



WORLD ANTI EXTREMISM  
**NETWORK**  
BUILDING A FREE WORLD

# UNCENSORED WATCH

*Defending Freedom, Challenging Extremism and Authoritarianism*

Issue 5 | January 2025



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*Defending Freedom, Challenging Extremism and Authoritarianism*

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## **SECTION - 1:**

WELCOME TO UNCENSORED WATCH- A PROJECT OF WORLD  
ANTI-EXTREMISM NETWORK



### Welcome to the third edition of «Uncensored Watch»!

Welcome to the latest edition of Uncensored Watch, your go-to source for unfiltered news and insights on human rights violations, atrocities, authoritarianism, and the fight for justice worldwide. In this issue, we've curated the most pressing stories that demand attention, alongside updates on our recently published articles.

But that's not all—stay tuned for an exclusive teaser of our upcoming webinar series. We'll dive deep into the case studies published on our website, offering a closer look at the realities on the ground and the voices that refuse to be silenced.

Thank you for standing with us in our mission to uncover the truth and strengthen the call for justice. Together, we can make a difference.

Enjoy the read!

The Uncensored Watch Team



## SECTION - 2:

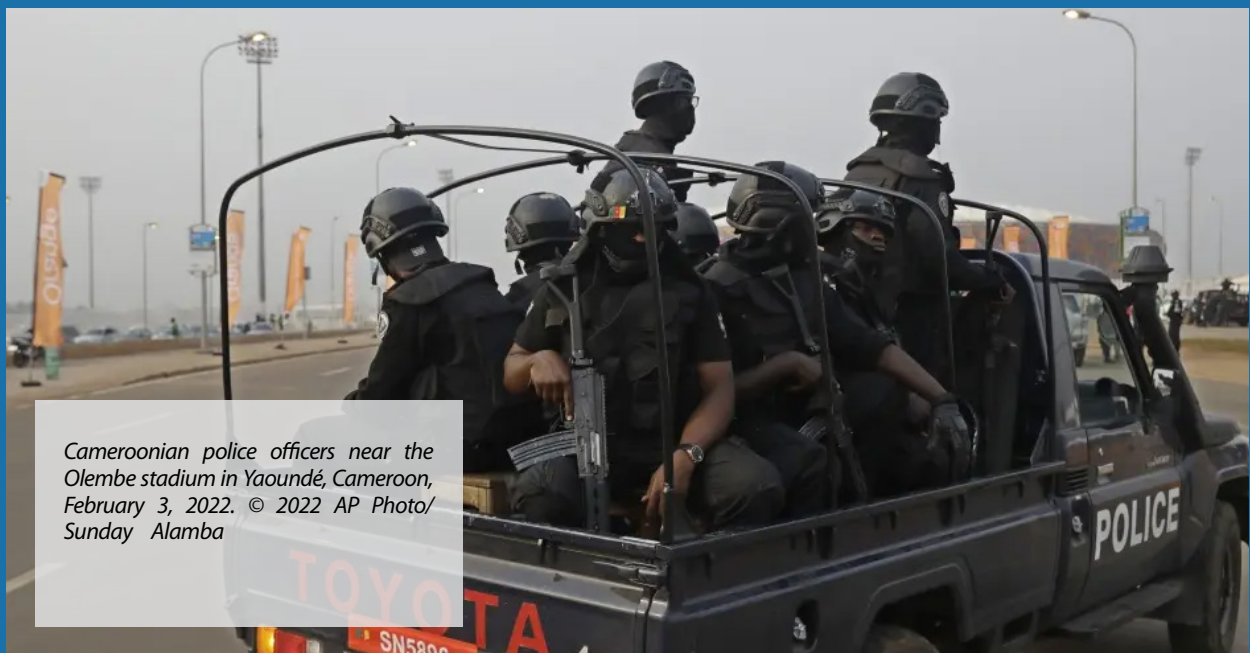
Global Crisis in Focus



## Cameroon: Reports of Torture Surface Before Death in Custody

Cameroon's authorities are under scrutiny following the death of Abdoul Wahabou Ndandjouma, a 36-year-old man, in police custody on January 17, 2025. Ndandjouma was arrested in N'Gaoundéré, Adamawa region, along with another man, Mohaman Toukour Nana, who was released the same day without charges. Nana reported hearing Ndandjouma screaming in pain during interrogation. The next day, the governor informed Ndandjouma's family of his death, and his body was taken to a regional hospital. The family demanded an investigation and an autopsy, which was conducted between January 20 and 24, but the results remain unknown. This incident occurs amid a broader pattern of arbitrary arrests, torture, and deaths in custody in Cameroon, as well as a government crackdown on dissent, opposition figures, and human rights activists ahead of the 2025 presidential elections. Additionally, the government has suspended the activities of human rights organizations, such as the Central Africa Human Rights Defenders Network, further limiting accountability.

