

2. "Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories: A perfect storm of apartheid policies led to Salah Hammouri's deportation", 21 December
3. "They Were Just Kids: Evidence of War Crimes During Israel's August 2022 Gaza Offensive", 25 October
4. *Israel/OPT: Continuing patterns of unlawful killings and other crimes further entrench apartheid*, 11 May
5. "Israel/OPT: The stifling of Palestinian civil society organizations must end", 18 August

ITALY

Republic of Italy

Head of state: **Sergio Mattarella**

Head of government: **Giorgia Meloni (replaced Mario Draghi in October)**

Concerns about torture persisted. Police used excessive force against demonstrators. Restrictive measures against unauthorized musical gatherings risked undermining freedom of assembly. High levels of violence against women persisted. People rescued at sea were left stranded for many days before being allowed to disembark. The government approved new rules to restrict rescue operations by NGO ships. Cooperation with Libya on migration was extended, despite abuses. Access to abortion was not guaranteed in some parts of the country. Poverty levels rose, gravely affecting children and non-nationals. Parliament failed to extend protection against hate crimes to LGBTI people, women and people with disabilities. Whistle-blowers were not adequately protected in law. Mandatory vaccination against Covid-19 ended for medical staff working in hospitals and care homes.

BACKGROUND

In July, Mario Draghi resigned. Parliamentary elections in September delivered a strong majority for the far-right coalition, including the Brothers of Italy party, led by Giorgia Meloni, who became prime minister in October. During the electoral campaign and in her first speech to the parliament, Giorgia Meloni condemned racism and antisemitism, but her party continued to use language and

symbols reminiscent of Benito Mussolini's fascist regime.

TORTURE AND OTHER ILL-TREATMENT

In November, 105 prison officers and other officials went on trial accused of multiple offences, including torture, for the violent suppression of a protest in the Santa Maria Capua Vetere prison in April 2020.

In December, a police officer was placed under house arrest, accused of torture in the case of Hasib Omerovic, a Roma man with a disability. He had fallen from the window of his home outside the capital, Rome, in still unclarified circumstances during an unauthorized police inspection in July. Four other police officers were suspended, accused of making false statements.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND ASSEMBLY

Police used excessive force against protesters on several occasions. In January, anti-riot police in Turin used batons to beat students who were demonstrating against the work-related death of an 18-year-old boy. About 20 people were injured, one seriously.

In December, parliament approved the introduction of a new offence that punishes trespassing aimed at organizing a musical or other entertainment gathering deemed dangerous for public health and safety. Organizers of such gatherings could face up to six years' imprisonment and a fine of up to EUR 10,000. There was concern that the new legislation could infringe on freedom of assembly and expression.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

There were 100 killings of women in domestic violence incidents, with 59 killed by their partners or former partners, a slight decrease from 2021.

Parliament failed to adopt a bill introduced in 2021 to strengthen safeguards to combat violence against women.

REFUGEES' AND MIGRANTS' RIGHTS

Over 160,000 people fleeing from Ukraine requested temporary protection in Italy under

the EU Temporary Protection Directive. The authorities granted them priority access to residence permits and a subsistence allowance.

On other routes, 1,373 people went missing at sea trying to reach safety in Italy. Many had departed from Libya. There were 105,140 people who arrived irregularly by sea, up from 67,477 in 2021, with many requiring rescue at sea. Over 12,000 were unaccompanied children. In June, 21 European countries agreed a voluntary solidarity mechanism for the relocation of up to 10,000 asylum seekers from Italy and other countries in the Mediterranean.

The government refused to assign a place of safety for disembarkation to hundreds of rescued people on board NGO rescue ships and then attempted to introduce a selection process for disembarkation. The French government authorized the disembarkation in France of a group of people refused by Italy, but then retaliated by suspending transfers from Italy to France under the relocation mechanism. In December, the government approved a law with immediate effect to restrict NGOs' life-saving activities at sea. NGO crews must now request a port for disembarkation and make their way there after each rescue, limiting the possibility of saving more people in one operation; they are also expected to determine, while still at sea, whether rescued people intend to seek asylum. Violation of the new rules carries administrative penalties ranging from fines to the temporary or permanent seizure of the ship.

In December, the Tribunal of Rome found one Italian Navy official and one Coastguard official guilty of refusing to authorize a rescue, which contributed to the deaths of about 268 people, including dozens of children, when a refugee boat was shipwrecked in October 2013. However, the officials could not be sentenced due to the statute of limitations.

