021/22

**THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S
HUMAN RIGHTS**



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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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This report documents Amnesty
International's work and concerns
through 2021.

The absence of an entry in this
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comparison of the extent and
depth of Amnesty International's
concerns in a country.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN

Association of Southeast Asian Nations

AU

African Union

CEDAW

UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CEDAW Committee

UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

CERD

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

CERD Committee

UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

CIA

US Central Intelligence Agency

COVAX

Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access, directed by the GAVI vaccine alliance, CEPI and the WHO

Covid-19

Coronavirus disease-19

ECOWAS

Economic Community of West African States

EU

European Union

European Committee for the Prevention of Torture

European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

European Convention on Human Rights

(European) Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom

GDP

Gross domestic product

ICC

International Criminal Court

ICCPR

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICESCR

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

ICRC

International Committee of the Red Cross

ILO

International Labour Organization

International Convention against Enforced Disappearance

International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

LGBTI

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex

MP

Member of Parliament

NATO

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO

Non-governmental organization

OAS

Organization of American States

OCHA

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

OHCHR

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

OSCE

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

PPE

Personal protective equipment

TRIPS

Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property

UK

United Kingdom

UN

United Nations

UN Convention against Torture

Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

UN Refugee Convention

Convention relating to the Status of Refugees

UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions

UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions

UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty

UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights

UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression

UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression

UN Special Rapporteur on racism

UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

UN Special Rapporteur on torture

UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

UN Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights

UN Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes

UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women

UN Special rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences

UNHCR, the UN refugee agency

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF

United Nations Children's Fund

UPR

UN Universal Periodic Review

USA

United States of America

WHO

World Health Organization

PREFACE

How did people fare under the power politics of 2021? Were rights upheld better amidst the world's chaotic contests for profit, privilege and position? Were rights holders better recognized, respected and protected as the Covid-19 pandemic continued and conflicts deepened?

In 2021, slick slogans were the mantra: “we will build back better”. Promises too were dangled: promises of a “global reset” of the economy; of a global “common agenda” to curb corporate abuse, of a sustainable and green recovery, of transformational global solidarity. But slogans, it transpired, meant little, promises were not to be kept and more people were failed in more places more often.

Faced with other options, still governments picked policies and pursued paths that took more of us further away from dignity and rights. The systemic inequalities that drove the pandemic were further entrenched, not systematically reduced. The cross-border flows of health services and supplies that could have broadened access to care often did not come to pass. The intergovernmental cooperation needed to avert further disaster and mitigate human rights crises rarely materialized.

A year ago, writing my first preface for Amnesty's annual report, I had ardently hoped that 2021 would see nations and peoples travel further down the road to an inclusive recovery from Covid-19. With scientific breakthroughs, won at an unprecedented pace, putting the pandemic's end within our reach, it seemed possible. So, what went wrong?

Instead of giving us genuine and meaningful global governance, the world's leaders retreated into their caves of national interest. Instead of providing greater safety to more people, leaders pushed us closer to the abyss of insecurity and, at times, war. Instead of stamping out the practices and strategies that divide us, leaders pitched our nations into self-defeating contests for wealth and resources, and conflict. Instead of upholding the universal human rights norm of equality, racism became further hardwired into the working of the international system, determining even who lived and who did not – adding to the cruel history of whose lives matter and whose do not.

2021 should have been a year of healing and recuperation. **Instead, it became an incubator for greater inequality and instability**, not only in 2021, not just for 2022, but for the decade ahead.

2021's astronomical waves of Covid-19 infections, illness and death was maddeningly predictable and distressingly avoidable. As wealthy governments congratulated themselves for their vaccine roll-out, by the year's end their rampant vaccine nationalism had left more than half the world unvaccinated or only partially vaccinated. Low immunization rates allowed new variants to flourish, putting us all at risk of vaccine-resistant mutations and lengthening the pandemic. Booster shots were delivered to citizens of rich nations while millions in the Global South, including those most at risk of serious illness or death, still awaited their first jab. In September, Amnesty International found that developed countries were sitting on half a billion surplus doses, enough to fully vaccinate several of the world's least-vaccinated nations. Their

dumping of surplus doses allowed to expire was a shocking symptom of a world without moral compass; a world that has lost its way. While companies' CEOs and investors bagged big profits, those desperately needing the vaccine were told to wait. And die.