This incident is a clear violation of human rights. The death of Ndandjouma in police custody, coupled with reports of torture and lack of medical care, violates the right to life and the prohibition of torture under international human rights law. The arbitrary arrest of Ndandjouma and Nana without a warrant and the alleged use of torture during interrogation are abuses of their rights to liberty, security, and fair treatment. The failure to conduct a transparent and independent investigation into Ndandjouma's death perpetuates impunity and denies justice to his family. The broader crackdown on dissent, including the arrests of activists and journalists, undermines freedom of expression and political participation. The suspension of human rights organizations restricts the right to freedom of association and weakens mechanisms for accountability. These actions collectively represent a systemic disregard for human rights and the rule of law in Cameroon.







Uganda's veteran opposition figure, Kizza Besigye (unseen), is transported inside a Ugandan military police vehicle as he arrives at the Makindye Martial Court in Kampala, on November 20, 2024. © 2024 Badru Katumba / AFP

## Uganda's Supreme Court Declares Military Trials of Civilians Unconstitutional

Uganda's Supreme Court has ruled that military courts cannot try civilians, declaring such trials unconstitutional. The court ordered the transfer of all ongoing military trials of civilians to the civilian court system. However, it did not overturn past convictions made by military courts.

This decision is a significant victory for human rights in Uganda. For years, military courts have tried civilians, including political opponents and critics, often violating fair trial standards and constitutional rights. The ruling aligns with international human rights standards, which emphasize that civilians should only be tried by independent and impartial civilian courts.

The decision is expected to positively impact human rights in Uganda by ensuring fair trials for civilians and reducing the misuse of military courts to suppress dissent. It also highlights the need for accountability for past abuses and the release of those wrongfully detained. Overall, this ruling strengthens the protection of fundamental rights and justice in the country.



Residents walk past a burnt car as they evacuate the Delmas 22 neighborhood the morning after an attack amid ongoing criminal violence in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Thursday, May 2, 2024. © 2024 Ramon Espinosa/AP Photo

## Haiti in Turmoil: Rising Violence Fuels Humanitarian Crisis

Haiti's deepening crisis is not just a story of statistics or political instability, it's a heartbreaking reality for millions of people whose lives have been shattered by violence, fear, and deprivation. Families are torn apart, children are robbed of their futures, and communities are left to survive in a world where basic human rights feel like a distant dream. The rise of armed groups, their grip on large parts of Port-au-Prince, and their brutal tactics, mass killings, sexual violence, and the forced recruitment of children, have

created a nightmare for countless Haitians. These aren't just abstract violations; they are daily horrors that strip people of their dignity, safety, and hope. Journalists, activists, and ordinary people trying to survive face constant threats. The state, overwhelmed and under-resourced, has been unable to protect its citizens, leaving them to fend for themselves in a world where justice feels nonexistent. For women and girls, the situation is even more dire. Sexual violence has become a weapon of terror, used to control and intimidate. The stories of survivors of rape, exploitation, and abuse are a stark reminder of how deeply this crisis is rooted in the violation of human dignity.

Perhaps one of the most devastating aspects of this crisis is the targeting of children. Armed groups are forcibly recruiting boys and girls, ripping them away from their families and schools, and thrusting them into a life of violence and exploitation. These children, who should be learning and playing, are instead being turned into instruments of terror. Their childhoods are stolen, their futures destroyed, and their innocence replaced with trauma. This isn't just a violation of their rights—it's a betrayal of their humanity.

