

# World Report 2026; France

The 2024 snap parliamentary elections denied President Macron a majority support in the National Assembly leading to the collapse of four governments. Post-election political instability continued in 2025 with increasing political polarization and large popular protests over social and fiscal inequality. The country faced a deepening crisis of trust in its democratic institutions and a shrinking civil society space. The government's use of administrative powers to dissolve nongovernmental groups threatened the rule of law. Police repression of protests restricted freedoms of expression and association. Discrimination against minorities persisted amid high rates of hate crimes. Migrants and asylum seekers faced an increasingly unwelcoming environment.

## Rule of Law

In December, CIVICUS, a nongovernmental group assessing civic freedoms globally, [downgraded](#) France's civic space from "narrowed" to "obstructed."

France's 2021 "separatism" law continued to negatively impact rights. A [June report](#) by the European Civic forum, noted that the law's "Contract of Republican Engagement," requiring organizations to commit to secularism and republican values in exchange for public subsidies, acts as a "lever for restricting freedom of association and expression."

In April, the [Minister of Interior initiated dissolution procedures](#) for Urgence Palestine, a leading pro-Palestinian solidarity organization, Lyon Populaire (an ultra-right group), and Jeune Garde (an anti-fascist group). While the latter two were [dissolved by decree in June](#), at this writing, Urgence Palestine's dissolution had not been confirmed.

In its [2025 report](#) on the rule of law in Europe covering 2024 events, the NGO Liberties noted that both the [law on algorithmic surveillance](#), passed under the pretext of the 2024 Olympics to prevent foreign interference, and the "separatism law," restricted freedoms of expression and association, and the rights to privacy and to non-discrimination.

While a new law on drug trafficking was passed [without a provision](#) that would have drastically affected end-to-end encryption and privacy rights, it still gives police [invasive new surveillance powers](#).

Press freedom groups condemned police violence against journalists, while [covering protests](#). Liberties [noted](#) a decline in press freedom exacerbated by media concentration.

[Attacks](#) on the judiciary spiked after Marine Le Pen's March [conviction](#) and five-year ban on public office and former President Nicolas Sarkozy's September [conviction](#) to five years in prison for criminal conspiracy to use illegally Libyan funds for his 2007 campaign. Authorities [launched investigations](#) into death threats against the judge in Sarkozy's trial.

## Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

In January, Oxfam France [reported](#) that the wealthiest 10 percent of the population holds nearly two-thirds of the national wealth, while the standard of living for the remaining 90 percent has stagnated or decreased. A report from France's National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies, [published in July 2025](#), revealed that the poverty rate in 2023 reached its highest level since 1996, affecting 15.4 percent of the population.

The Housing Foundation [warned in February](#) that France is “sinking into a housing crisis,” with 350,000 people homeless in 2024.

## Discrimination and Intolerance

Official [data published in 2025](#), showed a high level of recorded racist, antisemitic, xenophobic, or anti-religious offenses in 2024 (9,350 recorded acts), an 11 percent increase from 2023 (8,428 recorded acts). Anti-Muslim acts decreased by 29 percent, while other racist and xenophobic acts increased by 15 percent. Between January and June, antisemitic acts decreased by [27.5 percent](#) compared to the [same period in 2024](#), but remained more than twice as high as in the first half of 2023, before the start of the war in Gaza. The National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH) [noted](#) that underreporting remains a serious problem.

In its [concluding observations on France](#), the UN Committee Against Torture (UN CAT) expressed deep concern over numerous allegations of excessive force and ill-treatment by law enforcement, which disproportionately affect individuals of African and Arab descent and non-nationals.

In a landmark ruling, [the European Court of Human Rights \(ECtHR\) condemned France for racial profiling](#) for repeated identity checks by the police with no “objective and reasonable justification” of a Black French national. The court rejected the claims of five other French nationals and failed to address the systemic nature of racial profiling by the police in France.

A [report](#) by the Defender of Rights found young men perceived as Arab, Black, or North African are four times more likely to be stopped by the police. A [study](#), supported by the Defender of Rights, found police practices of repeated checks and “multi-fining” targeting young racialized men from working-class neighborhoods were discriminatory. A [report](#) by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance called for the establishment of a monitoring database for police checks.

[SOS Homophobie’s annual report](#) published at the start of 2025 revealed a 57 percent increase in physical assaults against LGBT people in 2024 compared to 2023.

## Asylum Seekers and Migrants

In August, France and the UK launched a [pilot “one in, one out”](#) migration deal, under which France should take back one person who traveled irregularly by boat to the UK for each asylum seeker the UK accepts to take from France. Migrant rights [groups condemned](#) the deal as dehumanizing and opaque. At time of writing, [dozens](#) had been “exchanged” under the agreement.

The UN CAT, in its [concluding observations on France](#), expressed concern about frequent illegal pushbacks of asylum seekers and migrants on the French-Italian border, including unaccompanied children, denying them access to asylum in France.