In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, new conflicts were incubated, and unresolved conflicts deepened. In Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Israel/Palestine, Libya, Myanmar and Yemen, to name a few, conflict caused violations of international human rights and humanitarian law on a vast scale. In far too few instances did the needed international response come; in far too few cases were justice and accountability provided. Instead, conflict expanded. Extending over time, its impacts worsened. The numbers and diversity of intervening parties rose. New theatres of conflict opened. New weapons were tested. More deaths and injury were exacted. Life was cheapened.

In no other place was the world's decaying order more evident than in Afghanistan where, following the withdrawal of all international troops, the collapse of the government, and the takeover of the country by the Taliban, Afghan women and men on the front line of the fight for human rights and democratic values were left to fend for themselves.

Meanwhile, the global failure to build a global response to the pandemic sowed the seeds of greater conflict and greater injustice. Rising poverty, food insecurity and government instrumentalization of the pandemic to repress dissent and protests – all were well planted in 2021, watered by vaccine nationalism and fertilized by greed of the richer countries.

Such a legacy of 2021 was also evident at the COP26 climate conference. Plagued by short-termism and thwarted by selfishness, a fortnight of negotiations ended in betrayal. Governments betrayed their people by failing to agree a deal to prevent catastrophic climate warming. In doing so, swathes of humanity were condemned to a future of water scarcity, heatwaves, flooding and starvation. The very governments who turn migrants away at their borders sentenced millions to flee their homes in search of safety and better living conditions. Countries already floundering in unsustainable levels of debt were left without sufficient climate finance to tackle deadly environmental change.

2021 incubated further acceptability of racist policies and ideologies whose practices forced millions to live at the very edge of life itself. We saw this in vaccine producers steadfastly refusing to share their knowledge and technology with low-income countries, preventing the expansion of manufacturing needed to close the gap. We saw this again in many wealthy governments' refusal to support global initiatives such as the proposed TRIPS waiver which could have scaled up vaccine production. We saw this in governments' policies predicated on "risk of death" as an acceptable deterrent for the record number of refugees, migrants, internally displaced people and asylum seekers; policies that went so far as to criminalize those trying to save lives. We saw this again and again in the rise of public political discourse demonizing minorities, pitching arbitrary ideas of freedoms (including of "freedom to hate") into toxic contest against universal rights, norms and standards that are there to protect us from racism and sexism. We saw this in the withdrawal of essential services for sexual and reproductive health with devastating consequences for women and girls in particular.

If in 2021 those in power lacked the ambition and imagination to tackle humanity's gravest adversaries, the same cannot be said for the people they should have represented. In 2021, people across the world stood up not only for their own rights but in solidarity for the rights of all. They demanded better institutions, just law and a fairer society. The Nobel Committee recognized courageous exemplars of that dedication and vision when it awarded the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize to two journalists – Maria Ressa of the Philippines and Dmitry Muratov of Russia – for their brave stances against corrupt leadership and press restrictions in their respective countries.

People the world over rose up, even in the face of authorities' cruel repression and governments who at times used the pandemic as a smokescreen to deny the right to protest. In 2021, at least 67 countries introduced new laws to restrict freedom of expression, association or assembly.

Yet people would not be deterred from making their voices heard. In more than 80 countries, people rose to protest in vast numbers. In Russia, rallies in support of opposition leader Aleksei Navalny went ahead in the face of unprecedented numbers of mass arbitrary arrests and prosecutions. Farmers in India demonstrated against three contentious farming laws until December when India's federal government bent to the wisdom of people power and repealed the legislation. Throughout 2021, people kept rising – in Colombia, Lebanon, Myanmar, Sudan, Thailand, Venezuela and many more countries.