But the crisis doesn't end with violence. The collapse of law and order has created a humanitarian disaster. Half of Haiti's population is struggling to find enough food to eat. Clean water, healthcare, and education are out of reach for many. Families are forced to make impossible choices—between feeding their children or sending them to school, between seeking medical care or risking their lives to travel through gang-controlled areas. The most vulnerable—women, children, and

marginalized communities—are bearing the brunt of this suffering, their lives defined by hunger, fear, and despair.

In the face of such immense suffering, the world cannot look away. The UN-backed security mission led by Kenya offers a glimmer of hope, but it is not enough. The international community must respond with a response that prioritizes humanity over politics. This means stopping the violence and addressing the root causes of the crisis—poverty, corruption, and the lack of strong institutions. It means providing immediate aid to those in desperate need while also investing in long-term solutions that empower Haitians to rebuild their lives and their country. Their resilience is a testament to the strength of the human spirit, but they cannot do this alone. The world must stand with Haiti, not just with words, but with action. Without urgent and meaningful intervention, Haiti's crisis will only deepen, leaving millions trapped in a cycle of suffering that no one should have to endure.





*Prime Minister Hun Manet addresses the launch of the Roadmap towards Global Health Coverage 2024-2035 on May 23. STPM*

## **Cambodia's Crackdown on Dissent: Human Rights and Democracy Under Threat**

In its World Report 2025, Human Rights Watch (HRW) accused Cambodia's government under Prime Minister Hun Manet of intensifying repression of civic space, political participation, and fundamental freedoms in 2024. The report highlights increasing restrictions on free expression, media freedom, and peaceful assembly, along with politically motivated arrests of dissidents and critics.

HRW noted that Cambodia's Senate elections in February were marred by intimidation, bribes, and arrests of opposition members. Despite appearing before the UN Human Rights Council in May for its Universal Periodic Review, the government failed to act on previous recommendations. Since July, at least 94 people were arbitrarily arrested for criticizing a government development plan with Vietnam and Laos, with 33 facing charges punishable by up to 10 years in prison. Environmental activists, journalists, and labor rights advocates also remain targeted.

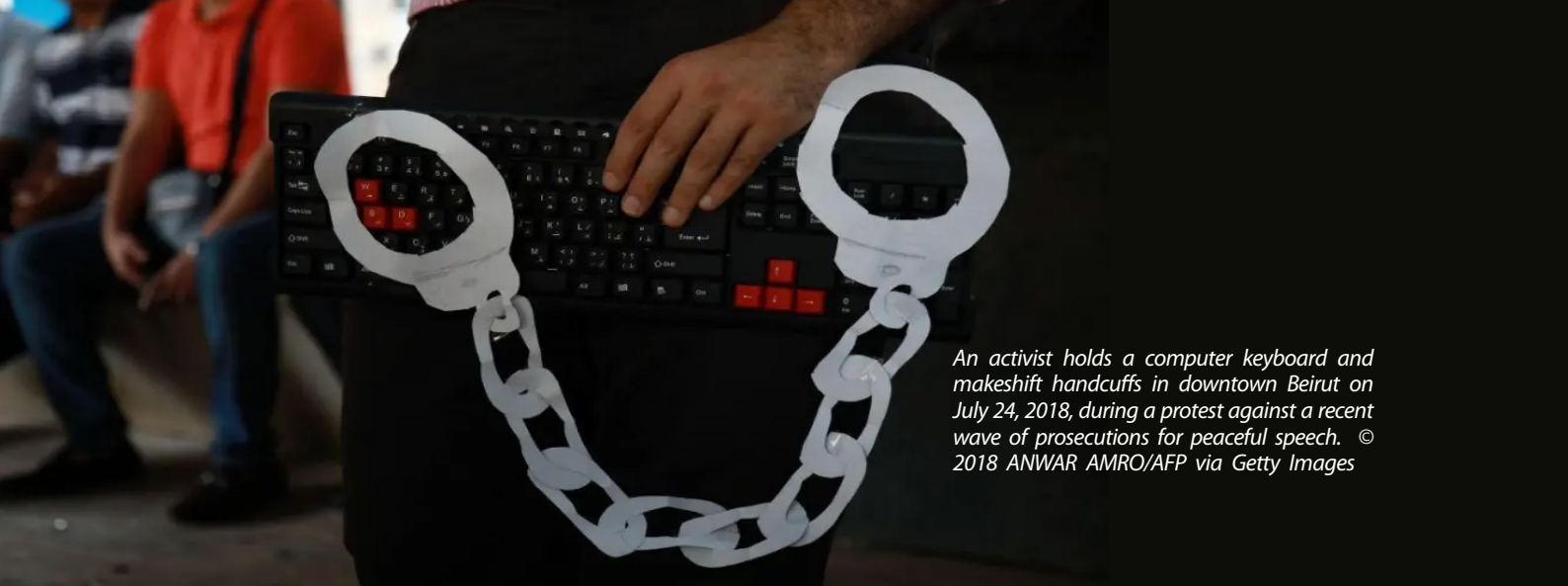
Cambodia's development partners were urged to demand an end to the crackdown on freedoms and called on Hun Manet's government to uphold democracy and the rule of law. The report underscores Cambodia's shrinking democratic space and persistent human rights abuses.