Reports of labour exploitation of migrant workers continued, with agriculture one of the sectors where people were most frequently underpaid and made to live in

substandard and dangerous accommodation. In November, five people were arrested for exploiting workers employed to pick tomatoes near Foggia, Apulia.

COOPERATION WITH LIBYA

Italy's support to Libya to contain people there continued despite persistent grave violations by Libyan authorities and militias. During the year, the Libyan authorities intercepted over 24,000 people at sea and returned them to Libya, with Italy's logistical and material support.

In July, parliament approved the extension for another year of military missions providing assistance to Libyan authorities intercepting refugees and migrants at sea and returning them to Libya. In November, the Memorandum of Understanding with Libya on migration and border control was tacitly renewed for a further three years.

CRIMINALIZATION OF SOLIDARITY

Court cases continued based on the offence of "facilitation of irregular entry", although in some cases courts recognized that acts of solidarity could not constitute offences. In May, the Court of Cassation annulled the conviction of four Eritrean nationals accused of facilitating irregular migration for offering hospitality to other Eritreans in a case that began in 2014. They spent 18 months in pretrial detention.

The preliminary hearing continued in Trapani, Sicily, in the case against the crews of the *Iuventa* and other NGO rescue ships for alleged facilitation of irregular migration in connection with rescue operations in 2016 and 2017. In December, the government joined the proceedings as a complainant.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Access to abortion remained difficult in many areas of the country due to the high number of doctors and other healthcare providers who refused to deliver abortion care. Their number reached 100% of competent medical staff in some regions.

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

In October, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) expressed concern about rising levels of poverty, including child poverty, and the disproportionately high level of absolute poverty among non-nationals. The committee also highlighted the inhumane living and working conditions endured by workers in the informal economy.

DISCRIMINATION

Parliament again failed to pass legislation extending to LGBTI people, women and people with disabilities the same protections available to other victims of hate speech and hate crimes based on racist, religious, ethnic and nationalist motives.

Parliament also failed to adopt a bill, decades in the making, to ensure effective access to citizenship for the children of foreign nationals who were born and/or grew up in Italy. Over 1.5 million children continued to face discrimination and challenges in accessing their rights.

WORKERS' RIGHTS

Parliament failed to meet the 31 December 2021 deadline to transpose EU directive 1937/2019 on whistle-blower protection. This lack of safeguards contributed to the challenges faced by health and care workers who raised concerns about working conditions in care homes during the Covid-19 pandemic.

RIGHT TO HEALTH

Continuing disproportionate limitations on visits to older care home residents to stem the spread of Covid-19 infringed their right to a private and family life.

FAILURE TO TACKLE CLIMATE CRISIS

In July, a part of the Marmolada glacier in the Alps collapsed, causing the deaths of 11 people. Experts attributed the detachment of the ice block to rising global temperatures.

In October, the CESCR expressed concern that current emission-reducing policies may

not be sufficient for Italy to meet its obligations to combat climate change.

JAPAN

Japan

Head of government: **Fumio Kishida**

The authorities' response to the climate crisis was insufficient. Long-standing discrimination against women, migrants, asylum seekers, ethnic Korean people and LGBTI people remained ongoing. Prolonged detention and inhumane treatment of foreign nationals in immigration detention facilities continued to be reported.

BACKGROUND

Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe died in hospital after being shot at a political campaign event in July. In November, Minister of Justice Yasuhiro Hanashi resigned after making a joke about the death penalty, in which he stated that the justice minister can only make the news headlines by signing off execution warrants.

FAILURE TO TACKLE CLIMATE CRISIS

Japan continued to be the world's biggest public financier of oil, gas and coal projects and one of the largest users of coal in electricity generation, policies which undermined the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

The Sixth Basic Energy Plan, approved by Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's cabinet in October 2021, remained in place. The plan aimed to decarbonize Japan's economy by 2050 and to achieve a 46% greenhouse gas reduction (on the base year of 2013) by 2030; targets which did not reach the level needed to achieve the 1.5°C average warming goal of the Paris Agreement. The plan also retained 19% of coal-fired power generation, inconsistent with the almost total phase-out of coal needed by 2030. A total of 166 coal-fired power plants were in operation, delaying the transition to renewable energy sources. Japan continued