The world over, in 2021, lawyers, academics, NGOs, victims and their families tirelessly pursued justice for human rights violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Some landmark rulings were won. In February, two courageous Vietnamese children, with the support of a London-based law professor, won their case at the European Court of Human Rights against the UK's criminalization of trafficking victims. In June, Alieu Kosiah, a former commander of a rebel group in Liberia, was found guilty in Switzerland for war crimes and crimes against humanity and sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment. Innovative strategic litigations and criminal complaints were filed by NGOs against big multinational companies including Nike, Patagonia and C&A for their complicity in forced labour in the Xinjiang region of China.

In 2021 civil society and journalists also took on Big Tech. The Pegasus Project – a major collaborative effort between human rights experts and investigative journalism – uncovered state surveillance of government critics and human rights defenders, shining a light on the underhand tactics deployed to crush dissent. In November, a US court allowed WhatsApp to proceed with its case against NSO group, the creator of Pegasus spyware, marking a major watershed moment for disclosure of information in court. The year also saw the largest fines to date against leading tech companies for breach of data protection and privacy laws, including Amazon (fined €746 million), WhatsApp (€225 million) and Grindr (€6.34 million).

NGOs, backed by ordinary people, also fostered positive developments in international norms and mechanisms. Civil society organizations including Amnesty International successfully lobbied the UN Human Rights Council to recognize the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and to create Special Rapporteurs on human rights and climate change and on human rights in Afghanistan.

If governments won't build back better – as they build back broken – we are left with little option. We must scrutinize every decision and fight every attempt to muzzle our voices. But we must also step up and towards each other. We must build together a more tangible, demanding and insistent movement for global solidarity – people to people to people. If our leaders won't lead us to rights, then rights must lead us to each other.

For that we must organize, support and enable a global movement for justice. We know that ultimately our futures and our fates are intertwined and interdependent – people to planet. We know it. We must live it. We need to take charge – human rights charge – and demand together global governance for the rights of each one of us, to the exception of none of us, in the interests of all of us. Now, let's together – all of us – incubate that.

Agnès Callamard,
Secretary General Amnesty International

foreign communications and for surveillance of communication networks without oversight when the declared aim is to determine the usefulness of information for specific investigative purposes.

In June, the Federal Parliament passed further amendments to intelligence laws allowing German intelligence services to install surveillance technology (“state trojans”) on devices to monitor even encrypted communications. The intelligence services can require that internet service providers assist in this process and can exploit critical computer security vulnerabilities when installing the surveillance software (so-called “zero-day exploits”).

Following the global Pegasus investigations, the German government admitted to the purchase and use of NSO Group’s Pegasus spyware. While the Ministry of the Interior noted that it was only used in accordance with German law for targeted surveillance, concerns remained because NSO Group’s spyware had been documented as facilitating human rights violations around the world.

RIGHT TO HEALTH

Germany contributed €2.2 billion to the ACT-Accelerator and delivered 84 million Covid-19 vaccine doses to the COVAX initiative. The federal government opposed the TRIPS waiver proposed by the WHO and failed to put pressure on BioNTech to join the WHO Covid-19 Technology Access Pool or mRNA vaccine technology transfer hub to share its knowledge and technology, and scale up global manufacturing.

Civil society organizations continued to raise concerns over the fact that abortion is regulated through criminal law.

CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY

In June, the Federal Parliament passed the Act on Corporate Due Diligence in Supply Chains, which requires corporations based in Germany with at least 3,000 employees to conduct human rights and environmental due diligence from 2023. Concerns remained regarding the limited scope of the law because it only applies to large companies

and does not impose due diligence obligations throughout the whole value chain. The law also failed to improve the right to compensation for people who experience abuses as a result of a lack of due diligence by corporations.