This report paints a troubling picture of the country's human rights and democratic situation. The government's increasing repression of fundamental freedoms, such as free

expression, media independence, and peaceful assembly, signals a further erosion of democratic principles. The use of repressive laws and politicized courts to silence critics, opposition members, and human rights defenders reflects a systemic effort to consolidate power and suppress dissent. This aligns with a broader global trend where authoritarian regimes are gaining ground by curtailing freedoms and targeting political opponents, activists, and journalists.

Cambodia's human rights record has worsened since its last UN Universal Periodic Review in 2019, with little progress on accepted recommendations. The arbitrary arrests of individuals criticizing government policies, such as the development plan with Vietnam and Laos, and the targeting of environmental activists, journalists, and labor rights advocates, demonstrate a deliberate strategy to stifle civil society. These actions undermine the rule of law and democratic governance, reducing Cambodia to what HRW describes as a democracy "in name alone. Cambodia's development partners and foreign governments must take a stronger stance. They should publicly and jointly condemn the ongoing crackdown on freedoms and tie aid and investment to tangible improvements in human rights and democratic governance. International bodies like the UN should continue to hold Cambodia accountable through mechanisms like the Universal Periodic Review. Local and international organizations should provide greater support to Cambodian civil society, including human rights defenders, independent media, and grassroots movements. Genuine reforms are needed to create an enabling environment for political participation, free expression, and peaceful assembly.

The government should engage in meaningful dialogue with opposition groups, civil society, and citizens to address grievances and foster inclusivity.

