

World Report 2025 - France

Snap parliamentary elections in 2024 saw increased racist and xenophobic rhetoric. Government-imposed constraints on civil society impacted the ability of nongovernmental groups to perform their role. Nationwide indicators showed a rise in hate crimes against minority populations as well as widening economic inequality across French society. The Olympic Games, while showcasing France globally, saw abuses against people living on the streets and use of intrusive surveillance technology raising privacy and discrimination concerns. Migrants and asylum-seekers faced dire conditions.

Rule of Law

France's 2021 "separatism" law [continues to chill](#) freedoms of [association](#) and [expression](#), particularly for environmental, anti-discrimination, and human rights groups. Measures including the "[Contract of Republican Engagement](#)" impose [stringent requirements](#) on organizations, forcing them to affirm their commitment to secularism and republican values.

The European Commission's [July 2024 Rule of Law report](#) underscored these concerns, highlighting problems with the [granting](#) and [withdrawal](#) of [public subsidies](#) to nongovernmental organizations. The UN Human Rights Committee [echoed](#) these concerns in November.

The Defender of Rights, France's ombudsperson institution, [cautioned](#) against increasing restrictions on freedoms of expression, assembly, and association.

The UN special rapporteur on environmental defenders [reported](#) on France's crackdown on environmental activists, citing excessive police force, restrictive bans, and misuse of anti-terrorism laws.

The European Commission [criticized](#) France's use of accelerated legislative procedures, limiting democratic debate.

[Press freedom groups condemned violations](#) after journalists investigating French arms sales to Israel and environmental issues were arrested in June and July.

Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

In January 2024, [Oxfam France](#) noted widening economic inequalities [in France](#), citing a November 2023 report by France's National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE). The INSEE report showed the standard of living [decreased](#) for the poorest 90 percent of the French population and increased for the richest 10 percent in 2022.

In April, authorities [resumed destruction](#) of informal settlements in France's poorest overseas department, Mayotte, following a 2023 operation which prejudicially associated irregular migration with crime and disease. Neither operation addressed pressing social needs in Mayotte.

The right to housing is regressing throughout France, [according](#) to a housing rights organization and the [National Consultative Commission on Human Rights](#) (CNCDH).

Discrimination and Intolerance

The lead-up to snap parliamentary elections in June, called by President Macron after his party's defeat and the far-right National Rally success in June European Parliament elections, was marred by a [surge](#) in racist, xenophobic, and discriminatory rhetoric. Hundreds of thousands of people [protested](#) against far-right intolerance, and a majority of voters ultimately [rejected](#) the National Rally at the polls.

Five rights groups, including Human Rights Watch, filed a [complaint](#) with the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination arguing that discriminatory police identity checks targeting people who are Black or Arab, or perceived as such, constitute systemic racism, and calling for specific government actions to end ethnic profiling.

The [CNCDH 2024 annual report](#) revealed a significant increase in hate crimes in 2023 based on data from the Interior Ministry. Antisemitic acts surged by a staggering 284 percent, peaking after the October 2023 attacks in Israel and Gaza. Anti-Muslim acts also rose by 29 percent and other racist and xenophobic acts increased by 21 percent. The CNCDH condemned the role of political leaders and media in normalizing hate speech through discriminatory rhetoric.

SOS Homophobie's [2024 report](#) revealed a worsening environment for LGBT people and a marked rise in anti-LGBT speech online. An EU FRA [survey](#) of LGBT people confirmed high discrimination rates, particularly for transgender people, with only 15 percent of victims reporting incidents. Seventy-one percent of respondents perceived an increase in violence against LGBT people and 61 percent said they avoid public displays of affection.

Asylum Seekers and Migrants

A [migration law](#) considered the “[most regressive](#)” in decades was [enacted](#) in January. [Implementing decrees](#) published in July include reduced appeal times for asylum seekers, expanded detention, and a requirement that foreigners sign contracts pledging adherence to French values, [sparking criticism](#) by [nongovernmental](#) groups. Following his September appointment, the interior minister made [statements](#) threatening the rights of migrants and asylum seekers, raising [civil society concerns](#).