FAILURE TO TACKLE CLIMATE CRISIS

In March, the German Constitutional Court ruled that the Federal Climate Protection Act was partially unconstitutional. The Court found that the Act violated the rights of future generations by imposing on them the undue burden of later drastic restrictions to compensate for current insufficient measures to tackle the climate crisis.

IRRESPONSIBLE ARMS TRANSFERS

An arms export moratorium on Saudi Arabia, extended in December 2020, remained in place until the end of 2021. As in previous years, it only covered Saudi Arabia, not other countries involved in the conflict in Yemen. The export of German parts and components for joint European arms projects destined for Saudi Arabia remained permitted.

GHANA

Republic of Ghana

Head of state and government: **Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo**

Cases of excessive use of force were reported. Prisons remained overcrowded. Women continued to suffer discrimination and gender-based violence. Attacks against LGBTI people intensified. Efforts were made to begin vaccinating at-risk people and essential workers against Covid-19. Forced evictions left some people homeless.

BACKGROUND

In January, President Akufo-Addo was sworn in for a second term. In May, variations of the hashtag #FixTheCountry started being used on social media by young Ghanaians calling for social and economic reforms.

EXCESSIVE AND UNNECESSARY USE OF FORCE

There were several incidents of excessive and unnecessary use of force by the security forces.

Various media reported that National Security operatives assaulted journalist Peter Tabiri on 7 May as he reported on a casino raid. The operatives allegedly kicked, slapped and poured water on him, injuring his right ear.

On 11 May, National Security operatives arrested and allegedly assaulted reporter Caleb Kudah from Citi FM after they found him filming abandoned state-funded vehicles within their premises. They then stormed Citi FM's office and arrested Caleb Kudah's colleague, Zoe Abu-Baidoo. Both were released without charge.

On 29 June, police and military forces shot dead two protesters and wounded four others during a protest in Ejura Sekyedumase in the Ashanti Region. A three-member Ministerial Committee commissioned to conduct a public inquiry into the incident submitted its report to the government in July.

On 1 July in Wa, in the Upper West Region, military officers went on a rampage, beating people over a suspected stolen phone. The Military High Command tasked a four-member committee to investigate the incident. Three officers from the Wa Barracks were demoted while eight others were tried and jailed for 30 days by a disciplinary board.

ARBITRARY ARRESTS AND DETENTIONS

On 14 January, a police officer arrested Selorm Gborbidzi, a reporter from the Accra-based newspaper *The FINDER*, after he started filming a scuffle between the officer and the driver of a commercial vehicle. He was released after four hours and charged with obstruction of justice, illegally filming a police officer on duty and insulting a police officer.

INHUMANE DETENTION CONDITIONS

Prison overcrowding continued. According to the Director General of the Prisons Services, as of 24 June the total prison population was 13,200, despite an authorized capacity of

9,945. Food given to prison inmates was inadequate due to the insufficient feeding grant of GHC1.80 (US\$0.30) a day per inmate.

WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' RIGHTS

At the end of the year, the Affirmative Action bill was still pending.

In March, UNFPA Ghana in partnership with the government launched the Orange Support Centre and the Boame mobile phone app to report cases of domestic violence.

"Witch" camps remained open, despite the government's promise to close them. Older women accused of witchcraft were at risk of being banished to such camps. A commemorative forum was held on 23 July, a year after a mob lynched an elderly woman, to call on parliament to criminalize the labelling of people as witches. In December, various media reported that youths beat to death an elderly woman in Nalerigu in the North East Region because they suspected her of being a witch.

LGBTI PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

Discrimination against LGBTI people intensified. In February, police officers searched and closed the recently inaugurated office of LGBT+ Rights Ghana, a non-profit organization. On 20 May, police arrested 21 LGBTI activists for unlawful assembly during a training session. They were released on bail in June and their charges were dismissed on 5 August.

In June, the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values bill was introduced in parliament. The bill further criminalized LGBTI people and introduced prison sentences for anyone expressing support or "sympathy" towards LGBTI people. The bill also encouraged conversion therapy and gender "realignment" for children.