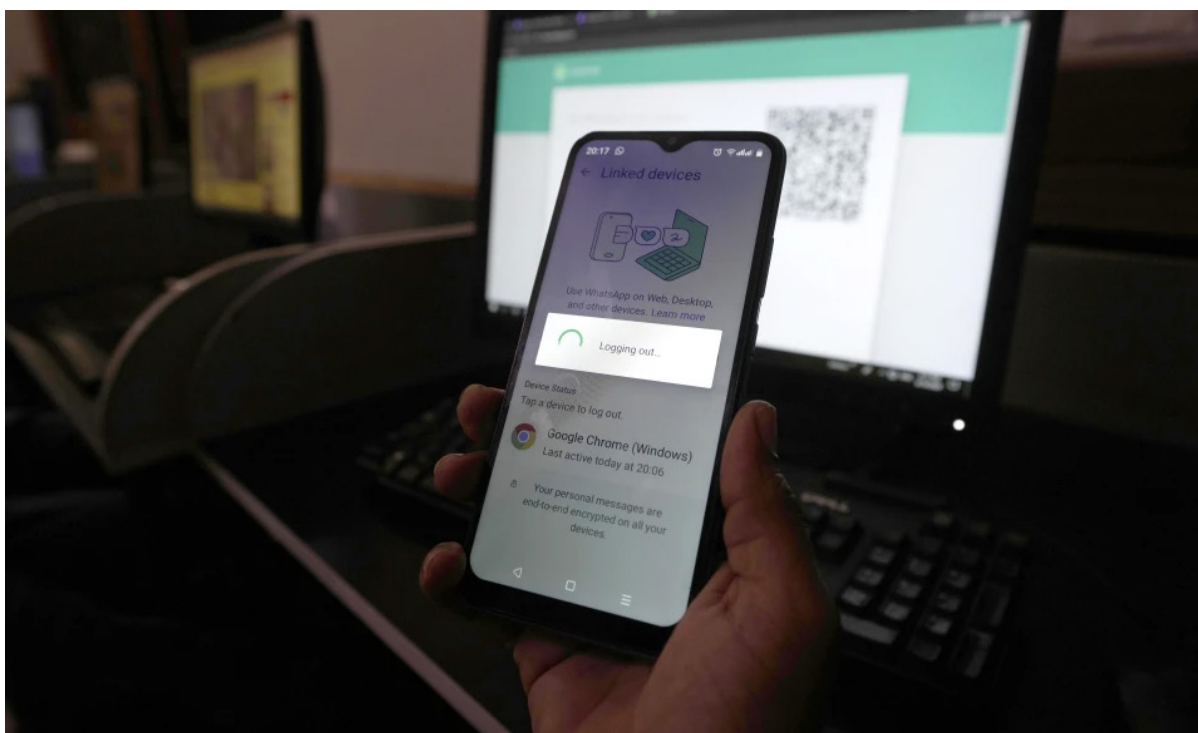


*An activist holds a computer keyboard and makeshift handcuffs in downtown Beirut on July 24, 2018, during a protest against a recent wave of prosecutions for peaceful speech. © 2018 ANWAR AMRO/AFP via Getty Images*

## Lebanon Deports Poet to UAE Despite Risk of Unfair Trial and Torture

The Lebanese government has deported Egyptian-Turkish poet Abdulrahman Youssef al-Qardawi to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where he faces a high risk of an unfair trial and possible torture, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported. The deportation carried out on January 8, is being condemned as a violation of both Lebanese and international law. Al-Qardawi was initially arrested on December 28, 2024, at the Masnaa border crossing upon returning from Syria, following a provisional arrest request from Egypt. Shortly after, the UAE issued its extradition request, citing charges of “spreading fake news” and “disturbing public security,” allegedly linked to a social media post critical of the UAE, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. Despite an appeal by his lawyer, Lebanese authorities proceeded with the deportation before a ruling was made. Human rights organizations, including [HRW](#), have warned that al-Qardawi is likely to face severe human rights violations in the UAE, where authorities have been accused of suppressing free expression and conducting unfair trials. Lebanon’s decision has raised concerns over its willingness to comply with requests from powerful Gulf states, disregarding the legal protections against politically motivated extraditions. The UAE has a history of detaining critics and activists under broad charges, with reports of torture and ill-treatment in detention. HRW has called the deportation a serious breach of Lebanon’s international obligations, urging authorities to uphold the rule of law and protect individuals from persecution.

The deportation of Abdulrahman Youssef al-Qardawi by the Lebanese government to the UAE represents a troubling disregard for both domestic and international legal standards, as well as a capitulation to pressure from powerful Gulf states. By extraditing al-Qardawi before his legal appeal could be resolved, Lebanon violated its own laws and international obligations, including the principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits returning individuals to countries where they face a credible risk of torture or persecution. The charges against al-Qardawi—vaguely defined accusations of “spreading fake news” and “disturbing public security”—are emblematic of the broader crackdown on free expression in the UAE and other Gulf states, where dissenting voices are often silenced through arbitrary detention and unfair trials. Lebanon’s actions not only undermine its commitment to human rights but also raise concerns about its increasing alignment with authoritarian regimes in the region, prioritizing political expediency over the rule of law. This case highlights the urgent need for Lebanon to reaffirm its independence and uphold its legal and moral obligations to protect individuals from politically motivated persecution.



*FILE -A Pakistani waits to connect his mobile WhatsApp with a desktop as the internet runs slow past several days, in Karachi, Pakistan, Aug. 19, 2024. (AP Photo/Fareed Khan, File)*

## **Pakistan's Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2025: A Threat to Free Speech and Digital Rights**

The recently passed Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act 2025 in Pakistan has raised significant concerns about its potential to suppress dissent under the guise of combating "false and fake information." While the government claims the law aims to curb misinformation, its vague and ambiguous language leaves it open to misuse, granting authorities sweeping powers to control and censor online expression. This could lead to severe violations of the fundamental right to freedom of speech, a cornerstone of any democratic society.

By criminalizing the dissemination of so-called false information and imposing harsh penalties, including up to three years in prison and fines, the law risks being weaponized to silence journalists, activists, and political opponents. Pakistan's history of using the original Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) to target dissent further fuels these fears. The expansion of powers to block and remove content, coupled with the creation of a new regulatory authority, grants the government unprecedented control over the digital landscape, undermining transparency and accountability.