In August, the government suspended a program that had brought [292 Palestinians from Gaza to France](#) since January after authorities launched an investigation into one of the evacuees for “apology for terrorism” [because of antisemitic messages](#) shared on social media. Rights and lawyers’ associations [lodged a complaint](#) arguing the decision violates the rights to life, human dignity, and family unity. France [reportedly](#) resumed evacuations of Palestinians from Gaza in October.

In June, the Interior Minister deployed over 4,000 police, gendarmes, and military personnel for two days to [conduct identity checks targeting migrants](#) in train stations and buses. Migrant rights groups [condemned](#) these operations as stigmatizing roundups.

## Children's Rights

UNICEF and the Federation of Solidarity Actors (FAS) reported that more than 2,100 children slept on the streets in 2025, up 6 percent from 2024 and 30 percent from 2022.

Many children in the overseas department of Mayotte were denied [access to education](#) amid a lack of infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, teacher shortages, and the absence of school canteens and after-school activities. Thousands remain excluded from school.

UN CAT [expressed concern](#) that asylum-seeker children, including unaccompanied children, are frequently detained with unrelated adults in border waiting areas, increasing the risk of abuse. It found it troubling that the application of a nationwide ban on detention of migrant children, adopted in 2024, has been [postponed until January 2027 in Mayotte](#), where a large number of children are reportedly [held in detention centers](#) without proper safeguards. In October the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child [concluded](#) France is responsible for grave and systematic violations of the rights of unaccompanied migrant children.

In September, France [repatriated three women and ten children](#) detained in Syria camps, the first such operation since July 2023. This brought the total number of children repatriated since 2019 to 179. Lawyers for the families warned that 110 French children and around 50 French women are still arbitrarily detained in “appalling conditions” in violation of France’s obligations.

## Women and Girls' Rights

The [2025 report from the High Council for Equality](#) highlighted an increase in sexist gender stereotypes in media and rising gender-based violence, while also noting persistent inequality between women and men in education and professional life.

The ECtHR [condemned](#) France twice for failing to effectively prevent non-consensual sexual acts. In October, Parliament [adopted a bill](#) defining rape as sex without consent. The former definition required use of violence, coercion, threat, or surprise.

## International Justice

In January, French judges [issued a new arrest warrant](#) for former Syrian President Bashar al-Assad for complicity in war crimes; the Court of Cassation [annulled in July](#) a separate 2023 warrant based on the principle of personal immunity for heads of state. Since then, judges issued two arrest warrants against Assad—one in August for [complicity in war crimes and crimes against humanity](#) committed in 2012, and another in October for [chemical weapons attacks](#) in 2013.

The trial of Roger Lumbala Tshitenga for crimes against humanity allegedly committed in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2002 and 2003 started in November.

## Foreign Policy

Amid global crises and fierce attacks against the multilateral system by major powers, including the [United States](#), [Russia](#), and [China](#), France reiterated its [commitment to multilateralism](#) and international law. It engaged in diplomatic efforts on conflicts in [Ukraine](#), [Israel-Palestine](#), eastern [Democratic Republic of Congo](#), as well as the crisis in [Haiti](#) and the situation in [Syria](#).

But too often, France failed to take action in response to serious human rights abuses and impunity. The continued [reduction](#) of French international aid, compounding the US [suspension of foreign](#)

aid, contributed to vital humanitarian programs being put at risk and undermines the UN's ability to pursue its human rights work.

France's recognition and diplomatic efforts at the UN in support of the State of Palestine, and its growing criticism of Israel's conduct in the occupied Palestinian territory, were not matched by concrete measures to prevent genocide in Gaza, end business with Israel's illegal settlements in the West Bank, and address impunity for grave crimes. France has not suspended its arms transfers to Israel despite the risk of complicity.

France condemned the US sanctions against International Criminal Court officials, including a French judge, and reiterated support for the court.

France mobilized to increase international pressure and sanctions on Russia for its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, including hosting the multinational "coalition of the willing" working on security guarantees for Ukraine. It pledged support for reconstruction, humanitarian aid, transitional justice, and accountability efforts in post-Assad Syria. But it further strengthened its ties with India despite the Modi government's escalating repression of civil society.

France condemned human rights violations in eastern Congo, including by the M23, and Rwanda's support for the armed group. It supported the creation of an investigative mandate by the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) and the adoption of EU sanctions against abusive commanders.

Amid the Taliban's escalating oppression of women and girls in Afghanistan, France supported the creation of an investigative mechanism by the HRC.

In October, France hosted the 4th ministerial conference on feminist diplomacy, which led to a political declaration endorsed by 31 states to defend the rights of women and girls and gender equality.

At the UN Security Council, France condemned the widespread violations in Port-au-Prince and supported strengthening the mandate and resources of the multinational mission in Haiti.

France helped, alongside Germany, to weaken the EU corporate due diligence directive, a serious setback for human rights and environmental protection in supply chain.