RIGHT TO HEALTH

On 1 February, the Ghana Medical Association declared an increase in doctors

contracting Covid-19, and the deaths of two doctors from the disease during January.

In March, Covid-19 vaccinations began for people at risk and essential workers, with drones being used to deliver vaccines to rural communities. On 7 May, the vice president, Mahamudu Bawumia, stated that 2,161 prison officers and 1,136 inmates with underlying health conditions had been vaccinated. By mid-December, less than 10% of the population were fully vaccinated.

FORCED EVICTIONS

The Greater Accra Regional Minister's "Let's Make Accra Work" campaign involved demolishing illegal structures. As part of the campaign, on 5 July, authorities demolished homes of people living in the Railway Quarters along Graphic Road in Accra, making them homeless. Former residents told the media they were not given adequate notice. In the same month, about 3,000 woodworkers at Kaase-Angola in the Asokwa Municipality, who had been operating in the area for decades, were requested to vacate the area after the government allegedly sold the land to a private company. The woodworkers stated that it would deprive them of an adequate place to work, affecting their livelihood.

ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

In February, three global manufacturing companies expressed concern over the impact of bauxite mining on the people and wildlife of the Atewa forest, and stated that they would not use this supply chain.

In May, the defence minister announced that 561 military officers had been deployed during a four-day operation on the Birim, Ofin and Oda rivers of the Eastern and Ashanti Regions as part of Operation Halt to counter illegal mining which was polluting water bodies. On 27 May, the government announced another deployment of 401 military officers to halt operations on the river Ankobra.

GREECE

Hellenic Republic

Head of state: **Katerina Sakellaropoulou**

Head of government: **Kyriakos Mitsotakis**

Reports of unlawful use of force against peaceful protesters persisted. A Roma man was fatally shot during a police chase. Pushbacks and human rights abuses against refugees and migrants continued, despite systematic denials by the authorities. The authorities' crackdown against NGOs and those working to help refugees continued. Violations of the rights of conscientious objectors to military service persisted. As violence against women escalated, a controversial child-custody bill that would put victims of domestic violence in greater danger was passed by parliament.

BACKGROUND

Greece faced an ecological disaster after wildfires destroyed over 900,000 hectares of forest and farmland.

TORTURE AND OTHER ILL-TREATMENT

Reports of unnecessary and excessive use of force by the police against peaceful protesters and others persisted. In March, footage showing the unlawful use of force against a young man by a police officer during a Covid-19 document check caused public outrage and prompted many demonstrations. A disciplinary inquiry was ordered and a police officer was suspended from his duties while an Athens prosecutor ordered a criminal investigation. Two protesters who participated in one of the demonstrations in March reported being tortured by police in the General Attika Police Directorate during their questioning and filed a criminal complaint.

In April, an Athens court found police responsible for the life-threatening injuries sustained by protester Yiannis Kafkas in May 2011 and awarded him compensation. In

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From a human rights perspective, 2021 was largely a story of betrayal and hypocrisy in the corridors of power. Promises to “build back better” after the Covid-19 pandemic were little more than lip service, with some governments even redoubling their exploitation of the pandemic to bolster their own positions.

Hopes of global cooperation withered in the face of vaccine hoarding, reluctance to confront climate change and narrow self-interest. Promises of economic recovery were undercut by lacklustre debt relief and entrenched income inequality. Advances in science and technology were undermined by corporate greed and governments' complicity or exploited to stifle dissent and keep refugees and migrants from crossing borders.

But hopes for a better post-pandemic world were kept alive by courageous individuals, social movements and civil society organizations. Their efforts and limited hard-won victories should prompt governments to live up to their promises.

The Amnesty International Report 2021/22 highlights the impact of these dynamics at a global, regional, and national level, covering the human rights situation in 154 countries in 2021. It presents Amnesty International's documented concerns and recommendations for governments and others. It is essential reading for policy makers, advocates, activists and anyone with an interest in human rights.

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