In a democratic country like Pakistan, such measures are highly unacceptable. Freedom of speech is essential for holding power to account and fostering open dialogue. Instead of tightening its grip on digital spaces, the government should engage in meaningful consultations with civil society to ensure laws align with international human rights standards. Without such safeguards, this act risks becoming a tool for authoritarian overreach, stifling the very democracy it claims to protect.





A Yonhapnews TV broadcast with a satellite image by Airbus Defense and Space of Russia's Ussuriysk military facility, where South Korea's National Intelligence Service (NIS) said North Korean personnel were gathered within the training ground, October 18, 2024. © 2024 Kim Jae-Hwan / SOPA Images/Sipa USA via AP Photo

## North Korean Soldiers in Ukraine: A Stark Reminder of Human Rights Violations

A video is released and it shows two North Korean soldiers captured in Ukraine's Kursk region being interrogated. One of them expressed a desire to stay in Ukraine—a statement that could lead to severe punishment, including torture, forced labor, or even execution if he is returned to North Korea. His family back home is also at risk of retaliation. According to U.S. reports, North Korea has been sending troops to Russia since October, initially for trench-digging and logistical support. However, many of them have been forced into combat. North Korea reportedly sent these soldiers in exchange for Russian military technology, including nuclear and weapons advancements. This move highlights Pyongyang's ongoing exploitation of its citizens for military and authoritarian purposes. Some reports that injured North Korean soldiers are executed by their comrades, and some carry instructions to commit suicide rather than

be captured. This raises serious human rights concerns, especially under the Third Geneva Convention, which requires the humane treatment of prisoners of war (POWs). The convention prohibits violence, humiliation, and forced repatriation to countries where prisoners could face persecution or torture. Ukraine has been cooperating with international organizations like the Red Cross to ensure POWs receive proper treatment. However, the captured North Korean soldiers are at risk of being sent back to their home country, where they could face severe human rights abuses. Governments worldwide are urged to ensure these soldiers are protected under international humanitarian law and not forcibly repatriated.

The recent capture of North Korean soldiers in Ukraine highlights significant human rights violations, particularly regarding the treatment of prisoners of war (POWs). These

soldiers were forcibly deployed to Russia by the North Korean regime, often under duress and with no agency over their roles. This practice of forced military service and labor reflects the broader exploitation of North Koreans by their government.

The Third Geneva Convention mandates humane treatment for POWs, but the captured soldiers face grave risks of torture, forced labor, or execution if returned to North Korea. Reports of executions and instructions to commit suicide rather than be captured underscore these violations. The risk of forced repatriation violates the principle of nonrefoulement, which prohibits returning individuals to countries where they face torture or persecution.

Furthermore, North Korea's use of collective punishment, where the families of captured soldiers may be retaliated against, deepens

the human rights crisis. Ukraine's cooperation with international organizations like the Red Cross is a positive step, but these soldiers must be protected from repatriation to North Korea.

The situation also exposes Russia's complicity in these abuses, raising concerns about its commitment to international norms. Overall, this case underscores the need for the global community to act decisively to protect the rights of these soldiers and hold North Korea and Russia accountable.



## UK Government Under Fire for Failing to Protect Democratic Rights, Especially Right to Protest

Human rights organizations are criticizing the United Kingdom's Labour government for not upholding democratic freedoms, particularly the right to peaceful protest. In its World Report 2025, Human Rights Watch expressed concern over the government's continued defense of controversial anti-protest measures introduced by the previous administration.

The Labour government, led by Prime Minister Keir Starmer, took office in July 2024 with promises of reform, but activists were disappointed when it failed to reverse key anti-protest legislation. This includes the Public Order Act 2023 and the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, which have been widely condemned for undermining free speech and giving the police excessive powers to suppress peaceful protests.

Despite a High Court ruling in May that deemed some of these measures unlawful, the government decided to appeal the decision in December, shocking human rights advocates who had hoped for a shift in policy. The report also highlighted other human rights issues in the UK, including the ongoing cost of living crisis, which has worsened poverty and inequality, and growing hate speech and xenophobia, exacerbated by political rhetoric. Racial discrimination, particularly against the Chagossian people, and the failure to establish a humane migration system also remain pressing concerns. Human rights advocates are calling on the UK government to rethink its approach and ensure that it stands by its commitment to human rights, both at home and abroad.