People [continued](#) to [undertake the dangerous](#) Channel crossing, given the [lack of safe migration and asylum routes](#) to the UK and decisions by France and UK [prioritizing](#) a focus on deterrence rather than saving lives and the push factors driving people to move. International Organization for Migration data show that in the first 11 months of 2024 at least 75 people [went missing or died](#) during [the crossings](#), a [record high](#).

In April, the Defender of Rights [denounced](#) illegal pushbacks at the French-Italian border.

In late 2023 and early 2024, France [deported](#) Sudanese nationals to Sudan despite the devastating ongoing armed conflict there.

Children's Rights

In Marseille and [elsewhere](#), unaccompanied migrant children [faced](#) arbitrary age assessments, depriving them of access to fundamental rights such as housing, health, and education. In May, 27 nongovernmental organizations [petitioned](#) the Conseil d'État to compel authorities to align the French system for assessing and sheltering unaccompanied children with relevant provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

An [August report](#) by UNICEF and the Federation of Solidarity Actors denounced the ever-increasing number of children without housing, forced to sleep on the streets.

French authorities failed to return 120 French children and their mothers who [remained arbitrarily detained](#) in degrading conditions in camps and prisons in northeastern Syria.

Women's and Girls' Rights

In March, France [enshrined](#) the freedom to have an abortion in its constitution, a global first and a victory for reproductive rights.

The High Council for Equality's [2024 annual report](#) indicated that women continue to experience violence, discrimination, and harassment at alarming rates, with recorded sexual violence incidents doubling between 2017 and 2022.

Despite [ratifying](#) the International Labour Organization Convention on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work (C190) in 2023, the French government at time of writing had yet to enact reforms to implement the convention's provisions and its accompanying [recommendation](#).

In April, the Institute for Public Policy Studies [revealed](#) that between 2012 and 2021, 94 percent of rape complaints and 86 percent of sexual violence complaints were dismissed by the French justice system.

The September opening of the unprecedented [Mazan rape trial](#) spurred [widespread mobilization](#) among feminist organizations, [renewing calls](#) for French law to include the [notion of consent](#) in its definition of rape.

In July, the European Court of Human Rights [rejected](#) a case brought by 261 sex workers against France's 2016 law criminalizing payment for sexual services. Several UN agencies and [several](#) nongovernmental [organizations](#) criticized [the law](#).

International Justice

In May, French [judges convicted](#) three high-ranking Syrian officials for their role in the 2013 imprisonment, enforced disappearance, and torture of two dual French-Syrian nationals.

In June, the Paris Court of Appeal affirmed a [French arrest warrant](#) against President Bashar al-Assad for using chemical weapons in Syria in 2013; a subsequent [challenge](#) to the warrant by the prosecutor general was pending at time of writing.

Olympic Games

France hosted the [Olympic and Paralympic Games](#), the first since the International Olympic Committee adopted a [strategic framework on human rights](#).

[Independent institutions and nongovernmental organizations](#), including [Human Rights Watch](#), expressed concerns about human rights abuses connected to the Games.

Before the Games, this [included](#) the intensification of eviction operations described as "social cleansing" of people living on the streets or in precarious housing, particularly migrants.

During the Olympics, authorities used [controversial algorithmic](#) video surveillance technology authorized by an emergency temporary [law](#) heavily [criticized for infringing on rights to privacy and non-discrimination](#). In June, the CNCDH [warned](#) of the law's risks to rights, including potential unwarranted police interventions and discrimination against racialized communities.

French [authorities](#) and several sports associations [imposed bans](#) on French athletes [wearing the hijab](#), preventing Muslim women and girls from competing, a discriminatory measure [denounced](#) by the [United Nations](#), many [athletes](#), and [nongovernmental groups](#).

The online harassment of women boxing competitors Lin Yu-ting from Taiwan and Imane Khelif from Algeria during the Olympics, which [prompted an investigation](#) by French authorities,

underscored the harms of “sex testing” policies for women athletes.