This report raises concerns about democratic freedoms, particularly the right to protest. Many had hoped that a change in government would bring a shift in policy, but laws restricting public demonstrations remain in place. Even after a court ruled some of these measures unlawful, the decision to appeal suggests that maintaining control over protests is being prioritized over reversing past restrictions. This has disappointed activists who see peaceful protest as essential to a healthy democracy. At its core, this debate is about the balance between order and freedom. Some argue that tough policies are needed to maintain stability, while others see them as a threat to basic rights. How the government chooses to move forward, whether by doubling down on these laws or taking steps toward reform, will shape how people view its commitment to democracy and human rights in the years to come.



## **SECTION - 3:**

Multimedia Update: Voices Against Authoritarianism



## Write-ups by International Human Rights Certificate Program Participants

In January, we are pleased to announce the publication of write-ups by the graduates of the International Human Rights Certificate program, highlighting their perspectives on various human rights violations and authoritarianism in their regions.

### ■ **From Accusation to Asylum: The Asia Bibi Case and Pakistan Blasphemy Law Crisis** by Hamza Niaz

This article discusses the Asia Bibi case, a high-profile blasphemy accusation in Pakistan that highlights the misuse of the country's stringent blasphemy laws. It covers her legal journey from conviction to acquittal, the societal and political challenges she faced, and the international outcry over human rights violations. By reading this, you will learn about the dangers of blasphemy laws, their impact on religious minorities, and the broader implications for freedom of speech and justice in Pakistan.



### ■ **Violation of Pashtun Rights in Pakistan: Analyzing the Role of Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement** by Rimsha Khan Burki

This article highlights the struggles of the Pashtun community in Pakistan, particularly their suffering during the War on Terror and military operations, which led to widespread violence, displacement, and human rights violations. It discusses the rise of the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), a peaceful protest movement demanding justice, accountability, and an end to discrimination against Pashtuns.

To learn more about the issue in detail, visit our [website](http://www.worldantiextremism.org).



■ **Minorities in Afghanistan: My Call for Justice and Protection for Hazaras and Sikhs**  
by Mohammad Yaseen Jaras Aslam

The article discusses the persecution and threats faced by Hazaras and Sikhs in Afghanistan, especially under the Taliban, and explores possible solutions to protect their rights. If you want to learn more about this issue in depth, read this article on our website.



■ **Struggles for Civilian Supremacy: The State of Democracy and Human Rights in Pakistan** by Muhammad Aslam

The essay explores the persistent conflict between civilian and military power in Pakistan, highlighting its impact on democratic governance, human rights, and marginalized groups. The write-up also offers practical solutions, such as strengthening civil society and ensuring electoral integrity, to foster a more just and democratic Pakistan. If you are interested to learn more, this write-up is a must-read.



**Scholarly Podcast: New Episode is Live**

Mustafa Akyol, Senior Fellow at the Cato Institute and a prominent voice on Islam and modernity honored our podcast with an insightful discussion on the link between extremism and Islam, how extremists misuse religion, and the impact of such ideologies on Muslim societies.

Don't miss this thought-provoking conversation. Listen and gain valuable insights!





## SECTION - 4:

Updates corner



## Webinars on Case Studies on Extremist Movements in Central Asia - Coming Soon

In today's volatile world, the rise of militancy and extremism in fragile regions has spiraled into a global crisis. Nowhere is this more evident than in Third World nations like Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Pakistan, where extremist ideologies exploit weak governance, fractured societies, and economic hardships. What begins as localized violence quickly ripples across borders, destabilizing entire regions and threatening global security.

At WAEN, we have published in-depth case studies that delve into these critical issues, which you can access on our website. These studies provide valuable insights into the root causes and dynamics of extremism in these regions. WAEN remains committed to exposing the unseen forces driving extremism and giving voice to those often ignored in the global conversation.

To further engage with these pressing topics, we are bringing you a series of webinars focused on these case studies. Stay tuned with us for more updates and join the conversation as we work towards a deeper understanding of these global challenges.



## SECTION - 5:

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